

Infrastructure Abroad

Two New York firms followed very different paths to commissions for metro stations in India and a bridge in China By John Morris Dixon, FAIA



WXY ARCHITECTURE + URBAN DESIGN

As the economies of China and India have expanded, their demand for distinctive design has continued to rise. And the firms that first established beachheads in Asia don't necessarily get all the choice commissions. Two relatively small New York firms with special areas of expertise have recently produced memorable designs for infrastructure projects in these countries.

For Lee Harris Pomeroy Architects (LHPA), work in both China and India has developed in steps that could not have been planned. The firm designed the Lally School of Management at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), where Lee Harris Pomeroy, FAIA, RIBA, met a Chinese professor in the school's Sino-American MBA program. This encounter led to a meeting with the director of a new Economic Development Area in the port city of Tianjin. The two men invited Pomeroy to visit the site and asked him to do a feasibility study for a convention center there, which he carried out with a financial planning group from RPI. LHPA designed the center, which was completed in 2004. Convention activity it attracted led to its expansion, according to plan, in 2009. Contacts made as a result of the Tianjin work led a public/private partnership to commission LHPA to design the 1,000-unit Westgate residential and retail development in Shanghai, first phase completed in 2007.

Later visiting India, Pomeroy met with the developer and Bollywood movie idol Sanjay Khan. Impressed with the firm's work in China, Khan invited him to master plan a mixed-use development called Skill City in a Special Economic Zone near Bangalore.

Design Distinction for a Metro Line

Several factors lay behind LHPA's commission to design the stations for the new East-West Corridor of the Kolkata Metro Railway. In New York, the firm had completed renovation/expansion projects at the Lincoln Center, Union Square, MoMA, and Fulton Street subway stations, and had projects under way at the Bleecker Street and the 180th Street stations (both joint ventures with Weidlinger Associates). The latter involves restoration of a prominent, landmarked structure and its entry plaza.

Through these jobs, Pomeroy forged contacts with New York City Transit Authority staff members who came from India and had since returned there. As qualifications for the Kolkata project, LHPA's New York subway experience was complemented by its success with projects abroad. The firm was invited to join a design and engineering consortium with firms from the United Kingdom, France, Japan, and India, which won the metro commission.

LHPA has designed the aboveground portions of six stations on this new subway line, which will link Kolkata's two main railroad stations and an existing subway. All of the metro stations will have a significant urban presence – some with just a broad identifying canopy, others integrated into new mixed-use structures. One of them will be worked into the fabric of the Howrah Station, an imposing landmark of British rule. Another will be the dominant feature of a large new plaza at the busy Sealdah station.

carrying their footbridge scheme through essentially the design development phase, with the collaborating Southwest Municipal Engineering Design and Research Institute of China taking the process to completion, scheduled for next year. The details remain subject to design review by WXY and Weidlinger.

