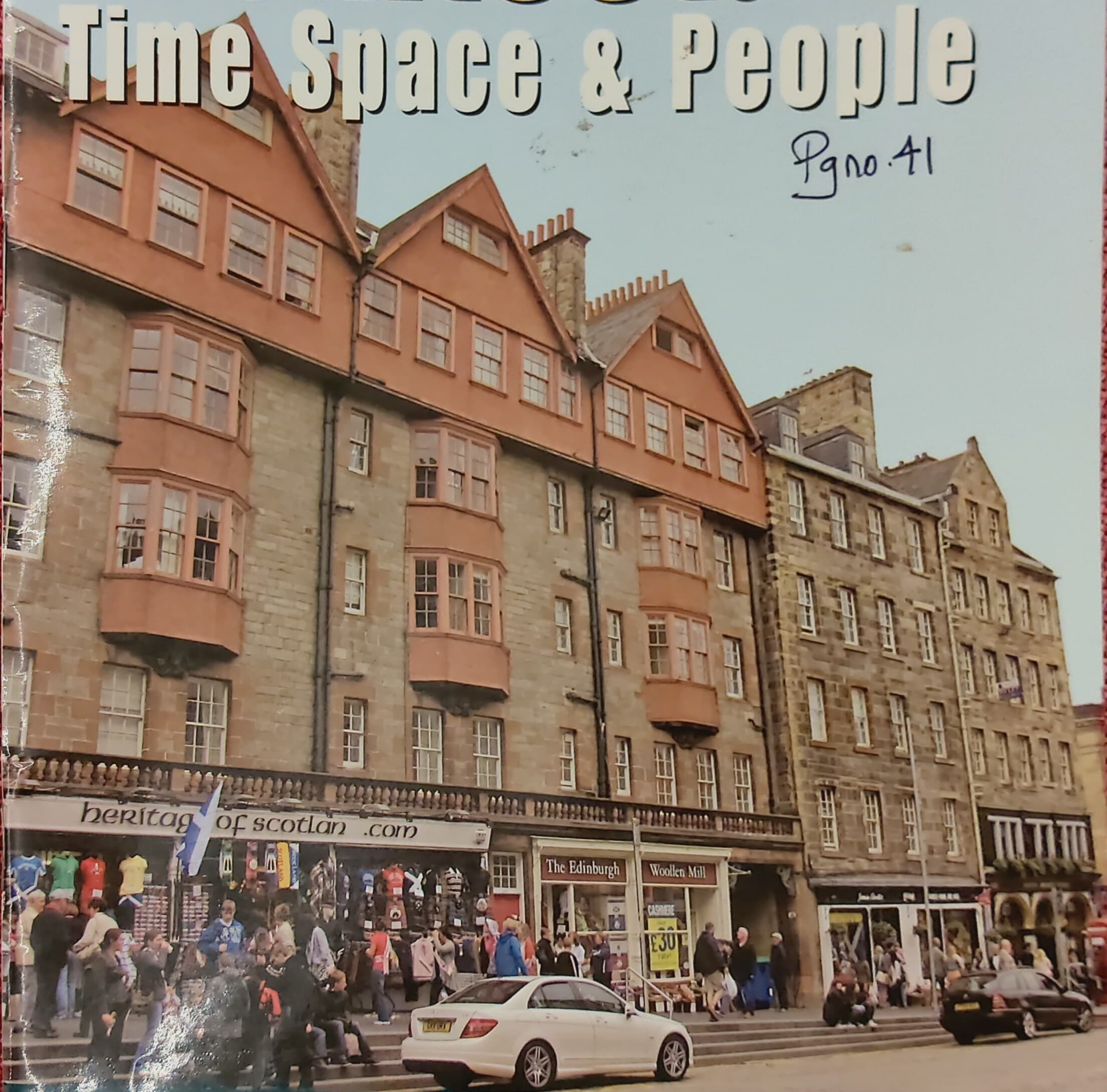


# architecture

FEB 2016

## Time Space & People

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**HERITAGE**

PRESERVING THE OLD  
TO ATTRACT THE NEW:  
SCOTLAND VS SIDHPUR

**CONSERVATION**

CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE  
EMBRACES TRADITIONAL RAJASTHANI  
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VITRUVIUS: A  
MULTIFACETED  
PERSONALITY

