

**RANDHIR SAHNI | LLEWELYN-DAVIES SAHNI, INC.**

**education background** master of architecture/urban design, rice university, 1971 master of architecture, kansas state university, 1968 bachelor of architecture and ms, university of baroda, 1966 **professional affiliations** american institute of architects, texas society of architecture, urban land institute, american planning association **specialty** architecture | **planning+urban design** **website** thehdnet.com

**LISTENING TO A R. RAHMAN'S AWARD-WINNING JAI HO, GOT ME WRITING AND DANCING! IF YOU HAVEN'T EXPERIENCED INDIA, IN ONE WORD, GO! I HAD AN EYE OPENING, LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE WITH THE INSIGHT OF TOM BAKER FROM CRUISECENTER.COM. WE SPENT TWO ENLIGHTENING WEEKS TRAVELING THROUGH RAJASTHAN VISITING JEWEL-STUDED PALACES, PARTIALLY SUBMERGED TEMPLES, THE CHAOS OF THE STREETS WHERE PAINTED ELEPHANTS PULL UP BESIDE YOU AT A STOP NEXT TO A FAMILY OF 5 ON A MOPED.**

**FROM MUMBAI, CAMPING WITH HIS FATHER IN THE HILLS TRACKING BENGAL TIGERS, WHO KNEW RANDHIR SAHNI WOULD BE OFFERED A SCHOLARSHIP FROM RICE UNIVERSITY FOR ONE OF HIS MASTER'S DEGREES IN ARCHITECTURE BUT SPECIALIZING IN URBAN DESIGN. I GUESS IT IS A CASE, AS WE SAY IN TEXAS, OF "DANCING WITH THE ONE THAT BROUGHT YOU". I AM DELIGHTED TO INTRODUCE TO YOU, MR. RANDHIR SAHNI, SCHOLAR AND A GENTLEMAN. HIS INFLUENCE WILL CHANGE HOW MIDTOWN HOUSTON RELATES AS A COMMUNITY THROUGH STAR PLAZA AT THE HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAMPUS. BY OPENING UP THE CAMPUS AND ADDING GREEN-SPACE AND DIRECTIONAL PLANTING, THE HCC CAMPUS WILL BECOME AS ICONIC AS THE RICE UNIVERSITY IS TO THE MUSEUM DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD.**



sandra gunn | randhir sahni

**WHAT DROVE YOU TO ARCHITECTURE? WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT IT?**

The profession gives me the ability to influence, as well as shape, the urban environment. I love trying to figure out "what makes cities tick."

**WHAT DROVE YOU TO "GREEN" ARCHITECTURE?**

- In 1979 we worked on Post Oak Park, a 42-acre development planned for over 4 million square feet in UPTOWN with over four acres of open space.
- In 1981 we worked on the master plan of Houston Center, a 12-city block complex with Discovery Green park as its epicenter. Precepts include: a walking, mixed-use complex of 12 million square feet with housing, workplace, hotels, convention facilities and necessary attendant functions.
- From 1980-1994 we worked on Ben Taub Hospital and the LBJ replacement hospitals in the Texas Medical Center and focused our efforts on energy consumption, water retention, the use of mass transportation, medical equipment recycling, compact efficient 850,000 SF and 420,000 SF buildings on 11- and 20-acre sites.
- In 1985 we worked on the plans for the residential development around Lake Woodlands.
- In 1991 we worked on the UPTOWN/Galleria master plan to bring the light rail through the area and reduce the use of automobiles.
- In 2002 we worked on environmentally sensitive flood recovery for The University of Texas Health Science Center within the Texas Medical Center.
- In 2003 until 2005 we worked on the Image Plan of both Houston airports.
- From 2005 to the present we've been working on environmentally sensitive development of

Houston Community College campuses.

**WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT IT?**

Providing for quality urban growth while having the least impact of a growing population on the environment.

**CURRENT PROJECTS:**

Texas Southern University – Technology Building | Houston Community College – Star Plaza | Ed Wulfe/TxDOT – Redo of the Gulfgate Pedestrian Bridge over Loop-610  
Infrastructure and image work for HCC

**RECENT PROJECTS:**

Buffalo Bayou Walk | Bush and Hobby Airport Master Plans and Image Plans | Downtown Houston Theater District Master Plan | City of Houston – Central Water Testing Facility

**SO, THINKING BACK TO THE DRAWINGS YOUR MOTHER HAD UP ON THE REFRIGERATOR WHEN YOU WERE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL...WHAT WERE THEY?**

We didn't have a refrigerator when I was growing up. Instead, we got our cool water from an earthen pot. I didn't have time to draw as a child. I was away at boarding school in India from the time I was 9 years old and was on a very regimented schedule which didn't allow for time to "draw."

