



EXPLORING A WORLD ON THE MOVE

Combining the roles of architect and urban planner may offer some very straightforward solutions to environmental challenges now and in the future. A twofold approach adopted by architect and town planner Sudhir Jambhekar.

Sudhir Jambhekar

Designing green giants

*m*ost of us are familiar with the concept of urban design, and perhaps the principals of sustainable design in buildings. But how closely are the two related? Where does urban design stop, and sustainable design begin? For Sudhir Jambhekar, one of the world's leading architects and urban planners, the two are almost inseparable.

Sudhir Jambhekar approaches both architectural work and urban design with environmental considerations first and foremost. Only after these come the specific needs of the client. Sudhir Jambhekar feels he is not alone in this thinking: "Many of the people I regard as the best architects in the world all seem to have the same concerns and strong convictions about finding the right solutions to climatic and environmental issues."

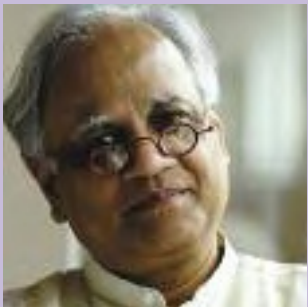
From his point of view then, sustainable or "green" building goes hand in hand with urban design, and this certainly shows in his work. Take, for example, his stunning plan for what will be the largest and tallest spanning arch bridge in the world, located in Dubai. "Of course the bridge connects two points within the city, but in doing so it interacts with inhabitants' lives." The bridge has many components; pedestrian, light railway with station, and of course cars. "Besides the commuting function, we made it a place of destination, and that's where the urban responsibility was fulfilled." To achieve this, Sudhir Jambhekar created an island upon which the bridge could stand. He added an amphitheatre, a train stop and ferry connections to a new opera house.

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FXFOWLE's project for the Marina and Beach Towers, Dubai Promenade, United Arab Emirates.

To ensure long-term sustainability, Sudhir Jambhekar insists it is essential to encourage the idea of mixed-use building in cities. Add to that higher density, good infrastructure, and public transportation – all while taking the climate into consideration. "The biggest challenges for urban areas now and in the future are the limited resources of water and power. Therefore, the idea is to intentionally design buildings that *take minimum* and *waste minimum*."

For Jambhekar, the root of both urban design and sustainable design is the search for inner meaning and usefulness. It involves finding the purpose and long-term function of the project, and equally, finding a way to relate to the culture, people, and communities it serves. There is no single sustainable solution. Every city, every site is different, requiring a unique response. Accounting for how a building relates to the city, and vice-versa, how the city relates to a building, is central. "Anything we design should have a positive environmental impact, both externally and internally." In this way, Sudhir Jambhekar believes urban and sustainable design can actually change the experience of a city, and genuinely improve the quality of life for inhabitants. ■



SUDHIR JAMBHEKAR
Is a senior partner for FXFOWLE Architects. His current projects include the Dubai's Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed, the largest and tallest spanning arch bridge in the world; multiple residential and office towers in India, the United Arab Emirates, China, Japan, and Korea, an IT Park outside Delhi, India, and a 202-hectare master planning project on the Dubai Waterfront for Nakheel. He received a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Bombay and a Master of Architecture and Urban Design from Columbia University.