

Know Him!

ARCHITECT - Mansoor H. Dalal



We live in a world where being an opportunist has almost become essential to survive, and come out ahead of everyone else - a world where every other person you meet, either has no ideals worth speaking of or has compromised them, turning into boorish cynics in the process. Your success is measured purely by the amount of money you manage to mint. So, it is a refreshing experience to meet someone who believes in something more than making the most of every opportunity.

Mr. Mansoor H. Dalal is not your run-of-the-mill architect, doing run-of-the-mill jobs for any kind of client, where the architect works under many constraints, especially financial. Mr. Mansoor Dalal, along with his father Mr. H. G. Dalal, heads the firm, M.H. Dalal Architects Pvt. Ltd., which has its office in Kondhwa (Khurd). Mr. H. G. Dalal, who is a continuing source of inspiration to his son, is an eminent R.C.C. specialist, and is now devoted to computerizing their office, where the conventional

drafting board has been totally eliminated.

The level of motivation, dedication and no-nonsense attitude is palpably evident in the staff, right from the watchmen upwards. Everyone seems to know what is required of them and goes about achieving it in an almost military-efficient manner. The office itself has no outer polish and glamour put on to impress the visitor. This mirrors what Mr. Mansoor Dalal believes in and puts in to practice as a professional architect. He

firmly insists that the functional aspect of a building is of utmost importance, the outer form should naturally grow out of the function a building is built for.

This firm does not believe in grabbing as many clients as they can. At a time they have not more than four or five jobs. "We have a speciality niche," as Mr. Dalal puts it, "We design buildings for specific usage, keeping function and quality paramount." The firm has had a steady clientele since 1980, for whom projects worth many millions have been done! To name a few projects - Seeds Processing Plants in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra, Marine Container manufacturing plant at Bombay, Holiday Resorts at Panchgani and Lonavala, Floriculture and Greenhouse Complex for roses at Bangalore, Medical and Research centre at Bombay, bungalows at Murud, Panvel, Jalna, Bhavnagar, renovations of hotels, and hospitals at Bombay etc. Projects presently in progress are the Cotton Delinting Plant, Research and Development centre and an Eye Hospital Complex for Sankara Nethralaya at Madras, office complexes at Hyderabad and Jalna, and a Seeds Processing Plant at Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh. Whew! Quite a list that!

Mr. Mansoor Dalal prefers it if the client is not also the contractor. As in such a case, the architect is unable to have a free hand in designing and maintaining the quality of construction.

His buildings also cater to the local climatic conditions. As in most traditional Indian structures, internal courtyards are included,

which allows proper cross-ventilation. This attention to minute details has been noted by the senior architect, of Singapore PWD, Mr. Lye, in a letter he sent recently. To quote from his letter, Mr. Lye says, ".... I was deeply impressed with the level and quality of the work of your company. Your work displays a deep sensitivity and consciousness of your culture, climate and tradition, yet not forsaking progressiveness and innovativeness in today's contexts. I can say without reservation, that the quality of your company's work is at par, if not better, than what I have seen during my interaction with architectural firms from Asia, USA and Europe"

Mr. Dalal views with distaste, the manner in which people are forced to live in identical flats and apartments stacked one on top of the other. This reminds me of what Desmond Morris has pointed out in his controversial book *The Naked Ape*. There is a basic psychological need for every family to have a home that is unique in its location and appearance. To quote again, ".... its shape and general appearance must make it stand out as an easily identifiable entity, so that it can become the 'personalised' property of the family that lives there ... frequently overlooked or ignored, either as a result of economic pressure, or the lack of biological awareness of architects. Endless rows of uniformly repeated, identical houses have been erected in cities and towns all over the world ... The psychological damage done to the territoriality of the families forced by architects, planners and builders to live

