

# Architectural IMPRESSIONS

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# THE MAHARISHI

A UNIQUE & ANCIENT APPROACH TO "GREEN" ARCHITECTURE OF TODAY



mathematical formulas, equations, and proportion—a design concept believed to bring beneficial influence of all the laws of nature to human life, which is the basis for good health. For example, this system of architecture requires precision to an eighth-inch tolerance in the layout of interior walls. Modifications made during the design phase had a domino effect, as it would proportionally change all of the other rooms and dimensional harmony.

The building's orientation on the site is of the utmost importance. A key principle of this system of architecture is founded on the idea that energy from the sun is greatest and most vital when rising. Therefore, the building's main entrance should face due east, and window placement on the east and west sides should maximize natural light to each room.

A second key principle of Maharishi Vedic architecture is that if the building's proportions are properly chosen, then the building harmonizes with the human physiology and therefore promotes the health and well-being of the individual.

A third key principle of Maharishi Vedic architecture is that rooms are placed according to their function, and the ideal function of each room is related to the quality of the sun's energy in that part of the building. One challenge was to design a building that balances these principles of ideal proportions and correct room placement.

**W**ith the trend towards sustainable design and green building design, there is an ancient system of design that embodies many of the new principles that are currently being popularized to conserve our resources and energy. This trend towards healthier environments was rekindled with the "sick building syndrome" that was a result of buildings being built too "tight" and unresponsive to the environment in the energy conscious designs of the 1980's through the 1990's.

A unique holistic medical facility has been created that provides patient assessment and treatment, implementing the techniques of Maharishi Vedic medicine. The facility is designed utilizing the principles of Maharishi Vedic architecture—design in accord with natural law.

The Maharishi Vedic Center's design intent is to foster a close connection with nature's intelligence—bringing good

health, success, and growth to the highest state of consciousness for its occupants and patrons. This design approach requires extremely precise planning, as the building's design is dictated by the belief that a harmonious relationship between individual life and cosmic life is necessary for one's peace, prosperity, and good health.

A recent project that our firm has been involved with has created a "design prototype" that includes a GFRC panel for entablatures and columns for very detailed design elements. Sue and Rick Weller are consultants trained in Holland on the techniques of Maharishi Vedic architecture. A team was formed to take the initial design and work within very specific parameters for dimensions, formulas, and site orientation.

Maharishi Vedic architecture provides universal rules and principles—precise

—[...a central atrium, called the “Brahmasthan,” creates a natural separation between the north and south wings of the building. ]—

# VEDIC CENTER

Another challenge was to implement the use of natural, nontoxic materials and energy-efficient construction in light of standard building practices. Furthermore, after the consultants, Sue and Rick Weller, approved the building design, an international review board for Maharishi Vedic architecture had to give their final approval, to ensure that the building's design met the standards required for a building in harmony with Natural Law.

In this Maharishi Vedic Center, each room's location has a direct impact on the design for the south wing. Specific rooms such as the kitchen and the preparation room had to be in the southern influence of the sun's energy. Lighting throughout the building is designed to bring positive energy to all interior spaces. This is most clearly seen as you enter the building, where a central atrium, called the “Brahmasthan,” creates a natural separation between the north and south wings of the building. Upon entering you have a visual focus to the west through an open conference room directly opposite the entrance. The two-level atrium has a stepped cupola that allows light to shine from east to west and also from above.

Hand-painted cloud scapes with gold leaf accents enrich the elaborate ceiling, drawing your eyes to the sky above. The “Brahmasthan” also carries the lotus theme into the interiors through intricate marble flooring. The “Brahmasthan” cre-



ates a feeling of harmony and wholeness. This creates a soothing influence throughout the building. From this point of entry, all other functions are derived, depending on the nature of the visit.

The South-side of the building is designated the "Health" wing. A reception area is located here with an adjoining waiting room. There are two holistic-medicine patient treatment suites, physician and nurse offices, an education center, and other support areas for staff. The suites are designed for patient privacy and staff efficiency. It is important that comprehensive care can be provided without leaving the suite area.

