

IN CONVERSATION

Studio Lotus

ARCHITECTURE

Krushi Bhavan, Studio Lotus

Swabhumi, Salient

A&B

TOTAL NUMBER OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER 84

MUMBAI

₹ 200

JANUARY 2020

VOL 33 (5)



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ICON LECTURERS OVER THE YEARS



Dr B V Doshi,
Pritzker Laureates, 2018
India

"India is diverse economically, socially, culturally and climatically. We need to stop talking about buildings and talk about a sense of community. That is what identity stems from."



Richard Meier,
USA
Pritzker 1984 Laureate

"I think, any work of architecture that has, with it, some discussion, and some polemic, is good. It shows that people are interested and people are involved."



Fumihiko Maki,
Japan
Pritzker 1993 Laureate

"Time was able to give us the ability to reflect on what we had done and became the mediator between the city and its architecture."



Late Charles Correa,
India
Padma Vibhushan, Padmashri,
RIBA Gold Medal

"Place represents that part of truth that belongs to architecture."



Massimiliano Fuksas,
Italy
Crystal Globe IAA Grand Prix 2015

"Architecture is probably the easiest and simplest interpretation of art and culture."



Peter Rich,
South Africa
Building of the Year award at WAF

"You cannot reinvent the wheel with architecture; it has all been done before."



Toyoo Ito,
Japan
Pritzker 2013 Laureate

"Asian Architecture and cities have inherited the culture of integrating with nature and are opened to nature."



Sir Peter Cook,
UK
Royal Gold Medal of the RIBA

"History of architecture seems to be preoccupied by the form of the window, the decoration of the window, the acknowledgement of the window."

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GRAFF LAUNCHES UNPARELLELED SHOWER LINE WITH THERMOSTATIC COLUMNS

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GRAFF, the worldwide manufacturer of innovative faucets and shower systems launches the exquisite shower line with Thermostatic shower columns for beyond to belief wellness experience. As part of an exhaustive shower portfolio, GRAFF offers a wide range of thermostatic shower columns in different finishes and designs. The shower collection by GRAFF comes with the choice of traditional cross handles, porcelain handles or metal handles. The shower line with thermostatic columns can be viewed at www.graff-designs.com

GRAFF elegant shower columns feature a functional thermostatic unit together with a shower head mounted on a unique unit and equipped with anti-scale nozzles for an easier maintenance. The collection is available in several glamorous finishes. Thermostatic Shower Columns by GRAFF come with the advantage of a thermostatic unit in place of a mechanical mixer: water can be set on the favorite temperature level and kept constant during the whole shower, even when some other water outlet is used in the same house.

Been designed and developed in several refined and long-lasting finishes the collection fulfills everyone's hunt for any design from traditional Victorian to modern and contemporary. Scripting the future wellness experience GRAFF fuses design and luxury with comfort and functionality. ■

About GRAFF: Headquartered in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and with locations throughout Europe, GRAFF is recognized globally for its trend-setting products and unique vision. Supported since 1922 by extensive plumbing and hardware manufacturing experience, GRAFF offers a wide range of contemporary, transitional and traditional styling. GRAFF's commitment to creating cutting-edge, premium-quality fixtures is evident in each product. GRAFF employs more than 1,000 dedicated professionals and has control over the full production process, making it truly a vertically integrated manufacturer.

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Skybridges, Test Towers and Innovations: thyssenkrupp Elevator sets the Tech Trends and Highlights for 2020



- New innovations lead the way, including skybridges which revolutionize space as we know it and smart technologies that mean elevators can be fixed, even before they are broken
- These innovations, alongside tower running, “flying carpets” for city centers and the world’s first ropeless elevator for skyscrapers makes for an exciting year ahead

2020 is knocking on the door. What will it bring for the technologies that disrupt - or even - revolutionize industries? “Que será?”, as the famous song goes, for indeed, the future is hard to predict. But sometimes, there are exceptions.

Such is the case for thyssenkrupp Elevator, whose research engineers have not only developed smart innovations for next year but have also prepared for the future. You could say that they have looked into the crystal ball and discovered some exciting trends and key highlights for 2020. A snapshot of these is captured below:

- **Skybridges:** One of the main trends for 2020 will be the further development and increasing use of what has been named ‘skybridges’ as an architectural element. No longer just a connection between two buildings at lofty heights, but instead a useful area and living space. “Skybridges are the transportation routes of the future instead of a mere architectural connection. For example, rather than holding the function of a pedestrian bridge between skyscrapers, these areas will instead be turned into living spaces at exciting heights. These areas will include swimming pools, event spaces, meeting rooms or even a skybar. As a cross-connection with many functions, they also pave the way for our vertically moving ropeless system, MULTI,” comments

Markus Jetter, Head of Research & Innovation Center Rottweil at thyssenkrupp Elevator, thyssenkrupp Elevator funds an 18-month research project, “Skybridges: Bringing the Horizontal into the Vertical Realm,” which will culminate in the publication of a Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat Technical Guide on the topic, with richly-detailed narratives and technical drawings, as well as historical overviews and future speculations about skybridges’ potential.

MULTI is the world’s first ropeless elevator system specifically made for skyscrapers, which will dominate the development of future urban mobility. MULTI is driven by linear motors and cabins which move independently in a single shaft, just like in a metro system. That’s what makes it perfect for multiple innovative applications. Moreover, it opens exciting new perspectives for architects and developers.

One thing is for sure: 2020 will be a very exciting and versatile year. thyssenkrupp Elevator will initiate much innovation and will bring existing solutions to the next level. And there’s another thing that’s for sure: 2020 will be a great year for urban mobility and the further development of urban life – including more comfort and more flexibility. ■

For further information please contact

Dr. Jasmin Fischer
 Head of Media Relations
 thyssenkrupp Elevator AG
 Tel: +49 201 844-563054
 E-mail: jasmin.fischer@thyssenkrupp.com
 Website: www.thyssenkrupp-elevator.com
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Shaw Contract Introduces Living Systems

Living Systems is a new Cradle-to-Cradle Certified Silver collection carpet tiles that represents a holistic design approach.

Shaw Contract recently introduced Living Systems, a Cradle-to-Cradle Certified™ Silver collection of 9x36 in. carpet tiles that represents a holistic design approach.

Embracing the concept of regenerative design, Living Systems integrates human needs in the built environment with sustainable integrity. As biophilic design becomes increasingly important in the built environment for its restorative and rejuvenating benefits, Living Systems' nature-inspired and regenerative qualities are particularly relevant. With biophilic references that evoke a sense of calm, Living Systems is a welcome solution for healing spaces. This soft surface flooring collection reduces stress through the use of patterns, textures and colours found in the natural ecosystem, creating a visual that promotes wellbeing. ■

About Shaw Contract: Shaw Contract is the global commercial division of the US-based Shaw Industries Group Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway Inc. Shaw Contract has been active in India since two decades and has built two state-of-the-art Experience Centres in Bengaluru and Mumbai, in addition to regional offices at Delhi, Hyderabad, Pune and Chennai. Shaw Contract flooring has been installed throughout India in over 3,000 designed environments in a wide range of sectors including corporate, hospitality, retail, healthcare, and education. Shaw Contract believes that the ground beneath our feet should have a positive impact on how we live, learn, work, and play. For more details please visit <https://www.shawcontract.com/en-in>



Further information:

Shaw Contract
 #19/3, Doddamane, 2nd Floor, Vittal Mallya Road, Bangalore, Karnataka 560001.
 E-mail: saritha.shetty@shawcontract.com
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Water flows best in stream lines. It can be assumed that there are layers and layers of water one upon the other and these layers "flow" by slipping over each other, moving forward because of the forces of the hydraulic head. To ensure minimum head losses, so that discharge remains optimum at the outlet, it's best if there are minimum of bends and curves along the flow path, in the pipeline as well as in the faucets. Each existing bend or curve causes back flow and eddy currents that impede the forward flow and thus reduce the rate of discharge.

Typhon is a range of faucets that is designed to maintain a high rate of discharge at the faucet outlet. The design of Typhon faucets is such that only necessary bends and angles are kept. Most of the faucet thus encourages a laminar, streamlined, unencumbered flow of water.

Typhon uses 3/4" Q/T headworks which add technological modernity and convenience of operation to the faucet. The 3/4" assembly as well as having broader cavities, makes it possible for Typhon faucets to offer highest discharge rates for homes among peer products in the Indian sanitary fittings industry.

Exquisitely finished with rich coats of Nickel and Chromium for protection as well as lustre, Typhon faucets uses the latest technology and ingredients to provide long lasting and impeccable performance. The operating knobs are light weight yet durable and ensure longer life for the spifful flows and stress-free operations.

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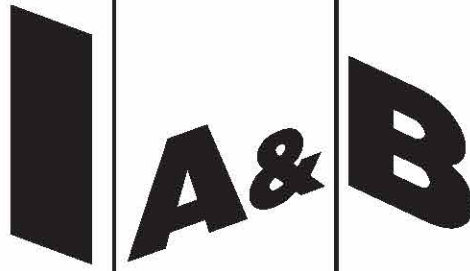
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IN CONVERSATION

14 The principals of 'conscious design': founders of studio lotus recount their design journey

Brought together by their passion for design and their commitment to quality, Amrishi Arora, Sidhartha Talwar and Ankur Choksi, principals, Studio Lotus talk about the spirit of learning, collaboration and 'intrapreneurship' that has shaped the practice's outstanding oeuvre.

ARCHITECTURE

28 Building – for the people, with the people

Designed for the Government of Odisha, Krushi Bhawan transcends the typical closed-off office campus morphology by integrating governmental functions with direct community engagement and education - manifesting the idea of decentralized state power in the process.

44 Of Joy, culture and the erstwhile Rajbari

Swabhumi by Salient is an adaptive reuse project that attempts to bridge the gaps between an erstwhile Kolkata and the city that the citizens seek. The precinct that comprises of a boutique hotel, shopping spaces, recreational areas and more borrows from the legacies of the past with infrastructure that has all the makings of a cultural yet commercially viable complex.

ACADEMIA

58 Reimagining a resurrection

Prof. Percy Adil Pithawala and his team members Dhruv Shah, Varun Shah, and Devansh Patel of The Red Studio reimagine the spire of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris post the April 2019 fire mishap.

70 The Generic Urban

An essay by Rupal Rathore.

Cover Image: © Studio Lotus

Chairman & Editor: Maulik Jasubhai Shah
Printer, Publisher & Chief Executive Officer: Hemant K. Shetty

Sub-Editor: Shriti Das
Writers: Sharmila Chakravorty
Design: Kenneth Menezes
Subscription: Dilip Parab
Production Team: V Raj Misquitta (Head), Prakash Nerkar
Email: iab_editorial@jasubhai.com

Head Office:
JMPL, Taj Building, 3rd Floor, 210, Dr D N Road, Fort, Mumbai - 400 001.
Tel: +91-22-4037 3636, Fax: +91-22-4037 3635

SALES
Brand Manager: Sudhanshu Nagar
Email: sudhanshu_nagar@jasubhai.com

MARKETING TEAM & OFFICES

Mumbai: Sudhanshu Nagar
Taj Building, 3rd Floor, 210, Dr D N Road, Fort, Mumbai 400 001.
Tel: +91-22-4037 3636, Fax: +91-22-4037 3635, Mobile: +91 9833104834
Email: sudhanshu_nagar@jasubhai.com

Delhi: Priyaranjan Singh
803, Chiranjeev Tower, No 43, Nehru Place, New Delhi – 110 019
Tel: +91 11 2623 5332, Fax: 011 2642 7404.
Email: pr_singh@jasubhai.com

Bengaluru / Hyderabad / Gujarat: Sudhanshu Nagar
Mobile: +91 9833104834, Email: sudhanshu_nagar@jasubhai.com

Kolkata: Sudhanshu Nagar
Mobile: +91 9833104834, Email: sudhanshu_nagar@jasubhai.com

Pune: Sudhanshu Nagar
Mobile: +91 9769758712, Email: sudhanshu_nagar@jasubhai.com

Chennai / Coimbatore: Princebel M
Mobile: +91 9444728035, +91 9823410712,
Email: princebel_m@jasubhai.com

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Printed and Published by Hemant K Shetty on behalf of Jasubhai Media Pvt Ltd (JMPL), 26, Maker Chamber VI, Nariman Point, Mumbai 400 021. Printed at The Great Art Printers, 25, S A Brelvi Road, Fort, Mumbai 400 001 and Published from Mumbai - 3rd Floor, Taj Building, 210, Dr D N Road, Fort, Mumbai 400 001. Editor: Maulik Jasubhai Shah, 26, Maker Chamber VI, Nariman Point, Mumbai 400 021.

Godrej interio | KITCHENS

Godrej Interio launches India's first Kitchen Experience Centre

Renowned chefs Rakhee Vaswani and Varun Inamdar along with leading interior designer Saniya Kantawala to discuss the emergence of Kitchen as a socializing zone in India



↑ (L-R) Nyrika Holkar, Exec director, Godrej & Boyce; Anil Mathur, Chief operating officer, Godrej Interio



↑ (L-R) Subhod Mehta, Senior. Vice president, B2C, Godrej Interio; Saniya Kantawala, Interior designer; Chef Varun Inamdar; Chef Rakhi Vaswani; Anil Mathur, Chief operating officer, Godrej Interio

Godrej Interio, India's leading furniture brand in-home and institutional segments, today launched its first 'kitchen experience center' in Mumbai in the presence of Nyrika Holkar (Executive Director, Godrej & Boyce Mfg. Co. Ltd.), Anil Mathur (Chief Operating Officer, Godrej Interio), along with culinary experts Chef Rakhee Vaswani and Chef Varun Inamdar as well as interior design expert, Saniya Kantawala (Saniya Kantawala Design).

The first-of-its-kind hub highlights Godrej Interio's design philosophy which is based on user centric approach. Consumers and interior designers can experience the best of products and services by Godrej Interio to co-create a customized and personalized kitchen design from a myriad range of options.

The launch also witnessed an engaging discussion on "The Emergence of Kitchen as a socializing place". While Chef Rakhee Vaswani and Chef Varun Inamdar elaborated on their experience of working in ergonomically and aesthetically designed kitchens, Saniya Kantawala

shared insights on creating an effective social kitchen. The panelists also highlighted how Indian cuisines are vastly different from other geographies, and hence the kitchen design must adapt and accommodate to the needs of consumers of the region.

Based on the changing consumer needs and workstyles, Kitchen provides a space that not only gives a productive, enjoyable cooking experience. It also offers the opportunity to socialize with your loved ones during and after cooking.

On the launch Nyrika Holkar, Executive Director, Godrej & Boyce said, "At Godrej, our mission has always been about enriching the quality of living every day everywhere. The Indian modular kitchen segment is fast growing and holds immense potential. With shrinking spaces and paucity of quality time with loved ones and families, kitchen has emerged as a social space where friends and family can cook, chat and eat together. We have listened closely to our customers and believe there is a significant opportunity for Godrej Interio to provide greater





value by offering a comprehensive solution for the Indian kitchen space in homes. For 120 years we have been at the forefront of the home interior and durables markets in India and we shall continue to serve the consumers and give them a remarkable experience”

Stressing upon the commitment to provide an unparalleled level of service and experience to consumers, Anil Mathur, Chief Operating Officer, Godrej Interio, said, “ Godrej Interio kitchens are designed as per the anthropometric data of Indian users, keeping in mind the ergonomics and Indian as well as western style of cooking. With our in-house Design and Manufacturing facility we offer consumers wide variety of designs, accessories, material & finishes to choose from. All this with a warranty of 15 years offers style with convenience, which makes cooking experience hassle-free and fun. Currently, the modular kitchen market is quite nascent but is expected to grow at

fast pace. We have aggressive growth plans in this segment with CAGR of 30% in 19-20.”

The discussion was an extension of Godrej Interio’s recently launched campaign – Make Space for Life which aims to highlight that in pursuit of professional excellence people feel they are compromising significantly on creating strong family ties, spending quality time with friends, and celebrating important life milestones.

As a part of the campaign, a national survey with over 1300 Indians living across 13 cities highlighted practicality trumps passion for a majority of Indians. Moreover, more than 68 % of the respondents feel that they miss out on living life on their terms in trying to maintain a work-life balance. Also, a staggering 56.7% of the respondents rate their work-life balance as terrible. ■

About Godrej Interio: Godrej Interio (GI) is India’s leading furniture brand in both home and institutional segments with a strong commitment to sustainability and centers of excellence in design, manufacturing and retail.

Led by the largest in-house design team in the country in the furniture category and awarded with 33 India Design Mark Awards till date, GI aims to transform spaces with its thoughtfully designed furniture to create brighter homes and offices with products that have the highest design quotient in aesthetics, functionality and technology. With consistent pursuit of excellence and a special focus on health and ergonomics, GI’s product portfolio comprises a massive range in the office, home and other specialized applications, viz:

- i. B2B – Office Modular Furniture, Turnkey Projects, Marine Accommodation Solutions, Healthcare Furniture and Lab Furniture
- ii. B2C – Home Furniture & Storage, Mattress and Kitchens

Godrej Interio has 7 manufacturing facilities situated at Mumbai, Haridwar, Shirwal, and Bhagwanpur. GI’s Shirwal Plant is Green Co Platinum Certified and Mumbai Plants are Green Co Gold Certified. GI

is widely known for its comprehensive sustainability certifications for its products in furniture category.

GI commitment to the environment has resulted in manufacturing products with lesser environment footprint. Our pioneering efforts include designing less environment burdening products, usage of eco-friendly materials and setting up less polluting and consuming processes, ensuring eco-friendly packaging and transportation and finally the extended responsibility of recycling/reuse of used furniture and scrap, thus ensuring a lifecycle approach to green. GI has the widest range of green choices for our customers which not only includes products but also services such as green interiors and recycling.

Currently present in over 650 cities with 300 exclusive showrooms and 800 dealers, GI is one of the largest divisions of Godrej and Boyce Mfg. Co. Ltd., part of the Godrej Group, one of India’s largest engineering and customer product groups.

The brand boasts of noteworthy awards received so far- CII Exim Bank Award for Business Excellence 2016, Superbrands 2017-18, Asia’s most admired brand 2016, Reader’s Digest Most Trusted Brand 2018 Gold (Home Furniture) and Reader’s Digest Most Trusted Brand 2018 Gold (Modular Kitchens).

Further information:

Godrej Interio Registered Head Office
Godrej & Boyce Manufacturing Company Limited Pirojshanagar,
Vikhroli, Mumbai 400 079, India.
Tel: +91-22-6796 5656



↑ JOHNSON-TILES LAUNCHES SMART TILES AND A MODERN EXPERIENCE CENTRE AT PUNE.



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JOHNSON-TILES LAUNCHES SMART TILES AND A MODERN EXPERIENCE CENTRE AT PUNE

H & R Johnson (India), the leading ceramic tiles manufacturer and a division of Prism Johnson Limited, opened its 2nd exclusive Experience Centre in Maharashtra, at Pune. The occasion was also marked by its launch of 'Smart Series' tiles for which Johnson recently received the "Superbrand" status in India. This unique and large showroom is thematically designed with product application mock-ups and is branded as 'House of Johnson Experience Centre'. Located at Sable House, Satara Road, near Swargate, Gultekadi, Pune, this company showroom has a collection of over 2500 tiling concepts, sanitary ware, bathroom fittings and engineered stones which makes it one stop shop to choose high quality, durable and stylish products for interiors.

