SafdieArchitects

Moshe Safdie

Moshe Safdie is an architect, urban planner, educator, theorist, and author. Embracing a comprehensive and humane design philosophy, Safdie is committed to architecture that supports and enhances a project's program; that is informed by the geographic, social, and cultural elements that define a place; and that responds to human needs and aspirations. Safdie has completed a wide range of projects, such as cultural, educational, and civic institutions; neighborhoods and public parks; mixed-use urban centers and airports; and master plans for existing communities and entirely new cities around the world.

Major projects by Safdie Architects currently under construction or recently completed include Mamilla Alrov Center, a dynamic urban center near the Old City in Jerusalem; Marina Bay Sands, a mixed-use integrated resort in Singapore; Khalsa Heritage Memorial Complex, the national museum of the Sikh people in the Punjab, India; the United States Institute of Peace Headquarters on the Mall in Washington, D.C.; the National Campus for the Archeology of Israel in Jerusalem; Golden Dream Bay, a high-density residential project in Qinhuangdao, China; the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts in Kansas City, Missouri; and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas.

Born in Haifa, Israel, in 1938, Safdie relocated to Canada with his family in 1953. He graduated from McGill University in 1961 with a degree in architecture. After apprenticing with Louis I. Kahn in Philadelphia, Safdie returned to Montreal to oversee the master plan for the 1967 World Exhibition. In 1964 he established his own firm to realize Habitat '67, an adaptation of his thesis at McGill, which was the central feature of the World's Fair and a groundbreaking design in the history of architecture.

In 1970, Safdie established a Jerusalem branch office, commencing an intense involvement with the rebuilding of Jerusalem. He was responsible for major segments of the restoration of the Old City and the reconstruction of the new center, linking the Old and New Cities. Over the years, his involvement expanded and included the new city of Modi'in, the new Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum, and the Rabin Memorial Center. During this period, Safdie also became involved in the developing world, working in Senegal, Iran, Singapore, and in the northern Canadian arctic.

In 1978, after teaching at Yale, McGill, and Ben Gurion Universities, Safdie relocated his residence and principal office to Boston. He served as Director of the Urban Design Program at Harvard University Graduate School of Design from 1978 to 1984, and Ian Woodner Professor of Architecture and Urban Design from 1984 to 1989. In the following decade, he was responsible

for the design of six of Canada's principal public institutions, including the Quebec Museum of Civilization, the National Gallery of Canada, and Vancouver Library Square.

Safdie has worked with a wide range of clients, including municipal entities and government agencies, colleges and universities, private developers, and non-profit organizations and civic institutions. Many of his firm's buildings have become beloved regional and national landmarks, including Exploration Place Science Center, Wichita, Kansas; Salt Lake City Public Library, Salt Lake City, Utah; Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts; Springfield Federal Courthouse, Springfield, Massachusetts; Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles, California; Lester B. Pearson International Airport, Toronto, Canada; the National Gallery of Canada; and Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum, Jerusalem, Israel.

In addition to numerous articles on the theory and practice of architecture, Safdie has written several books, most notably, *Beyond Habitat* (1970), *For Everyone a Garden* (1974), *Form and Purpose* (1982), and *Jerusalem: The Future of the Past* (1989). *The City After the Automobile* (1997), details Safdie's ideas about urbanism and city planning. A comprehensive monograph of his work, *Moshe Safdie I*, was published in 1996. *Moshe Safdie II,* a second monograph featuring work from 1996-2008, was published in 2009.

Safdie has been featured in several films, including *Moshe Safdie, The Power of Architecture*, which is a portrait film (directed by Donald Winkler, 2004), *My Architect: A Son's Journey* about Nathaniel Kahn and his father Louis I. Khan (directed by Nathaniel Kahn, 2003), and *The Sound of the Carceri*, about Bach and Piranesi, with Yo-Yo Ma (directed by Francois Girard, 1997).

