



## IN THE STUDIO WITH...

RAHUL KADRI, PARTNER & PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT AT IMK ARCHITECTS, WHO DRAWS FROM THE RICH LEGACY AND CUTTING-EDGE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION UNDERTAKEN AT THE FIRM, TO CREATE ARCHITECTURE THAT RESPONDS TO TIME, PLACE, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, PEOPLE.

### Tell us about yourself...

I went to school at the Sherwood College, Nainital, and hence spent most of my formative years in the Kumaon Himalayas amidst lush landscapes and exploring forests. This early relationship with nature-infused within me a deep passion to create buildings and spaces in harmony with their natural context.

I then went on to complete a graduate diploma in architecture from the Academy of Architecture, Mumbai, and a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Michigan, USA, where I was influenced by the work and writings of Christopher Alexander and Charles Moore. Reading 'The Pattern Language' and 'The Timeless way of Building' were the biggest watershed moments in my life.

The books spoke about human behaviour and geometry, how design affects what we do, how patterns link to patterns of behaviour. That way of thinking really grew on me and I have been growing that way of thinking ever since.

I worked for my father from 1990 till about 2003. During this period, we entered two architectural competitions without his knowledge (because he would not permit us to compete in competitions).

After being successful in both competitions, we told him of our achievements, and thereafter, my team and I served

the new clients -- slowly imbibing my own approach into the work of the firm

### And the legacy of your firm...

My father, I.M. Kadri, founded IMK Architects in 1960. I joined the firm in 1990 and worked for my father.

In 2003 I took over the firm. Our design philosophy is based on biophilic architecture and our focus and commitment are to provide designs, which are site-sensitive

1, 3 & 4. A peek into the office space of I.M. Kadri Consultants.

2. Rahul Kadri, partner & principal architect at IMK Architects.





and emphasise being in harmony with nature.

We ensure designs provide vibrant and warm spaces, which are socially responsive where people thrive and activities flourish.

#### What does your workplace look like?

Our office has an open floor plan with large windows to allow for abundant ingress of natural light. The desks are well spaced-out allowing each person to focus on their work. We have a large open landscaped terrace, which our team uses during breaks to get some fresh air.

#### How does your day start?

Making tea, and taking my dog for a walk. This followed by a 'standup meeting'- with all directors and managers discussing the key issues for the day.

#### What are you working on right now?

Currently, we are working on completing a library and a university administration building for Sona College of Technology in Salem.

It's a campus we have been working on since 1993. This library is set to be the finest in the country. The client wanted to focus on how to bring people back to the library and make it an important place in their lives.

We are also working on a residential complex Sona Vistaas in Begur, Bangalore and the expansion of a Club Mahindra resort, outside Shimla.

#### What are the high-points and challenges of the day?

**High point:** The first meeting of the day with my directors, in which I get abreast with the daily work happening within teams as well as listening to their inputs and coordinating the requirements from my end.

**Challenges:** Often and especially in light of the pandemic, having group meetings virtually has been quite challenging since brainstorming face-to-face is not possible; everything has to be written and explained rather than through a simple conversation in the office.

#### How and where do you seek inspiration?

I was very influenced by Christopher Alexander (with whom I worked) and Charles Moore. Their ideas of holistic architecture and social architecture particularly influenced me. We constantly seek to make places where people and their activities will thrive, it is the relationship of human aspiration to do certain activities related to the geometry of space that interests us. We don't create places or use geometries only for visual effects. I also constantly seek inspiration from nature and as our work as a firm, biophilic concepts are always at the core of our designs.

#### What's on your desk? What are you listening to?

iPad, work notebook and pencil. Not listening to any music currently.

#### Tell us any 3 bookmarks on your browser...

Shop for change, Amazon, Indian express/ CNN.

#### And any 3 must-follow design pages on social media...

On Instagram its Diaspora.co, SJK, Mumbai First, Opolis, Studiolotus, Landscapefirst, IMKarchitects\_India.

#### What do you love about your office space? And what would you like to change?

**Love:** Like the quality of light, the openness of our office and the vast terrace garden on the 4th floor.

**Change:** Conference room needs more natural light, and greenery around. Would like to use our garden more effectively.

#### When does your day end?

No serious thinking after 6 p.m. Generally, my day ends by 8 p.m.

#### What the last thing you do before you leave the office or wrap up work for the day?

Check emails, Whatsapp and my notes and see if I have handled everything required for the day. ■■

5 & 6. The IMK team.