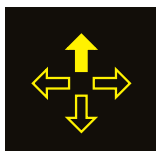
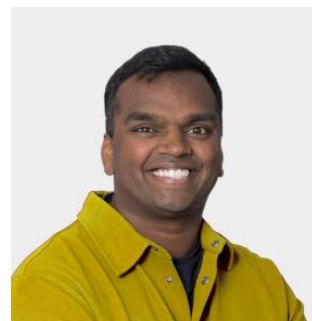


SGP

Why the Industrial and Logistics Sector needs a new generation of architects



By Joseph Silva
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The younger generation show a willingness to change outdated design norms, simply by questioning 'why?'

When starting architectural education, many students have ideas of what kind of architect they want to be. Many want to design houses, some have their sights on heritage projects, and some think they will spend their careers on the golf course(!) but it wouldn't be unreasonable to say that barely any budding architects have considered a career in Logistics and Industrial architecture.

Warehouses, fulfilment centres, transport hubs and distribution networks form the physical infrastructure that keeps our cities/economies and ultimately our countries running, yet their design is rarely considered a creative or aspiration pursuit for architecture students. This neglect will lead to a growing gap between the logistical demands of the 21st century and the architectural innovation that will be required to meet these demands.

The logistics sector needs an infusion of young architects and designers, not only to ensure the continued supply of high-quality logistics facilities, but also to bring fresh perspectives on technology, sustainability and the user experience. However, it's arguable that there is a curriculum gap, where logistics and industrial design is often overlooked in design studio briefs, creating a significant disconnect between education and the real-world demand for high-quality logistics space. The logistics sector represents a massive scale of opportunity as it's one of the few growing building typologies, and graduates need to be equipped to engage meaningfully with it.

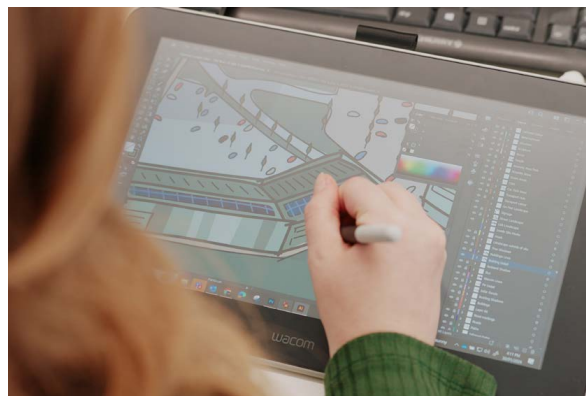
At SGP, we are always looking to the future and succession, and I'm fortunate to mentor four architectural assistants, at varying stages of their education and career. It is my experience that they bring with them a fresh perspective on the sector, whether in masterplanning or building design. Without aging myself, I too feel that I can provide a different perspective and viewpoint that only comes from my specific background and my sometimes-childlike ambition!

A wider understanding of environmental and sustainability issues, coupled with legislative changes, has both informed and influenced successive generations to become even more focussed on our already well-honed commitment to Net-Zero design, which is critical for the decarbonisation of logistics buildings. Most developers are now setting ESG business goals, which highlights their specific progress in achieving their sustainability goals. Such transparency chimes well with newer generations who demand/expect honesty from companies and fosters a workforce that continues to be proud to work for these clients, noting the positive change they can bring.

Notably, younger architects have a nuanced perspective on the workplace, and how this experience should feel. This is reflected in their design proposals for offices, where there is a priority for worker wellbeing, good daylight, spatial quality, which can often be forgotten in industrial environments where space is king. Unfortunately, we are unable to always include padel courts into all of our masterplans, but that doesn't mean we aren't including them on some!

As new generations enter the profession, they naturally bring with them different digital experiences and an increasing familiarity with emerging technologies. This is leading to new

architects coming into the industry with strong skills in BIM, AI, parametric design and more graphics-focused software. We are always trying to push the needle when it comes to presentation styles, and bringing even more of these new skills and perspectives into our teams is only helping us to keep evolving the way we present our work.



We host design reviews with the team weekly, and part of this involves developing what the current typology for industrial architecture is, challenging the 'big grey shed' stereotype, and encouraging more bespoke architectural design solutions, that address their context appropriately. This includes a more positive integration into the urban fabric, with better contextual awareness of mixed-use requirements as well as adaptive design. Perhaps there is more of a motivation for early-stage architects, who originally intended to work in other sectors, to make the sector more design-focussed, in order to present more buildings that we are proud of. When you compare yourself to your peers, there is always a degree of satisfaction talking about the significant clients we have the privilege of working with from major national and international brands, but always we want to be able to pair that with a pride for the buildings we design and deliver. We eventually want to facilitate design equity between sectors.



Ultimately, my intention for this article is to trigger a conversation about future-proofing the profession. Logistics is an innovative and dynamic industry, and masterplanners, architects and designers need to keep pace with the rate of change. For many years, SGP has actively challenged the institutional standards that typically govern the design of industrial and logistics buildings, with a view to better serving the requirements of 21st century occupiers. Younger generations, simply by nature of their fresh perspective and willingness to question everything, can be equally keen to change emerging design norms. As annoying as that might be, we need to reflect on all aspects of design and challenge ourselves to improve. 'We Challenge' is one of the value propositions of SGP, and young architects certainly like to challenge!



As e-commerce and automation reshape logistics globally, the design of these spaces is already evolving beyond the simplification of efficiency alone. We have an opportunity to redefine what a warehouse or distribution centre means, transforming them into more contemporary, resilient and adaptable spaces, with a focus on enhancing the user experience, with good design and amenity. It's worth noting that the 'user' isn't necessarily just the tenant, it could also include the neighbours to the development, who may be using the share amenity.

Many of my distinguished colleagues have 25+ years of experience in logistics, which is an important knowledge base and skill set we can draw from. Looking ahead, I am keen to build on that strong foundation and ensure that SGP's Industrial and Logistics sector continues to develop the next generation of expertise, supporting the same smooth transition of knowledge and leadership that has served the practice well.



Having recently won the ProCon Rising Star of the Year Award (humble brag), I said to the judging panel that the next step for me was not just about me, it was about championing the aspiring architects that I work with and mentor to be Rising Stars themselves. They've all got the capability, and with SGP's mentoring there is no reason why they can't be that.

The intention is not to solely future proof the business, but ultimately future proof the profession. It's clear that **'Logistics needs the next generation'**.

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