

domus

INDIA

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LA CITTÀ DELL' UOMO



HAFEZ CONTRACTOR
PADMA BHUSHAN 2010

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Cover view of the Shant Anand office building in Mumbai, India. The building is designed by Hafeez Contractor. The building's facade is a vibrant mix of red, blue, and white panels, creating a dynamic and colorful architectural expression.



Top view perspective drawing of the Post Hall Towers (1981), Mumbai designed by IMK Architects. The first floor levels have been a witness to both architectural and engineering history as they were pushing the earlier experience with prefabricated units.

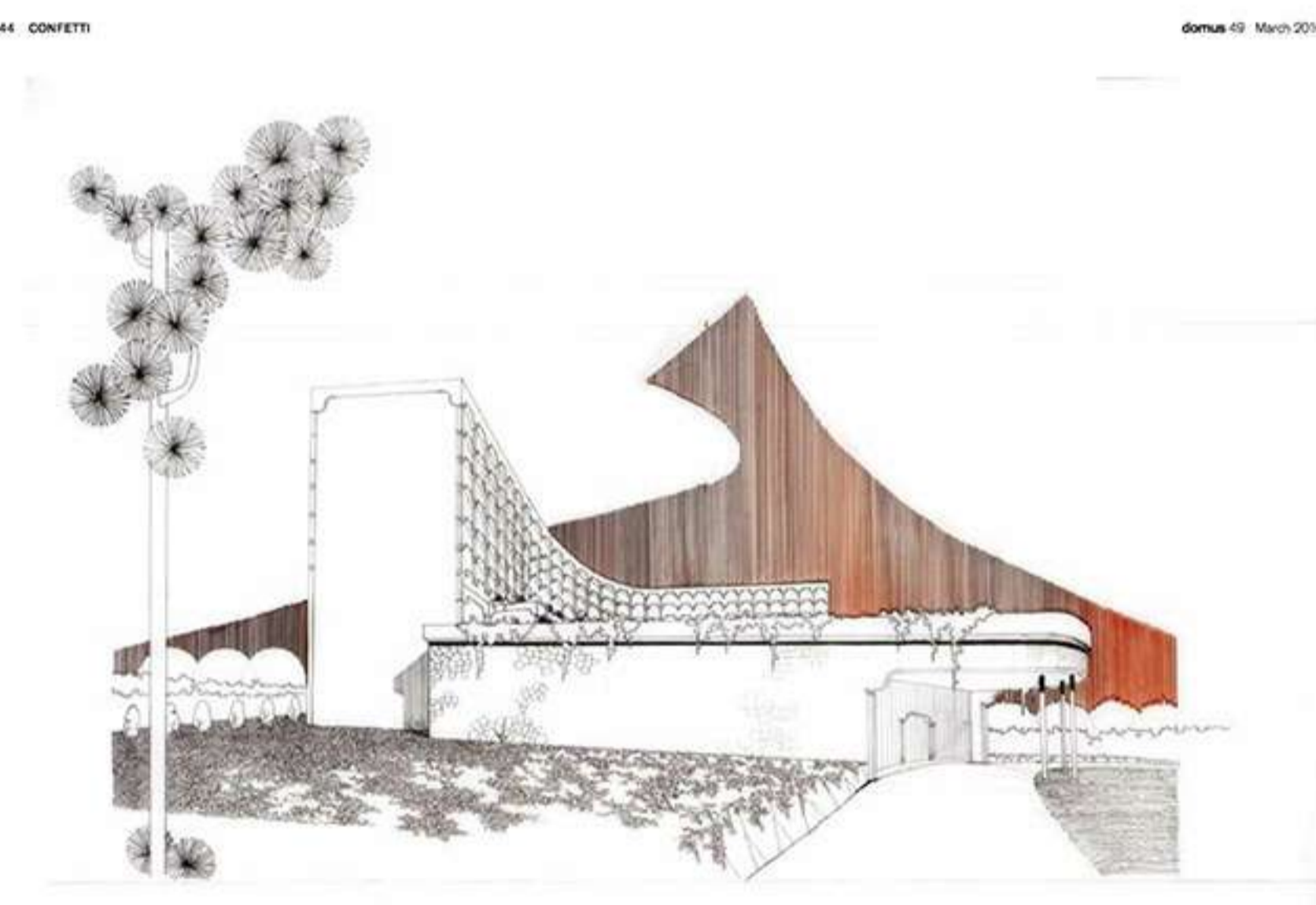
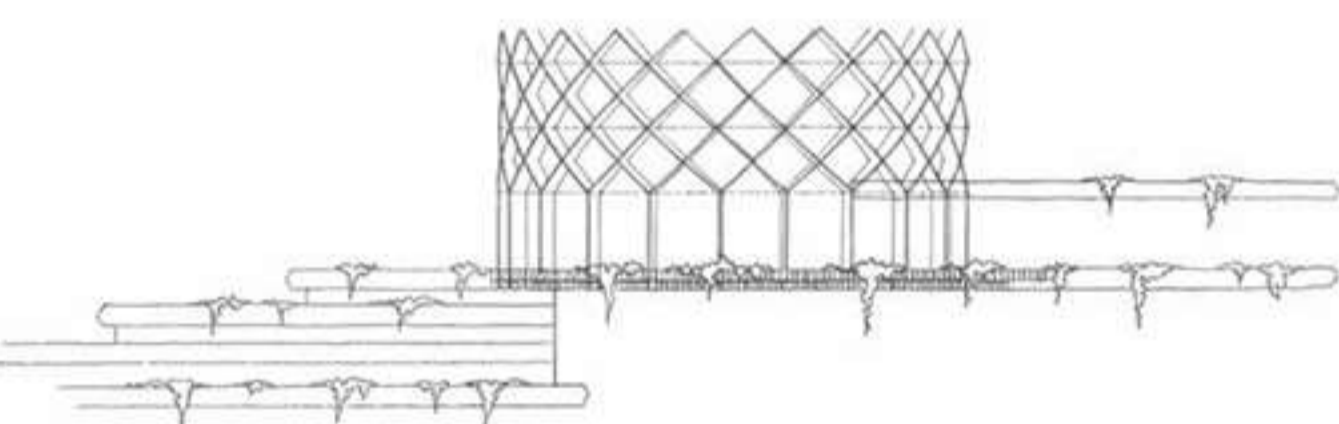
TRANSLATING IDEAS