In the fall of 2010, The National Gallery of Canada presented *Global Citizen: The Architecture of Moshe Safdie*, an exhibition that explores the architect's buildings and design philosophy. The exhibition is co-sponsored by Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and the Skirball Cultural Center.

Past exhibitions of Safdie's designs include *Building a New Museum* (Peabody Essex Museum, 2003-2004); *Moshe Safdie, Museum Architecture 1971-1998* (Tel Aviv University, 1998); *Moshe Safdie, Projects: 1979-1989* (Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 1989); and *For Everyone a Garden* (Baltimore Museum of Art, National Gallery of Canada, and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1973-1974).

Safdie has been the recipient of numerous awards, honorary degrees, and civil honors, including the Companion of the Order of Canada, the Gold Medal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, la Medaille du Merite from the Order of Architects of Quebec, Canada, and Israel's Rechter Prize.

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Firm Profile

Safdie Architects is an international architectural and urban planning practice founded and led by Moshe Safdie. Deeply committed to the creation of architecture that responds to local and regional characteristics of landscape, climate, cultural heritage, and contemporary life, Safdie is recognized for creating welcoming buildings and public spaces that contribute in meaningful ways to their setting while catalyzing a vibrant public life.

Safdie Architects is structured around a team of experienced partners, most of whom have worked together for many years. Moshe Safdie is lead designer on all projects by Safdie Architects. Together with the firm's partners and staff, he engages in an iterative design process, working closely with the client and consultants to test each project's program, refine design ideas, and facilitate the development of appropriate and effective solutions. To foster the advancement of innovative approaches, the firm sponsors a fellowship program, which is dedicated to research and the development of new ideas outside of the context of a specific project.

Safdie Architects is nimble in its approach, combining the advantages of an intimate design studio with the network of a global practice and its capacity for efficient implementation. Bringing together superior design, technical, and management skills, the firm is adept at working internationally in close collaboration with local and associate architects to develop innovative designs and see complex, large-scale projects to completion.

Projects by Safdie Architects are distinguished by their geographic and cultural diversity and represent many building types and scales. The firm has completed cultural, educational, and civic institutions such as museums, performing arts centers, libraries, religious facilities, and academic campuses; neighborhoods, residential developments and public parks; mixed-use urban centers and airports; and master plans for existing communities and entirely new cities, among other projects. The firm has created buildings and public spaces in such diverse communities around the world as Boston, Los Angeles, Ottawa, Jerusalem, Bangladesh and Singapore and for a wide range of clients, including municipal and government agencies, colleges and universities, private developers, and non-profit organizations and civic institutions.

The following "first principles" form the basis of Moshe Safdie's design philosophy and approach to architecture and urban design:

Shaping the Public Realm

One of the most important goals in architecture is to create meaningful, vital, and inclusive social spaces. As architects, we are responsible for shaping not only a project's program, but also its larger civic role of enabling and enriching the community. Our firm has designed civic buildings and public spaces, including museums, cultural centers, libraries, memorials, schools, urban parks, and religious facilities that serve as anchors of a vibrant public life in neighborhoods in cities around the world.

Architecture with a Purpose

We believe that architecture grows out of a vision of the way it can affect the lives of the individuals for whom buildings and public spaces are created. As architects, we are responsible for designing buildings that address human needs and aspirations. For example – a school, above all else, must be a wonderful place for learning. Every element of each design must be an expression of the life intended in a building.

Responding to the Essence of Place

The strength of our practice lies in the geographic and cultural diversity in which we work. We have created buildings in communities around the world: Boston, Los Angeles, Ottawa, Jerusalem, Bangladesh, and Singapore, among many other places. Our designs are specific to place and culture—they are inspired by, and woven into, the historic and social fabric of their site. Our solutions evolve in response to the context that defines a place – local and regional characteristics of landscape, climate, cultural heritage, and contemporary life. Celebrating the unique character of each place, we create buildings that belong.

