

# Satish Grover

## Hotel Oberoi, Bhubaneswar, India



### Project Data

*Hotel Oberoi, Bhubaneswar (India)*  
*Client: The East India Hotels, Ltd.*  
*Architect: Satish Grover*  
*Consultants: N.S. Roop Rai (structure)*  
*Kanwar Krishnan Associates (electrical)*  
*Dr. P.C. Jain (air conditioning)*  
*P.K. Gupta (sanitary/planning)*  
*Shaheer (landscaping)*  
*Site Area: 50,000 square metres*  
*Total Covered Area: 6,500 square metres*  
*Completed (Phase I): 1983 (4,000 square metres)*  
*Cost: 18.5 million Indian Rupees*

**B**hubaneswar, on the eastern edge of India is a city with a composite history of both Hinduism and Buddhism. This has been expressed through the architecture of its temples and ancient monasteries.

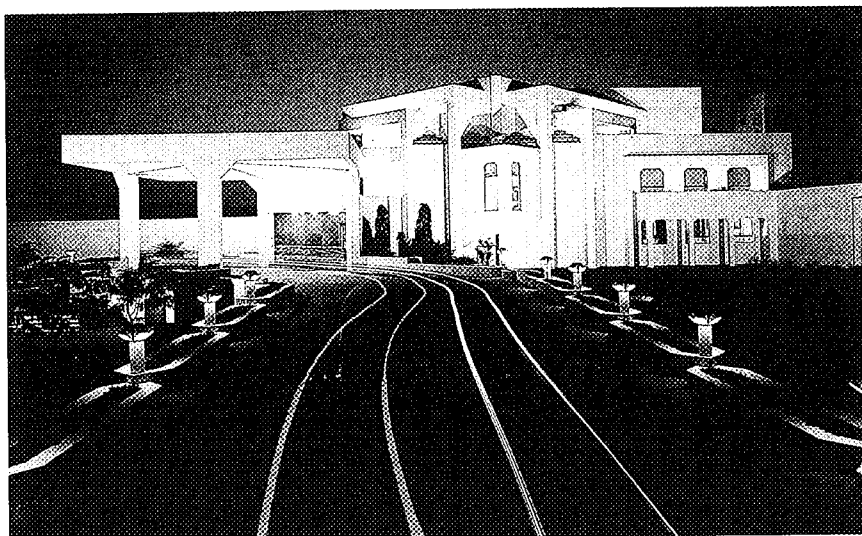
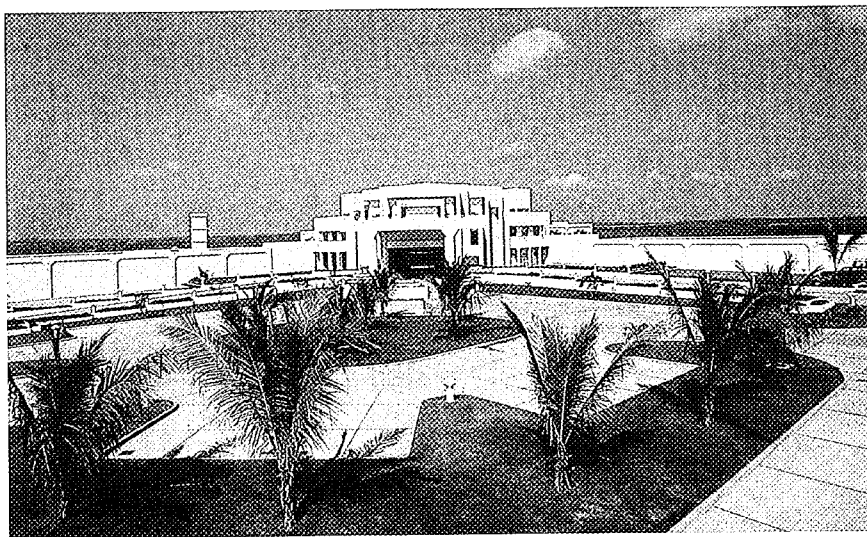
The Oberoi Hotel, set amidst the rich cultural heritage of the city was thus conceived as a synthesis of the two styles. The site measuring 230 feet x 270 feet (mxm) gently slopes down to the main driveway. The gradual incline was taken due advantage of and is reflected in the increasing volume of the main block. This concept is carried further in an attempt to imitate the gradual enlargement and expansions of volumes in the architecture of Hindu temples.