The showroom was inaugurated by H & R Johnson's CEO and ED Mr. Sarat Chandak. Commenting on the occasion, Mr. Sarat Chandak, ED & CEO of H & R Johnson (India) said, "Johnson has long held a strong belief in the philosophy of relentless innovation to pioneer the future of the categories we deal in. The new generation Experience Centers will completely elevate the buying and selection process for Lifestyle products being a one-stop-shop for planning & designing residential as well as commercial spaces."

Having started its journey in England in 1901, brand Johnson-Tiles came to India in 1958 and over the last 60 years of making tiles, the brand has become a pioneer of many innovations in the tiling industry. And most of these innovations can be found in their exclusive experience center located on Satara Road, Pune. Bringing all the products from Johnson under one roof, this Experience Centre boasts of the widest range of tiles for all different spaces, including residential interiors, exteriors, parking areas, commercial spaces and industrial spaces. Recently, Johnson was in news when their Brand Ambassador and Bollywood actress Katrina Kaif launched Johnson International collection of sanitary ware and bath-fittings in an event at Goa.

On being asked 'what is meant by smart tiles', H & R Johnson's Marketing Head Mr. Dinesh Vyas said, "While it is very well known that good tiles means beauty and durability, our relentless focus on innovation and customer aspirations has helped us make 'smart tiles', which deliver more than what is commonly available and expected. We have created and launched our patented 'Anti-Microbial' tiles for walls and flooring. These Germ Free tiles do not allow dangerous bacteria to grow on your floor or wall and at the same time the surfaces remain absolutely safe to human touch. Similarly, to deal with Electrostatic Discharge Hazards, we have launched Anti-Static Tiles. Not only this, our Endura Cool-roof tiles are certified high SRI (Solar Reflective Index) tiles which keep the rooms below the roof much cooler in peak summer climate. The list of smart tiles is long and these products can be seen closely by customers and specifiers in person".

As pioneers in the business of tiling, H & R Johnson (India) has always sought to push boundaries of defining lifestyles with their world-class products and innovations. With a focus on the key lifestyle elements of health, hygiene, concern for the environment and safety, Johnson is transforming the way consumers choose tiles with their unique offerings like the Germ-Free glazed vitrified large format tiles & slabs that are a technically superior alternative to imported Italian marble, stain free tiles, anti-skid floor and staircase solutions, environment friendly solar reflective roof tiles that reduce the need for cooling appliances.

Mr. Vyas further told the media "Many people ask me how tiles can be a lifestyle product and they are not wrong till we tell them the value proposition Johnson is offering. We take health, safety and concern for environment as highly crucial element of modern day lifestyle. All our Smart Tile products are aligned to these elements. For example while Antimicrobial Tiles bring healthier environment around us, the anti-skid and Anti-static smart tiles add safety in physical sense. Other important element of today's lifestyle is – making informed decisions."



↑ JOHNSON-TILES LAUNCHES SMART TILES AND A MODERN EXPERIENCE CENTRE AT PUNE.

"The Architect and Designers community in Pune have Global exposure on products and majority of them seek products which are not run of the mill. Johnson brings global aesthetics and lifestyle features like – Anti-microbial and Stain-resistant advantages along with subtle, stylish and trendy collection of wall and floor tiles as well as bathroom products and engineered stones at a single spot saving their precious time in the selection process."

With a focus on specific benefit for consumers, Mr. Vyas said "The prime objective of this experience center is to guide the consumer in selecting the right product for their home which is challenging as there are hundreds of similar looking tiles in the market with very little relevant and authentic information. Consumers in and around Pune will get to see the widest range of products by any single reputed brand in the city. The trained staff here will help the Architects and customers in the selection process and ensure that their buying process remains pleasurable."

"In one of our market study we found that some customers think we only have very high-end and costly products as compared to other tile brands. A visit to House of Johnson will make them realize that at a small premium, people can get high value product from the most trusted Johnson Brand. We have a complete new and wide range of products at reasonable price"

He further added "Architects and Interior Designers are increasingly helping the end-users to create aesthetics and comfort in the new or under renovation space and they look out for products which are latest, trendy and have International appeal and promote hygiene along with being eco-friendly. Johnson has introduced a new generation category of tiles which are Stain-Free and Germ-Free as well. Another product that is attracting users and specifiers equally is our "Cool Roof" tile which keeps the room below the roof much cooler during hot sunny summer days. It reduces the air-conditioning requirement which is again good for the environment."

With approximately 3000 products, Johnson has a range of tile options for all spaces. From residential and commercial to industrial spaces,

Johnson has tiling solutions apt for all application areas for walls and floors that includes special features that make the tiles durable and easy to maintain. Johnson also has a range of specialty tiles that include anti-static tiles that ground electricity, tactile designed to help the visually impaired navigate, durable and beautiful landscape tiles that can stand the wear and tear of outdoors.

Pune's House of Johnson does not only present best in class international quality tiles, but also has select, reasonably priced high quality Sanitary ware, Bath fittings and Engineered Marble and Quartz. All related categories from Johnson under one roof also results in time saving for consumers and specifiers. ■

About H & R Johnson (India): Established in 1958, H & R Johnson (India), a division of Prism Johnson Ltd. (Formerly Prism Cement Ltd.) is the pioneer of ceramic tiles in India. Over the past six decades, H & R Johnson has added various product categories to offer complete solutions to its customers. Today, H & R Johnson enjoys the reputation of being the only entity in India to offer end-to-end lifestyle solutions covering Tiles, Sanitaryware & Bath Fittings, Engineered Marble and Quartz. For Tiles Johnson has four sub-brands i.e. Johnson Tiles, Johnson Porselano, Johnson Marbonite and Johnson Endura that offers end to end tiling solutions for every space and application. Johnson Bathrooms offer complete solutions in bathrooms ranging from sanitaryware, faucets, accessories and wellness products. Johnson Marble & Quartz offer a range of products in engineered marble and quartz. H & R Johnson has 13 tile manufacturing plants (including Joint Ventures) across the country and 2 plants for Bathroom CP fitting products. For further details, please visit www.hrjohnsonindia.com

Further information:

Yohanna Irani

Tel: +91 9920499231

E-mail: yohanna.irani@madisonpr.in



† Patiala Crafts Mela was the first cultural project at Studio Lotus which laid the groundwork for a string of projects to follow.

The Principals of ‘Conscious Design’: Founders of Studio Lotus Recount Their Design Journey

Brought together by their passion for design and their commitment to quality, Amrish Arora, Sidhartha Talwar and Ankur Choksi founded Studio Lotus in 2002. Seventeen years later, they lead one of the most path-breaking multidisciplinary firms in India; the principals talk about the spirit of learning, collaboration and ‘intrapreneurship’ that has shaped the practice’s outstanding oeuvre – and, perhaps more importantly, its culture.

*Text, images and drawings: Studio Lotus
Edited: Sharmila Chakravorty*

IA&B: Can you take us through the evolution of Studio Lotus as a practice? How did it start, and what were the initial projects like? What were the challenges, and learnings, that shaped the studio into its current form?

Studio Lotus is a practice that believes in creating contextually relevant solutions using the best of local resources and global technology. Studio Lotus was set up as a collaborative practice of people from diverse design disciplines coming together to create value-driven, beautiful and meaningful spaces for our clients. The firm was founded in 2002 by Amrish Arora, Ankur Choksi and Sidhartha Talwar. Subsequently, Pankhuri Goel, and then Asha Sairam joined the leadership as Principals, and today, the five of them head a team of over eighty people who work in a dynamic and highly collaborative environment on various scales – from master plans to buildings, interiors and furniture, and on numerous typologies – including adaptive re-use, hospitality, residential, museums (institutional/cultural), F&B, wellness and retail.

Two of the first projects that we worked on as a studio were the interior design for a gymnasium and recreational area at the India Habitat Centre in New Delhi, and an office for a travel agency. While the former turned out okay, the latter failed to meet the standards of design and quality of execution that we had set for ourselves. In hindsight, this was an early lesson on how we wanted to progress as a practice – we swore to never let a project slip to a level of mediocrity, and striving for design excellence became a part of our ethos.

Our initial projects include the Patiala Crafts Mela – our first cultural project, which laid the groundwork for a string of projects to follow, including our work within the Mehrangarh Fort precinct, and Viya home and Rivet – projects that kick-started our journey in the hospitality and retail segments. Likewise, the Khaaja Chowk and F Bar helped us gain a foothold in the Food & Beverage domain. Among our early

architectural works, RAAS Jodhpur stands out, marking our foray into the domains of hospitality and adaptive re-use; the project received widespread acclaim on the global stage, which was transformative in itself, motivating us to raise the bar with each new project and explore new avenues of spatial expression.

IA&B: How much has Studio Lotus evolved since its inception 15+ years ago? Is there an ideal, final form that you want the Studio to achieve?

Over the years, our focus has expanded from innovation and pure project focus to a people-centric approach to design. Be it the people within the studio, our clients, the people we work with on-site, or the numerous stakeholders attached to a project – collective effort and aspirations inform each step that Studio Lotus takes. Today, we take pride in being a studio that everyone can belong to, a practice that multiple designers and non-designers can take ownership of.

Our work is founded on the principles of Conscious Design, an approach that celebrates local resources, cultural influences, an inclusive process and keen attention to detail. The principles of Conscious Design abide by an iterative process – this has extended beyond our work and has become part of our aspiration for the practice as well.

We aspire to craft spaces that address the emerging future of work, leisure and living, and how we build. We are excited to see what the future holds for us in terms of how we interact with our built environments, and how the practice can adapt to and address these transformations. Also, we question ourselves ongoingly, holding ourselves to account to our values, and committing ourselves to learn and change whatever we need to, to move to the next level. We hope to continue honing our skills and competencies as individuals, and as a collective to deliver on all of the above.

IA&B: What is your view of the state of architecture in India today?

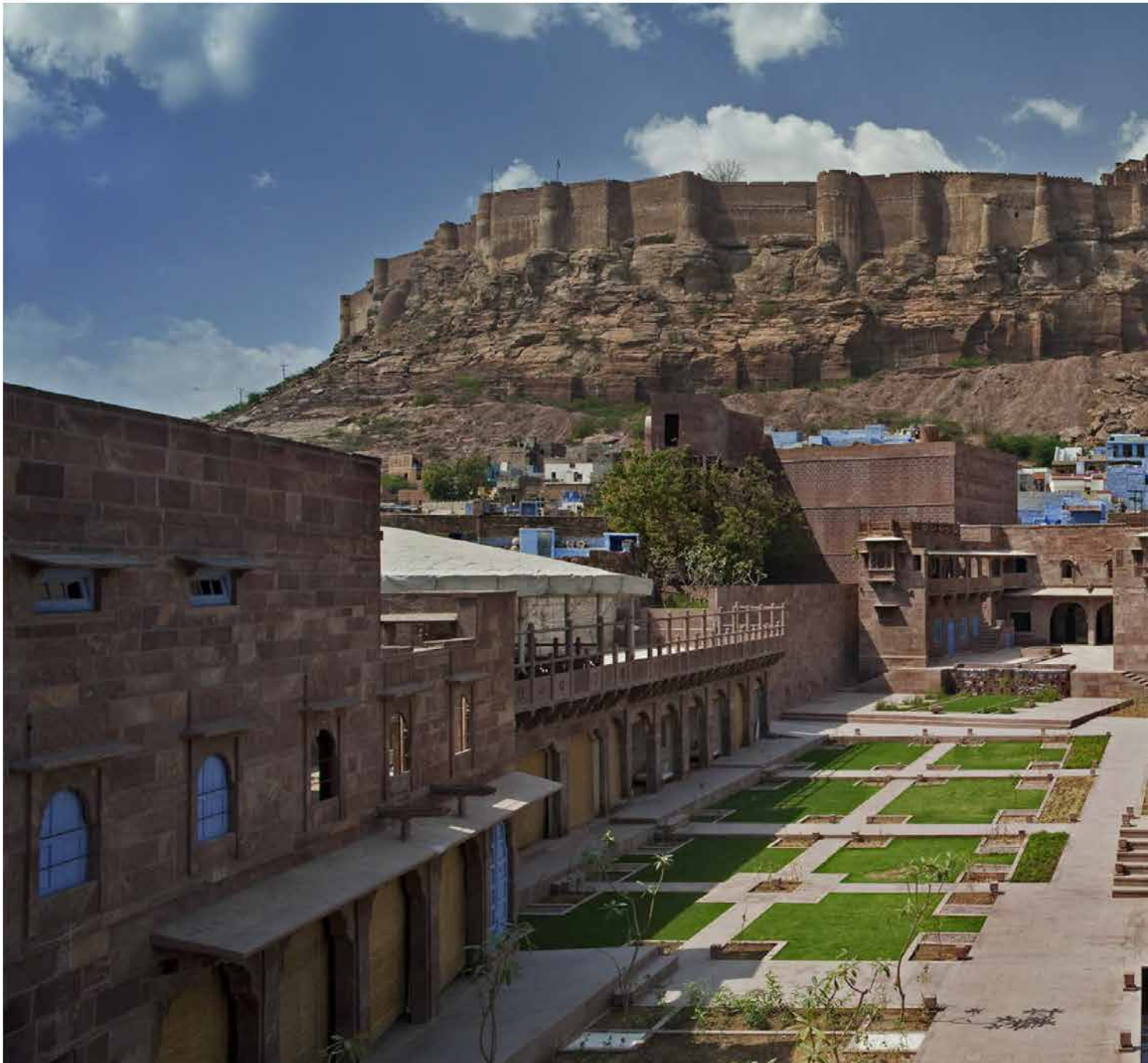
The practice of architecture worldwide, not only in India – has gotten progressively superficial, thanks to more and more architecture being designed for the image. Design is often driven by what it looks like and sounds like on digital media, as opposed to what it does for its inhabitants and the neighbourhood. As spatial quality gets side-lined, the engagement with construction detail, longevity of buildings, and contextual suitability have declined as well – often overlooked in favour of how photogenic a building can be.

However, there are several practices in the country that are doing admirable work and displaying an increasing sensitivity to context, producing some delightful work in the process. It is also imperative to note that India has the capacity to host the evolution of a new

urbanism; Indian cities have the potential to accommodate modern aspirations and historical underpinnings alike. Designers in India have the unique opportunity to guide their future growth and renewal to address the issues of equity, access, and sustainability; the archetypes that emerge can then guide the growth of the dozens of smaller cities that are to become the next set of metropolises – not only in India but across Asia.

IA&B: There is a strong focus on integrating crafts and using local techniques and practices in your projects. Could you elaborate on this back-to-the-roots approach?

The integration of crafts in our projects takes into account one major factor: authenticity and a celebration of our living heritage. While we create spaces that provide comfort, illustrate a particular narrative, or



¹RAAS Jodhpur was enriched through the adaptation and integration of local stone work.

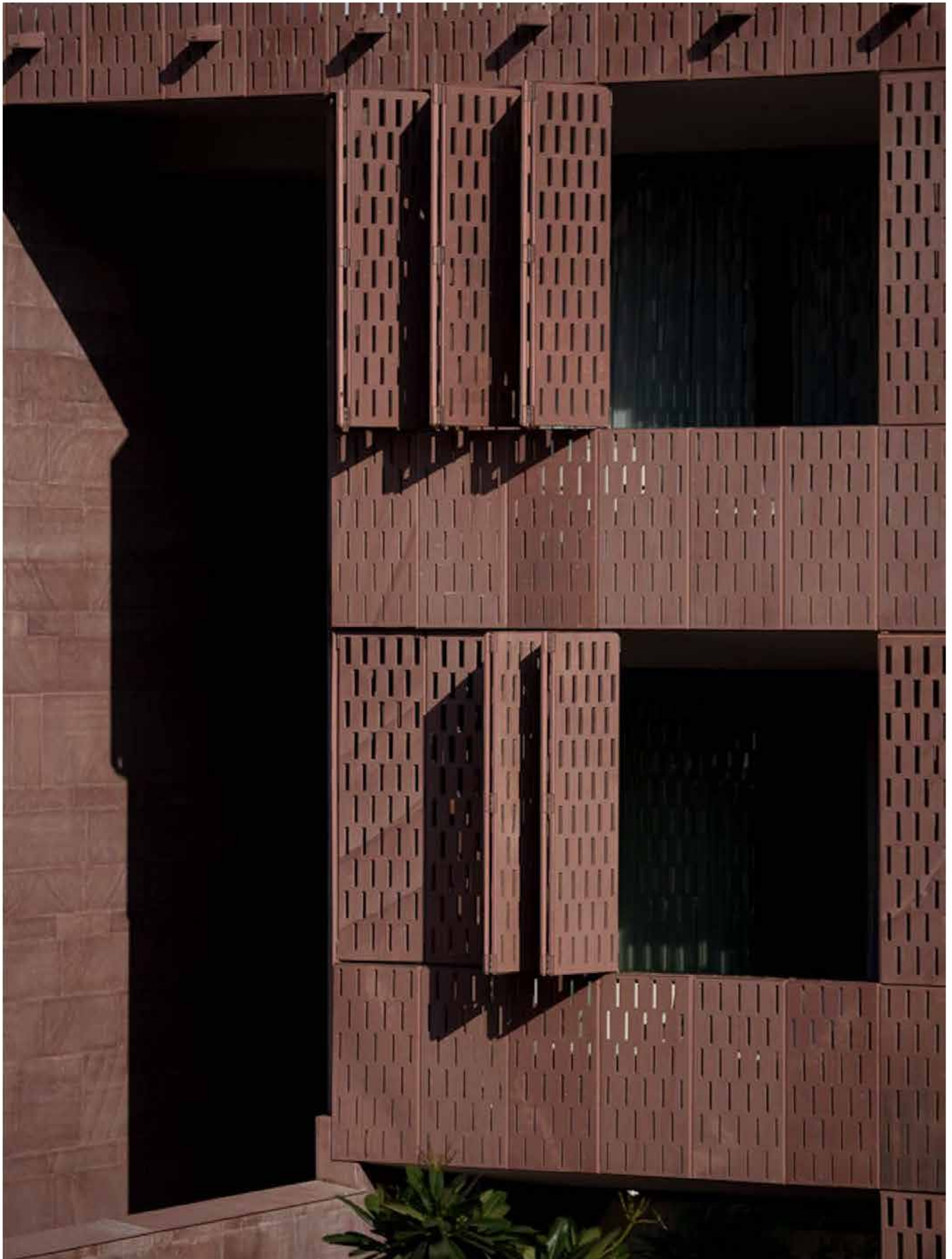
highlight their context, we attempt to work with a process that adds value at various levels, to the project and to the socio-cultural fabric of the region. Integrating artisans and responding to the cultural influences of a particular region then becomes a natural part of the process, as does expressing them through authentic adaptation. We achieve this by engaging with local skills and making them relevant to contemporary narratives. For long, vernacular wisdom has resolved the issues of material suitability and ease of construction, and converting these into viable alternatives for new construction, especially in India, is crucial to adding real value.

