



On this day in 1990, English actress, model and activist, Watson was born in Paris. She rose to prominence with her first professional acting role as Hermione Granger in the Harry Potter film series



AMIT KHANNA
Design Principal, Amit Khanna Design Associates



POOJA ASHLEY
Co-Founder Ashleys



AKSHAT BHATT
Principal Architect, Architecture Discipline

PESSIMISTIC ABOUT PACE OF PROJECTS & COLLABORATION

Many architects and real estate bigwigs talk about how their industry is coping after the outbreak of coronavirus

Sites and sounds of buildings

From execution of site work to commissioning material and products to vendors, it is extremely challenging to take things ahead.



EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION

ANGELA PALIOR

As India woke up to the last day of the 21-day long nationwide lockdown, the confirmed COVID-19 cases in India had reached 10,541 while the global tally of infections stood at 1,926,300. And in a nearly 25-minute televised address to the nation, PM Narendra Modi extended the nationwide lockdown till May 3.

The extension means a further blow to the economy. Much talked about is how the travel, hospitality, and other luxury industries are in a bad shape, we decide to look at how architecture and real estate is coping. Both creative spheres involve some degree of interaction and collaboration for ideas to materialise, however, due to the lockdown.

Akshat Bhatt, Principal Architect of Architecture Discipline, says that has been on hold. "As a designer, I have a lot to do with putting pencil on paper, building physical models, touching and feeling of material pal-

ettes etc. Although softwares like Facetime, video calling platforms, and other design applications are helping us get by, no real-world ideation or collaboration is happening. It's just pure maintenance work." However, Bhatt is looking forward to things going back to normal. "This time has taught us to be more critical, and we must not build for the sake of building," adds Bhatt.

The flow of work for these professionals has rapidly shifted from the on-field sites to an in-house workflow. Rakhee Bedi Kumar, Founding Principal, RSDA, is currently utilising this phase to strategise, and focus her time and energy on implementing a more hygienic business process.

"Our team of associates are taking this time to focus on the virtual aspects of the busi-

ness, creating 3D renders, enhancing the design development and detailing process for our ongoing and future projects. We have been able to use the extra time to package our past projects, optimise learning and achieve an efficient flow of operations at our practice," notes Kumar.

Amit Khanna, Design Principal, Amit Khanna Design Associates (AKDA), believes it is necessary to look at both the long term and the short-term impact it will have on the architecture and real estate industry. "With construction sites shut down and most of the workers have headed back to their rural homes, some serious disruptions are expected on the supply side of things. As the plants shut down and inventories pile up, this disruption is also expected at the manufacturing end. On the demand side, an uptake in transactions is expected, as people reprioritise their investment strategies towards more robust assets, following a rout in the equities market. Overall, the sentiment is expected to be increasingly pessimistic as the pace of projects slow down even further," shares Khanna.

From execution of site work to commissioning material and products to vendors, it is extremely challenging to take things ahead. Pooja Ashley and Arbaysis Ashley, Co-

Founders of Ashleys', feel that this will not only cause an irreparable economic depression, but will also shake the schedule of all projects, thereby creating a massive disturbance in the work grid.

"The real estate market, with a stall on the progress of every project, is facing inconsistency in terms of immediate future. Stabilising the client's commitment has become the primary goal of every firm.

Further, enhancing the designs, progress in material procurement and assessing the post lockdown situation, are few solutions that the architecture firms are coming up with to ensure ongoing progress," says the duo. With a proactive attitude, architects and designers are adapting to the work from home phenomenon while improving efficiency through technology and digital platforms.

For Asha Sairam, Design Principal, Studio Lotus, too, no one had anticipated a viral pandemic to bring all operations to a grinding halt, and this has forced her to question how the ways in which we live, work and create.

"As we work remotely from the privileged safety of our homes, we are ever more present to how in times like these, our values form our compass, keeping us all directed. We feel grateful for the reinforced spirit of shared purpose that brings our team together across all our collaborations both within and outside the studio," concludes Sairam.

“We have also been able to use the extra time to package our past projects, optimising their learning, helping us achieve an efficient flow of operations at our practice.”
Bedi Kumar, Founding Principal, RSDA