**HOW DID YOU COME TO LIVE/WORK IN HOUSTON AND WHY HAVE YOU CHOSEN TO MAKE THIS YOUR HOME?**



hcc central campus - view of the star plaza at hcc central campus

came to Houston to attend Rice University and was admitted to the first group of 10 students for the Master of Architecture in Urban Design. Houston was, at that time and still is, a laboratory for urban development – no limitation, no zoning restrictions – it attempts to answer the question what does something want to be. I chose to stay in Houston because I appreciate Houston's high level of acceptability and unique way of thinking.

**HOUSTON IS A VERY UNIQUE CITY. NO ZONING, AND ONLY RECENTLY A SENSE OF URBANISM, LACKING IN TRUE HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND PLENTY OF "COOKIE CUTTER" CONSTRUCTION. HOW DO YOU DESIGN AROUND THIS?**

Not so! The Bayou Plan prepared in the 1920s attempted to give the city a form.

**TELL US ABOUT YOUR HOME....**

I have designed my last two homes.

**House #1** – On a 8,000 SF lot introverted. No windows; skylight in atrium. All rooms have 12' wide glass opening into an atrium – resulting in year-round moderated ambient temperature.

**SIMPLE USE AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGY**

**House #2** – On a 1.2 acre lot with 100+ trees in City of Piney Point. The house design is introverted. Zoned AC by floor. All rooms with extensive glass which is shaded by tree cover in summer and rooms exposed to sun during winter resulting in extensive sunlight in every room and lower ambient temperature throughout the house. **SIMPLE USE AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGY.** House construction completed in 120 days.

**TELL US ABOUT THE "GREEN ELEMENTS" IN YOUR OWN HOME**

No irrigation, no trees cut; 18" overhangs; use of renewable material – wood floors/ structure/ exterior; higher EER, natural light; storm water retention; preservation of habitat – snakes, rabbits, birds, owls, raccoons, armadillos.

**ANYTHING TO WORK ON?**

Any project with the listed precepts. New urban center that takes into consideration the changing fixes: social equalization, information adaptability, respect for the living, respect for natural resources, minimal intervention into nature, conservation of energy.

**WHAT STAMP OR IDEA DO YOU WANT TO LEAVE ON THE WORLD AND WHY?**

A Gaudi-like legacy, Barcelona, Spain.

**BEST PLACE IN HOUSTON TO HANG OUT?**

My house.



**HOW CAN CHILDREN BE ENCOURAGED TO APPRECIATE ARCHITECTURE?**

By giving them opportunities to understand and comprehend why we build.

**WHAT CAN THE NEXT MAYOR FOCUS ON TO HELP MAKE HOUSTON MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY?**

Among other things treat the bayous as a unique form giver, open space, manage METRO's improvements, encourage the electric car by creating special paths as was done for bicycles during the Lanier Administration.

**IF YOU WERE HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, WHAT ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF ENERGY WOULD YOU FOCUS ON?**

Bio from waste, nuclear, wind and sea.

**IF YOU HAD TO LIVE OFF THE LAND, WHERE WOULD YOU LIVE?**

North Texas, Southern Colorado or California.

**FAVORITES:** GADGET iPhone **HOBBIES** WATCHING PEOPLE **MEAL** SIMPLE VEGETARIAN **MOVIE** PAPER MOON, GUIDE, BEFORE THE RAINS AND FUNNY MOVIES **BEST ENCHILADAS** CHEESE ENCHILADAS **AT NINFA'S** **WINE** SINGLE MALT WHISKEY **CAR** PORSCHE 911 **VACATION SPOT** ALASKA **LAST PLACE YOU WANT TO GO BEFORE YOU GO** JOURNEY BACKWARDS FROM WHERE I CAME. HOUSTON; INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA; BOULDER, COLORADO; MANHATTAN, KANSAS; DELHI, INDIA; BARODA, INDIA; JHASI, INDIA; KANPUR, INDIA; ALIGHAR, INDIA; MERRAT, INDIA; SHAHJAHANPUR, INDIA; LAHORE, PAKISTAN. **IF YOU WERE NOT AN ARCHITECT, WHAT WOULD YOU BE?** ECONOMIST WITH EMPHASIS ON CREATION OF WEALTH. **YOUR MOTTO** DO MORE FOR OTHERS THAN YOURSELF.