Apart from authenticity, contemporizing local craft provides the opportunity to revive these skillsets by adapting them to modern aesthetic sensibilities; for instance, over sixty artisans and craftsmen

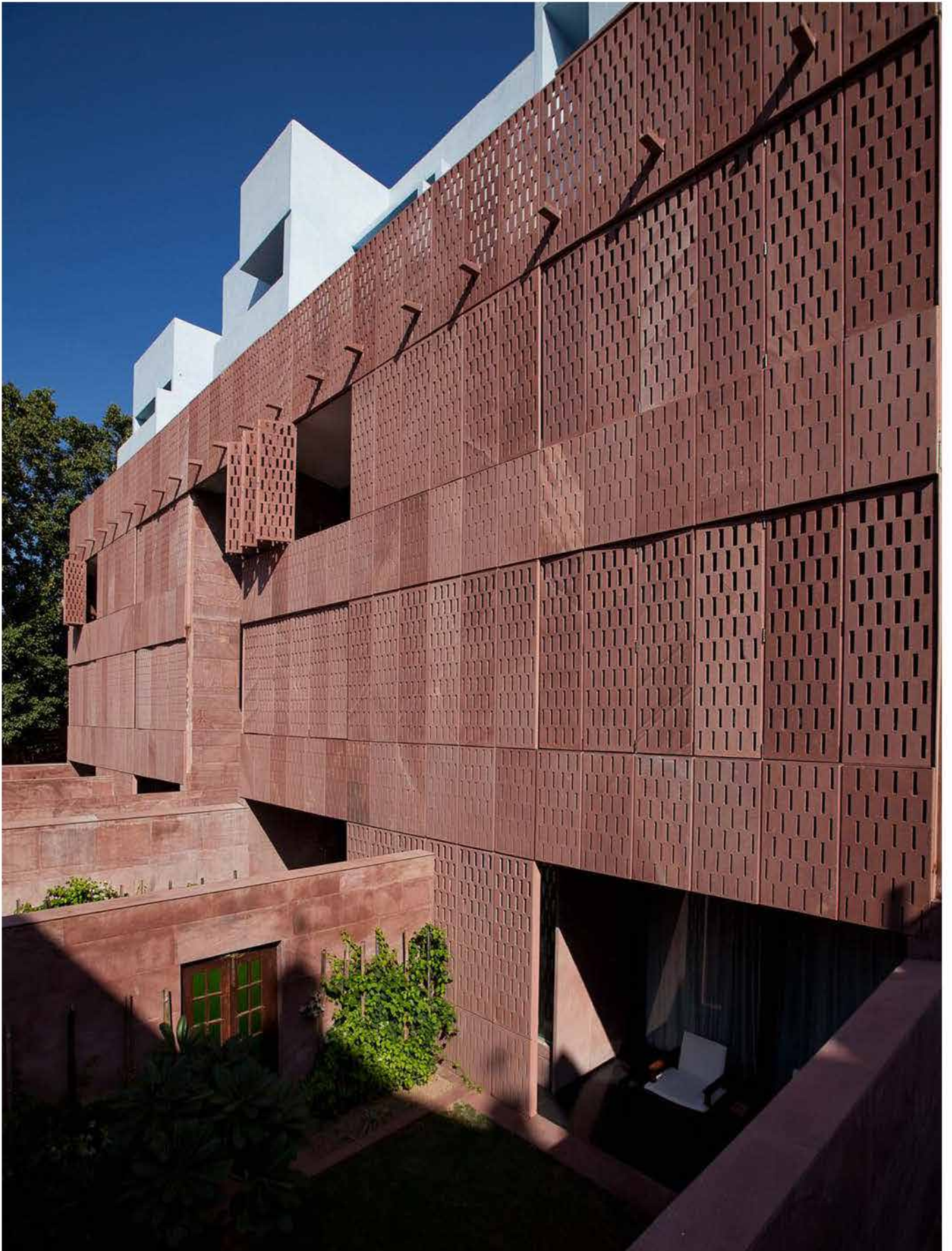
came together at Krushi Bhawan (Odisha) to create a vibrant narrative of traditional Odia craft at an unprecedented architectural scale. The involvement of these artisans enables the use of locally-sourced materials and the integration of low-tech interventions, helping curb the project's cost as well as its carbon footprint – an illustration of how the government can become the prime facilitator for regional crafts and revitalize the economies that are based around them, in addition to promoting sustainable development.

Similarly, at Baradari in Jaipur, we worked with Rajasthani artisans to adapt traditional crafts such as Thikri, stone and marble work, stone fluting and inlay and foundry work in metal, to create contemporary expressions assisted by using digital technology and tooling where needed.





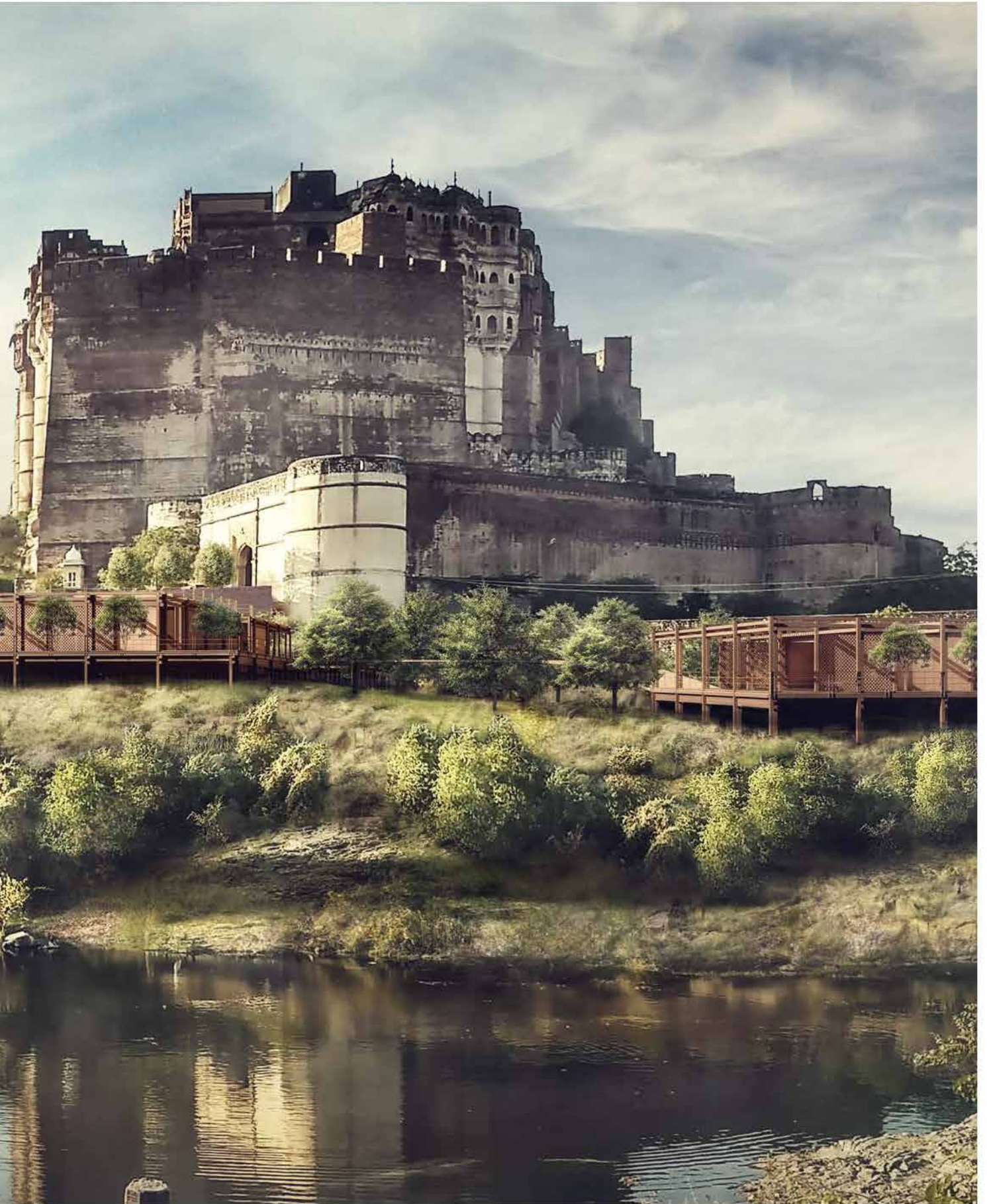
† The latticed stone skin was engineered to fold into panels and the heft of this screen was arrived at through multiple iterations undertaken with the local craftsmen.



† The minimalist, geometric design allowed for ease of execution for the labour as well as enable material savings – was crafted from red sandstone, setting the tone for amalgamating technology and local identity.



¹ Mehrangarh Fort Visitor Centre.





↑ Mehrangarh Fort Visitor Centre.: Bird's eye view.





† Mehrangarh Fort Knowledge Centre.



IA&B: While working with craftsmen and/or local techniques, how can architects attain an ideal mix of technology and tradition to design more efficiently?

We must begin with accepting technological innovation and local techniques as two sides of the same coin – that of building responsibly. Just as vernacular wisdom can supplement or supplant tech-intensive interventions, technology can aid the efficacy and scalability of local skillsets.

For example, the hospitality experience at RAAS Jodhpur was enriched through the adaptation and integration of local stone work. Working closely with regional artisans for several weeks, we explored contemporary expressions of the quintessential stone jaali as the overarching gesture that would bridge the modern with the historic. Inspired by the age-old double-skinned structures of the region, the new hotel blocks were wrapped in a latticed stone skin, engineered to fold into panels; the heft of this screen was arrived at through multiple iterations undertaken with the local craftsmen. Finally, a minimalist, geometric design – which would allow for ease of execution for the labour as well as enable material savings – was crafted from red sandstone, setting the tone for how technology and local identity could be incorporated as one.

This approach to design has been honed over the years, most recently implemented at the Corporate Headquarters & Product Development Facility for Royal Enfield in Chennai. The facility utilizes a unique, hybrid construction technology – a pre-engineered metal structure, form-finished concrete, and vernacular materials expressed in a contemporary format – to create a complex that celebrates the brand's legacy as well as the local context. Terracotta tiles mounted on pre-stressed steel cables form a rain screen, shading the naturally ventilated corridors.

IA&B: What factors influence the design process, and the overall design philosophy of the studio?

Another key factor that we embed in all our work is passive design. We believe that a country like ours can learn from indigenous, low-tech approaches for cooling, light and ventilation. These would provide viable alternatives to tech-intensive "sustainability" approaches for a country such as ours. We believe that our strength as a nation lies in frugal innovation.

IA&B: Do you think there is a signature style, or a design thread, that links all your projects together? If so, is it deliberate?

A common thread that runs through our work is a celebration of regional influences through a highly crafted yet contemporary and timeless approach. Our building forms are informed by internal movement patterns, the relationship of the inside to the outside, a response to the nature of materials being used and their appropriate expression, while constantly looking at pushing the boundaries of how it has been done before. This has emerged through the studio's attempt to arrive at enriching, vibrant and sustainable design solutions.



† Mehrangarh Fort Knowledge Centre.: Bird's eye view.



IA&B: Is there a practice/architect - Indian or global - that inspires you?

The craftsmen we collaborate with inspire us with their intuitive knowledge of the materials they shape and the tools that they wield, a dexterity that is honed over years. We are just as inspired by firms like Ideo – that inspire with their collaborative approach.

Ambrish: My father helped me build the foundations of my understanding of integrity; I have also looked to the philosophy of Gandhi for his perspective on truth, and Werner Erhard to cultivate an understanding of the being as the force behind all doing.

India is suddenly producing so much good work, along with the ghastly, there are so many of my peers that are immensely gifted, deep thinkers and are producing highly innovative work. Globally, I admire the Neues Museum in Berlin by Chipperfield for its gorgeous sensitivity, restraint in proportion and form, and its incredible craftsmanship of detail and materiality. In recent times, Diller Scofidio + Renfro's work in the public realm and their bridging of craft to bring meaning to projects – such as the Highline and the Shed is particularly inspiring. I also love a lot of the work that is coming out of South America, South Africa, and Japan.

Sidhartha: I am inspired by the works of the masters. One of the buildings that I got to experience in person early on in my career was Fallingwater by Frank Lloyd Wright; what affected me the most at that time – and what continues to influence my work in the present – was the delicate interplay between the site and the building, as well as the tectonic connections within the building. This deference to natural settings, a sophisticated manifestation of man's primal relationship with nature, has been a value that we as a studio strive to emulate in our work.

In a similar vein, I am moved by the works of Geoffrey Bawa and find the proportional principles of Indian architecture deeply inspiring and applicable to present-day design practice. Lastly, this quote by Bruce Mau inspires my way of design thinking — "When the outcome drives the process, we will only ever go where we've already been. If process drives the outcome, we may not know where we're going, but we will know we want to be there."

IA&B: Lastly, what message would you like to give to students pursuing architecture and young architects in practice?

Be true to yourself, and let love – for what you do, who you work with, and who you work for – drive you – don't give less than 100% of yourself to everything you do – don't wait for the 'right' project to prove your worth. Know that what is on your table right now is your opportunity for expressing yourself fully. And lastly, when you are down and faced with seemingly insurmountable challenges and constraints, know you always have a choice – either take the easy way of blaming your circumstance and head in a downward spiral, or get excited and look for how that challenge offers the opportunity for you to express and bring out the best in you! ■



† Krushi Bhawan is a facility developed for Government of Odisha's Department of Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment.

Building – For The People, With The People

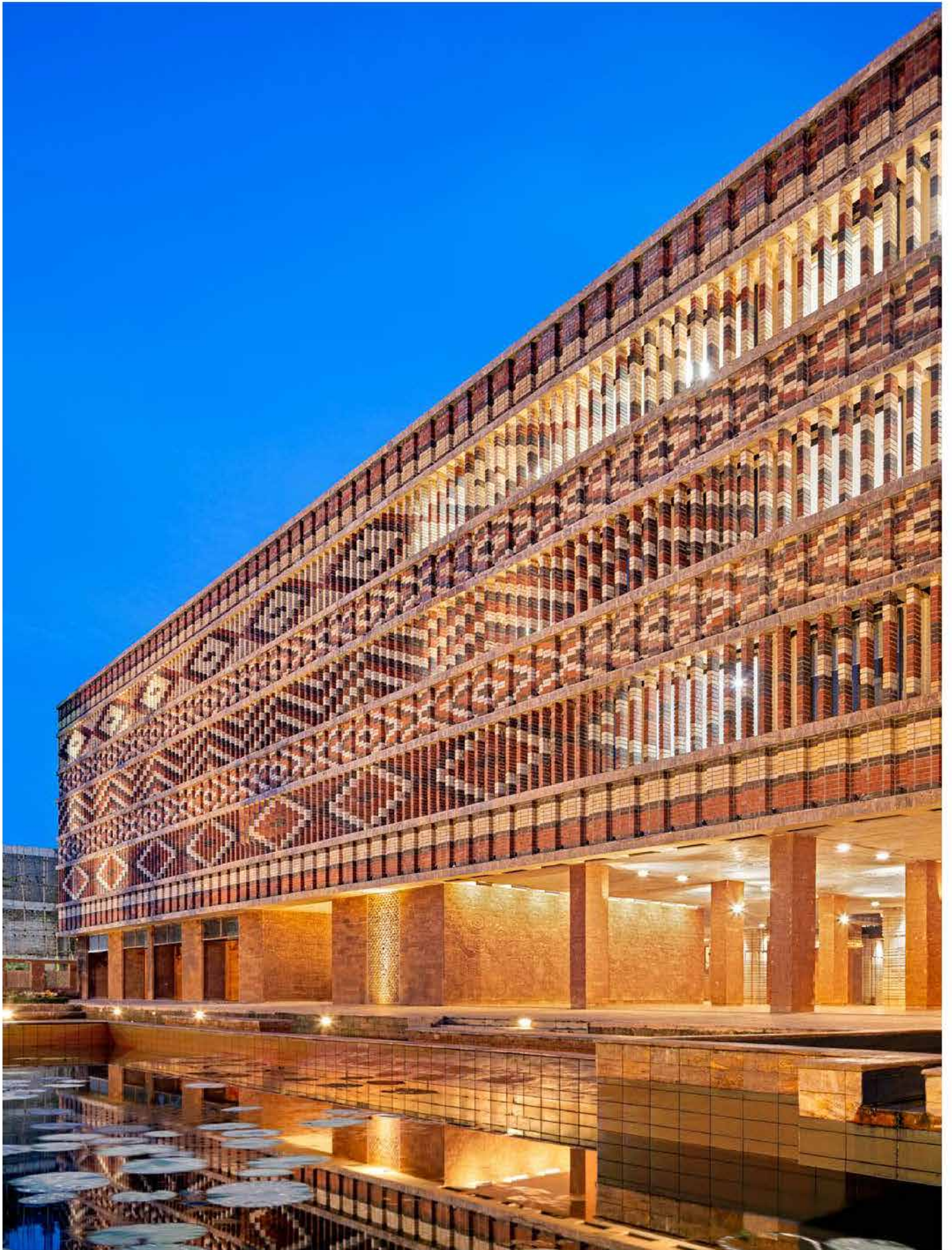
Krushi Bhawan, Odisha

Designed for the Government of Odisha, Krushi Bhawan transcends the typical closed-off office campus morphology by integrating governmental functions with direct community engagement and education - manifesting the idea of decentralized state power in the process.

Text: Sharmila Chakravorty

Images: Andre Fanthome & Sergio Ghetti

Drawings: Studio Lotus



↑ Studio Lotus, recognised the opportunity to "include public functions and community spaces to create a building that would add to the city's social infrastructure."