The Architecture of I M Kadi is a recent publication and a bold attempt at reworking the monographic format of accounting an architect's oeuvre. The book, while writing the biography of an architectural practice, also investigates the preoccupations and lapses in our normative understandings of architecture history in 20th century India. Practice can be the crucible where ideas are investigated and debated; we bring to you an extract from the section that documents the pencil and ink drawings and the stories they may tell us

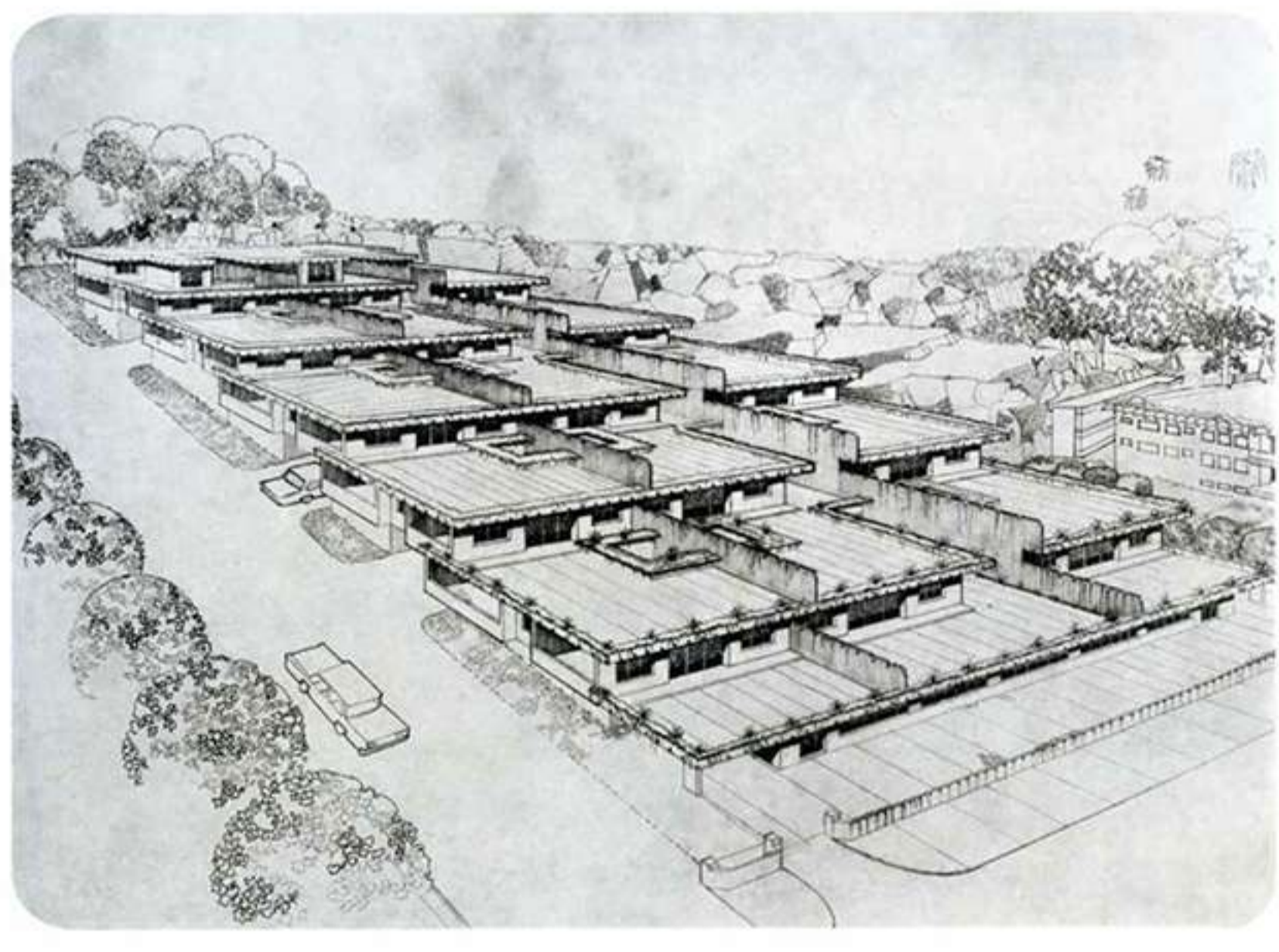
Kaiwan Mehta



This page above: the drawing of the Nehru Centre, Mumbai gives a sense of the entire building as imagined by I M Kadi. Nehru Centre consists of a cylindrical tower that rises from the apex of a sloping incline, which also serves as the garden and roof of the auditorium. The sloping garden is a reference to the great Mughal tradition of courtyard gardens, and agriculture — the backbone of Indian economy. The spiraling tower symbolises the growing modern nation and the aspirations of Nehru for a free India. Left: The three tectonic plates at the base of the tower indicate symbolically the tensions and creative turmoil in the formation of a new nation



Above: rendering of the Taj Palace in Dubai. The clarity in drawing developed during the design process produces the building with an exact clarity where geometry, detailing, and massing are all coordinated towards the generation of an aesthetic bond