Architecture that is Buildable

Architecture is not about building the impossible; it is about building what makes sense for a specific program and for a particular setting. It is about allowing the specific qualities of materials and the processes of construction to inform the design. The notion of "inherent buildability" is central to our work. We find elegant solutions that reflect the designing hand of nature. We are innovative architects and builders who use resources intelligently and carefully. We employ a full range of building tools and cutting-edge technologies to ensure efficiency and ease of construction.

Building Responsibly

Sustainability has always been a guiding principle of our work. As architects, we have a responsibility to respond to the issues of energy conservation and ecology, and to use resources efficiently while we advance our clients' goals. Sustainability, at its core, implies a way of building that is sensitive to local geography and culture. This approach not only addresses important ecological goals, it also enhances the sustainability of a building's use and value to its owners. Whenever possible, we choose to work with indigenous building materials and local labor. We always aim to preserve resources and construct the most with the least.

Humanizing the Megascale

In the 20th century, urban development has been shaped by factors such as proliferation of the automobile, greater population densities, and the advent of high-rise buildings made possible by new technologies. Architecture must cope with rapid urban growth, congestion, and resisting the dehumanization of the environment that is too often a result. As architects and urban designers, we work toward effective urban strategies to address these challenges, mitigate the dehumanizing effect of mega-scale, and enhance the quality of life in our cities and neighborhoods.

Keur Farah Pahlavi

Senegal, Africa



Designed as a new city and industrial harbor for a population of 100,000, the site was chosen for its proximity to phosphate mines 100 miles north of Dakar. Located in an oasis rich in vegetation and palms, the city's linear plan culminates in the harbor. Commerce and recreational facilities constitute the city's central spine, with residential neighborhoods on either side. A system of natural lakes and trees winds through the central district, and a network of pedestrian paths, markets, and squares allows residents to move through the city independently of the road system. The coast is permanently preserved as open space for recreation. The proposed housing accommodates the traditional Senegalese pattern of living, while significantly increasing in density to preserve land; a typical housing cluster forms an extended family compound, enclosing communal shaded courtyards designed to provide generous outdoor spaces. A joint Senegal-Iran undertaking, the project's development hinged on a barter: phosphates for an oil refinery, and ceased when the Khomeini regime discontinued its support.

Client: Government of Senegal/Her Majesty of Iran
Status: Unbuilt

Modi'in

Modi'in, Israel



The New City of Modi'in, roughly equidistant between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem along Israel's main highway, was planned for an ultimate population of 250,000. The project is intended to ease overcrowding on Israel's coastal plain and to provide housing for the large influx of immigrants. The site covers 3,300 hectares of mostly treeless, hilly terrain with rock escarpments.

The site topography consists of a network of valleys running east to west towards the sea. These valleys form the spine of the community – accommodating parks and community services – and are straddled by a couplet of one-way urban arteries. Each valley is planted and identified with its own species of tree – the Valley of Pines; the Valley of Palms; the Valley of Jacarandas. At least fifty percent of the area in each valley is devoted to parks and playgrounds, while the balance accommodates neighborhood shopping areas, schools, synagogues, clinics and other facilities.

The configuration of housing follows the site topography. Generally housing is limited to four stories in height, thus forming terraced massing culminating on the hilltops. There, high-rise buildings serve as landmarks, from which views to the Mediterranean are afforded.

Client: Ministry of Housing and Construction, Government of Israel
Program: Master plan and urban dewsign for the new city
Size: 4,500 hectares (11,120 acres)
Status: Completed 1989

Simpang New Town

Singapore



Simpang's design, with a projected population of 125,000, was commissioned by the Housing and Development Board of the Republic of Singapore. Facing the Straits of Johore on Singapore Island, the site is 20 kilometers from the city center and boarded by an extensive mangrove swamp, to be preserved as a wildlife refuge, and the beach island of Pulau Seletar. A hierarchy of three principal 'main streets' and a central linear park joined and orient the town. Streets and pedestrian ways run perpendicular to the linear park, where most social and educational services are located, to bring all dwellings into close proximity to landscape, services, the town center, and sea front. High-rise towers line the central park, the southern edge of town, and the waterfront to capture views. Low-rise deck housing stretches between these high ridges, opening to gardens and community decks with internal, landscaped views.