The Magazine of the Council of Architecture, India



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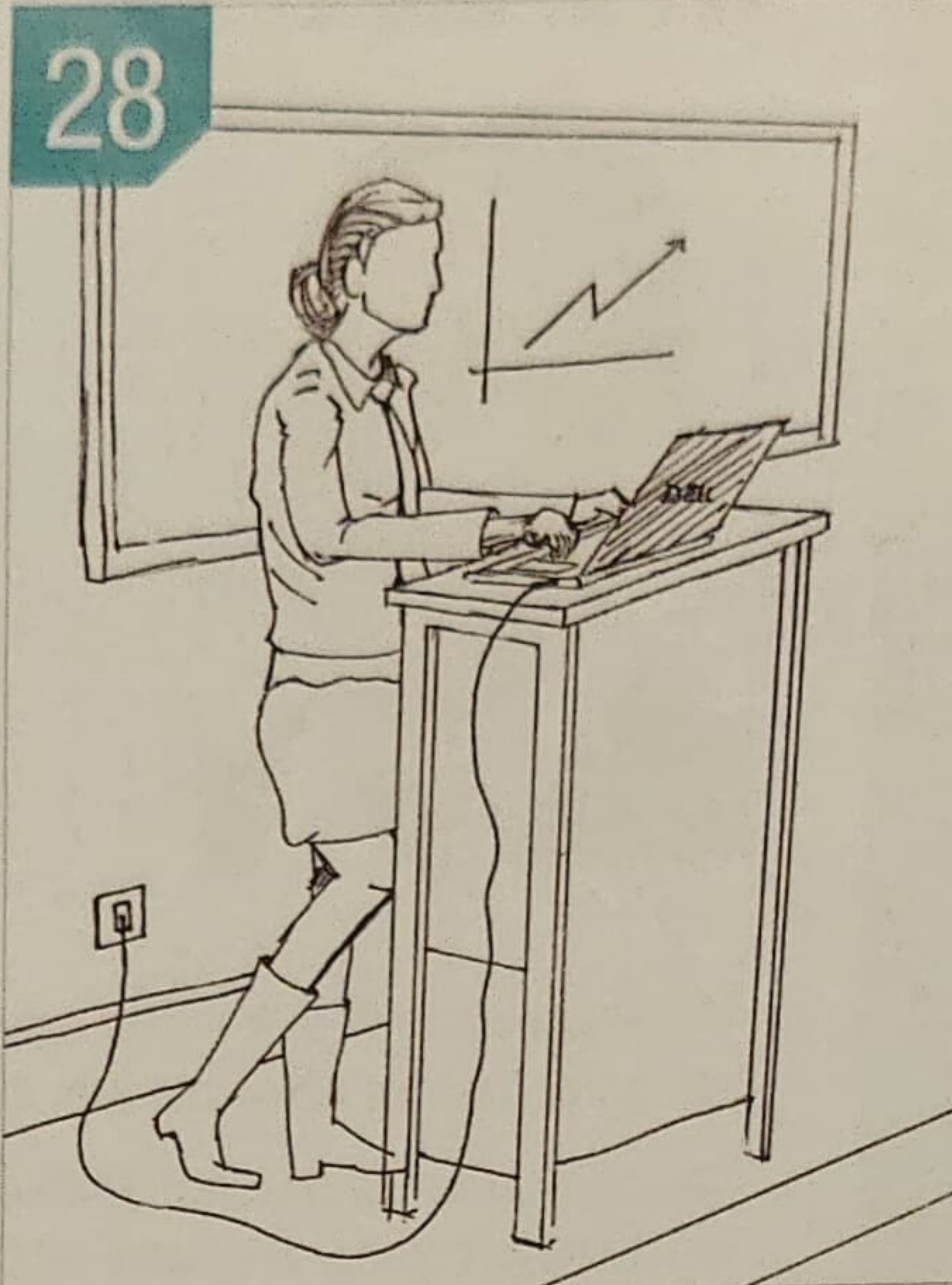
## HERITAGE

### PRESERVING THE OLD TO ATTRACT THE NEW: SCOTLAND VS SIDHPUR

Why can't the concept of adaptive re-use be applied to the beautiful and old historical dwellings in Indian towns?