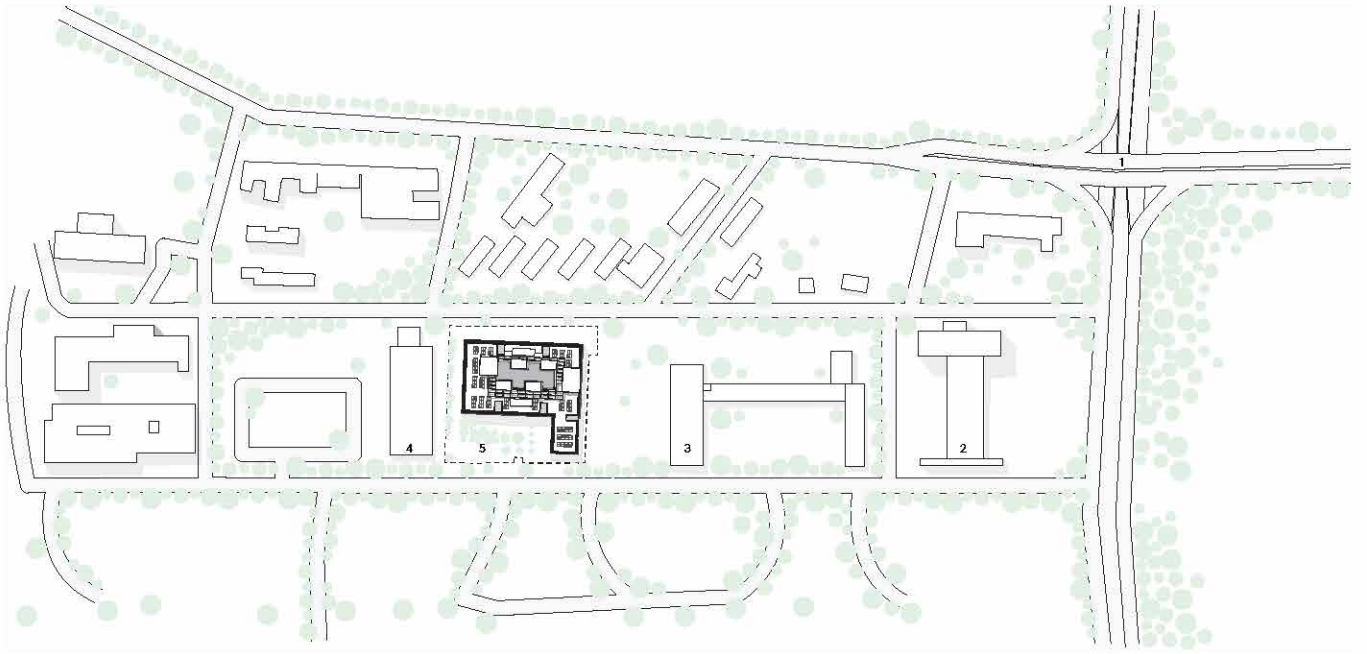
Krushi Bhawan is a facility developed for Government of Odisha's Department of Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment. It has a 130,000 sq.ft administrative centre that will serve as an office for nearly 600 people. Besides, Krushi Bhawan also accommodates spaces for community engagement and learning. It was originally planned as a purely administrative space, but the architects commissioned to create the campus, Studio Lotus, recognised the opportunity to "include public functions and community spaces to create a building that would add to the city's social infrastructure". The idea stems from, they add, "Königsberger's original vision for Bhubaneswar where he saw the Capitol Complex with a host of government offices becoming a lively point of public life."

To incorporate this into the building's realisation, the architects designed the ground floor as a free-flowing public space opening out into a plaza.

The plaza, in turn, is an extension of the street. The visual transition from the street to Krushi Bhawan is almost seamless. The ground floor houses a learning centre, a gallery, an auditorium, a library, and training rooms. These public spaces have become a hub for learning and sharing skills and knowledge, and engaging diverse sections of the city's population through exhibitions, workshops, haats (weekly markets), lectures and school visits. The public function of the building continues on the rooftop, which houses urban farming exhibits and demonstration of agricultural best practices. Being a government building, it is but natural that the architects had to factor in spaces and sections that were less public, and required restricted access. These spaces – the offices for the State department and Directorates – are located on the first, second, and third floors. Explaining the idea behind this, the architects say, "It allows the offices to be secured off, making it possible to keep most of the other facilities open to the public even on holidays."



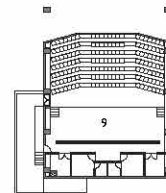
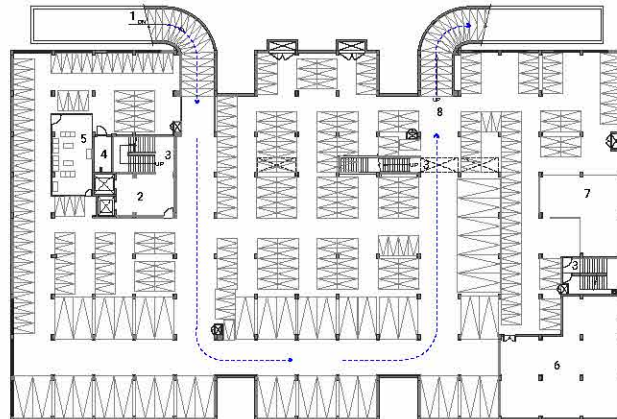
↑ Studio Lotus designed the ground floor as a free-flowing public space opening out into a plaza. The plaza, in turn, is an extension of the street.



- 1. Power House Jambha
- 2. District Office of Police
- 3. Information & Public Relations Department
- 4. State State Guest House
- 5. Site



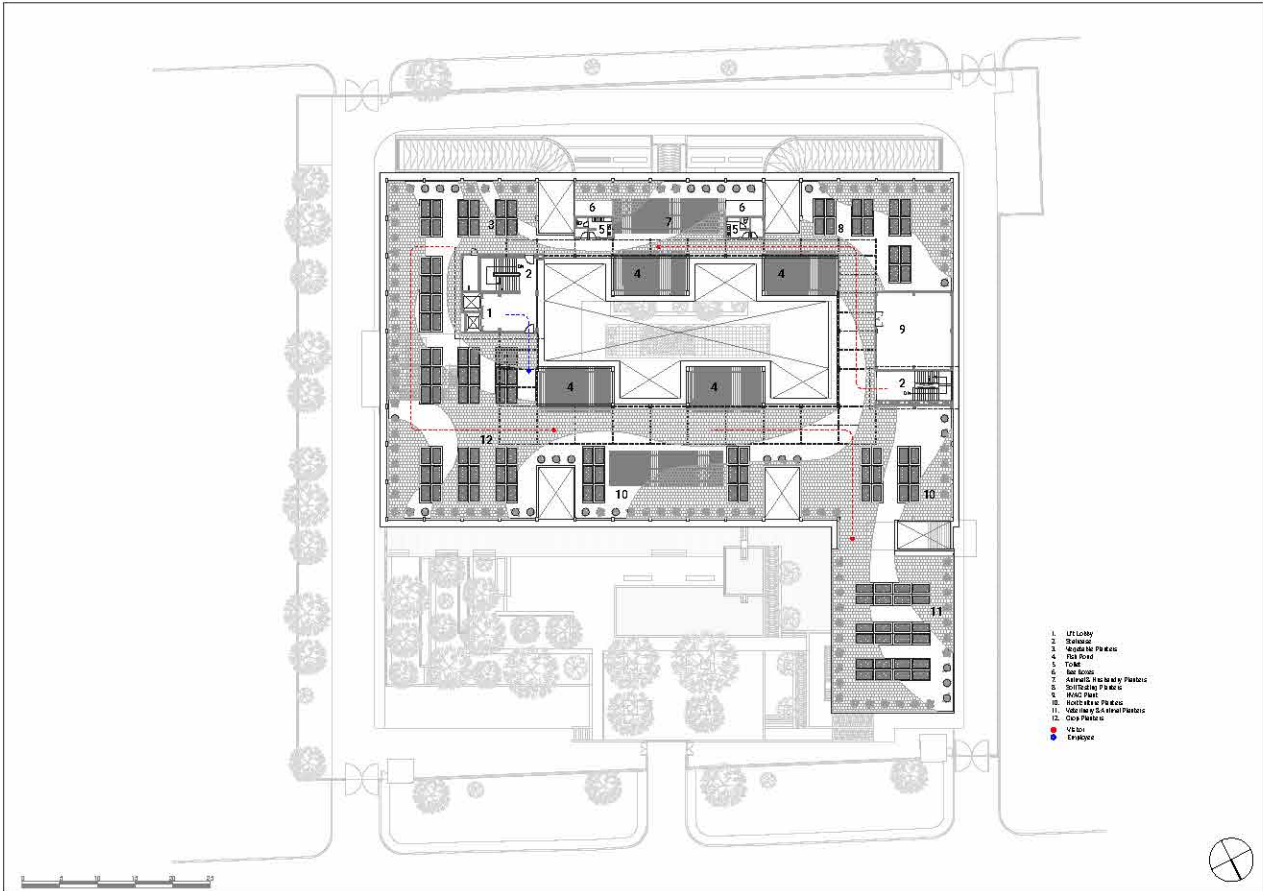
↑ Site context.



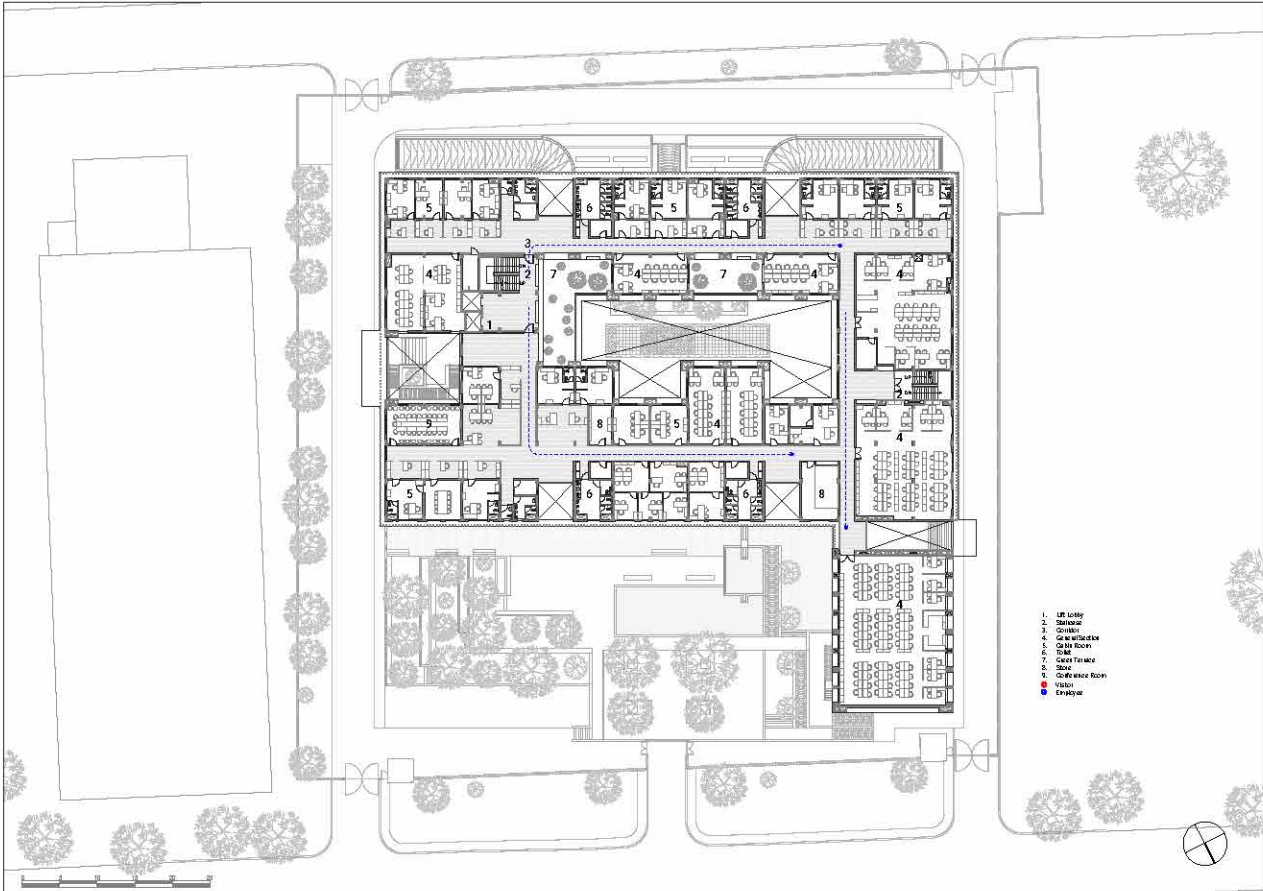
- 1. Entrance to Parking Area
- 2. Lift Lobby
- 3. Staircase
- 4. Electric Room
- 5. Diesel Hall
- 6. Pump Room
- 7. Maintenance Room
- 8. Exit to Parking Area
- 9. Ambulance
- Vehicle
- Employee



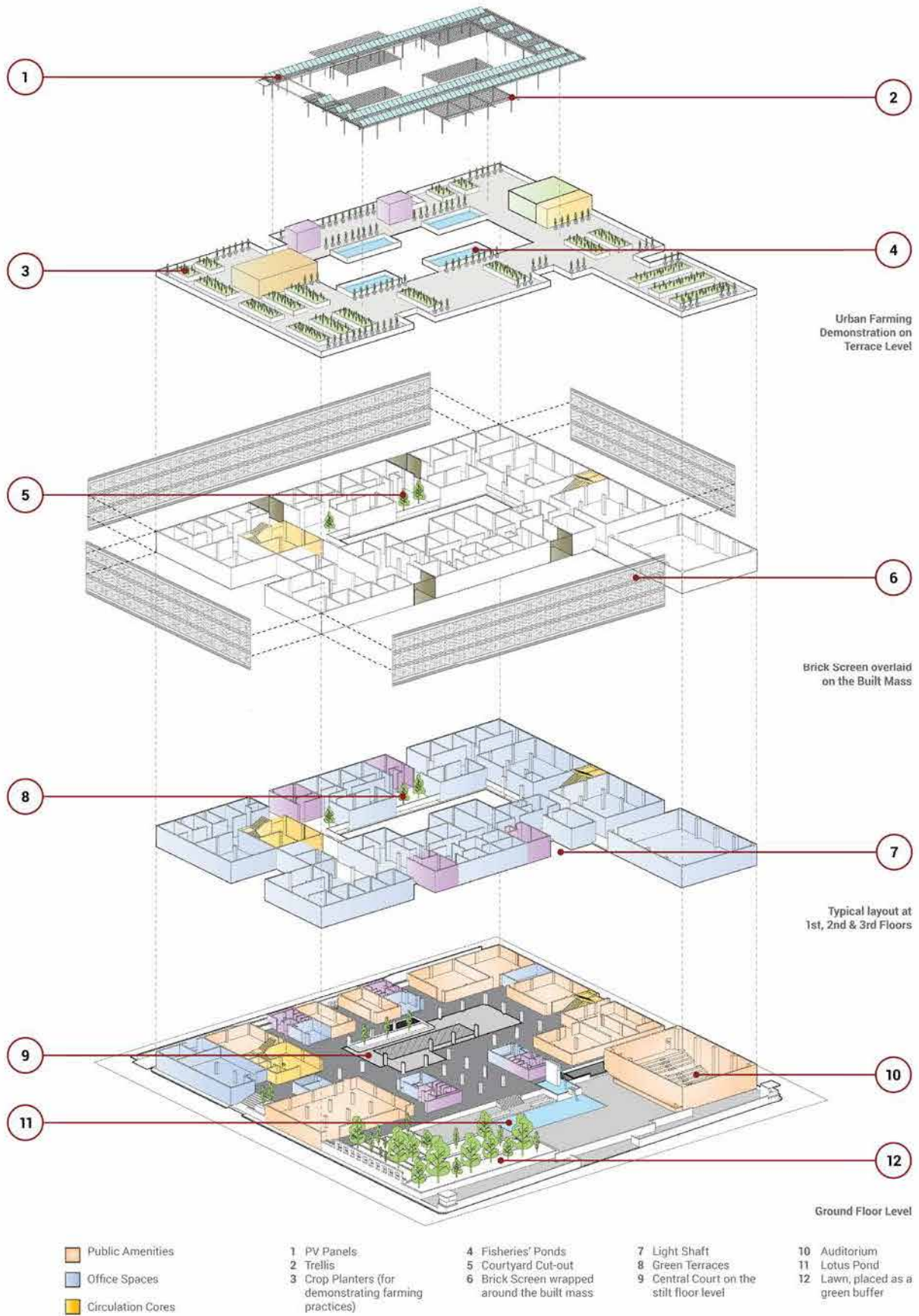
↑ Basement floor plan.



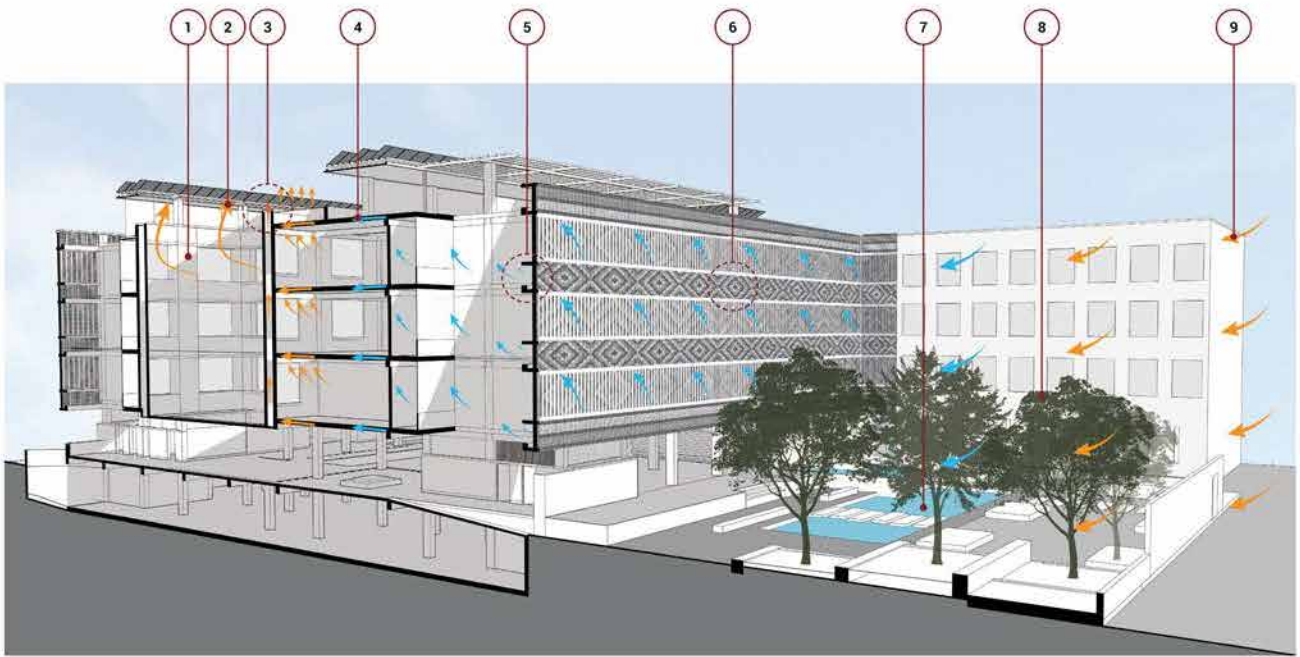
↑ Terrace floor plan.



↑ Typical floor plan.