Status: Unbuilt

Habitat '67

Montreal, Quebec, Canada



Habitat was the major theme exhibition of the 1967 World Exposition in Montreal. It pioneered the design and implementation of three-dimensional prefabricated units of habitation. Three hundred sixty-five construction modules connect to create 158 residences. These range in size from 600-square-foot one-bedroom dwellings to 1,800-square-foot four-bedroom dwellings. In all, there are fifteen different housing types. Stepped back in their modular placement, each residence has its own roof garden. Play areas for young children are provided throughout the project.

Three elevator cores direct vertical circulation throughout the complex. Elevators stop at every fourth floor to serve pedestrian streets. The streets are continuous through the project, and access to the dwellings is directly off them. The project incorporates both covered parking for all tenants and additional visitor parking.

In Habitat '67 all the parts of the building, including the units, the pedestrian streets, and the elevator cores, participate as load-carrying members. The units are connected to each other by post-tensioning, high-tension rods, cables, and welding, all of which combine to form a continuous suspension system.

Client: Canadian Corporation for the 1967 World Exhibition
Associate Architects: David, Barott, Boulva
General Contractor: Anglin Norcross Quebec, Ltd.
Program: 365 prefabricated units, 158 dwellings
Total Program Area: 238,000 sq.ft. (22,160 sq.m)
Cost: $17 million Canadian
Status: Completed 1967

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Habitat of the Future

Design Research

To revisit the concept of Habitat almost half a century later demands that we reconsider and rearticulate the objectives of this enterprise. What did Habitat aim to provide? How has it lived up to its promise? How might it be improved as a living environment or made more affordable? Or made more sustainable? Or made more adaptable to current urban conditions? These questions draw on issues of lifestyle, social interaction, construction technologies, and real estate economies, to mention but a few of the relevant issues.

Habitat was, above all, about the theme “for everyone a garden,” a metaphor for making an apartment in a high-rise structure into what connotes “house”- a dwelling with its own identity, openness in a variety of orientations, and adjacent personal garden space set within a community. One of the charms of Habitat was that it maintained the feeling of an agglomeration of houses, not of high-rise apartment living. The individual identity of the house is maintained - its autonomy within the whole, its abutting garden open to the sky, its multiple orientations transcending the decades-old malaise associated with apartment living.

In deciding to embark on Habitat of the Future, we face the question, how might we do this today at the beginning of the twenty-first century? We must carefully define our objectives if we are to avoid an ambiguous drift, seesawing between questions of economics and density on one hand, and amenity and livability on the other. The following themes have guided the Habitat of the Future studies: regional adaptation, individualization of the dwelling, buildability, density and mixed-use, and structural simplification.

Sky Habitat

Singapore



Over the last four decades, Safdie Architects has created from the experimental project Habitat '67 in Montreal a series of projects incorporating fractal-geometry surface patterns, a dramatic stepping of the structure that results in a network of gardens open to the sky, and streets that interconnect and bridge community gardens in the air.

In Singapore, the 38-story Sky Habitat housing complex is representative of high-density, high-rise upper-middle-income urban housing, a typology that is in great demand in Singapore and other Asian cities. The prevailing designs for such housing have been towers that share common amenities on the ground level. For the Sky Habitat project, we have incorporated many design features to greatly expand family and community space amenities, in part by providing generous community gardens and outdoor spaces on the ground and in the air, as well as individual roof terraces and gardens for more than half of the individual residences.