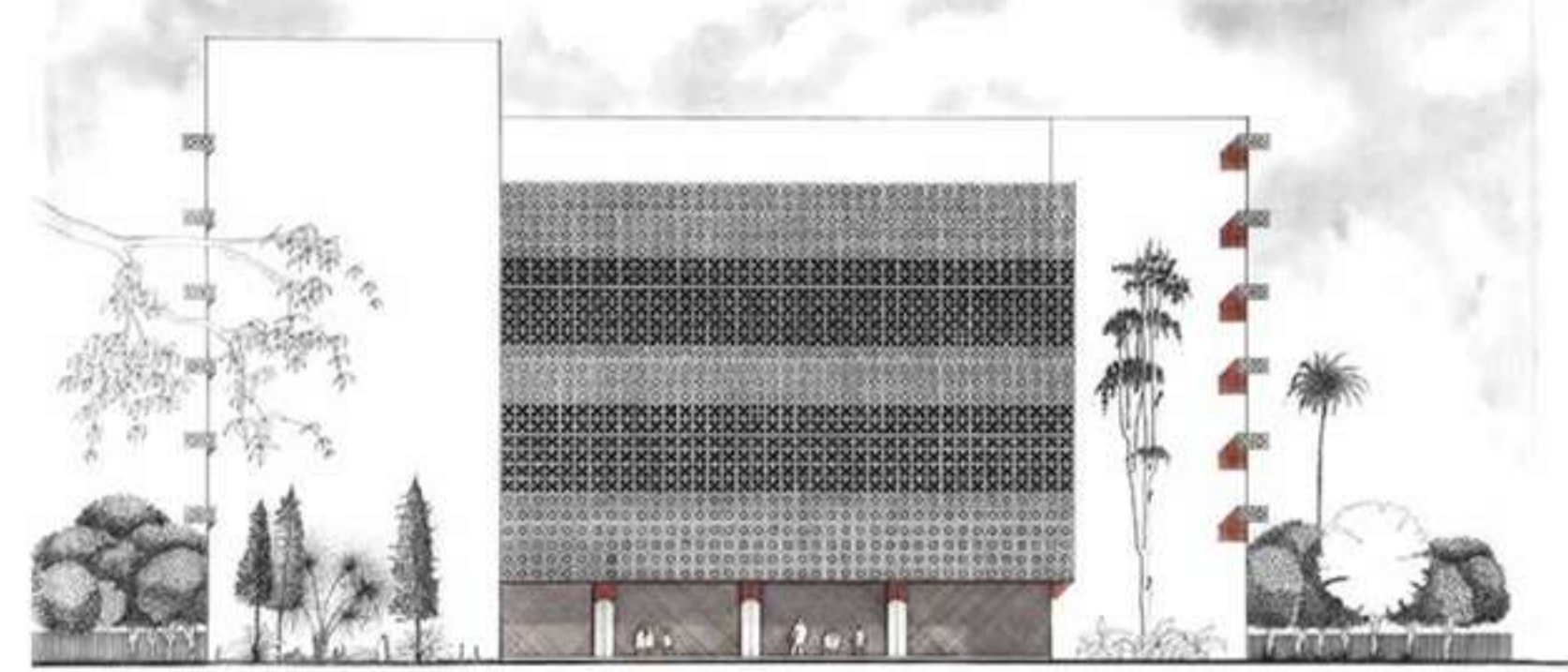
The architecture of I.M. Kadi spans the second half of the twentieth century. Practising in a metropolis and a country that witnessed mammoth transformations and ideological shifts even in a brief span, Kadi believed in architecture as being the force that builds human societies and life over time. His work manifests the belief that architecture seeks a balance between the act of making a building and the world of ideas. His buildings are objects of beauty located in a landscape, as well as repositories of life and cultures. It is as if the Vitruvian triad of firmness, commodity and delight were the principles through which he understood and practiced architecture. Indeed, Kadi produced a legacy of works that can help us understand architecture as buildings as well as culture. His work ranges from early residential buildings in Mumbai to hotels across other cities in India, from office buildings to institutions — an oeuvre spanning numerous programmes and cities, and even countries. From the Nehru Centre in Mumbai