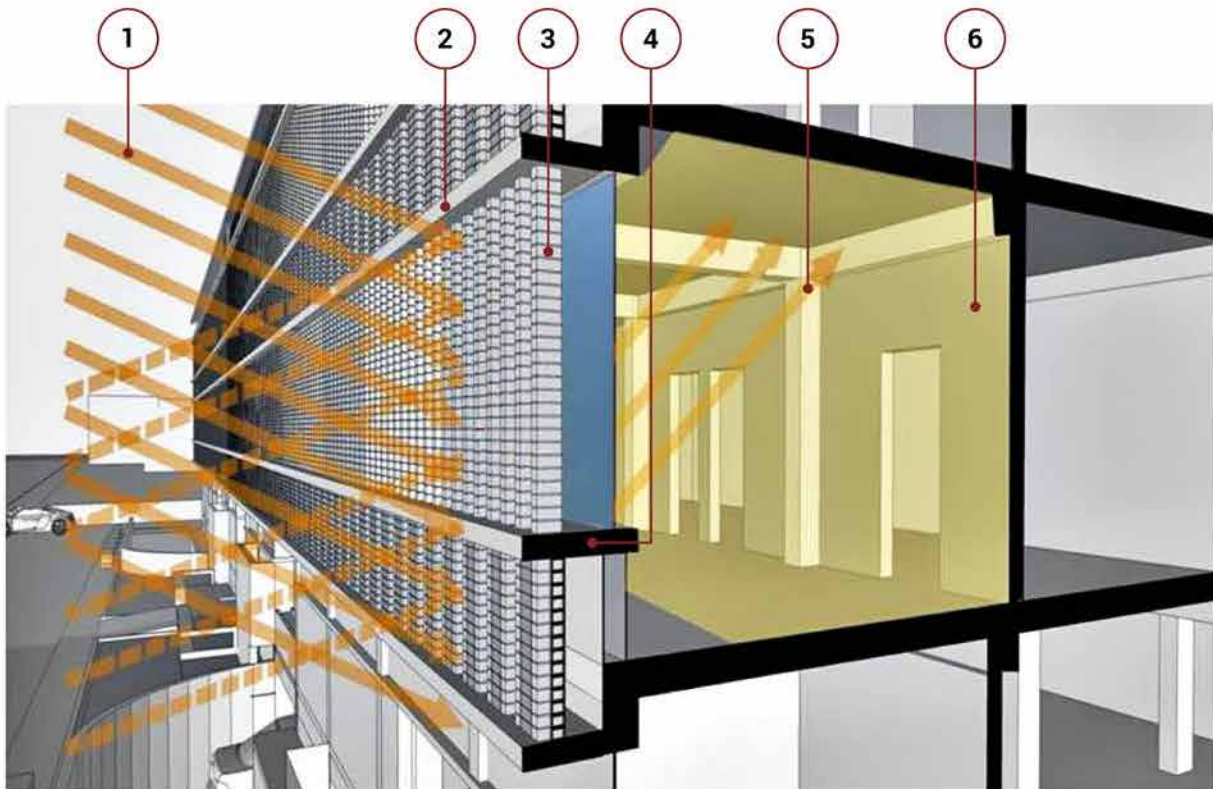


↑ Exploded Isometric.



- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Staggered Building Facade to ensure self-shading 2 Hot Air rising in the courtyard due to Stack Effect 3 Hot air ejected out through the night-purge system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 Cool Air travelling through vents under the slab 5 Cool air sucked in through Vents under the brick facade 6 Double-skin facade to cut down glare | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 Water bodies cooling the air passing over them 8 Tree canopies cooling down the hot air passing through them 9 Hot Air blowing in from the South |
|---|---|--|

↑ *Passive cooling strategy.*



- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Direct Sunlight 2 Projected Lintel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Vertical Brick Louvers 4 Projected Sill | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 Reflected Sunlight 6 Diffused Sunlight |
|---|--|---|

↑ *Ingress of light.*



East Elevation



West Elevation



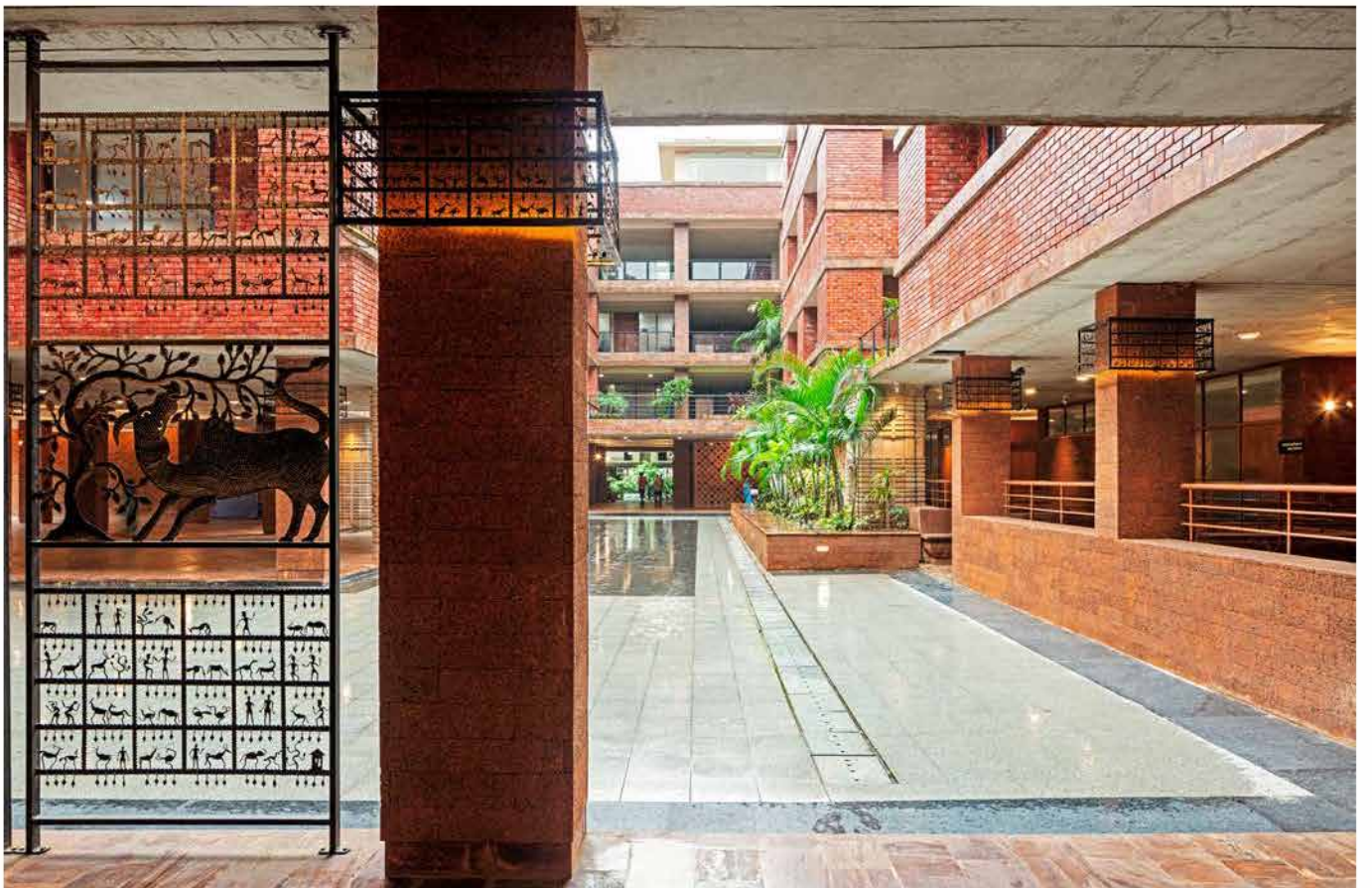
Section YY'



Section XX'



† The upper floors of Krushi Bhawan feature a distinctive brick façade inspired by Ikat patterns of Odisha handlooms, created using clay in three different colours.



† The identity of Krushi Bhawan is derived from regional materials and vernacular narratives, expressed in a manner that is responsive to the local climate.



A vibrant and contemporary narrative of traditional Odia craft was created by about 100 local artisans. It depicts agricultural folklore and mythological stories.



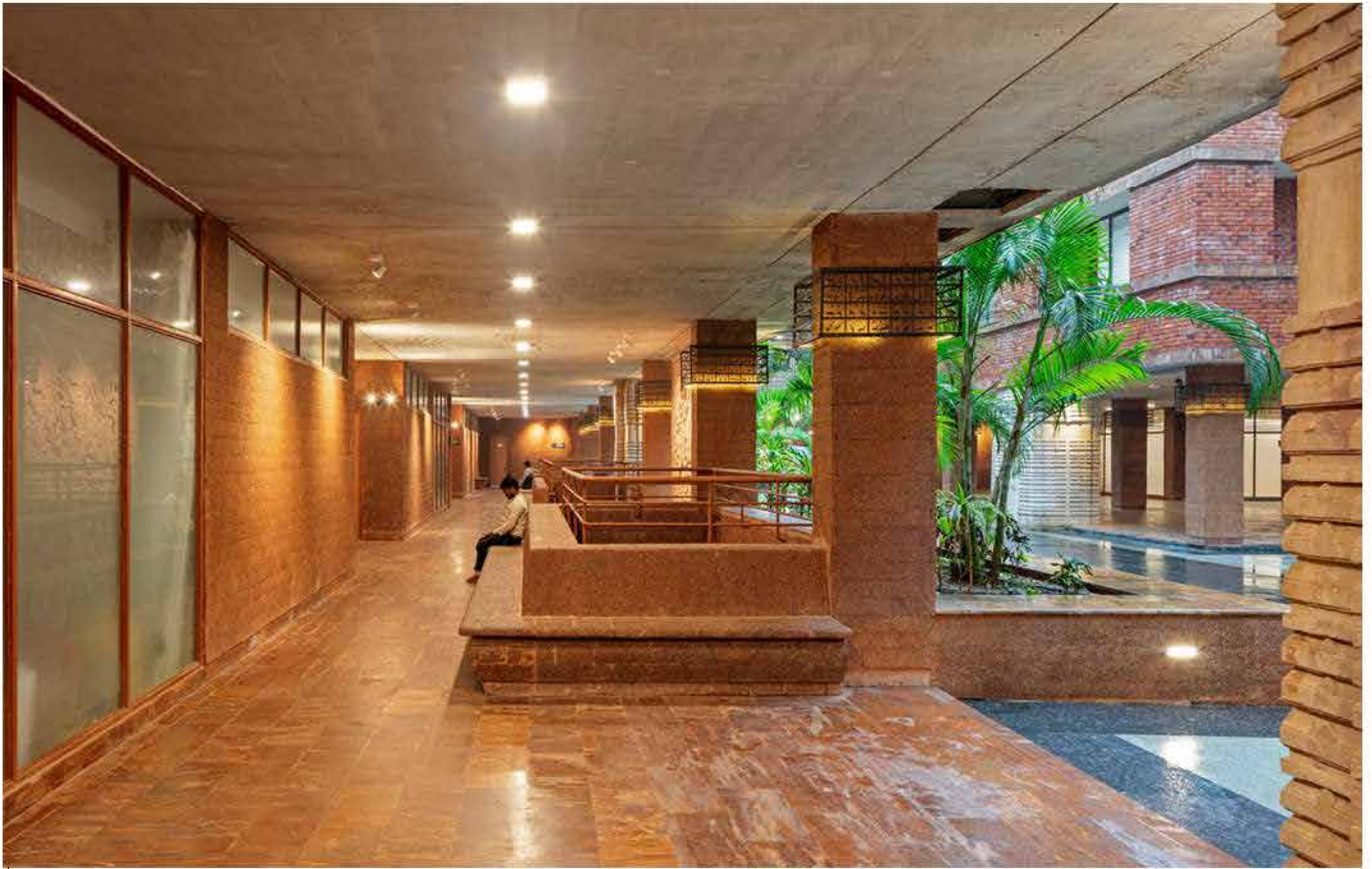
The public spaces have become a hub for learning and sharing skills and knowledge, and engaging diverse sections of the city's population through exhibitions, workshops, haats (weekly markets), lectures and school visits.



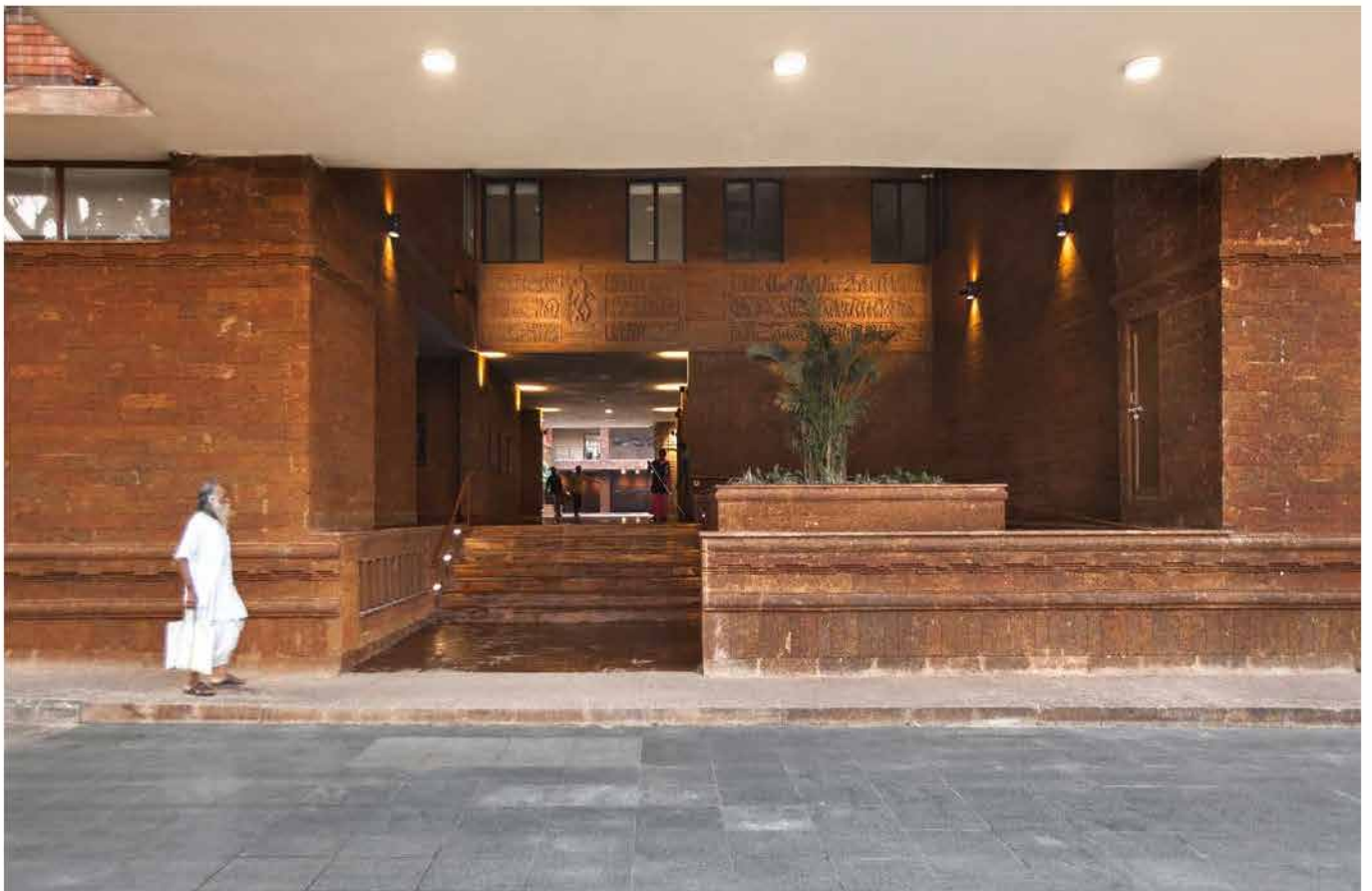
† The tribal craft of dhokra (cast metal craft) has been adapted to make metal screens that line the building corridors.



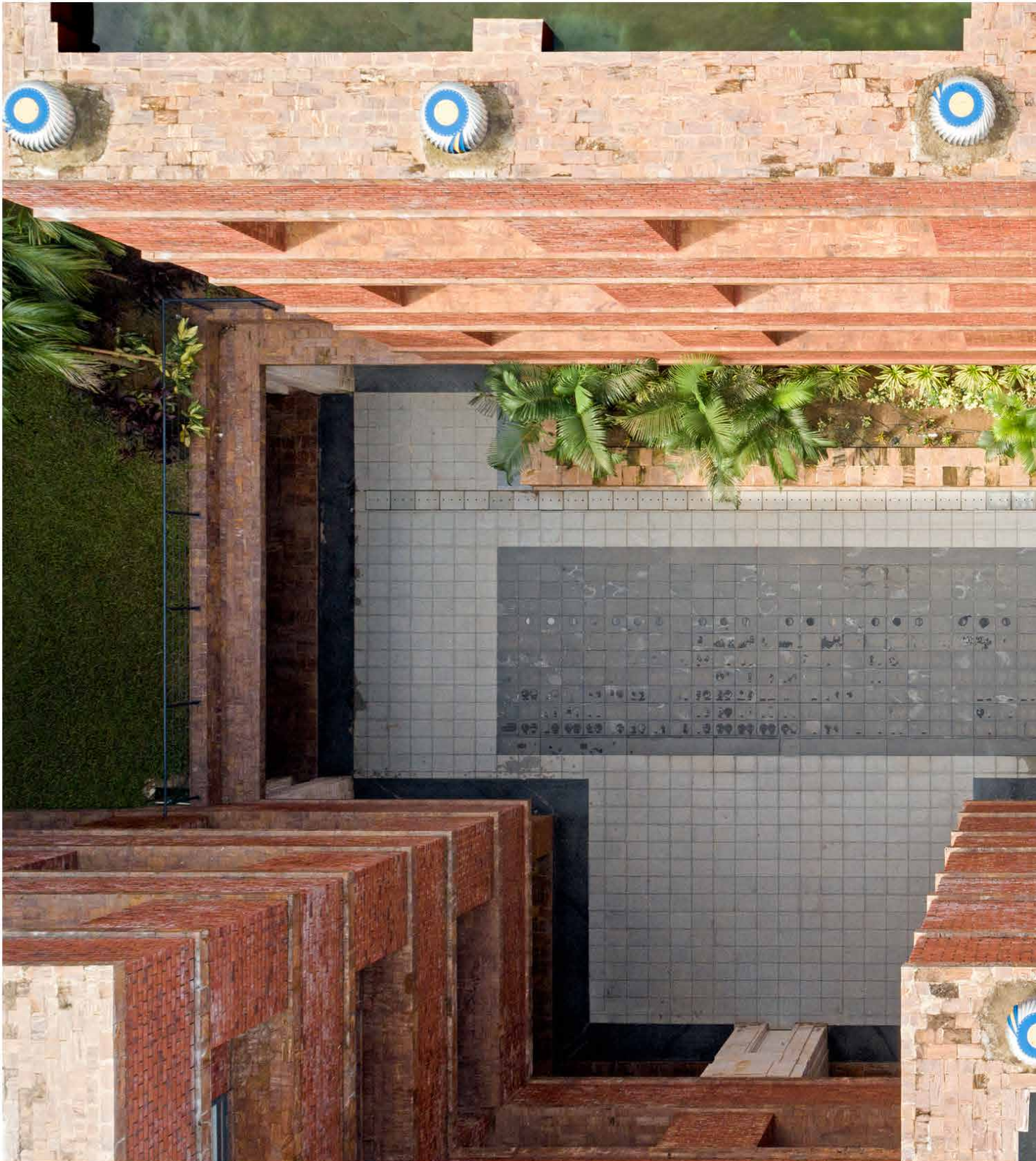
† The local arts and crafts make the building strongly reflect the context it is set in, as well as resonate with the aesthetics the locals are most likely to relate with.