Instead of independent towers, the design for Sky Habitat proposes a singular, interconnected (at three levels) clustering of terraced apartments with lush garden spaces. The overall mass is porous and open for air and light, with the air to breeze through and the light to penetrate. This maximizes views for families and for the community spaces, resulting in a more humane and delicate urban fabric than is usual in the traditional apartment building. The structure is highly rationalized, affording cross-ventilation and multiple exposures to every unit. It is well-adapted to maximizing air movement in Singapore's tropical climate. At the ground plane, above a sunken parking podium, 72 percent of the site is developed into a series of lush gardens, outdoor event rooms, swimming pools, and walking paths.

While providing an unprecedented quality of life, mitigating a sense of density and concentration and maximizing contact with nature, the complex also results in a village-like clustering of residential units, echoing hillside developments and the integration of architecture and plant life into a singular experience.

Habitat

Qinhuangdao, China



A high-density residential beachfront community, the Habitat project in Qinhuangdao offers a bold new concept for urban living. As a project that combines both second homes for residents of various neighboring Chinese cities, as well as permanent residence for many families of the city of Qinhuangdao, the design strives to create a garden environment combining numerous private and public gardens in the sky. Many units, ranging from ground to the 30th floor, open to generous roof decks, creating a series of stacked penthouses. In addition, there are garden/pool areas atop the parking deck and at the 15th and 30th floors respectively.

Habitat is conceived as a vital, urban seafront community. As such, it is organized around a beachfront boardwalk running north/south, and an east/west bazaar-like spine connecting the abutting neighboring communities as well as the community with the beach area. This crisscrossing of two community spines will provide for daytime and nighttime activities, designed for all seasons, with facilities that will serve both those living within and around.

Client: Kerry Properties Ltd.
Architects: Safdie Architects, Design Architect
Associate Architect: Local Design Institute of Shanghai
Program: 2400 residential housing units, community amenities and retail facilities
Cost: US $60-100 million
Status: In Construction

Chongqing Chaotianmen

Chongqing, China



Located on a historically significant site at the confluence of the Yangtze and Jialing rivers, the Chongqing Chaotianmen complex is composed of six slender towers that sit atop a five story retail podium, featuring residential and office space, retail facilities, a serviced residence, a hotel, restaurants and clubs. The project also integrates a public park and gardens, and will be a major hub for land and water transportation, housing a car park, metro station, bus interchange, ferry terminal, and cruise center. A major element of the design is a quarter-mile long, glass-enclosed structure, or 'conservatory,' perched at the 60-story level, accessible by four of the towers and providing a grand, common area for public activities.

As the city's initial dock area on the Yangtze, Chao Tian Men Plaza represents the great tradition of the shipping highway, which has fueled Chongqing's development as one of China's largest and most important modern cities. In designing the site, inspiration was drawn from historic images of great Chinese sailing vessels on the river, and the complex is intended to serve as a symbol of Chongqing's noble past as a trading center. Gently arcing toward the water, the six towers of the complex form the 'apex' to the city's peninsula, like the great masts of a ship, with its sails pulling the city forward.

Bridging the four interior towers at the 60-story level is the conservatory, which brings amenities and green spaces into the sky. The conservatory houses the hotel lobby, restaurants, pool, ballroom, spas, and clubhouse and gymnasium type facilities for the residential apartments. It also links the towers to one another high above the skyline, affording uninterrupted views of both rivers and of downtown Chongqing. Because Chongqing's climate can fluctuate drastically, the glass enclosure will ensure year-round enjoyment of the indoor gardens.

At the ground level, the project includes an expansive, nearly one-acre park featuring gardens and landscape features that will serve as one of the city's largest public amenities. The park gently slopes to the north, such that its entirety can be seen from the city, offering dramatic framed views to the water through the towers.

Beneath the park level, the podium offers five levels of retail gallerias, generously endowed with natural light and extensive views to both rivers. This ground level extends over the road, thereby providing pedestrian access to Chao Tian Men plaza and reconnecting the city to the water. Also included in the podium is a major public transportation interface – housing terminals for subway, train, and ferry.

Client: CapitaLand,CapitaMalls Asia, and Singbridge Ltd.
Area: 817,000 sq m (8,800,000 sq ft)
Status: In Design