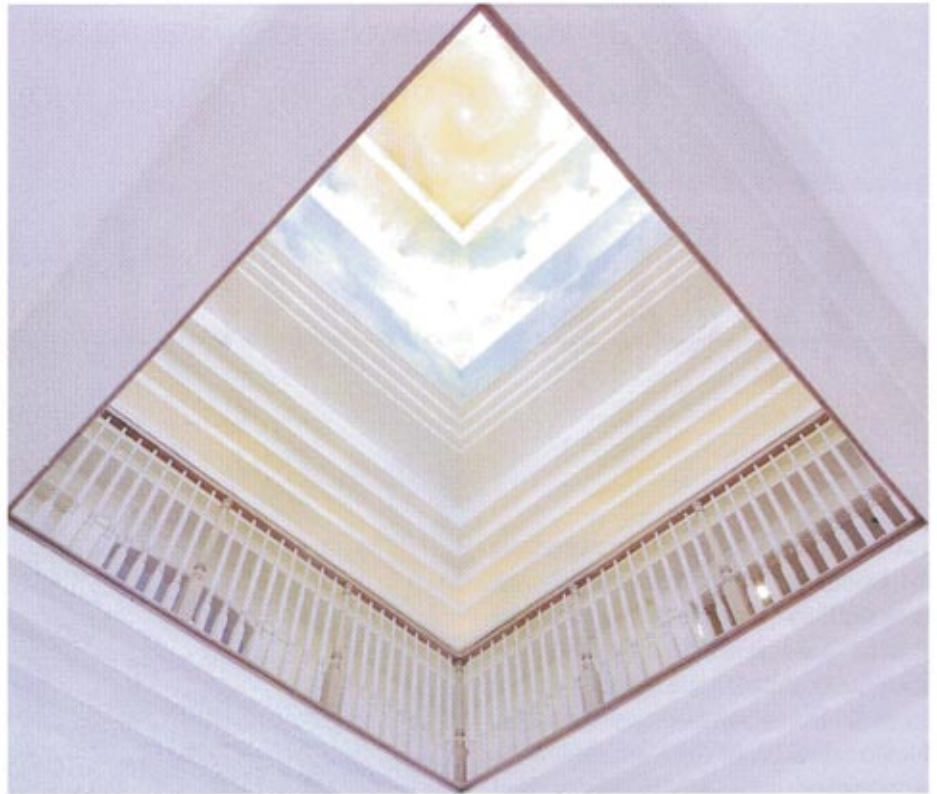
The North-side of the building is designated the "Consciousness" wing for the Transcendental Meditation Program. This wing is designed for other educational components of the facility, including private and multi-patient instructional areas and administrative offices.

The building functions entirely within the concept of Maharishi Vedic architecture, including "green" construction materials. This was the challenge that gave the project depth and understanding for the inter-relationship of the architect and the building, "an understanding of harmony."

Natural materials were used, avoiding synthetics that emit toxic fumes over a long period of time. The amount of ferrous metals was also limited. For example, the building was framed in wood instead of metal. Similarly, very little steel is used in the reinforcement of concrete foundations and in the framing for the fire stairs.

At the front entrance, exterior GFRC columns are designed to a specific vedic proportions for the shaft and base, and adorned with a lotus theme that carries into the interiors. The doors and windows have precise placement as they relate to the specific function of each room, and are operable, as required.

The staircases are strategically located according to the directional flow of use,



and have a specific number of risers, in accord with vedic principles. Even the bathrooms have a particular orientation, requiring specific placement of the sinks, toilets, and mirrors.

The design also requires specific entry points for the utilities, water, and the sewage. Another challenge in this project, was to design within the vedic guidelines, while also complying with the national and state building code requirements.

Each room is specifically designed to provide adequate space for the "correct" furniture placement so that each integral piece is oriented to the East or the North. Pastel colors and natural maple wood create a sense of well-being for patients and staff.

The initial site, located on the University of Kentucky's Coldstream Research Park is planned to accommodate a second facility. A second project is under construction in Houston, Texas and is three stories above grade.

Maharishi Vedic architecture recommends three special ceremonies performed on auspicious dates. The ground

breaking ceremony includes digging a square hole that has exact metric dimensions and must be dug while facing East! The contractor has a lot of fun trying that. Each team member makes a wish for the project's success while dropping a handful of organic "fertilizer" into the pit along with sacred water from India.

The next ceremony is the cornerstone laying, which defines the beginning of construction. After construction, the new building must "breathe" for a specified period of time prior to the move in. The final ceremony, moving in, celebrates the first use of the building.

I was skeptical about this approach when the first project started a few years ago. Now that a second project is under construction, I have a different attitude towards the process. I see that this process has brought together a very dedicated team of designers, engineers, developer and contractor that are committed to delivering the principles of Maharishi Vedic architecture.