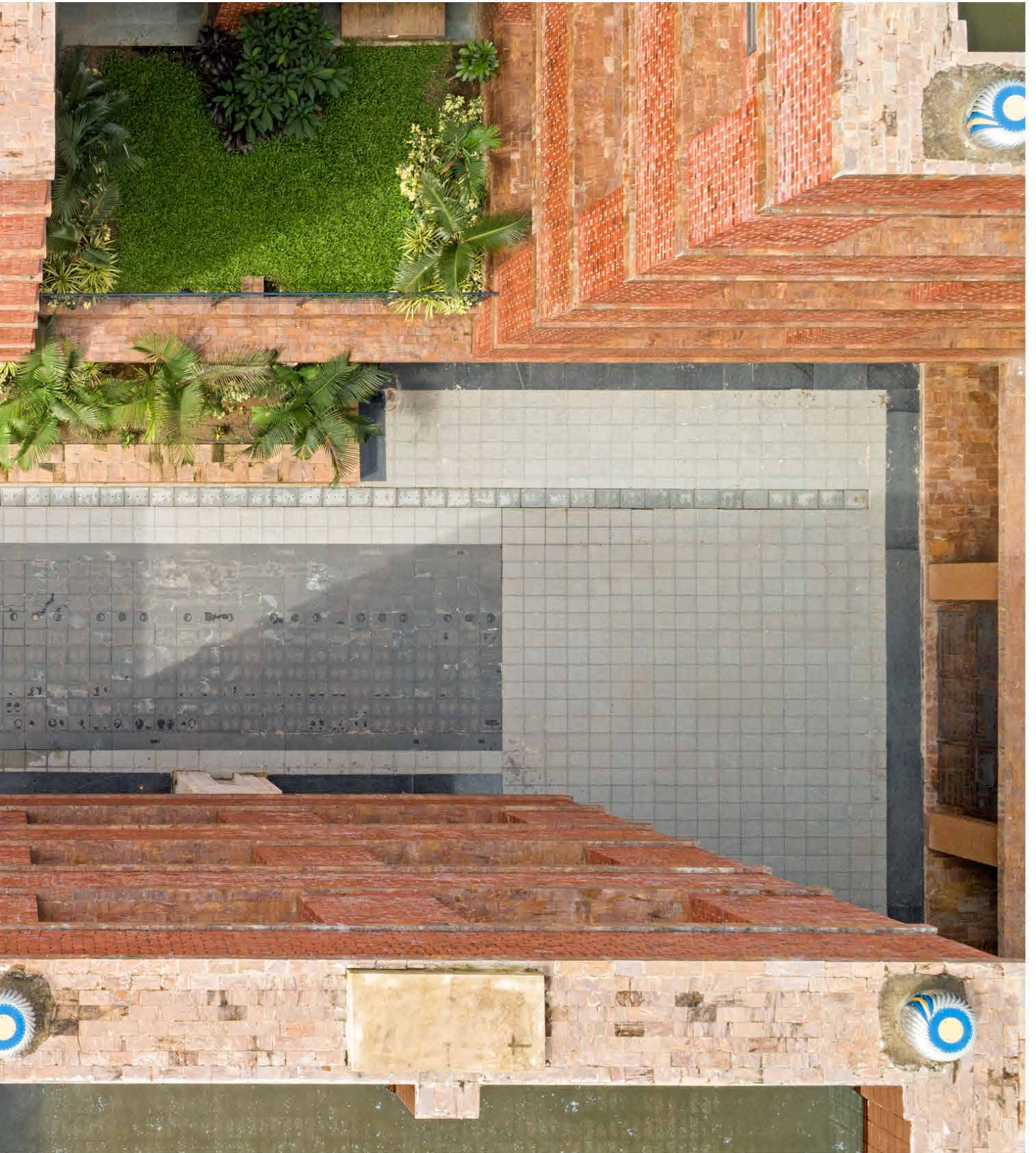
Hand-carved khondalite lattices provide a sense of enclosure to the Central Court.



the campus that the architects have created has an inclusive vibe, with local aesthetics that highlight the facility's down-to-earth persona. Everyone is welcome here, regardless of status, class or other such man-made divisions.



↑ The layout optimizes the air circulation and natural light throughout the building, while the expertly designed windows help in lowering heat gain. The staggered mass of the building also enables self-shading, blocking direct glare to a great extent.





† The building achieves high thermal comfort for its users while cutting down the need for air-conditioning via HVAC systems to only 20% of the built spaces.

Speaking of the thought process that shaped the design, the architects say, "The distinct visual identity of Krushi Bhawan has been derived from regional materials and vernacular narratives, expressed in a manner that is responsive to the local climate." A vibrant and contemporary narrative of traditional Odia craft was created by about 100 local artisans. It depicts agricultural folklore and mythological stories, envisioned at an unprecedented architectural scale. Elaborating further, the architects explain, "For instance, the tribal craft of dhokra (cast metal craft) has been adapted to make light fixtures that wrap around the ground floor columns, as well as metal screens that line the building corridors. The ground floor level and North Wing use locally-sourced laterite and khondalite stone. Hand-carved khondalite lattices provide a sense of enclosure to the Central Court. Similarly, agricultural motifs have been displayed across the building through a variety of craft techniques – such as the bas-relief carvings in laterite along the Public Plaza, which depict ripe paddy crops illustrated in the Odia Pattachitra (cloth-based scroll paintings)

style. In the Central Court, a Crop Calendar has been created on a stone inlay floor, which displays the harvesting cycles for the most prevalent crops in Odia farmlands. The upper floors of Krushi Bhawan feature a distinctive brick façade inspired by Ikat patterns of Odisha handlooms, created using clay in three different colours that represent the geographical diversity of the region." All these factors make the building strongly reflect the context it is set in, as well as resonate with the aesthetics the locals are most likely to relate with. In many ways, it also makes the perennial maintenance of the building easy, as people attending to the task are closely familiar with the materials, patterns, and textures used.

The architects have included indigenous passive design strategies to ramp up sustainability parameters of the building. The layout optimizes the air circulation and natural light throughout the building, while the expertly designed windows help in lowering heat gain. The staggered mass of the building also enables self-shading, blocking direct glare



↑ *The architects' collaboration with local talent such as artisans, weavers, and craftspeople also adds to Krushi Bhawan's authenticity and integrity, while giving the locals a sense of ownership over the building.*

to a great extent. Use of local materials considerably reduces the carbon footprint of the construction process – and by extension, the building's impact on the environment. Speaking about other ingenious features of the building that enhance its sustainability quotient, the architects explain, "Bhubaneswar experiences significant drops in night temperatures throughout the year. Taking this into consideration, a simple Night-Purging system has been devised for cooling and ventilation. Through this mechanism, cool air gets pulled into the building through the northern façade when temperatures drop at night, by means of a custom designed 'low-tech' damper system. The high thermal mass of the building traps the 'coolth' and becomes a 'coolth' exchanger with the surrounding air in the day, when outside temperatures are higher. Consequently, the building achieves high thermal comfort for its users while cutting down the need for air-conditioning via HVAC systems to only 20% of the built spaces."

Located in Bhubaneswar's power centre, the Krushi Bhawan campus sits next to the old ministry office with several ancillary structures of power in the vicinity, such as the Police Commissionerate Building and the State Guest House. Thus, perhaps by virtue of proximity and association, the perception of the building among the people could have been one of stately power and authority; for many, this translates to unapproachable and intimidating. And yet, the campus that the architects have created has an inclusive vibe, with local aesthetics that highlight the facility's down-to-earth persona. Everyone is welcome here, regardless of status, class or other such man-made divisions. The architects' collaboration with local talent such as artisans, weavers, and craftspeople also adds to Krushi Bhawan's authenticity and integrity, while giving the locals a sense

of ownership over the building; it is something they have created to empower themselves – it puts the focus back on the functionality and context of the building, and on those who helped make it. In the architects' words, "The ground floor functions as a public node that turns the traditionally austere image of government facilities into one that is welcoming, inclusive and collectively owned." Architectural grandeur and design discourse here takes the backseat, allowing local, contextual and functionality-based parameters to be the driving forces behind the success of the project. ■

FACT FILE:

Project	: Krushi Bhawan
Location	: Bhubaneswar
Architect	: Studio Lotus
Design team	: Amrish Arora, Sidhartha Talwar, Raman Vig, Sachin Dabas
Client	: State Government of Odisha (Department of Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment)
Project Area	: 1,30,000 sq. ft
Structural Engineer	: NNC Design International
Civil contractors	: M/S AVR Infratech
Electrical contractors	: Sterling India Consulting Engineers
Crafts	: Collective Craft (crafted jaalis & folk art)
Landscape	: ROHA Landscape Architects
PMC	: Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation
Project Estimate	: NA
Initiation of Project	: 2013
Completion of project	: September 2018
Photography	: Andre Fanthome & Sergio Ghetti



Of Joy, culture and the erstwhile Rajbari

Swabhumi, Kolkata

Swabhumi by Salient is an adaptive reuse project that attempts to bridge the gaps between an erstwhile Kolkata and the city that the citizens seek. The precinct that comprises of a boutique hotel, shopping spaces, recreational areas and more borrows from the legacies of the past with infrastructure that has all the makings of a cultural yet commercially viable complex.

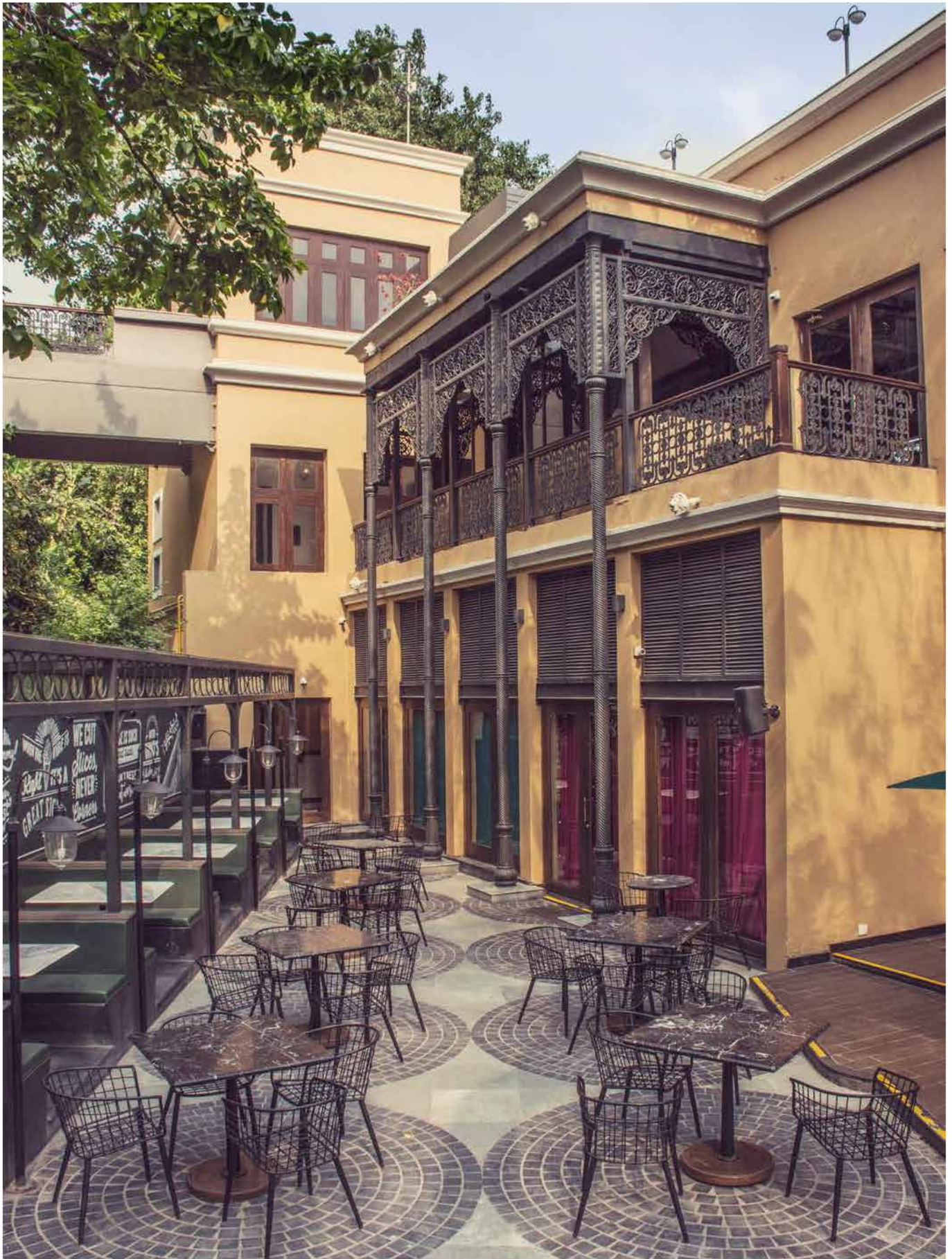
Text: Shriti Das

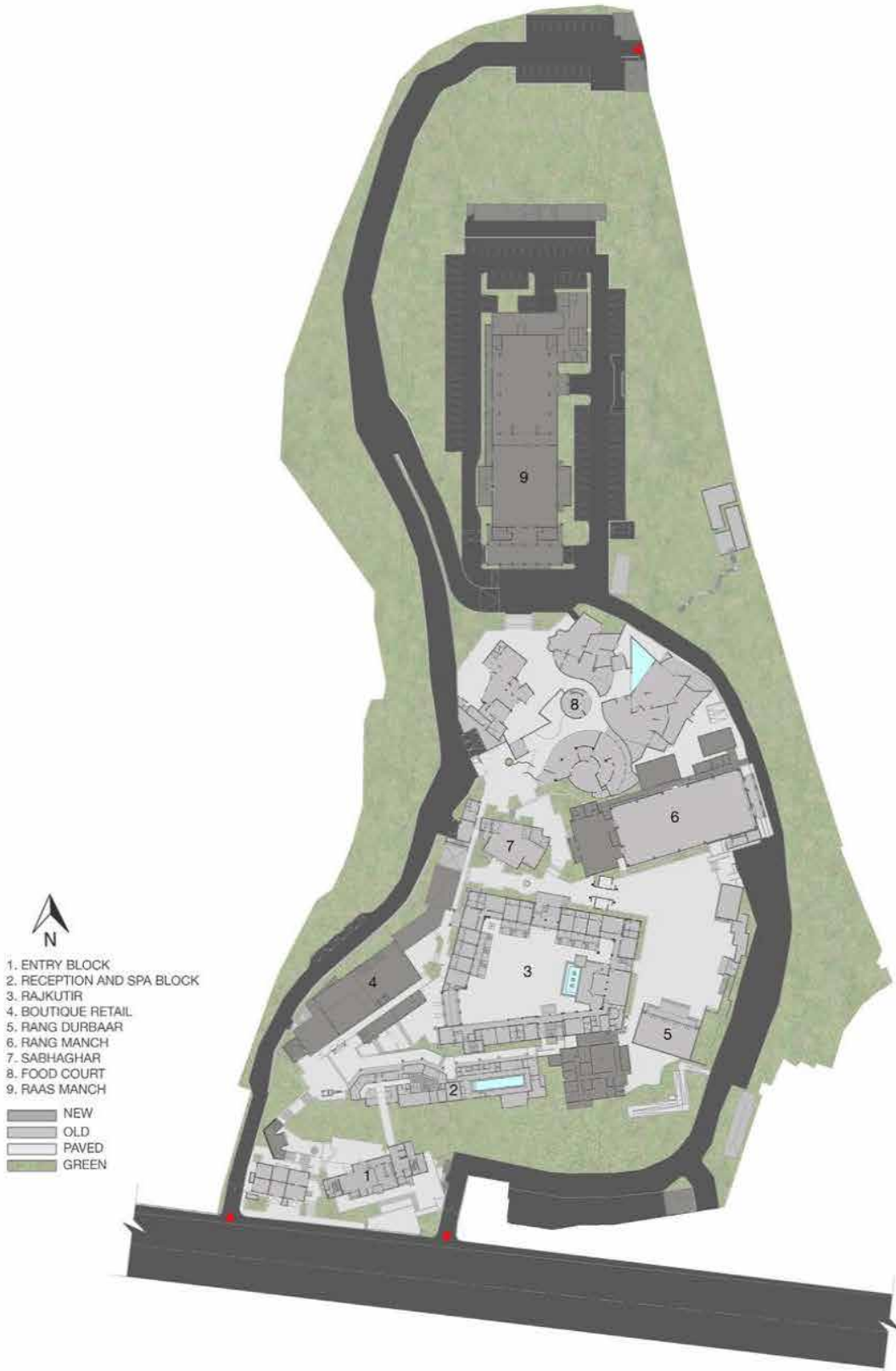
Images: Pradip Sen, Vivek Singh Rathore

Drawings: Salient

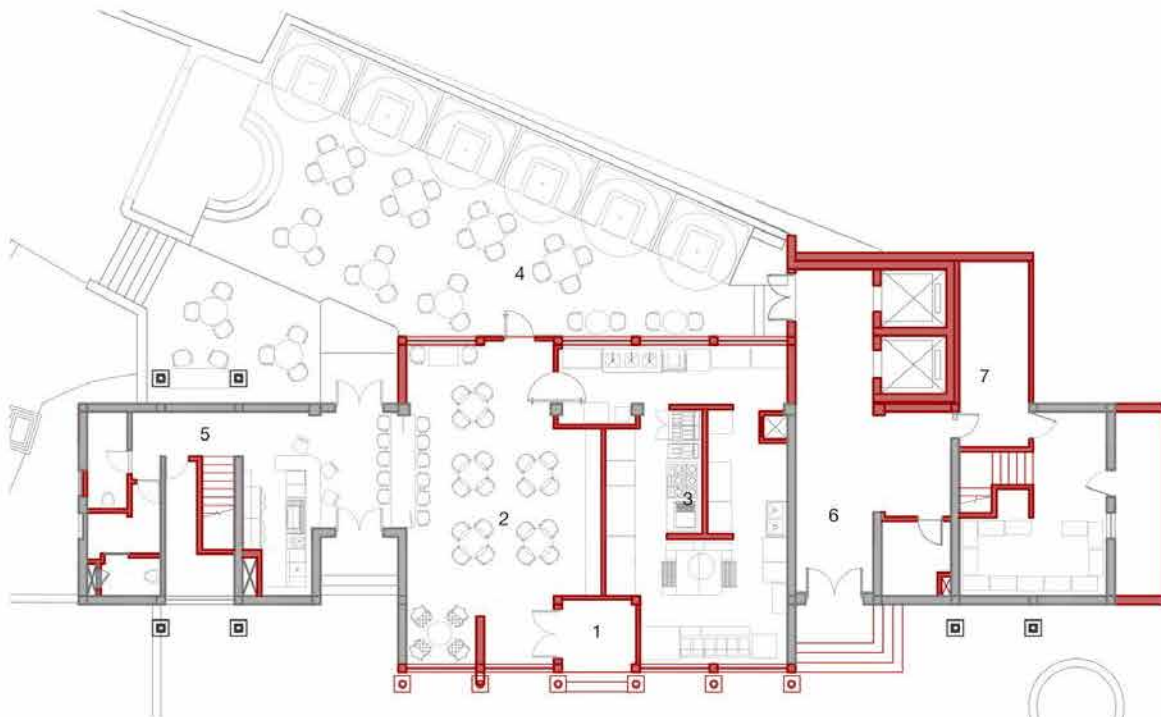
Bengal has its fair share of critiques and venerations; both equally valid. It demonstrates literary flairs, cinematic excellences, esteemed institutes and patrons of art and craft; handloom and weaving industries flourish in almost each city and hinterland, etc. Kolkata's Durga Pujo is also India's official nomination to UNESCO's 2020 list of cultural institutions. While the city is still steeped deep into such pre-colonial legacies, the influence of the Raj era is evident in its skyline. It is evident in its Art-Deco residential precincts,

manors of North Kolkata and neighbourhoods like the Hindustan Park that borrows from the aforementioned influences. Alongside its rich architectural heritage, the same city is also critiqued for being trapped in a time-warp, for its economic debility and so on. Much is left to be desired for the city that was once the capital of the British Indian Empire, the first state to introduce metro rails and is still the cultural capital of the country. Kolkata is perhaps caught between a tug of war between the old and new.