Although the plan of the hotel is essentially comprised of three squares, successively growing in size and juxtaposed on each other, the basic intent of

recreating the strictly linear movement within the Hindu temples is effectively expressed through the straight roof lines of the lobby, which are in contrast to the sharp corners of the walls. In antithesis to the spatial sequences experienced within a temple, spaces enlarge and grow as one is drawn further inside, concluding with a sunlit view of an expansive courtyard. The swimming pool is the focus of the courtyard with a series leading down to its cool depths. The courtyard reminds one of those in Buddhist monasteries, where cubicles (viharas) were clustered around the main congregational space and succeeded in eliminating external disturbances from their self induced privacy.

The block of changing rooms, at the other extreme end of the diagonal, is straddled by two single-storey wings accommodating guest suites, which project into the clear geometry of the court.

*Below and bottom: Main entrance*



*Text and photographs courtesy of the architect.*



With terraces on the first, they provide an inviting view of the central pool. From this main building two service wings stretch out diagonally and help define the entrance to the complex. Deep corridors connect these facilities to the main spine.

An extension to the existing hotel has been anticipated, and is to be accommodated in two more square courtyards on either side of the existing central one.

The treatment of the facade, once again attempts to synthesize modern building techniques with the artistic heritage of Orissa. The entire building is totally plastered and painted white.

The landscaping also enhances the formal layout plan of the building, with walkways taking off from the lines of the buildings, and a series of courts and gardens have been created.

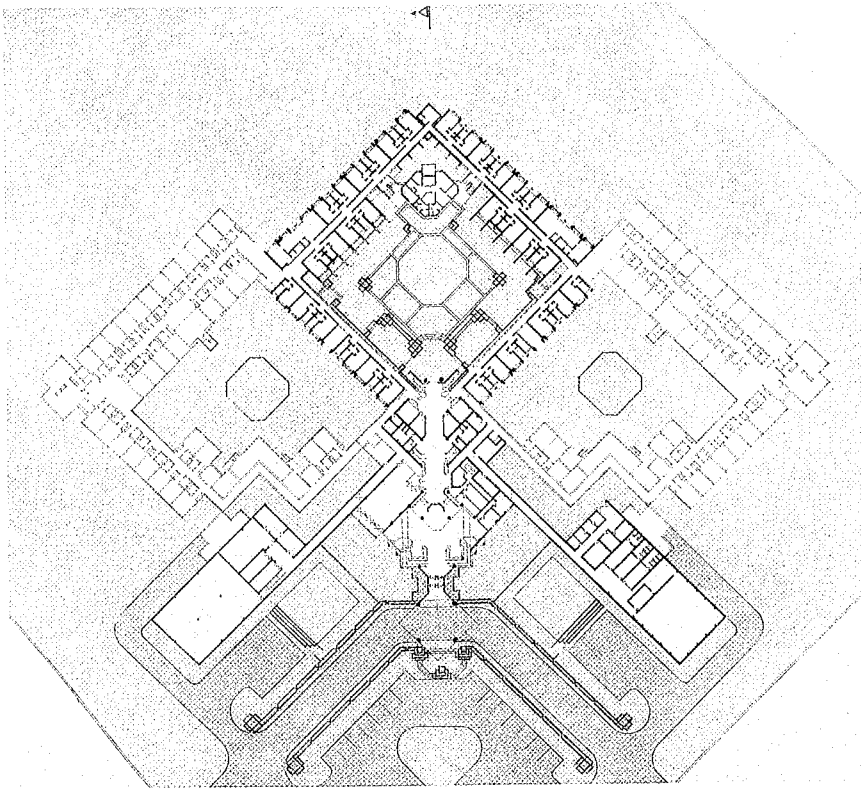
The entire approach has been direct and straightforward; by translating commonly used concepts, the architect has sought to create a functional five star hotel amidst historical settings.