to hotels in New Delhi, Bangalore or Dubai, to the National Judicial Academy in Bhopal and a mosque in Kowloon, Kadi has designed buildings in many genres. When one stops to look at such a body of work which has developed over five to six decades, one has the unique opportunity to explore a journey that involves many people, ideas and situations. Architecture itself becomes a rich epic of diverse characters, plots and scenes, with every building in the narrative contributing a role and character sketch. India has produced a variety of architectural styles and approaches since 1947, yet we race towards narrowing classifications that stifle the celebration of differences. Kadi himself believed that for a designer to get locked into or restricted to only one style of architecture would be putting an end to challenging one's own creative impulses and stifling the possibility for further innovation. Every building was a brand new opportunity for Kadi to think about life, history and beauty anew. One can understand then why a building like the Shivsagar

Estate in Worli, Mumbai or the Islam Gymkhana on Marine Drive in Mumbai, both of which he designed, play with strong modernist aesthetics, while Happy Home, another of his works also in Worli, Mumbai or his design of the university buildings in Srirangar draw upon elements from a historical language. And yet they all come together as lyrical and strong works of architecture.

(Extracted from Chapter 01 titled Five Decades of Change in the book)

This page: this rendering of Swapnalok, Mumbai indicates how the apartment tower is imagined through architecture and engineering as a series of terraces that hug the ground along a slope



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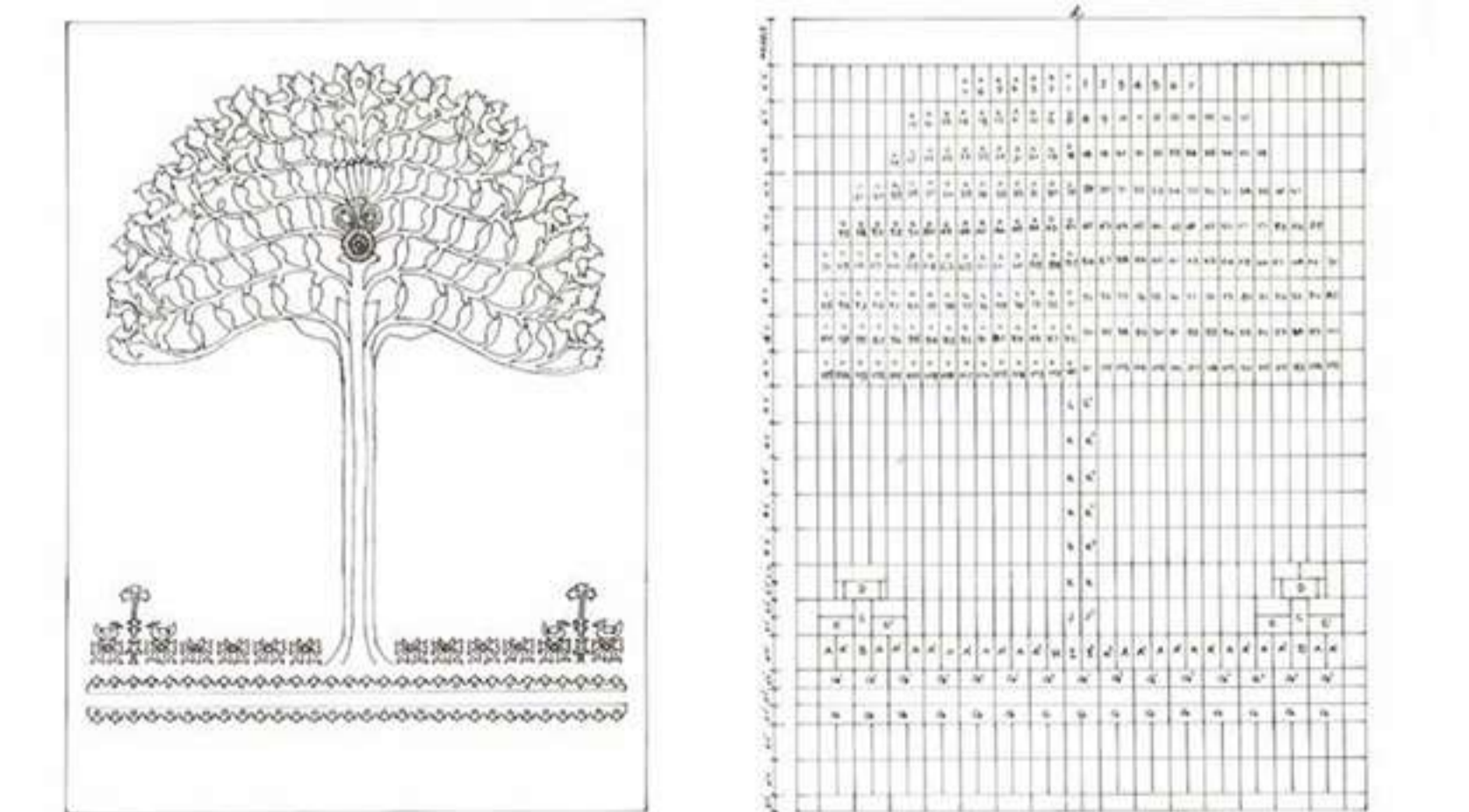
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Opposite page below: the Happy Home building is a wonderful example where a very modern building incorporates elements like a jaali facade that is modern yet ornamental, pointed arches that would come from medieval fortifications or weaving the facade through a series of patterns and details — as seen in the Otters Club. Below: the Otters Club. Below: the Otters Club. Below: the Otters Club.