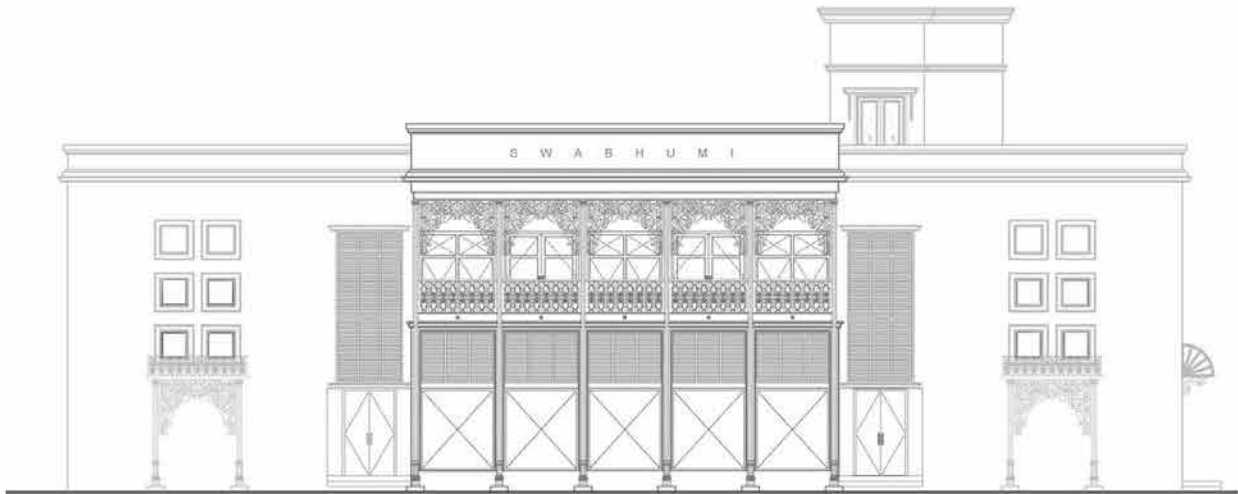
↑ Site Plan.



0 1m 2m 3m 5m

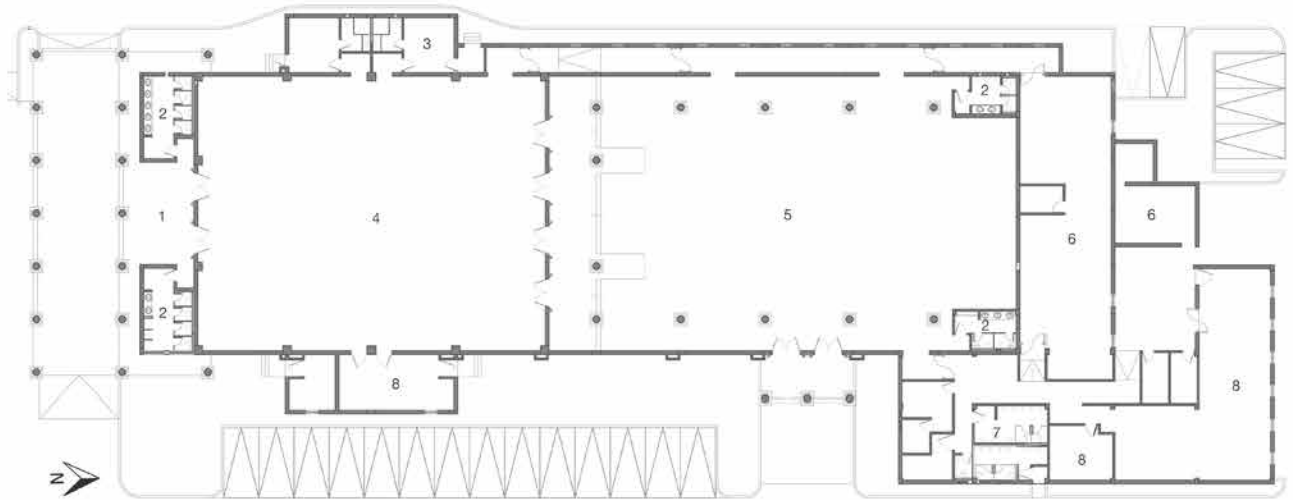
- 1. ENTRY
- 2. COFFEE SHOP
- 3. KITCHEN
- 4. ALFRESCO DINING
- 5. TOILETS AND SERVICES
- 6. HOTEL LOBBY
- 7. SERVICE AREA

NEW
 OLD



0 1m 2m 3m 5m

† Plan & Elevation: Entry Block.

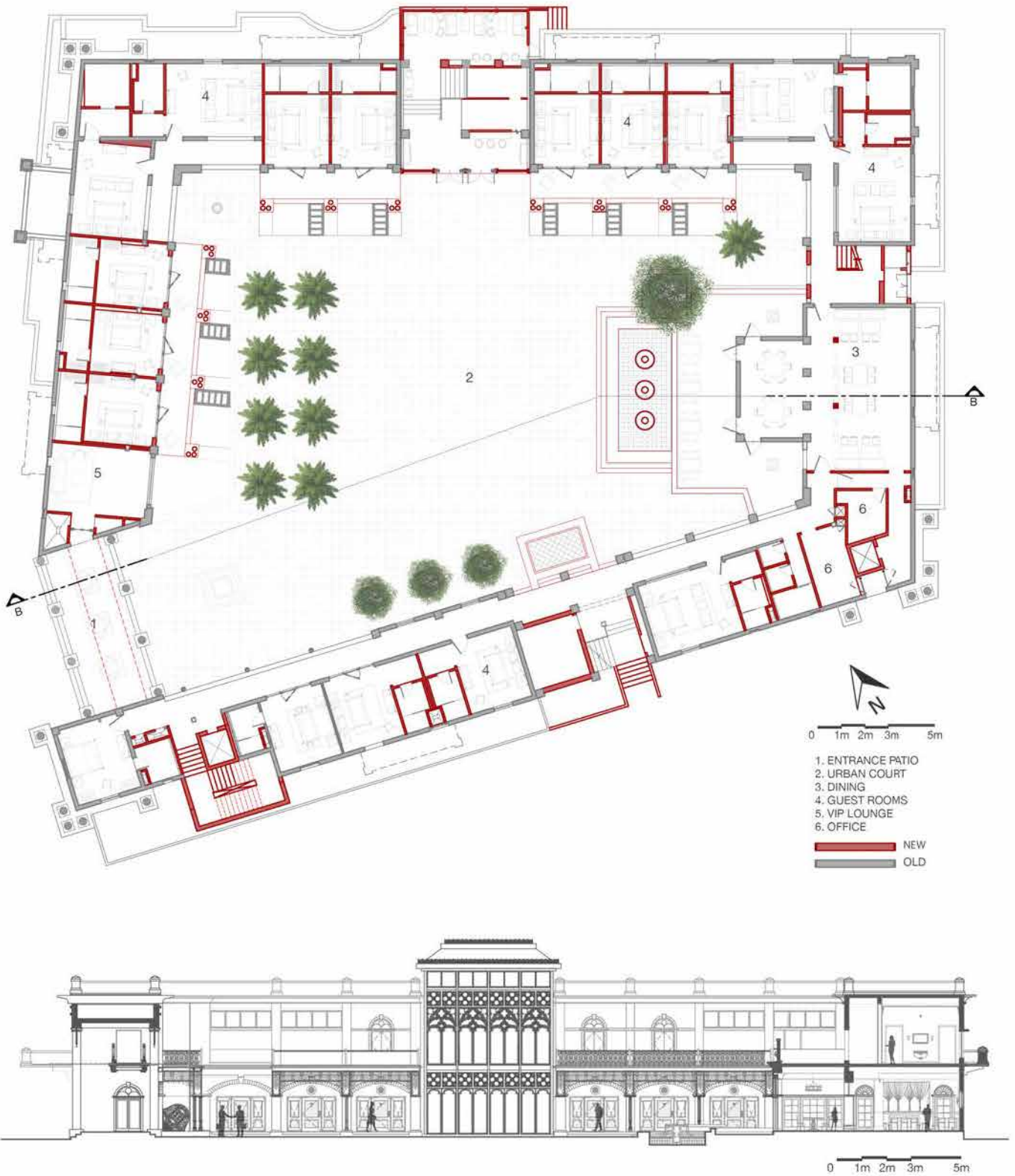


- 0 1m 2m 3m 5m
- 1. ENTRY FOYER
 - 2. TOILETS
 - 3. GREEN ROOMS
 - 4. HALL 1
 - 5. HALL 2
 - 6. KITCHEN
 - 7. STAFF FACILITY
 - 8. STORAGE
- NEW

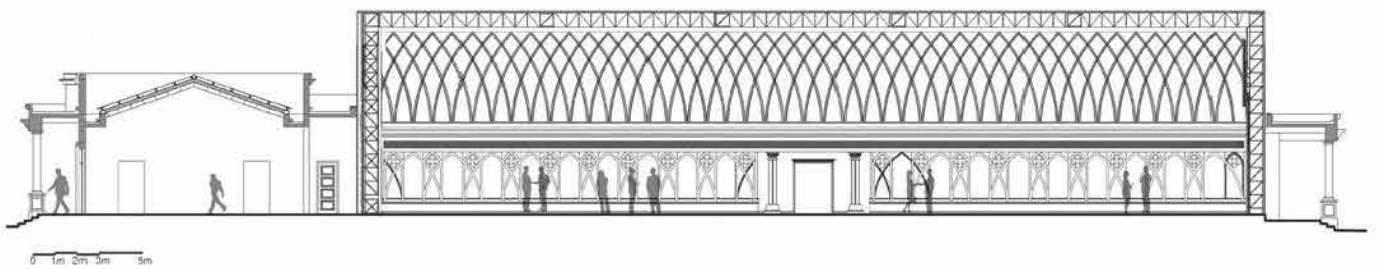
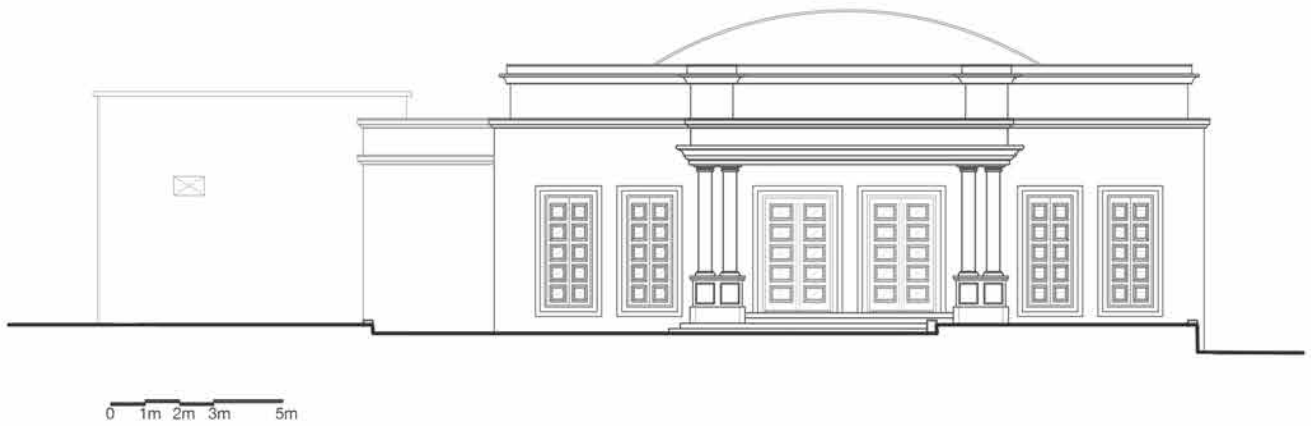
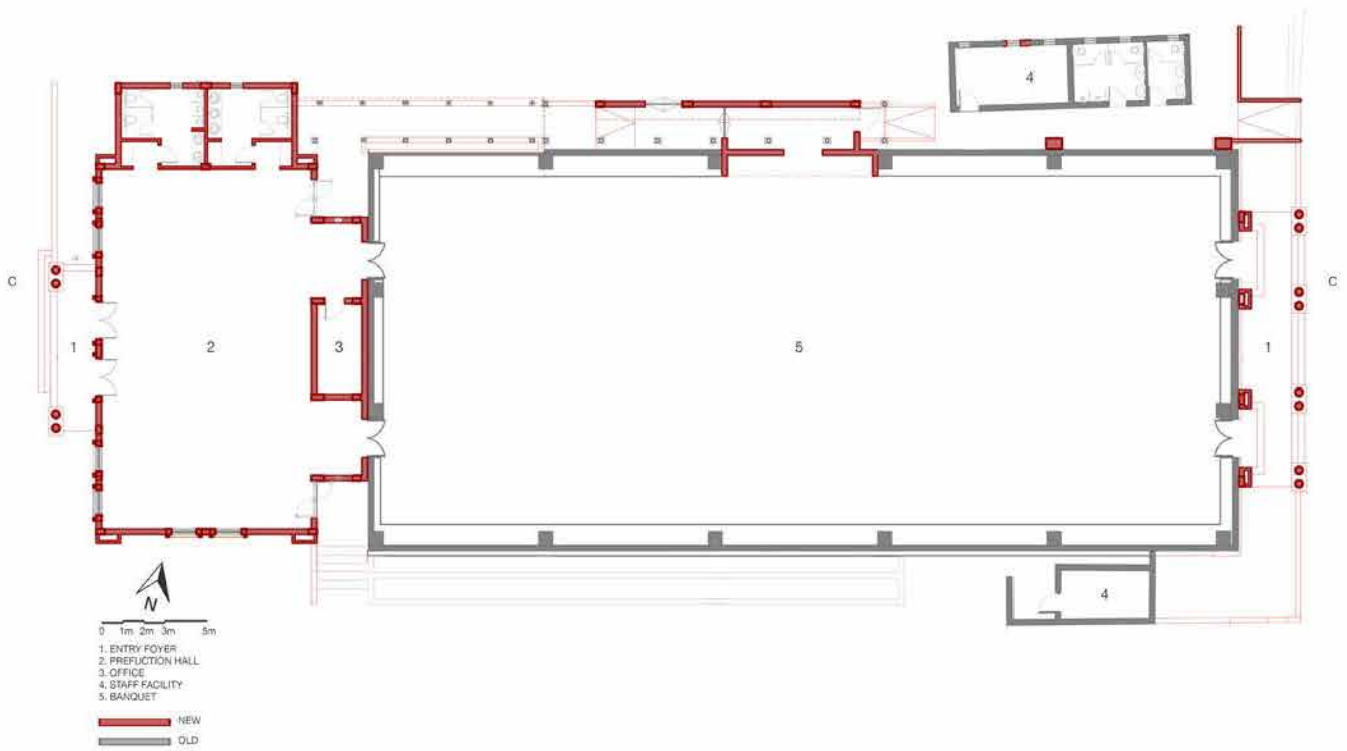


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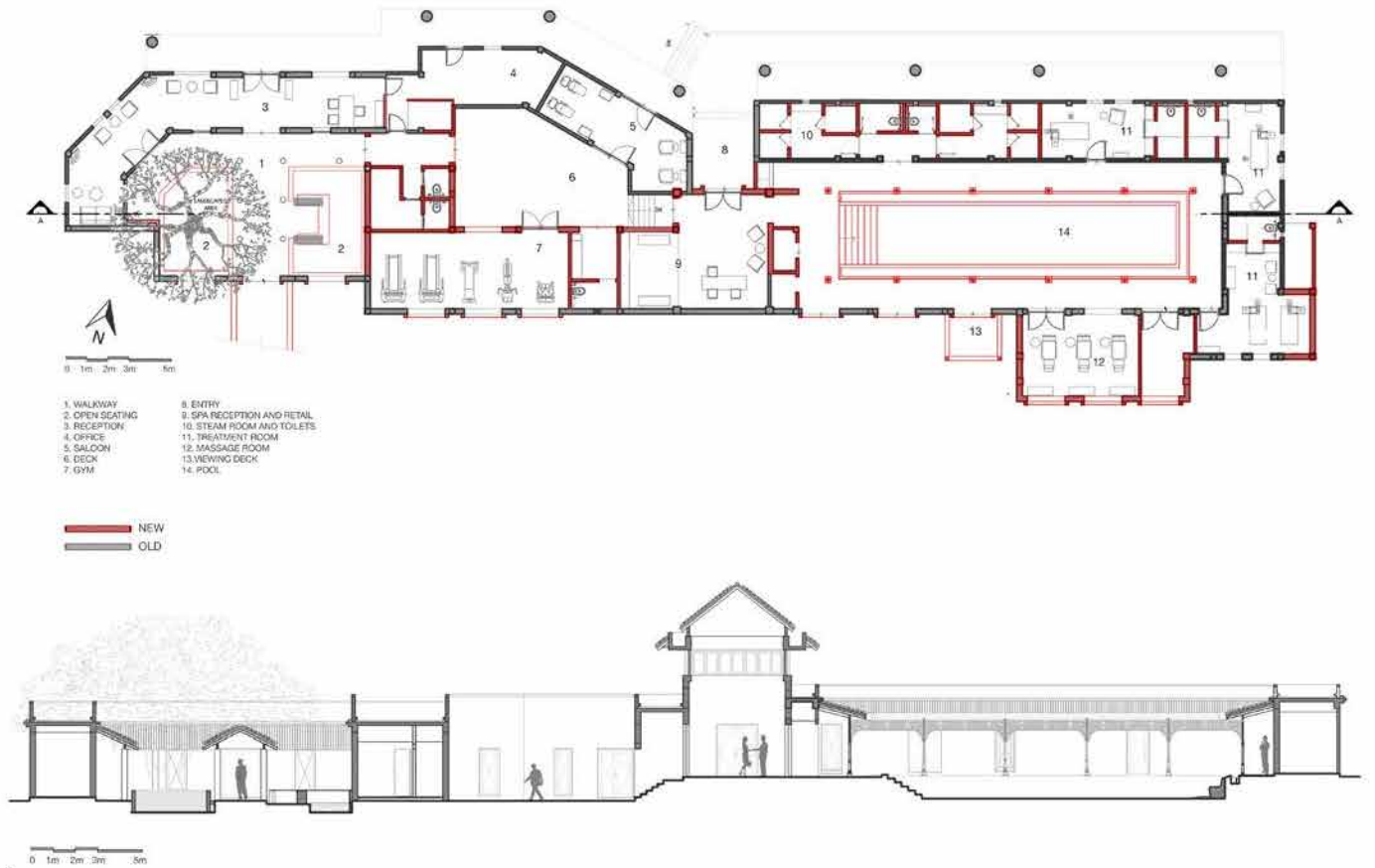
↑ Plan & Elevation: Rasmanch.