— Snigdha A. Sanyal and Ruma Bhatt

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## EDUCATION

### TEN COMMANDMENTS OF A GOOD VOCAL PRESENTATION

Young architects, with their minds erupting with creative ideas, get so deeply involved in putting their ideas across in a visible format that they ignore the way these ideas need to be vocally presented to others. Little do they realize that by overlooking the vocal presentation they are losing out on the appreciation due for their creative potential, and the impact necessary to be created to make the idea saleable to the client. After all, marketability is essential for a professional architect, and much of it depends upon how one speaks and appears at a presentation/meeting.

— Ravindra Deshmukh

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## SUSTAINABILITY

### HOW SUSTAINABLE ARE VERNACULAR DWELLINGS?

A study of local bhunga houses in Kutch adapting to desert climates in a sustainable way, with reference to modern green building norms followed in India

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## CONSERVATION

### CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE EMBRACES TRADITIONAL RAJASTHANI ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Some of the modern buildings of Jaipur have managed to conserve various design elements of traditional Rajasthani architecture

— Bindu Agarwal and Harshul Singh

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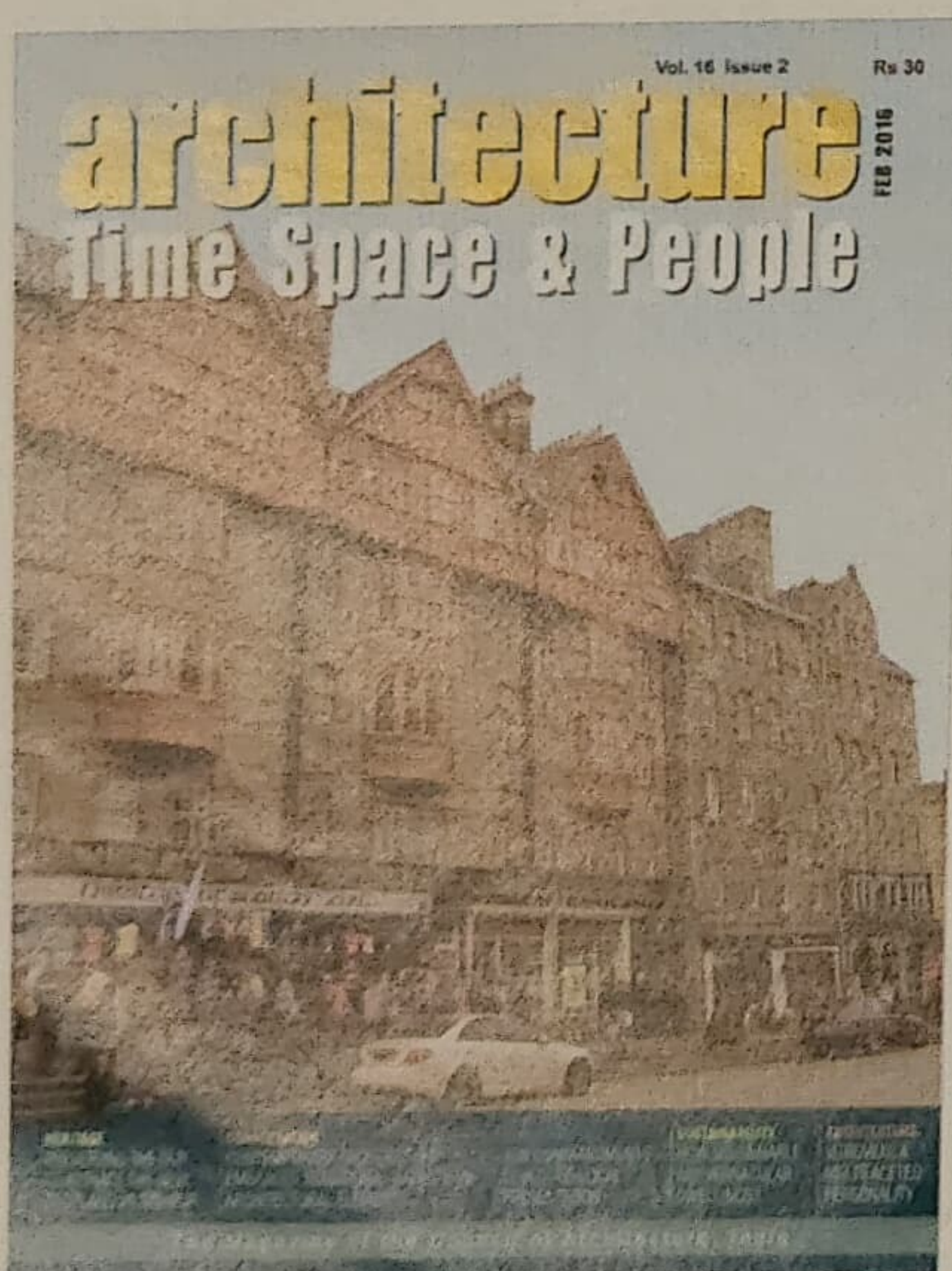


