

INSIGHTS

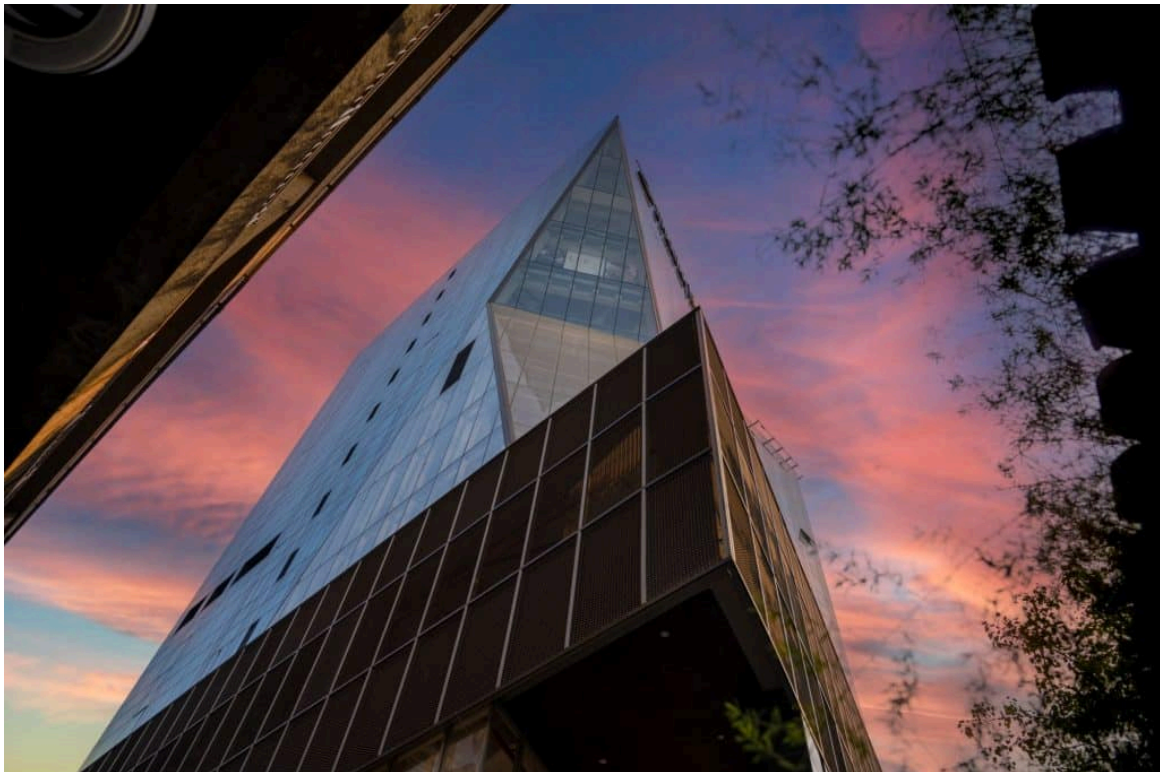
The hidden impact of female architects in shaping iconic cityscapes

Explore how female architects are redefining cities with empathy, resilience, and vision

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Architecture is more than just designing **buildings**; it is about shaping environments, influencing lifestyles, and leaving a lasting impact on society. As a female architect, my journey in this field has been both challenging and deeply rewarding. The presence of women in architecture is steadily growing, and with it comes a fresh perspective that is transforming the way we experience our cities.

The inspiration

As a young girl, I was always fascinated by buildings and the way they influenced their surroundings. There was a certain romance in construction and design — a sense of purpose and artistry — that drew me towards architecture as a career. My journey began at IES College of Architecture, where I laid the foundation for my knowledge and love for the field.

After working as an architect for over a year and a half, I chose to deepen my expertise by pursuing Advanced Construction Management at NICMAR, Pune, where I also studied Real Estate Finance. During this time, I was privileged to be part of the 10K Women Entrepreneur program by IIM Bangalore and Goldman Sachs. This experience equipped me with the tools to effectively run and grow a creative studio, shaping not only my entrepreneurial mindset but also my design philosophy.

Over the years, I've come to believe that great design goes beyond aesthetics, it is about functionality, sustainability, and crafting meaningful spatial experiences.

Bringing a unique perspective

One project that stands as a reflection of my resilience and growth is the Chambers project. Spanning 13 years from conception to completion (2008–2022), it was a journey marked by unexpected challenges — including the development of a metro line through the area. Yet, it also became a testament to patience, adaptability, and vision.

As a female architect, I believe I brought a nuanced perspective — one rooted in balance, detail-oriented problem-solving, and a deep sensitivity to space and human experience. Architecture is never black and white; it demands flexibility, innovation, and above all, the ability to stay true to your vision amidst evolving constraints. The Chambers project reaffirmed the value of perseverance and creative thinking, proving that endurance is as vital to good design as creativity itself.

How female architects shape cities

Women bring an innate sense of inclusivity into design. Female architects often prioritise human-centred approaches, with a focus on safety, functionality, and community well-being. Their design philosophy tends to consider social, cultural, and environmental contexts deeply — leading to more equitable, inclusive, and nurturing urban environments.

Architectural marvels like the Serpentine Gallery Pavilion and the Heydar Aliyev Centre by Zaha Hadid exemplify this unique sensibility. These structures, with their fluid forms and innovative spatial narratives, break away from convention, reminding us that architecture is a deeply human experience — not just a technical pursuit.

Challenges faced by women in architecture

Despite the strides we've made, being a woman in architecture comes with its own set of challenges. Gender bias, especially on construction sites, is a significant hurdle. The long hours and high demands of the profession can also make balancing career and family life difficult.

Yet, women continue to break barriers — leading complex projects, innovating fearlessly, and managing multiple roles with grace. We've proven that leadership and creativity know no gender.

The evolving recognition of female architects

The architecture industry is evolving — slowly but surely — to recognise and support female architects. More women are taking up space in this field, proving they can handle high-pressure roles and still balance personal responsibilities. Our ability to multitask, empathise, and innovate makes us valuable contributors to the industry's growth.

Trailblazers like Zaha Hadid, Sheila Sri Prakash, and Brinda Somaya have redefined what it means to be a woman in architecture. From Hadid's futuristic designs to Prakash's focus on sustainability and Somaya's cultural sensitivity — each has carved a unique path, inspiring generations to come.

Building the future: Mentorship and inclusivity

For more women to take on leadership roles in urban planning and architecture, mentorship programmes, leadership training, gender-inclusive policies, and strong professional networks are essential. Visibility matters. When young architects see women succeeding, they are inspired to dream big and challenge norms.

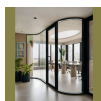
In today's world, equality should be a given — not a debate. Educational institutions and professional spaces must embrace gender-neutral curricula, inclusive hiring, and mentorship opportunities that support diverse voices. Only then can we create a truly balanced and enriched architectural landscape.

A future built by women

As female architects, we have the power to redefine urban spaces with empathy, creativity, and sustainability at the forefront. Our ability to blend practicality with artistry enables us to shape environments that uplift, include, and endure.

It is time to celebrate and amplify the contributions of women in architecture — not just on Women's Day, but every day. Because the cities of tomorrow will be shaped by the women of today.

Previous



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Next