*Left: Entrance lobby of the hotel with stairs to the first floor.*

*Bottom: View of the hotel lobby and reception desk.*







Left: Ground floor plan.  
Bottom: The Hotel Oberoi, Bhubaneswar seen  
from the courtyard and swimming pool.



## Indian Buddhist Temple, Pattaya.

### Project Data

Project: Indian Buddhist Temple in Thailand  
Client: His Holiness Somdej Prayamasangworn  
Completed: 1987  
Cost: Rs. 13,50,000.00 – Rs. 1.4 Million  
Consultants: N.S. Roop Rai (Structure)  
Construction Agency: M/S Preeds Construction Limited

If we were to walk along the shores of the lake in Wat Sangwaram, which is approximately 160 kilometres from Bangkok, one would chance upon a number of pavilions, unmistakably Buddhist, along the banks of the lake. Commissioned by Buddhist monks in Thailand, they were built to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the birth of His Majesty, the King of Thailand.

The pavilions depict the variety in style of Buddhist architecture which has evolved in the many countries where Buddhism has flourished. Buddhism as a religion has found expression through divergent forms built in many materials. This is because, though it has remained true to its inherent ideology and symbols, it has also incorporated indigenous styles

at the local architecture.

While many of the pavilions are replicas of original monuments, others are derivations. The Indian Pavilion is the sole attempt at a new and creative design. The pavilion is replete with symbolic allusions to Buddhist architecture of the Ashoka Period in history and represents a paradoxical allegory of Buddhist architecture. While refraining from creating a verbatim copy of any existing model, the architect attempts to reinterpret and reassemble the inherent symbolic features of Hinayana art evident in the magnificent *chaitya* halls of the Karla and Bhaja caves of Western India.

Raised on a plinth, which is a typical feature of Indian temples, the platform is further defined by the *vedika* (railing). The *vedika* originated from the need to define the precincts of a sacred space be it a *stambh* (pillar), a *chaitya* hall or the Bodhi tree. Initially in wood, the structure has later been imitated in stone; and in this pavilion in stainless steel and concrete.

