SEALAB, India

Intern Architect position: Community housing, Ahmedabad

Virtual Project Placement 2022

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Number of positions: 1 student

Eligibility: Architecture (preference), Interior Architecture (second preference) - min 3rd year U/G

Placement dates: Term 1, 2022

Application due: 22 Jan, 2022

Location: UNSW student will be based in Sydney and working online at SEALAB, Ahmedabad.

Local address: 698, 1st Floor, Drive in enclave, Drive in road, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India

Expected hours: 120 hours (including online meetings and self-directed work)

Days and/or times required: Monday to Friday (exact time for daily online meetings to be confirmed)

Rate of pay: This is not a paid position.

Job title: Intern Architect

Project title: Community housing at Vastral, Ahmedabad

Project background: Loving Community’s origin is interwoven with the history of leprosy in India. Until 1981 leprosy was an incurable disease. People infected were forced to leave their homes and find isolated places to live. Many of them, mainly from regions in Southern India, came to Ahmedabad and settled along the Sabarmati river, where their informal houses flooded every year. In 1968, the government of Gujarat gave them a piece of land in Vastral to settle, at that time, on the outskirts of Ahmedabad. The community initially built informal shelters, but through strong community leadership and the involvement of an NGO (Lions club of Ahmedabad), they rebuilt their homes and treated the leprosy patients.

Today 435 residents, 2nd and 3rd generation of those migrants, live on the land assigned by the government of Gujarat in southeast Ahmedabad. Even today, with no new cases of leprosy, the residents face problems of poverty and issues of the stigma associated with the disease.

The location of the settlement, in a low-lying area, floods every monsoon, creating unhygienic conditions. Many people have to leave their homes and move with their belongings to the nearby community hall during the monsoon. The lack of common infrastructures like water, drainage, sewage, and proper sanitation is also evident and a threat to healthy living conditions. Recently, many families were able to invest in their houses, increasing the plinth level, and adding one or two floors. But many others, with less economic stability, still see their homes flooded every year. More than 60% of the houses don’t have a plinth to protect them, and, since the street was raised over time, many of them are now below street level.
Project brief: This project aims to rebuild some of those houses that flood every year, providing dignified living conditions and individual design solutions for each family. The community selected 55 houses that were in need of renovation, and, on the basis of lottery and consensus of the community, 10 houses were built, two are under construction and one is in the design stage.

Intern architect duties: UNSW student with SEALAB will prepare the following:

- The speculative drawings on how the community has evolved over time.
- Analysis of existing physical site conditions, activities and built environment.
- Conceptual master plan with strategies for flood management, landscape, amenities, street edges and its relation with the neighbouring community.
- Documentation of the three workshops which were conducted in the community – Ferrocement construction, Tile making from waste materials, insulated bricks from waste paper.

Methods: Drawings (analytical, speculative, technical)

Workplace description: SEALAB is an architecture practice based in Ahmedabad, India.

Our work delves into the poetics of space and the social and cultural meanings of Architecture. The process of design is slow, reflective, and contemplative, working in continuity with the place while shaping the surroundings. We strive for qualities as beauty, serenity, amazement, wonder, and simplicity.

For us, each project is an opportunity to investigate a topic, its historical evolution, and its cultural meanings. Some of our recent works are Jai Jagat theatre at the historic Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad, Community housing at Vastral, Ahmedabad, School for the blind and visually impaired children, Gandhinagar and 2021 Seoul Biennale of Architecture and Urbanism.

Application Process:

Part 1: Video (1-2min)
Why are you interested in this Placement?

Part 2: Portfolio (3 pages)
Showcase projects that demonstrate skills/knowledge required in the Placement (e.g., you might focus on themes, communication techniques, processes, etc.). PDF only.

Part 3: Curriculum Vitae (CV) (1 page)
Include experience that relates to the Placement context. PDF only.

Send your application to:
geral@sea-lab.org (Anand Sonecha, Director and Architect, sea-lab)
e.lloyd@unsw.edu.au (Eva Lloyd, Lecturer, UNSW BE)