

## Chapter News

February 10 the New York LPC designated the building a New York City Landmark. Designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill with Gordon Bunshaft overseeing design and J. Walter Severinghaus as partner in charge, Chase Plaza was deemed "a milestone, perhaps even an end point in the development of the American skyscraper," by Architectural Forum.

The advocacy committee of DOCOMOMO US/New York/Tri-State was one of seven parties, including building owner JP Morgan Chase, that testified in favor of designation at the hearing last June. The designation report is available on the Commission's website: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/lpc/html/home/home.shtml>

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—Nina Rappaport

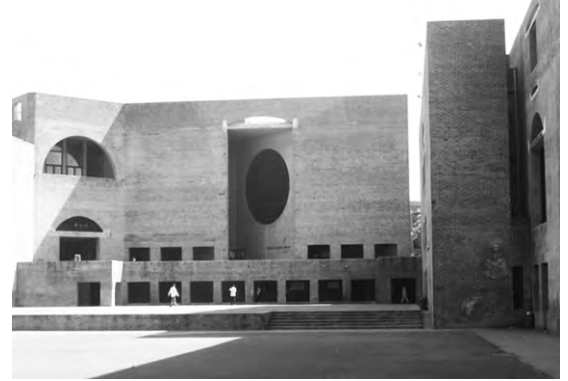
## Louis Kahn: Indian Institute of Management, Ahmadabad

Any visitor to Ahmadabad will be struck by the vibrancy of this Indian city of nearly 5.5 million people. Once known as the "Manchester of the East", much of the city's twentieth century reputation was built upon commerce and enterprise, most notably within the textile industry. Known for its architecture, in the old town ancient 'havelis', original galleried houses, as well as a number of breath taking step wells can still be found. Gandhi's long march started in Ahmadabad (now honoured with the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Museum by Charles Correa) and since India's independence, architects and designers such as Charles and Ray Eames, le Corbusier, Buckminster Fuller, and Louis Kahn have successfully contributed notable works to the city. Example is better than precept; on the heels of these great artists followed local heroes such as Balkrishna Doshi and Hasmukh Patel who realized some striking architectural designs of their own.



**Arched Walkways between student dormitories.**  
(photo: Kees Spanjers)

The Indian Institute of Management is, or should be, among Louis Kahn's master works. Designed between 1962 and his death in 1974 the extensive campus complex combines all the characteristic elements that make Kahn's work unique. Vastly monumental, yet heart-warmingly human in scale the IIM is a feast of light and shade, vistas and views, connections and transitions. The general plan shows a strict order in functional hierarchy with matching façade expression. The main academic wing encloses an open plaza, that includes the majestic library building. To the south, this monolith is embraced by 15 student dormitory buildings, connected by arched corridors and landscaped courts. Divided by a lawn (originally conceived as a reflecting pool, but unsustainable in the dry Indian climate) are the faculty apartments, that in turn are surrounded by staff apartments and facilities. Huge open spaces depict the freedom of thought, the principle that embodies IIM. Distinctive of Kahn's work, large circles are carved out of north and east façades of the main buildings and dormitories.



**Interior Plaza.** (photo: Kees Spanjers)

Today, the IIM buildings are in a poor shape. Although the interiors show a financially limited but caring upkeep of the buildings, the exteriors are in a deteriorating state of decline. Kahn's main



**Detail: Steel and Brick Spalling**  
(photo: Kees Spanjers)

building materials where exposed brick and poured in place concrete masonry. Much of the brickwork is cracked, at points exhibiting delamination. Some arches have collapsed, and multiple south facing parapets are missing. Locals blame the poor quality of the materials used and the devastating earthquake of 2001, but the real reason of the seemingly incurable maintenance problem may be in the construction method Kahn developed especially for the project. On the campus grounds prototypes of the daringly wide jack arches and circular arches can still be found. As the story goes, these were engineered and built by Kahn himself, and the technique was demonstrated on-site to workers. Kahn's method was to reinforce the brickwork by putting reinforcing bars in the joints. The poor quality of the bricks and steel used may have exacerbated the process, but the Indian climate would inevitably have caused steel corrosion resulting in the failure of the brick facing. The earthquake simply finished off the job. Some façades have been partially repaired by cutting out and replacing parts of brickwork and installing new joints. The rusted steel is replaced by stainless steel rods. A costly and labour intensive repair, the long term success of the stainless steel in conjunction with the brickwork in an environment of extreme heat and moist conditions is unknown.