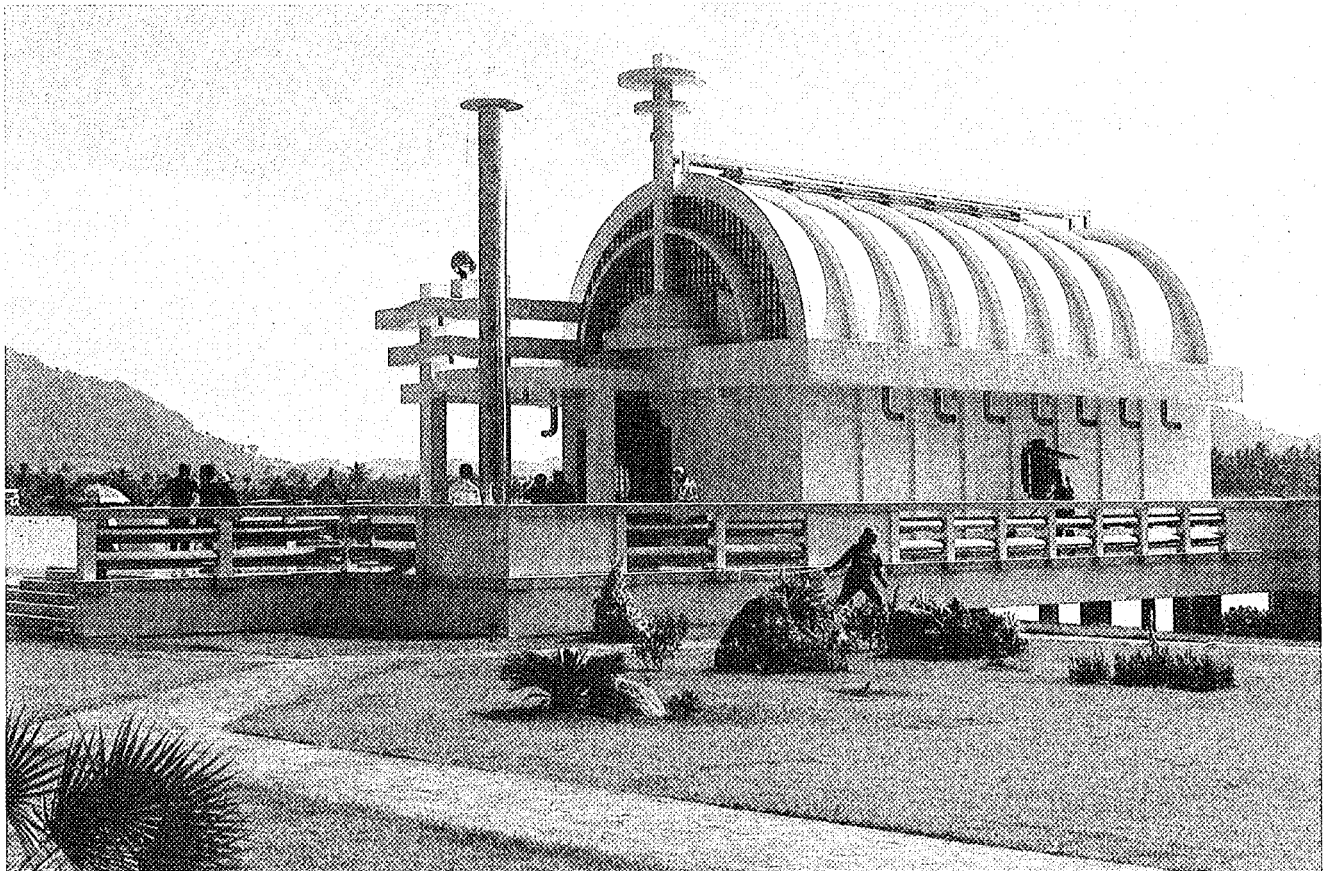
Two steps led to the front platform, where one is confronted by a myriad of surrealistic images. On the right, a concrete *stambha* capped by a stainless steel cupola, reminiscently suggests the famous Ashoka pillar. On the left, a

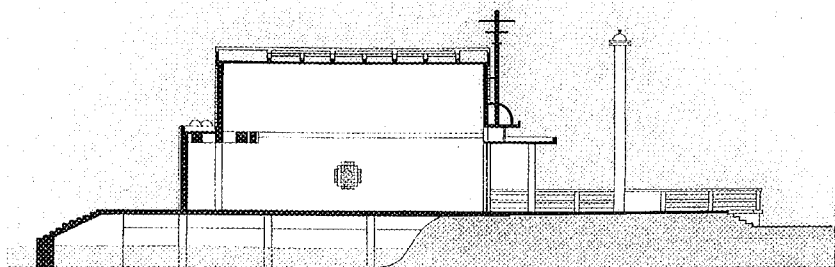
*toran*, conceptually a gateway, guides one through a covered walkway to the other end of the platform. The main *chaitya* pavilion retains most of the characteristics and form of its many predecessors. These halls were used for performing Buddhist congregational rituals, requiring a large column-free space. The prototype developed from a large oblong hall, roofed by a timber and till barrel-shaped form, to a permanent indestructible form manifest in rock-cut caves. The details of such timber construction have been evoked along the curve of the vaulted roof.

The entire finish is in white ceramic tiles. Reflecting the sun, it gives a luminous quality to the pavilion. In keeping with the dictum of tradition and culture, the water spouts of stainless steel have been exaggerated and by presenting a contrast to the overall milky white character, become a major feature of design.

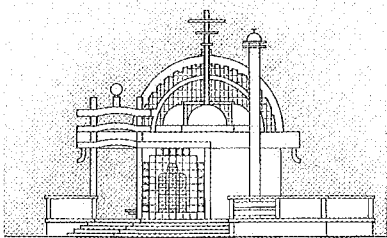
The stupa, and its earlier form, was built over relics but later, it became the focus of worship itself. As a powerful symbol of the faith, the stupa has been represented by a bold semi-hemispherical feature, immediately above the entrance.

View of the temple on the site of the commemorative temple complex.





