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## Bharat Diamond Bourse



Building type  
Commercial / Corporate

Location  
Mumbai, India

Site Area  
850,000 sf

Project Area  
1,700,000 sf

Client  
Bharat Diamond Bourse

Completion Year  
Currently on hold

Top:Street View

**History:** The Bharat Diamond Bourse project has its inception in the late 1980's and the early 1990's. The invited competition eventually led to the selection of Balkrishna Doshi as the architect for the project.

**Place and Cultural Metaphor:** India is a diverse land that has been the cradle of ancient civilizations and the wellspring of religions and faiths. This land of ours has welcomed people from far and wide; Ancient Chinese scholars, Arab traders, Mughal invaders, refugees such as the Parsi and the Jewish communities and many more. India truly is a microcosm of our larger world.

India is truly perhaps the only place in the world where life is based on a pluralistic diversity of the 'One and the Other'. A 'Genius Loci' that permits people to live, love and accept; a place where, 'Athithi Daeva Bhava' is experienced and practiced every breathing moment.



India is a land where almost all is said and understood through the nuances of metaphor. Poetry, arts, literature and even architecture carry the same metaphorical approach to success.

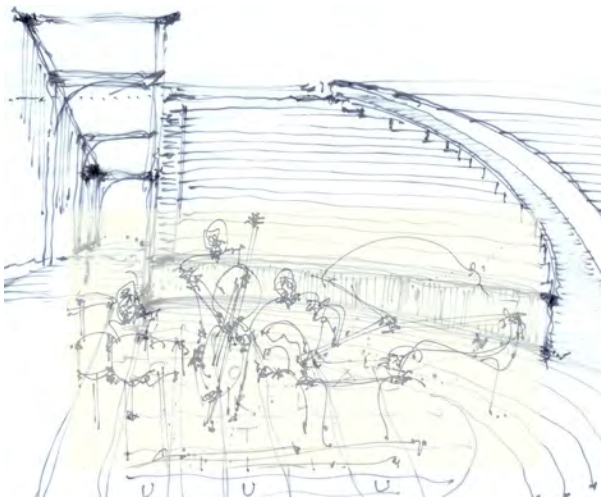
**Existing Concept-Metaphor and Architecture:**

The existing design by Doshi brings forth such metaphors at numerous levels and is perhaps why this project was chosen in first place. To comprehend this concept, let us review some of the salient features in Doshi's mind that transform metaphor into architecture.

In his Jerusalem lecture, Doshi says that he visited the tower of David and thought about the parallel ideas of a citadel, which would also work well for the needs of the Bharat Diamond Bourse, but this also ties into the idea that Mumbai at one point also had a bastion called 'Fort'.

A review of his plan reveals the concept as a series of fingers or ridges traced in the sand. This is, in his mind, a metaphor for the 7 islands of Mumbai that were rock or crystal formations; it resembles the form of a diamond and the valleys or courtyards formed transpose the figure ground relationship; so relevant in Hindu and Jain philosophy of 'material and nothingness in juxtaposition'.

Top:Aerial View



Top: Courtyard View  
 Bottom: Sketch for one of the theaters coming down from the gardens

What is even interesting is that Doshi has created a spur from the seventh ridge to perhaps connote an eighth arm. This, one can conjecture, is not accidental, but intentional as reflection of 'Mumba Aai'. The presiding Goddess of Mumbai who saved the city by vanquishing demons.

Architecturally, Doshi has given his buildings an east west orientation by rotating them 45 degrees to the angles of the binding streets. This stems from numerous precedents and requirements.

- a) The lease depths had to be small due to an industry requirement in the 1990's for natural lighting
- b) All the finger buildings tried to take advantage of north light
- c) Doshi, like his guru Le Corbusier, perhaps believed that the 'heliothermic axis' orientation improved the quantum of natural light in spaces.

**Proposed Concept-Metaphor and Architecture:**

Our concept truly tries to 'crown the jewel'. In the following paragraphs we will clearly identify how and why we maintain our roots, and yet bring you a truly unique concept that merges the values of the east with the efficiencies of the west.

Our concept proposes to complete the courtyard by inserting almost transparent rectangular buildings in each void. These buildings are open slabs from end to end with no obstruction of cores such that they emphasize a



sense of openness and nothingness. These also permit tenants to have maximum space flexibility efficiency. Our lease depths vary between 9.0m and 12.0m thereby ensuring all Class A space.

