



Neeraj Kumar
Project manager
Self Tucker Architects, Inc.

As an architect, Kumar believes his major role should be focused on addressing social and environmental needs of the society. Over the course of his career, he has indulged his passion for designing buildings for the disabled by being extensively involved with Americans with Disabilities Act projects. Having been recently certified as a LEED Associated Professional by the U.S. Green Building Council, Kumar is shifting his focus to the environmental side of the profession. Before coming to the U.S., he was a consultant for the state government of India, working to develop cost efficient designs for the rural part of the country.

BIOGRAPHY

Age: 40
Hometown: Patna, India
Education: B.A. in architecture from the School of Planning and Architecture in New Delhi, India; master's in city planning from University of Memphis
First job: Research assistant at U of M
Family: Shweta (wife), Rohan (son)

TRUE CONFESSIONS

Like best about job: Opportunities for creativity and innovation; never bored at work
Like least about job: Pressure to meet unrealistic deadlines
Pet peeve: People who do not call back
Most important lesson learned: Face your fears
Person most interested in meeting: Barack Obama
Most respected competitor: Project deadlines
Career goals: Enhance the quality of life of those who live and work in buildings I design.
First choice for a new career: Hosting "Home & Garden" show.

PREDILECTIONS

Favorite quote: "Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new." — Albert Einstein
Most influential book: *Gandhi An Autobiography: The Story Of My Experiments With Truth* by Mohandas

K. Gandhi

Favorite cause: Working on Americans with Disabilities Act projects
Favorite status symbol: Interior decor
Favorite movie: "Titanic," "Gone with the Wind"
Favorite restaurant: Texas de Brazil, Bonefish Grill
Favorite vacation spot: Las Vegas, the Gulf shore in Florida
Favorite way to spend free time: With friends and family
Favorite stress reducers: Playing with my son
Favorite musician: Michael Jackson, A. R. Redman
Automobile: BMW X3

WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

In redevelopment projects, how can you pay the proper homage to what the building or space once was without hindering what you're trying to accomplish with the new design?

Redevelopment projects are critical in preventing the deterioration of inner city communities. These projects are important for the prosperity and revitalization to create a better sense of community. Typically, older deteriorated homes and communities are demolished to make way for future redevelopment. However, I believe that redevelopment efforts should be sympathetic to the community's historical background and identity. Communities and buildings are designed for longevity and stability. Demolishing historic buildings destroys the community identity and historic framework.

Creating new spaces should be done without destroying the past, but by discovering a community's past assets and understanding how these assets can be adaptively reused for a new market. The existing infrastructure should be utilized as much as possible. Redevelopment plans should identify vacant spaces and non-contributing buildings for land infill and replacement, while enhancing the health, safety and prosperity of deteriorating communities without destroying their existing framework and historic identity.

First

Independent Bank is the first project in Shelby County or West Tennessee to achieve LEED Silver Certification by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC).

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