



The Green Factory concept demonstrated at the Brandix Eco Center at Seeduwa.

Architecture Now

—Achieving More with Less

People & Events

By Nan

"Today diminishing resources call for 'doing more with less'. Thus the professional architect's role in society increases in stature. It is becoming steadily important to create comfortable environments often within tight budgets making the architect's role a challenging one. Good architecture offers sustainable solutions to create buildings and spaces that are better suited to their environment. This in turn would use less energy and be cheaper to maintain." This is part of the message of the President, Sri Lanka Institute of Architects, Archt. Jayantha Perera to the SLIA 2009 Annual Sessions held at the BMICH on Friday March 5.

I attended the pre-lunch session and was totally absorbed in the presentations and what was articulated. I came away with much to mull over, a merely interested member of the public who was enthralled and educated by all that was presented.

Words that came across often in the presentations, in addition to environment and pollution, were sustainability, renewable resources - solar power, eco-friendly, and the Next Industrial Revolution. I had an article of seminal relevance to the theme of the SLIA annual sessions sent me by an architect living abroad so before going on to writing about the presentations on 5 March, I will quote a couple of paragraphs from this article by William McDonough which appeared in *The Atlantic* in October 1998. It would have been groundbreaking

Nan read with pleasure the verse dedicated to her by Dr. Uswatte-Aratchi in his article titled Needed: a bridge ... with first line Nan to rhyme with 'a man with a van'. Unfortunately Nan is unable to return the compliment; she can neither rhyme nor rhythm, hence even doggerel is beyond her!

theme; its relevance remains.

"The infrastructure created by the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century was powered by fossil fuels, and later nuclear reactors, and chemicals. It is pouring waste into water and smoke into the sky. It is attempting to work by its own rules, contrary to those of the natural world. And although it may seem invincible, its fundamental design flaws presage disaster."

"The Next Industrial Revolution incorporates positive intentions across a wide spectrum of human concerns. People within the sustainability movement have found that three categories are helpful in articulating these concerns: equity, economy, and ecology."

"Equity refers to social justice. Does a design depreciate or enrich people and communities? What an advance for humankind it would be if no factory worker anywhere worked in dangerous or inhumane conditions."

"Economy refers to market viability. Safe, intelligent designs should be affordable by and accessible to a wide range of customers, and profitable to the company that makes them, because commerce is the

engine of change.

"Ecology, of course, refers to environmental intelligence. Is a material a biological nutrient or a technical nutrient? Does it meet nature's design criteria? Waste equals food. Respect diversity, and use solar energy."

What is eco-efficiency? Primarily, the term means "doing more with less" - more efficient in terms of resource use, that generate less pollution and waste, that are based on the use of renewable rather than non-renewable resources, and that minimize irreversible adverse impacts on human health and the environment.

The points mentioned above were what the speakers presented as having been incorporated in their designs and buildings, with much more. In fact the meaning of eco-efficiency as "doing more with less" was the theme selected for this year's annual sessions of the Sri Lanka Institute of Architects.

Archt D. H. Wijewardena in introducing the theme, as Chairman, National Conference 2009, said that we all know the world is in crisis with man made conflicts, natural disasters and the economic meltdown. "A radical change is necessary in practicing our profession. Usage of materials, usage of energy and also disposal of waste should be done in harmony with nature; in other words the buildings we design should not be a burden to the environment but be a harmonious part of it."

Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Patali Champika Ranawake was chief guest. His address was reproduced in full in *The Island* of Saturday March 7. He ended his address thus: "The recent initiative taken by the government of Sri Lanka to establish a National Sustainable Development Council with the leadership of H E the President under the Haritha Lanka Programme clearly goes hand in hand with the governance structure necessary to integrate green economy needs into existing development processes at national level."

Morning session speakers

Archt. Karan Grover, Karan Grover Associates, Baroda, India, was the keynote speaker. He holds the distinction of winning the prestigious LEED Platinum Award from US Green Building Council in 2003.

He started by complimenting the host country referring to Horace Walpole's coining of the meaning-rich word serendipity from the ancient name of this island.

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This design by of the Mihila Green Factory of the Hirdaramani Group at Agalawatte by Architect Tilak Samarawickrema indicates the scope for eco-friendly building.