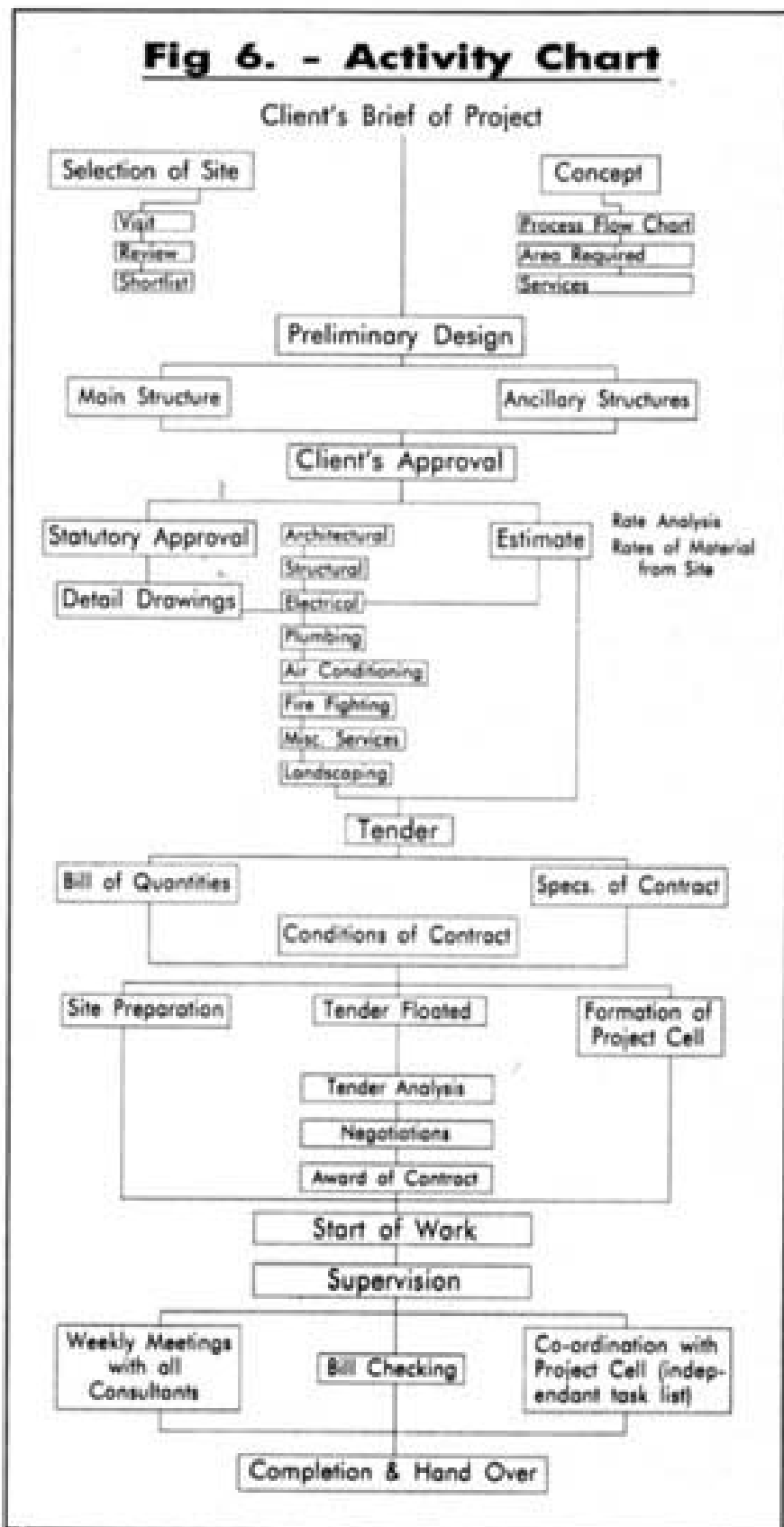
under these conditions is incalculable."

Mr. Dalal believes, "As architects, we have a fundamental duty, a moral responsibility to the user, for whom one designs. The interiors should be designed first and the outer form should grow from that. The form has to follow the function. One should design spaces that function well and inherently give you an aesthetically pleasing form."

The firm also has a panel of reputed consultants for handling all the varied aspects of building design like R.C.C. and structural, power, air-conditioning, fire-fighting, sanitary and plumbing, drainage and roads.

A sister concern of theirs, M/s Interact Project Management Consultants Pvt. Ltd. (IPMCL) does Quality Audit on site for projects under construction. All aspects of construction are covered on periodical basis, so no specifications are missed out. "We have a field checklist for every item of construction, so no major scenario of quality deterioration takes place," says Mr. Dalal. This is a concept the firm is trying to promote and which has been taken up by a number of clients like - Hoechst Marvin Russel, German Remedies Ltd. Merico Industries, Finolex Essex, Bharati Duralive, all in Goa, and Bridgestone ACC in Indore, Lever Johnson in Pune.

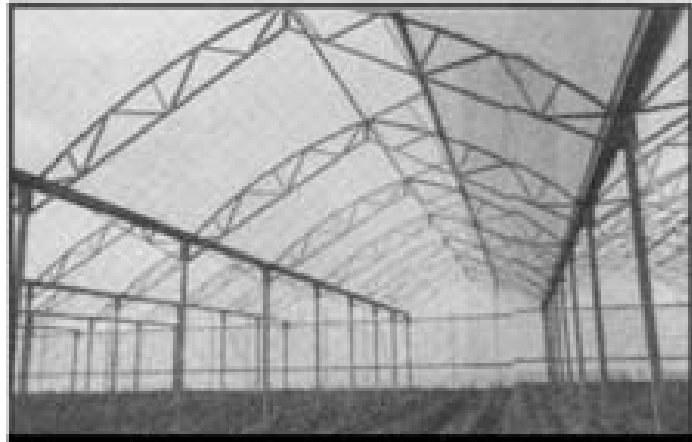
Mr. Dalal has published a 'Total Quality Assurance System' manual, which he has dedicated to his father. This system is designed to have 'objective, Scientific Quality Assurance, instead of prevailing unscientific arbitrary and per-



They specialise in designing industrial complexes.
Most of their clients are industrial houses and public limited companies.



Seed Processing Plant, Karnataka



Floriculture and Green House Complex for Roses, Bangalore



Drip Irrigation Pipes Manufacturing Plant, Gujarat

sonality oriented Quality Control on Projects'. This system covers all aspects of construction and has been time-tested for projects all over the country.

The specific requirements for every project is researched in great detail, which includes even things

like wall-finish and humidity levels required. Designing starts only after the information obtained is analysed. All detailed drawings are completed 100 % before work begins at the site, so the costs are kept within control. The fact that final costs have never exceeded 5 % of

estimated costs, speaks for itself!

It's is a matter of pride not just for Kondhwa, but for Pune as well that we now have an architect of such calibre amongst us.

By Anni Thomas