Beginning in 2003, IIM has implemented a major campus expansion plan and its sympathy toward Kahn's design suggests eventual support for restoration of the original structures. The new campus situated on an adjacent lot is designed by Ahmadabad architects Hasmukh and Bimal Patel.

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## Articles

**Louis Kahn**

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The new plan is a meticulous continuation of Kahn's IIM masterplan, and the architectural manifestation is clearly inspired by Kahn. However, where Kahn used exposed brick as a construction material with concrete, Patel turns this around to exposed concrete with some brick infill. The result is an unarguable brutal building, but it is some of the finest brutalism I have ever seen. As in Kahn's buildings, Patel uses the same transparency and honesty in his architecture with austere and powerful forms that incorporate beautifully proportioned and well detailed interior spaces. As Kahn said, "every time a student walks past a really urgent, expressive piece of architecture that belongs to his college, it can help reassure him that he does have that mind, does have that soul." Let's hope the IIM can find a way to preserve Kahn's legacy to show the students how a great example can lead to great inspiration.

—Kees Spanjers

## Gettysburg Cyclorama Center Update—Move It!



**Exterior 1962**

*(photo: Jack Boucher, National Park Service)*

In a recent editorial piece titled "Save the Cyclorama," the York (PA) Daily Record asked "What's the hurry to demolish the building?" Supporters for the preservation of this 1962 Richard Neutra-designed visitor center are asking the same question—and the public is listening. An ongoing effort, headed by Dion Neutra (an architectural partner with his famous father) and the Recent Past Preservation Network, is seeking to bring this issue back to the table with an emphasis on exploring creative re-use options for the structure.

Neutra, with the help of architecture blogger and illustrator Skip Ploss, has started a new online petition addressed to President Obama and the incoming administration (see the link from his site at [www.neutra.org](http://www.neutra.org)) urging the president to "pardon" the National Register-eligible building and "re-cycle" it for continued use. Citing the support of such noted organizations as DOCOMOMO US, the World Monuments Fund, and the Society of Architectural Historians, the petition demonstrates widespread public support for the preservation of important modernist works. More than 2000 people registered on the previous incarnation of the on-line petition addressed to President Bush, including individuals from Germany, Belgium, and Italy, as well as closer to home Neutra-fans in California, Pennsylvania, and Montana. Numerous petition signers advocated relocating the building rather than demolishing it. One enthusiastic supporter from Los Angeles practically shouted out "Move It, Move It, Move It!!!!!!".

The Recent Past Preservation Network is encouraging the Park Service to explore this very option. Re-locating the building is a feasible alternative that would preserve the historic mid-century structure and facilitate the restoration of the battlefield landscape on which it stands. The Park Service has moved a number of large historic structures in the past, including the 193-foot high brick Cape Hatteras Lighthouse and three associated buildings in North Carolina that were threatened by an encroaching ocean. Expert declarations filed in the ongoing federal lawsuit

indicate that the building can be moved and is suitable for a variety of re-uses, including, but not limited to, office, retail, and museum space. Additionally, two local businessmen have offered their properties for the relocation. Eric Uberman, owner of the American Civil War

Museum, owns approximately three acres across the street from the Cyclorama Center. His colleague, Robert Monahan has also shown interest in taking the building. Monahan's 70-acre site at the intersection of routes 30 and 15 currently hosts "Gateway Gettysburg," a hotel and convention center complex a few miles from the battlefield boundaries.

In 2000, architect Frank Gehry wrote that Neutra's building "reflects the highest ideals of his own time, and deserves the highest appreciation of ours." With this in mind, the Recent Past Preservation Network hopes to facilitate a series of practical conversations between preservationists, architects, and the Park Service, with the unified goal of re-invigorating the Cyclorama Center for future uses.

For a full history of this preservation effort, photographs and drawings of the building, and recent updates, please visit: [www.mission66.com/cyclorama](http://www.mission66.com/cyclorama).

—Christine Madrid French  
*President, Recent Past Preservation Network*



**Interior 2003**

*(photo: Boris Starosta)*



**Stone panel and stone wall on the south end of the office wing, 1962.**

*(photo: Lawrence S. Williams, Inc.)*