Section.



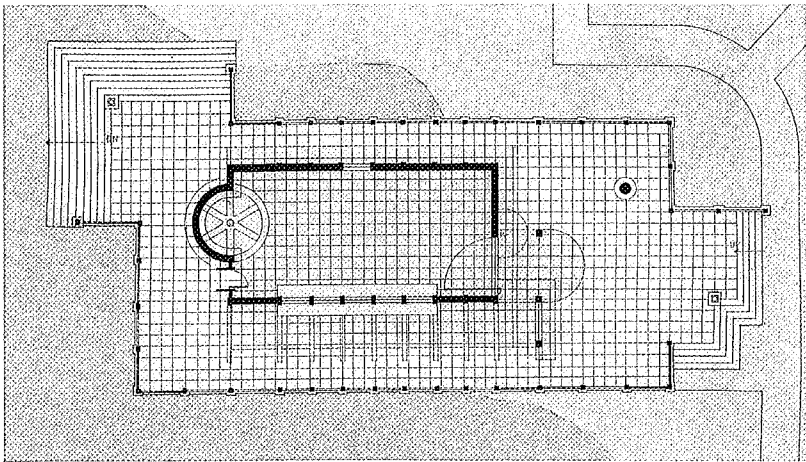
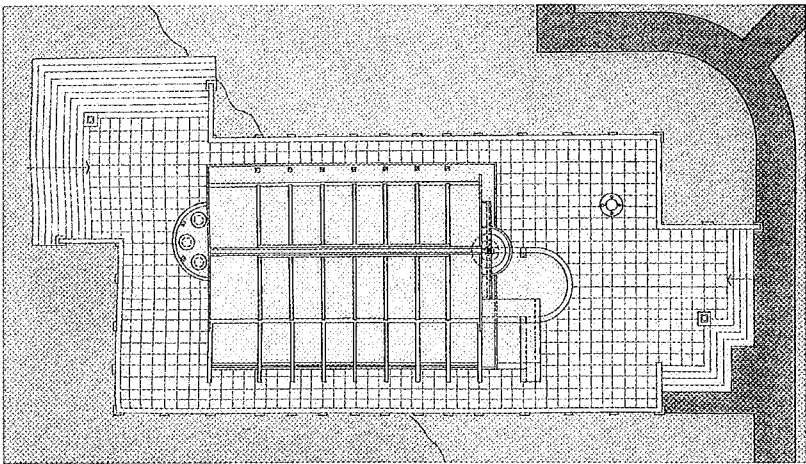
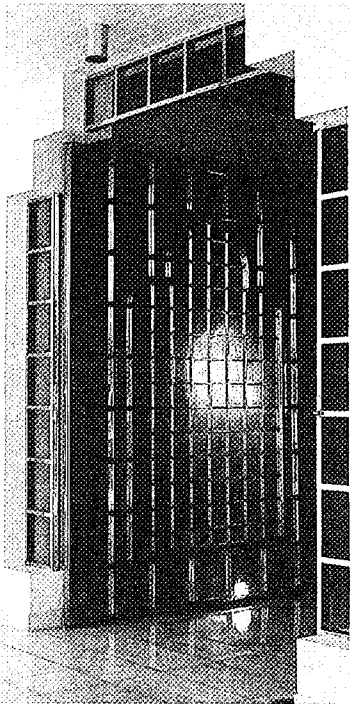
Front elevation of the temple.

Above, the bodhi tree (holy tree under which lord Buddha attained enlightenment) has been reflected by a vertical shaft on which ascending circular discs of stone also give the impression of an Ashokan *chatil*.

As one enters the hall, one is drawn to the opposite end of the pavilion where the *chakra* (the wheel of life) is mirrored on the roof. Open to sky, it brings shafts of light and rain into the dark sombre interior.

The rear door leads to the platform which extends over the water on stilts; steps descend and finally merge into the water, which for centuries has been the symbol of life, rejuvenation and eternity.

Details of the main entrance to the temple.



Plan of the Buddhist Indian Temple.

Left: Main facade with the entrance to the temple.  
Left, bottom: Detail view of the vedika (railing).