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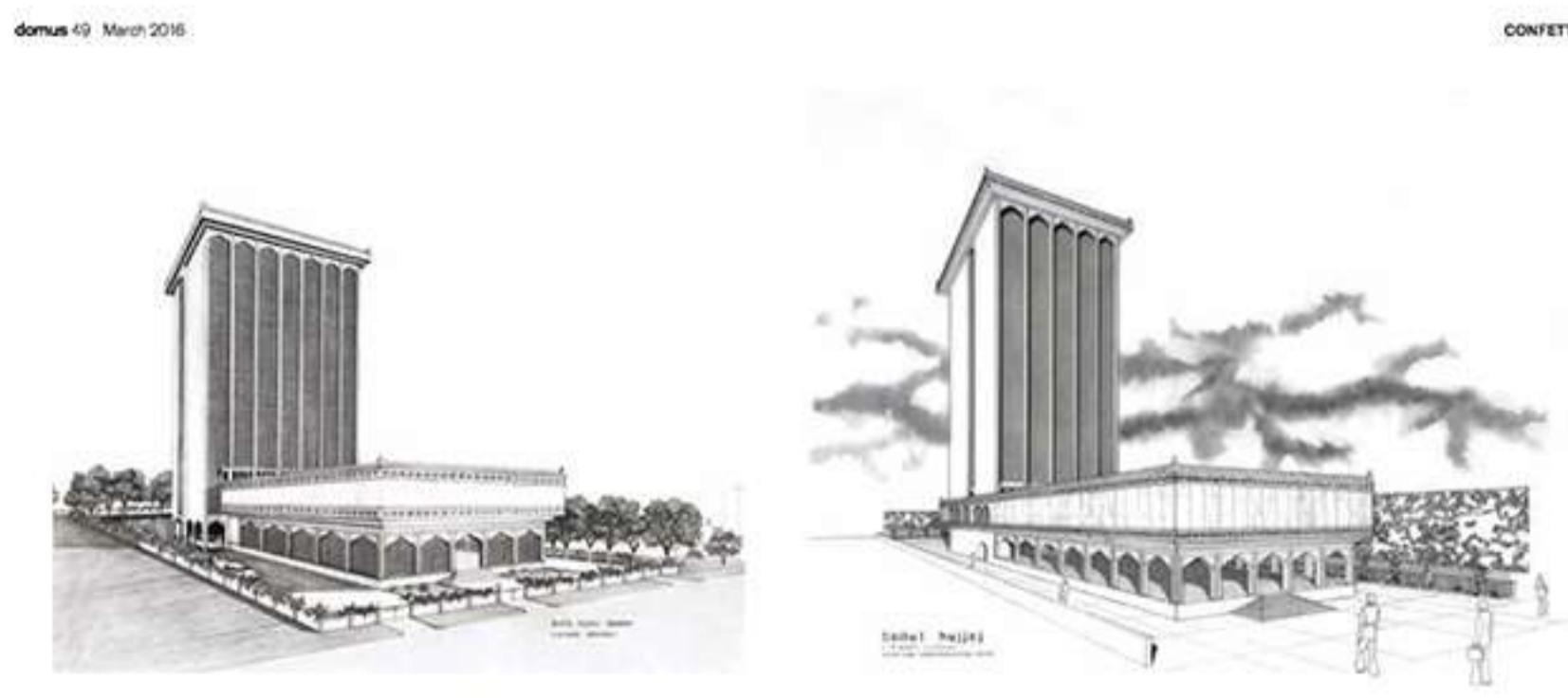
