





Architect: Vedika Architects

DAKSHINACHITRA

Muttukadu, Tamil Nadu

Dakshinachitra was envisioned as a heritage village that offers visitors a view of the vernacular culture of South India. It is conceived as an outdoor museum which displays the lifestyle of the people by recreating an environment of their everyday lives. The idea is to create a unique cultural centre; a space where visitors can unwind leisurely and learn simultaneously.

The 10-acre complex consists of ticketing counters, a reception, seminar halls, workshops and display spaces, a craft-shop and bazaar, stores for various items and a restaurant. The design approach is sensitive to the dictates of climate, location and availability of materials, blending traditional elements and indigenous skill to evolve a design for the need of a contemporary context. Features like courtyards, 'verandahs', 'jali', pitched roofs along with the materials induce a rustic characteristic to the buildings. The open spaces have a high Mangalore-tiled roof, held up by an intricate system of rafters and beams using traditional joinery, which lends it a decidedly traditional feel. While exposed brick and stonework carve out the central theme, granite columns and stone slabs from old buildings pride heritage and form integral structural members. Old doors and windows, rescued from demolished homes, are reused.

The importance of traditionalism as an elemental is the essential idea. The construction is carried out by traditional craftsmen and masons employing



ELEVATION



SECTION SHOWING THE COURTYARD CREATED



SECTION THROUGH THE THATCHED HUTS



Entrance

The entrance building employs a simple rectangular plan with two landscaped courtyards. The bricks constituting this structure are of different hues, creating a subtle variance. The craft shop is the only space in the complex whose walls are white-washed to provide a contrast with the brightly coloured objects on display.

Restaurant

The restaurant consists of two main dining areas, one fully enclosed and air-conditioned, the other an open pillared area, and with a connecting kitchen. The enclosed space employs aesthetically appealing and cost-effective bamboo reed mats or 'pai' on the ceiling that furthers thermal insulation and reduces the air-conditioning cost.



Thatched Huts & Teashop

A few small thatched huts along the pathway to the teashop form seating areas which serve as additional spaces during educational workshops, festivals and large events. They are made of natural materials such as earth, country wood and thatch. The Teashop is another tiled roof structure, which brings to mind the typical village tea shop “chai kada”.

Craft Bazaar

The craft bazaar is a series of partially covered spaces that flow along the main pathway from the entrance building to the display sections. It is used to exhibit and sell the artefacts made by the traditional craftsmen. Unpolished stone beams, brick jalis and tiled roofs are the predominant materials used here. The stone pergolas shaded with thatch, extending over the pathway are inviting on a hot summer day.



