

## Auroville – A unique blend of Architecture, Technology and Sustainability



Auroville – city of dawn is a universal city dedicated to the spirit of human unity based on the ideas of Sri Aurobindo. It has been given multiple names like “a beautiful urban experiment”, “utopian township”, “experimental community” etc. It was founded by ‘The Mother’ *Mirra Alfassa* and designed by architecture pioneers like *Roger Anger* from France, *Piero & Gloria Cicionesi* from Italy and *Poppo Pingel* from Germany in the year 1968. The individual styles of the architects – curvilinear and innovative shapes by *Anger*, ‘Aspiration’ huts by *Piero & Gloria* made using local knowledge in a modern way and low cost yet detailed buildings of *Pingel* made way for a unique blend of the galaxy city.

In terms of physical development, Auroville aims at becoming a model of the ‘city of the future’ or ‘the city the earth needs’. It wants to show the world that future realizations in all fields of work will allow us to build beautiful cities where people sincerely looking towards a more harmonious future will want to live.

One of the most remarkable concepts of Auroville is its master plan, laid out in form of a galaxy – a galaxy in which several ‘arms’ or Lines of Force seem to unwind from a central region.

- At the centre stands the Matrimandir, the “soul of Auroville”, a place for individual silent concentration.
- Radiation out beyond the Matrimandir Gardens are four Zones, each focusing on an important aspect the township’s life:
  - Industrial (north)
  - Cultural (north east)
  - Residential (south/south west)
  - International (west)
- Surrounding the city area is a Green Belt consisting of forested areas, farms and sanctuaries with scattered settlements for those involved in green work.

In the initial stages the city adopted the vernacular building materials of casurina, keet, palm leaf and thatch. As the need for ‘community living’ developed, it gave way to the unconventional ‘Auromodele’. During the 70’s and 80’s, creative freedom took over which resulted in experimenting with building materials, technology, design and life-styles resulted in present day serious applied research offering

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advances in ferro-cement technology for roofs and interior fittings as well as compressed earth blocks for load bearing structures.

As described by Aurovillian architect *Mona Doctor-Pingel*, “The architecture here, in its multiplicity of styles and typologies is an expression of its core values and reflect the socio-economic, cultural, ideological, ecological and climatic factors of the location”.

Technology plays an important role in the pursuit for sustainable living. The word generally misconstrued as advanced engineering and materials is also learning from the past, using the basic materials in a most innovative ways and building structures that are user friendly and sustainable in the long run rather than being iconic buildings with no relevance to its context, natural surroundings and the user. Several research institutes at Auroville are working on innovative processes by modifying and integrating new and existing technologies.

Auroville is truly a beautiful urban experiment which embodies the universal principles of design, technology and sustainability.

References:

1. [www.auroville.org](http://www.auroville.org)
2. [www.buildotechindia.com](http://www.buildotechindia.com)