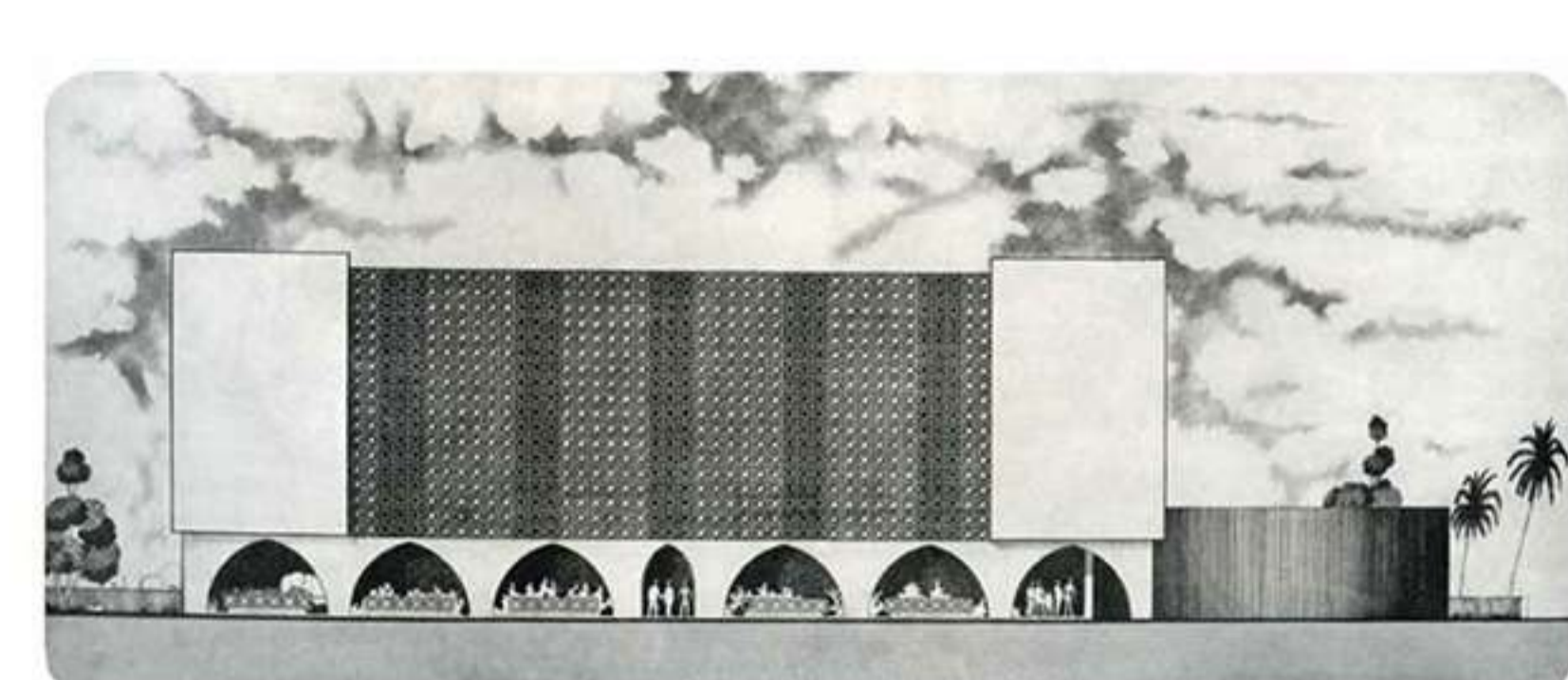
ELEVATION OF TOWER FACADE

