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Vauban of the east: Cultural, environmental and archetypal deep beauty in a Pakistani urban development

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What would the Vauban, Malmo or Hammar by Stad of Pakistan Look like? By the mid of the last century in most of the Western World the issue of sustainability had been discussed and understood; but an understanding of the South Asian (Indo-Pak) perspective on this term is not very well known. Earthen architecture and other natural materials have been a part of the vernacular built culture of most of South Asia for many centuries until the advent of the industrial age and the introduction of steel and concrete made everyone fall for the false belief that this was the most comfortable way to build. Material though, was not the only way in which people lived self-sustaining lives. Most eastern lifestyles, day to day routines, and even family structures were built around the idea of sustainability even though most people may not have known the meaning of the contemporary name given to their lifestyles. Originally our traditional lifestyles, family setup and non-monetized mutual support were the source of the unique typology and configuration on our homes not the iron grid plotting, their bye laws and their plot sizes. Availability and practicality of locally sourced materials and the need for light, air and thermal comfort were the credentials for building the machine that our homes were, not the type of available technology alone. And the form that this machine eventually took reflected a resolution of its infinite parts and systems into one whole by an artisan trained under masters. It was not the result of the least expensive possible mimicry of the past or the random juxtaposition of globally sourced influences; instead it was a simple truth to the materials being used. By building upon research and conclusions drawn regarding the typological development of Northern Pakistani Residential building culture, the aim is to use both the analysis of the traditional and contemporary models of residential design in North Pakistan in order to come up with design guidelines for a hybrid style of residential building. One that is more suited and resilient within our cultural setup and environment, and that hence reflects deep beauty at an archetypal level as well. Aims towards cultural sustainability include: Create a community that allows for demonetized mutual support e.g.: for child/adult care; create an intimacy gradient from private to public spaces instead of abrupt boundaries between private and public domains; create social diversity by bringing residents from different financial backgrounds together. Aims towards environmental sustainability include: Climatic comfort; reduced energy use and increased self-sufficiency in energy production and; resource efficiency through maximum use of locally available materials. Aims at archetypal scale include: Sensory stimuli incorporated through biophilic design, merger of sacred patterns from cultural context and contemporary generative form. So that the form commences with unity, disperses into infinity and then gathers back to a unified design.

Biography

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