## ARCHITECTURE

### VITRUVIUS: A MULTIFACETED PERSONALITY

A discussion on Vitruvian theories and an attempt to discover why architects today have developed a 'style' of architecture instead of a scientific 'theory'

— Kanchi A Parmar and Shreya Sen



Cover Photo Courtesy:

Snigdha A. Sanyal and Ruma Bhatt

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# VITRUVIUS: A MULTIFACETED PERSONALITY

A discussion on Vitruvian theories and an attempt to discover why architects today have developed a 'style' of architecture instead of a scientific 'theory'

— Kanchi A Parmar and Shreya Sen

What good is knowledge if one doesn't pass it on? It's interesting to realize that the existence of knowledge is no different from the raw manner in which a tree develops. The aura of a person built by the knowledge he nurtures behaves like the foliage of a tree. The seed of knowledge, if sown and nurtured, even if it is just one, would fruit to give many more. The leaves would crunch, but the seeds remain promising.

Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, an architect and a theorist, rooted his ideas so deep that he became the principal yardstick for the classical Renaissance in Western architecture.



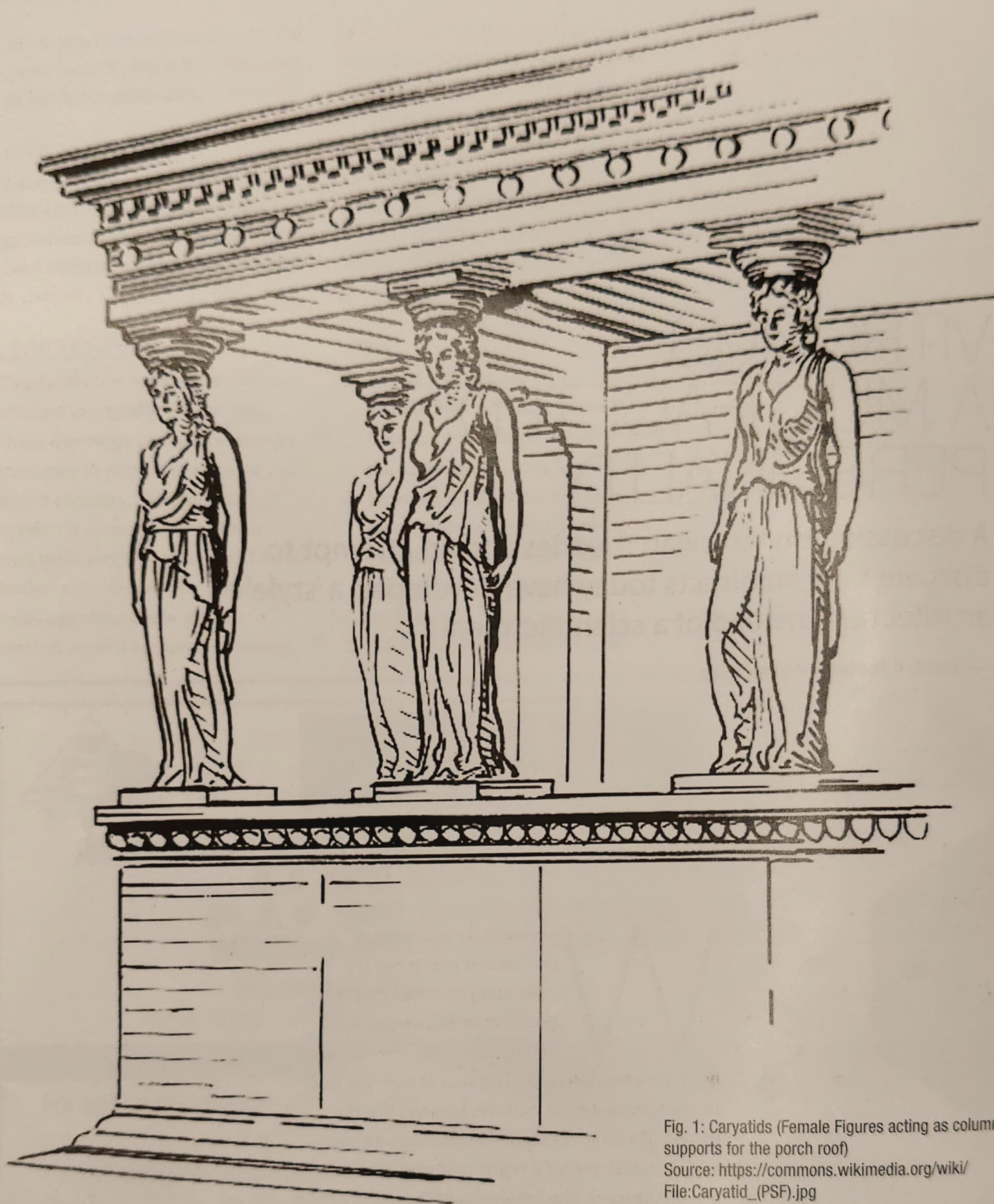


Fig. 1: Caryatids (Female Figures acting as column supports for the porch roof)  
Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Caryatid\\_\(PSF\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Caryatid_(PSF).jpg)

"I began to write this work for you since I notice that you have built much and continue to do so now." (pollio, pp. intro, book I)

De architectura, a treatise put forth by Vitruvius, a compilation of all his understanding on architecture, was an act to display the very details in

his field, narrated to Augustus the adopted heir of Julius Caesar. The impressions on paper dictated to Augustus, shaded many in the same



field and gave impetus to follow the ready-made vocabulary.

Many of us believe architecture to be a set of drawings with a pencil in hand, while Vitruvius made people wonder whether the first letter A stood for Architecture.

Ordinatio (planning), dispositio (projection), eurythmia (harmony), symmetria (modularity), décor (appropriateness), and distributio (distribution), (Pollio, pp. chapter II, book I) are words that sprout to list the principles of architecture, where, planning ranges from quantity to selection of modules to execution of work. Projection defines better with its types, being the ichonographia or the ground plan, orthographia or elevation and scaenographia or the perspective drawing. Harmony speaks of aesthetics and modularity explains why symmetry is supreme. In a similar mode Vitruvius has managed to pour words onto paper to justify the principles enlisted.