ELEVATION OF TOWER FACADE MAJOLE FINISH

The portfolio of drawings

Drawings are integral to architectural practice; however this is not completely true at all times in the history of architecture. Only certain historical moments made drawings as a tool towards thinking about and constructing buildings. Different kinds of drawings have been prevalent at different times in history amongst architects. Late 1990s saw the transition to computer drawings and one could say I.M. Kadi's generation would be the last to completely construct and design through pen and ink drawings. Through the twentieth century, architectural drawings were finished as if they were works of art in themselves, and the meticulous nature with which drawings were constructed or rendered was seen as a reflection of one's skill and engagement with architecture itself. Architectural drawings were a kind of material manifestation of the thinking and creative designer, and they were the medium to judge the quality of unbuilt design as well as the mode to translate design from mind to paper to site.

At I M K Architects, design drawings soon seemed to have become construction drawings with a design development evident in the way the drawings were changed as well as developed. Axonometric views seemed to have been popularly developed for most projects and rendered meticulously. It is evident in some drawings, such as the ones for Haveli Apartments, Nehru Centre office building, Haj House, or CEAT Bhavan, how the axonometric view played a crucial role in deciding the proportions of the architectural object. Certain more complex buildings such as Swapnalok Apartments in Mumbai or Fort Aguada Beach Resort in Goa were developed through the mid and late twentieth century consciously plays with



Opposite page: the relief mural at the Taj Comandante in Chennai is indicative of Kadi's careful design of building form and visually. Detailed construction drawings for the making of the Kalpanachitra low relief mural at Taj Comandante in Chennai.

This page above: the drawings where the architect studies evaluating the proportion of the building versus its detailing and the number of arches as seen across two technical drawings developed for the same building. Below right: spreads from the book



The book The Architecture of I.M. Kadi by Kaiwan Mehta is published by Nyogi Books (2016) and features a foreword by Parter Sawyer. Extracts published here are with the permission of the author and the architect

the relationship of two-dimensional and three-dimensional scales; the different purposes for which you decide to use a flat projection (2D drawing) and for what purpose you will use a 3D projection makes it evident how the drawing is contributing to design development. As much as intricate details were developed in elevation drawings, or graphed templates allowed for an exact detailing of geometry and ornamentation, the projected view was used to understand the form and scale of the complete building. Ornamental details were also always drawn out on these axonometric projections — not only as presentation drawings to give the client a sense of his investment, but as a way of judging the micro and macro scale at which the building-object would work. As architecture gets more and more trapped in the world of real estate and rapid development the architect enhances the drawing through coloured renderings as a way to establish the value and importance as a way to protect the budgets that would go along with it, as well as its saleability and value as a project in the largely competitive world. Renderings then are a certain way to expand architecture's reach.

An essay on the work of I M Kadi was published in the August 2012 issue of Domus India (DI_08)