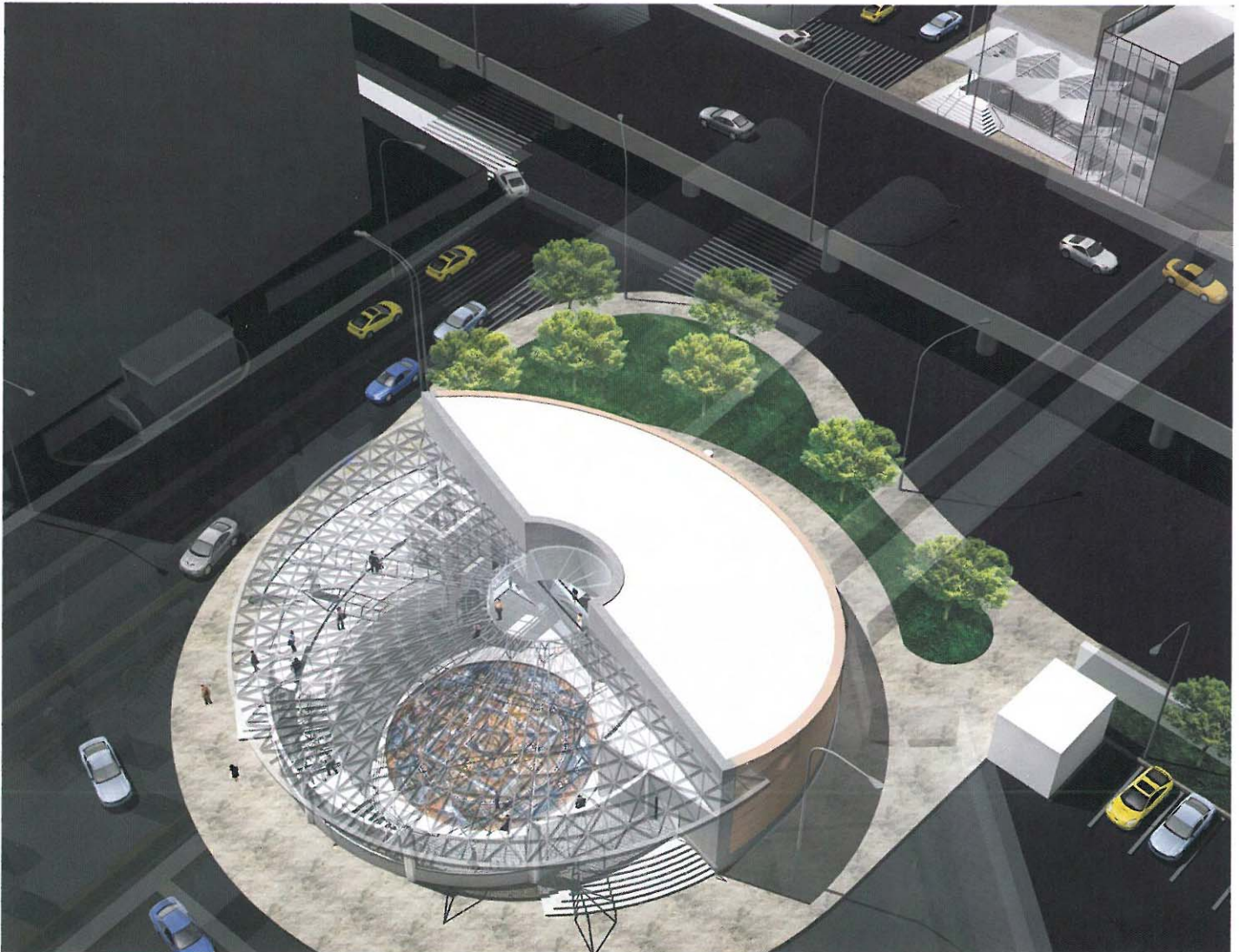
These commissions are just a few of many that architects from various countries have been carrying out in China and India. They demonstrate that there are intriguing opportunities abroad for a variety of firms, and that the outcome of these commissions can increase the international stature of American architects.

John Morris Dixon, FAIA, left the drafting board for journalism in 1960 and was editor of *Progressive Architecture* from 1972 to 1996. He wrote the Midtown Manhattan portion of the original 1967 *AIA Guide to New York City*. In recent years he has written for *Architectural Record*, *Architecture*, *Architect*, and other publications.

Project Credits:

Kolkata Metro Railway East-West Corridor (Underground Segment)
Client: Kolkata Metro Rail Corp. Ltd. (KMRCL)
Lee Harris Pomeroy Architects Team (Station Architecture, Support Facilities, and Property Development): Lee Harris Pomeroy, FAIA, RIBA, Antonio Figueroa, AIA, James Wright, AIA, Richard Foley, AIA, Leopoldo Torrocha
Project Management, Civil, Structural, Geotechnical Engineering; and Tunneling: Maunsell / AECOM
Railway Engineering Systems: EGIS Rail S.A.
Underground Engineering: Yachiyo Engineering Co., Ltd.
Transportation Planning: SGI/SEMS
Construction Administration: CES (Consulting Engineering Services India Private Limited)

Nanhe River Landscape Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge, Xinjin, China
Client: Chengdu and Xinjin Development Corporation
WXY Architecture + Urban Design Team: Claire Weisz, AIA, Mark Yoes, AIA, LEED AP, Layng Pew, AIA, Kate Brumder, LEED AP, Yeju Choi, Travis Eby, LEED AP, Matthew Gilbert, Shachi Pandey, LEED AP, Alan Tse, LEED AP
Weidlinger Associates Team (Design Engineer): Guang-Nan Fanjiang, PE, Qi Ye, PE, Jeremy Zhang, PE, Courtney Clark
Engineer-of-Record: Southwest Municipal Engineering Design & Research Institute of China



Lee Harris Pomeroy Architects: The entrance to the Sealdah Metro Station that provides an intermodal link to Sealdah Train Station includes a Mandala symbol in a sunken plaza