Those who have studied Vitruvius, will immediately relate to these three words —Firm it as, utilitas, venustas, knowing that they mean strength, function and aesthetic respectively. (Architectural theory, p. pdf 4). This famous triad is the result of a deep study of nature and the human form, and was truly rational according to Vitruvius. An observation which he documented, to find phi 1:1.618, and applied this proportion not only to architecture but also, in turn, illuminated the path for other theorists.

"The architect may not and cannot be a grammarian of the stature of Aristarchus, though

he must not be illiterate; not a musicologist such as Aristoxenus, though he must not be ignorant of music; not a painter like Apelles, though he should not be incompetent as a draftsman, nor a sculptor of the level of Myron or Polyclitus, though he should not be ignorant of the techniques of sculpture; not, again, a doctor such as Hippocrates, though he not be entirely ignorant of medicine." (Pollio, pp. chapter I, page 11)

Vitruvius has not only set principles on architecture but has also highlighted, in depth, the principles for an architect. He gives utmost importance to the education of an architect rather than the level of intellect an architect should possess. Being precise on words, he conveys the point that an architect may not excel in every field but he should not render himself unaware of why and what is around him.

The ones who wrinkle their nose for history will fail to understand the very essence of placing caryatids, instead of columns, with mutules and cornices set above them. Caryatids are marble statues of women draped in matronly robes. After the Greeks were liberated from the war by a glorious victory against the Caria, they captured the town, killed men and auctioned the citizens. Hence, these Caryatids were set as an example of slavery placing them at a load-bearing position in public buildings. (Pollio, De Architectura).

New practitioners, or the so called modernists, may or may not agree with the principles and the

confined set of standards set by Vitruvius.

One would smile at the irony, when realization dawns that this world is always in the urge of doing something different, isn't it? May be this is why one cannot define this era the way one's ancestors boasted of theirs. What is worth pondering over is that, globally, we all build on similar lines, and in the end on the same land with demarcation. Then, is there a need to quote something which we call different or, "Our Style of Architecture"? Again as the famous ones say, the choice is yours.

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