

## **IAW, Regional Meeting at Ahmedabad**

Attended by Sarva shri Miki Desai, Madhavi Desai, Pratyush Shankar, Surya Kakani, Himashu Parikh and NH Chhaya, at CEPT campus on April 28, 2007

Three main areas were covered as part of the meeting (not necessarily in the same order)

1. The reiteration of what was discussed and agreed at the last meeting
2. Format of IAW
3. What role can be played by the group present today

### **1. The reiteration of what was discussed and agreed at the last meeting:**

Surya Kakani giving a brief introduction about the background of IAW and catch 22.

Miki Desai reminded the concern expressed in the last Mumbai meeting, which were:

- (a) Need for documentation and portfolio publication
- (b) Issues of Architecture of the Heroes and the problems associated with it

### **2. Format of IAW:**

- (a) Pratyush Shankar started by saying that we should really the discuss the format and focus of IAW before moving ahead. The uniqueness of the IAW format lies in the fact that it is not formalized, and is loosely structured as a forum which should be critically looking at issues. He believes that threads of conversation here and which get represented in the mailing list becomes very important. It should be seen as an opportunities to raise and discuss issues that otherwise we are not able to pursue. For example critical review of contemporary architecture is not covered by any journal in India. Other issues that are interest to him are issues related to IPR, Patents, Globalization of Practices and software,<sup>1</sup> which he thinks are going to affect the architectural community but today are not being systematically and critically being discussed in any forum. And IAW does offer opportunity for all of us to start such debates, contribute essays etc. He believed the internet offers a good opportunity to document opinions and extract knowledge from seemingly casual conversations. He

<sup>1</sup> How does this concern Indian Architecture Workshop? We need to see a direct link between IAW goals (Muktiraj's paper) and this.

further reiterated before moving into details we should really discuss the format of IAW to get sense of everybody's opinion. He personally felt there should not be any need to moderate posts because if that is done then the whole purpose of the effort gets defeated.

- i. NH Chhaya felt that if Pratyush Shankar can put up on the mailing list all what he said right now and slowly everyone can put their opinion on the web, soon it will become a very important knowledge bank
- ii. Surya Kakani felt that the web is not necessarily the ideal and most comfortable format. He felt that the mail list has its problems. The replies fly too often, sometimes you do not want to get into a conversation, You do not find your own space in it, and hence one gets alienated from it. He thought anyways it should not only be conversation but some tangible task based kind of format.
- iii. Hamanshu added that some kind of topics can be posted for discussions on the mail list, so it can become slightly more specific and constructive. The key word he said was task based discussions and issue based criticism. Rather critical appraisal is more conducive than criticism.
- iv. Miki Desai agreed and said tangible outputs and not just communication is something we should aim for. For example we can resolve here that by the end of this year we should come out with a small booklet on some topic. An example of such topic could be "Conversations between Architect and Engineer"<sup>2</sup> to address the gap between the two professions.
- v. Everyone seemed to agree that some "task based" output apart from critical appraisal, criticism and discussion will really help IAW. The next round of discussion was on the nature of tasks

### **3. What role can be played by the group present today:**

(a) Surya Kakani tried to summarize the key things that can be done, which are...

A. Portfolio and documentation

B. Material related to teaching learning processes

<sup>2</sup> Was there some explanation or discussion as to why this is a thing IAW should do, what is the gap, and how to do this type of a topic?

### C. Architecture criticism/ Critical appraisal

- ii. Himanshu Parikh insisted on theme based conversations can help IAW to develop a focus. He said that let us first think why we are doing all this - we are a group of friends, who have done little more than average and we all believe that something better can be done
  - iii. Madhavi Desai felt that we should make a commitment to write about our education experiences and processes, since many of us are into it
  - iv. Surya Kakani said that we have time till 2-3 month to think what we want to do. He again felt that it should not only be conversation but some other activities as well. Maybe we should get together to discuss our work a kind of peer review.
- (b) Pratyush Shankar disagreed with Surya Kakani and said that we should not try to think that through IAW we can do all the other activities that one has always wanted to do!! there are other forums as well. He also felt that IAW should be more conversation and criticism type of mode and if we can do in our own ways small little tasks like documentation, writing etc. but they activities should be individual centric and not group centric. For example Miki Desai could write about his Basic Design course and put it up for all of us to see.<sup>3</sup>
- i. NH Chhaya felt that we need not wait 2-3 months, we should just start doing little things. He also felt that there is no real problem it being more conversation mode as that is also important
  - ii. Miki Desai suggested finally their could be presentations that are opened to students community as well<sup>4</sup>
  - iii. Pratyush Shankar said there is problem here as it becomes too attached with “the CEPT way of doing things”. He felt it should have nothing to do with CEPT as an organization. We should move away from CEPT so that we become more vulnerable and in the process maybe learn more. I think that is the only way efforts such as IAW will succeed.<sup>5</sup>

3 This is a reduplication – the Architecture South Asia proposal for doing this was forwarded to Miki Desai via Pratyush Shankar a few months ago

4 Ashish Ganju wants to stay with the first IAW format – it is felt that the presence of “student community” tends to dilute the conversation. IAW is a peer-group, not a mentor group

5 The template, as suggested by the first IAW is to hold meetings outside college campuses, Architects offices are perhaps better venues

A. Everyone agreed on that point and suggested that we may meet some where else in Ahmedabad next time!!.

**4. In the end...**

- (a) Madhavi Desai said that everyone should commit on some little things in form of writing or portfolio to bring out by the end of this year.
- (b) In the end Miki Desai showed his documentation report on the Jamnagar Solarium to the participants. The discussions on building and many other issues went on for sometime then<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> What does this mean in the context of IAW?