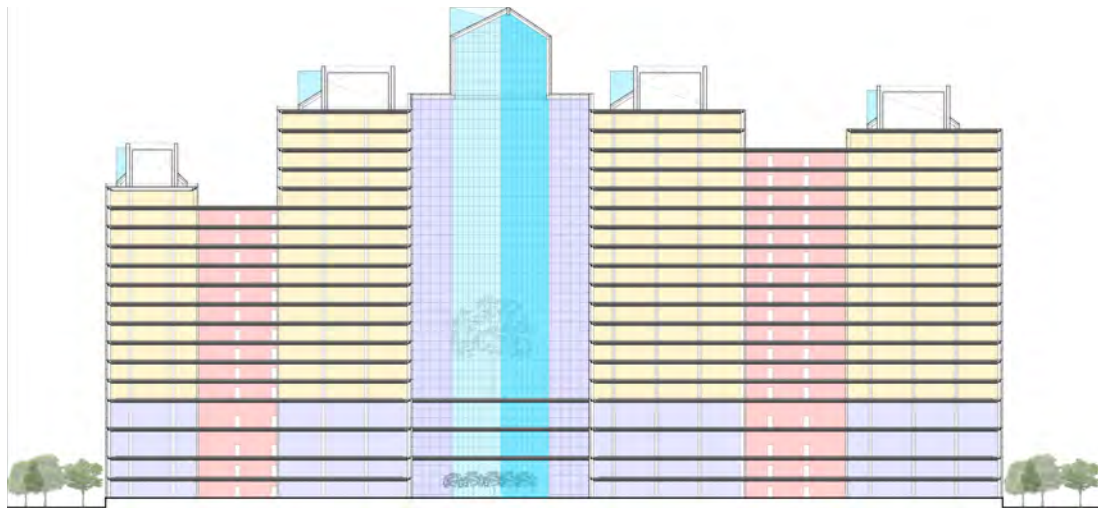
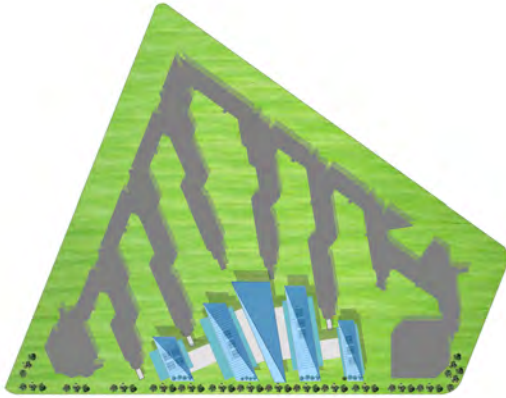
Where the fingers of the existing buildings come through, we have located our new cores and services such that conceptual clarity is maintained. In addition, this permits tying in of the old cores with the new, thereby providing ease of potential human flow through the complex. These five buildings act as jewels on a ring that crown and complete the diamond.

We have maintained the angular rhythms and structural grids of Doshi's complex trying to emphasize the unity of the project in context but also to try and coordinate with the existing column grids in the basement. This helps avoid many conflicts with parking in the basement.

The complex as we know it is lacking in one key element and that is gardens. Gardens hold both a metaphorical and environmental value. The great saints and philosophers of various Indian faiths gained peace and enlightenment under trees and in gardens. With this in mind, we have created 'elevated hanging gardens every 4-5 floors which can be enjoyed both individually and collectively by the tenants. In terms of sustainable design these gardens act as sun shading devices, stack effect promoters and

Top:Lobby View

Bottom L: View of reduced scope



as convective air channels, as well as 'oxygenators' for the complex. These gardens are like crystals that are irrigated with residual water from the mechanical systems on the roof. More importantly these gardens can be visually enjoyed by the entire complex both inside and out.

In addition to the above features we have created a large atrium in the central building that has a stack effect and can have additional garden balconies within. This permits and encourages ventilation in natural mode if so required, humidity permitting.

In essence, we have tried to maintain a few core principals in our concept. We believe this concept is

- a) Simple and humble in its form, yet powerful in its visual essence
- b) a design that changes from an accoutrement to something mainstream it becomes a catalyst for dwelling or as we know it 'Rit' in India
- c) That this design embraces the values of the east with the efficiencies of the west.

**Intent and Recognition:** Winner invited design competition among a list of 10 national and international architects.

Team

Cyrus Subawalla-Principal Designer  
Sangwan Seo-Project Principal

Consultants

Structural: Conceptual & Review  
Thornton Tomassetti Inc

MEP/FP: Conceptual & Review  
Environmental Systems Design

Structural & MEP/FP Design Development & Build  
Larsen & Toubro LNT-EDRC; L&T (ECC)

Top L: Site Plan

Top R: 4th Floor Plan

Bottom: Longitudinal Section