↑ Plan & Elevation: Raajkumar.
 Indian Architect & Builder - January 2020



↑ Plan & Elevation: Rangmanch.



↑ Plan & Elevation: Wellness Block.



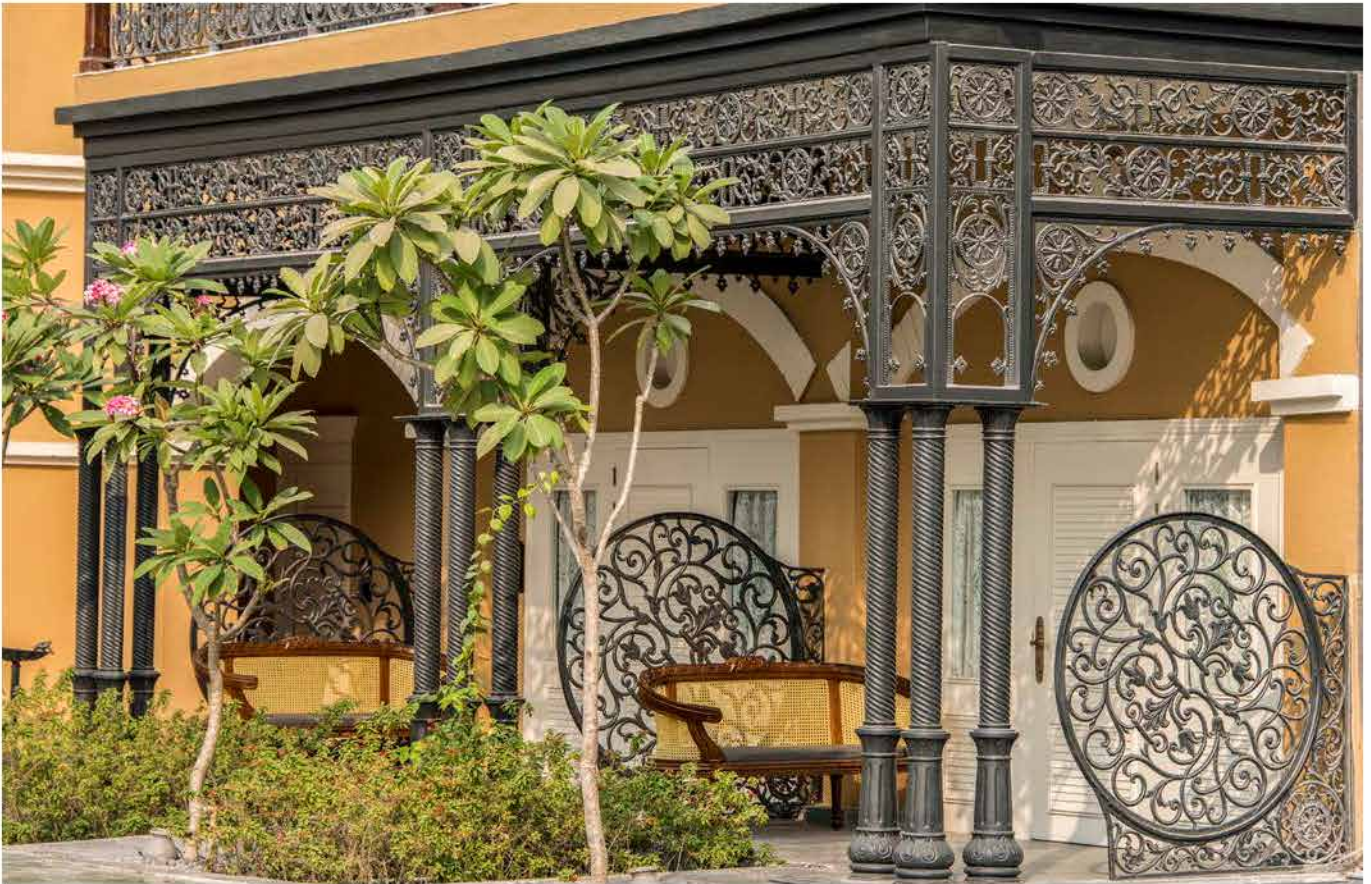
↑ The area in Swabhumi between the the banquet hall – Raas Manch and a bar lounge.



† Entrance to Swabhumi – The Heritage Plaza.



† Courtyard of the boutique hotel Rajkutir, facing a waterbody.



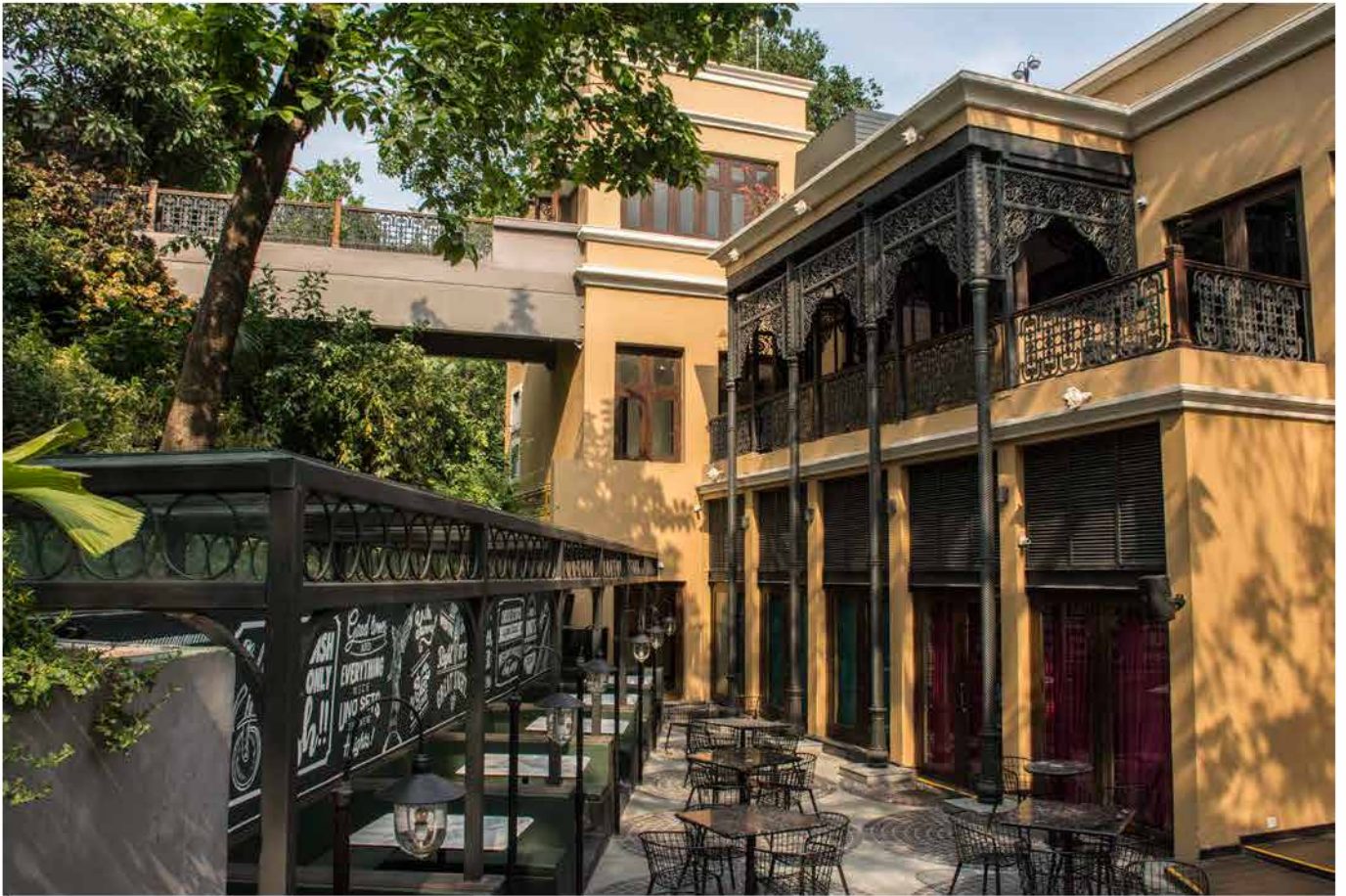
† Cast iron decorative and greens dominate the seating area of the Rajkutir hotel rooms, present on the ground floor, facing the courtyard.



† Fountain facing the Rajkutir room verandas which are designed with cast iron railings.

Swabhumi is a revamped building that attempts to bridge the aforementioned gaps. The urban realization project, at the time of its inception in the nineties aimed to celebrate Bengal's cultural heritage through performance, food and heritage. The site, Narkeldanga in Kolkata is located between the old city and Salt Lake City was metaphoric of the Bengal-British connection. Swabhumi came into existence in the late nineties as a Public-Private-Partnership project that comprised of a crafts' village, a retail arcade, a food court, a convention centre and a banquet. But as mentioned, the space that came into existence fulfilled the cultural expectations but lacked not only infrastructure but also aesthetics. Kolkata being a city of palaces with its charm of 'zamindarbari' had little representation in the contemporary spaces in the new city. Also, the zamindarbari epitomised the privileged class. Keeping these perspectives in mind, the existing building was overhauled to imbibe the architectural legacy of Kolkata.

Salient conceptualised the new Swabhumi as an experience that offered its guests five key impressions Living, Celebrating, Possessing, Dining, and Socializing. Living entails Raajkutir, a boutique five-star hotel that is reminiscent of the zamindaarbari spirit complete with luxury spas. It encompasses three events and convention venues for official and family functions. This boutique hotel becomes the core or the focal point of the entire premise and project. There are interstitial spaces and piazzas that have a quality of the built and unbuilt that are further connected with courtyards. 'Memories' is a retail street built across levels with fashion, décor and lifestyle products. Restaurants, cafes and light-clubs complete the experience. While the Raajkutir maintains the 'raj' decorum within the hotel, the adjoining open spaces imbibe an informal character.



† A café opening onto a sidewalk at Swabhumi – design dominated with cast iron.



† Colonial details of in-house restaurant, reviving the feeling of nostalgia.



↑ The courtyard of Rajkutir hotel, that showcases an iron clad front – an art form from the mid 19th century revived by Salient, on one side and an in-house restaurant on the other.

The new construction preserves over 60% of the previously built structure. The remaining 40% becomes testimony of the Bengal craftsmanship. Kota stone has been reused in the design. Features like cast-iron balconies, patios, crests and brackets uphold nostalgia with fondness. The trees have been intact on site which resulted in an odd geometry of the spaces. But it also ensured sufficient shading within the premises. The orientation of the buildings on the site facilitates ample air ventilation. Clay 'khapra' tiles on the hotel roof further help to maintain the ambient temperatures. As a result, most spaces, with the exception of the banquet areas and rooms. Local artisans from Shantiniketan were commissioned to work on the project. 27 such craftsmen were employed to translate sketches into products and design elements for Raajkutir. An existing staircase too, is remodelled in the lounge bar as its main design feature. While it is often easy to incorporate art and creative elements to design, working with an existing and old building often brings its own plethora of challenges. It called for RCC jacketing and Carbon Fiber Wrapping in places areas. Sonic mapping of the existing foundation had to be constructed in many areas. Much structural retrofitting was required since the existing land was used as a garbage dump. The buildings are a hybrid of RCC and steel construction with new buildings being made with AAC blocks. The site also deploys solid waste management and 100% grey water management.

The interesting part about its architecture is that it doesn't equate luxury with exorbitant costs. It echoes the quintessential Bengali

sentiment and philosophy of simplicity but with high standards that is evident in its craftsmanship and detailing. It metaphors the fact that while Kolkata may be encapsulated in its colonial and even pre-colonial 'shell', there lies potential to celebrate its many legacies. ■

FACT FILE:

Project	: Raajkutir, Swabhumi
Location	: Kolkata, India
Architect	: Salient
Design team	: Tawsig H. Isaq, Debjit, Pallavi, Kumarjit, Rumki, Anirban
Principal Architects	: Ar. Vivek Singh Rathore, AR. Anuradha Rathore
Client	: Mr. Harshvardhan Neotia
Project Area	: Site area: 521000SFT
Built up area	: 100000 SFT
Structural Engineer	: Mr. Sanjiv Parekh - SPA
Civil contractors	: Sreeram Builders
Electrical contractors	: Electro Power
Project Estimate	: Undisclosed
Initiation of Project	: January 2017
Completion of project	: November 2018
Photography	: Pradip Sen, Vivek Singh Rathore

Reimagining a resurrection

Prof. Percy Adil Pithawala and his team members Dhruv Shah, Varun Shah, and Devansh Patel of The Red Studio were recently awarded an Honorary Mention Prize at the RTF - Rethinking the Future International Design Competition to reimagine the spire of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Their entry, the only one from India to win the honor, expertly weaves in architectural and conceptual elements to build a design narrative of the past, the present, and the future against a vivid background of hope and resilience

Text: Sharmila Chakravorty

Renders, illustrations and graphics: Dhruv Shah



In April 2019, a devastating fire propelled the internationally popular building onto a global stage once again; however, this time for an unfortunate incident that left the future of the beloved

Any imagery of Paris is perhaps incomplete without the famous Notre Dame de Paris, the more than 800-years-old structure that is considered iconic by tourists and architects alike. While tourists marvel at the building's grandeur and exquisite stained glass windows, architects study the structure to try and sketch an outline of what the design and construction process of the cathedral would have been like in its time.

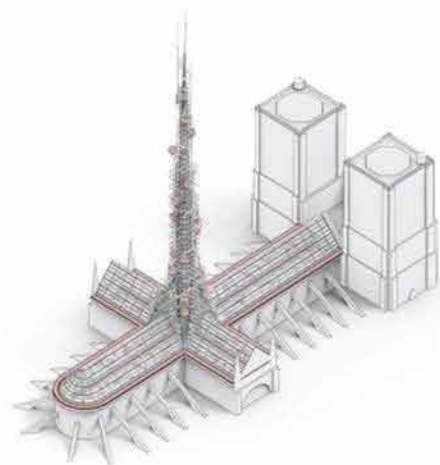
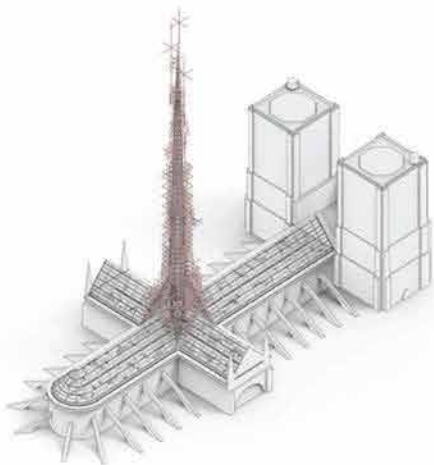
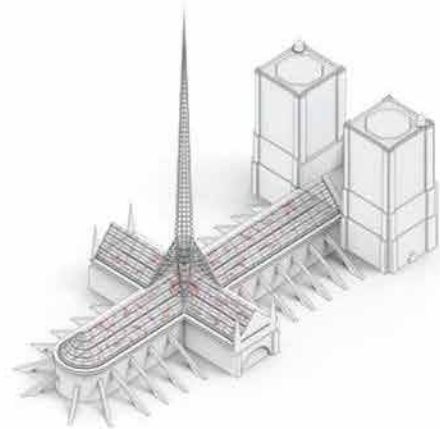
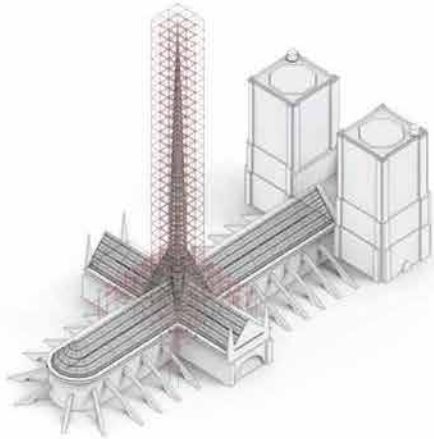
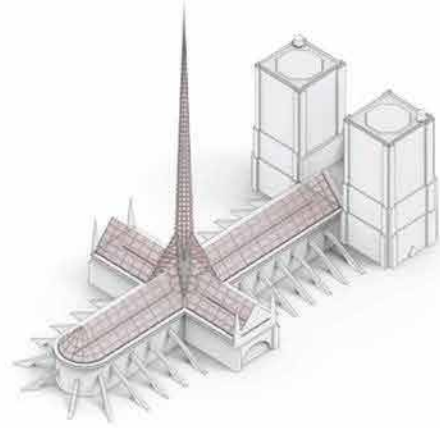
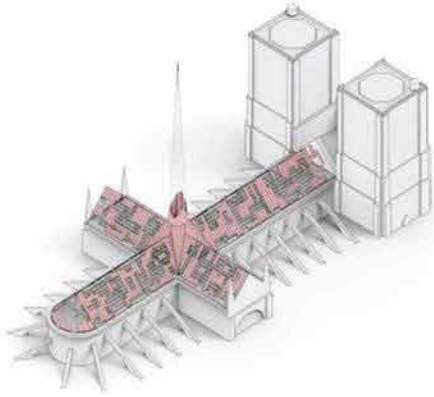
In April 2019, a devastating fire propelled the internationally popular building onto a global stage once again; however, this time for an unfortunate incident that left the future of the beloved cathedral hanging in the balance. The fire irreparably damaged the spire and the roof of the cathedral, opening up the dialog about reconstruction, and possibly reimagination. This perhaps inspired the conception of the RTFI - Rethinking the Future International Design Competition, which gave architects and designers from around the world creative freedom to reimagine a do-over for the iconic cathedral.

A jury of eminent professionals and academicians selected a winning entry and ten honorable mentions. Among these honorable mentions was the entry submitted by The Red Studio's Prof. Percy Adil Pithawala and his team members Dhruv Shah, Varun Shah, and Devansh Patel.

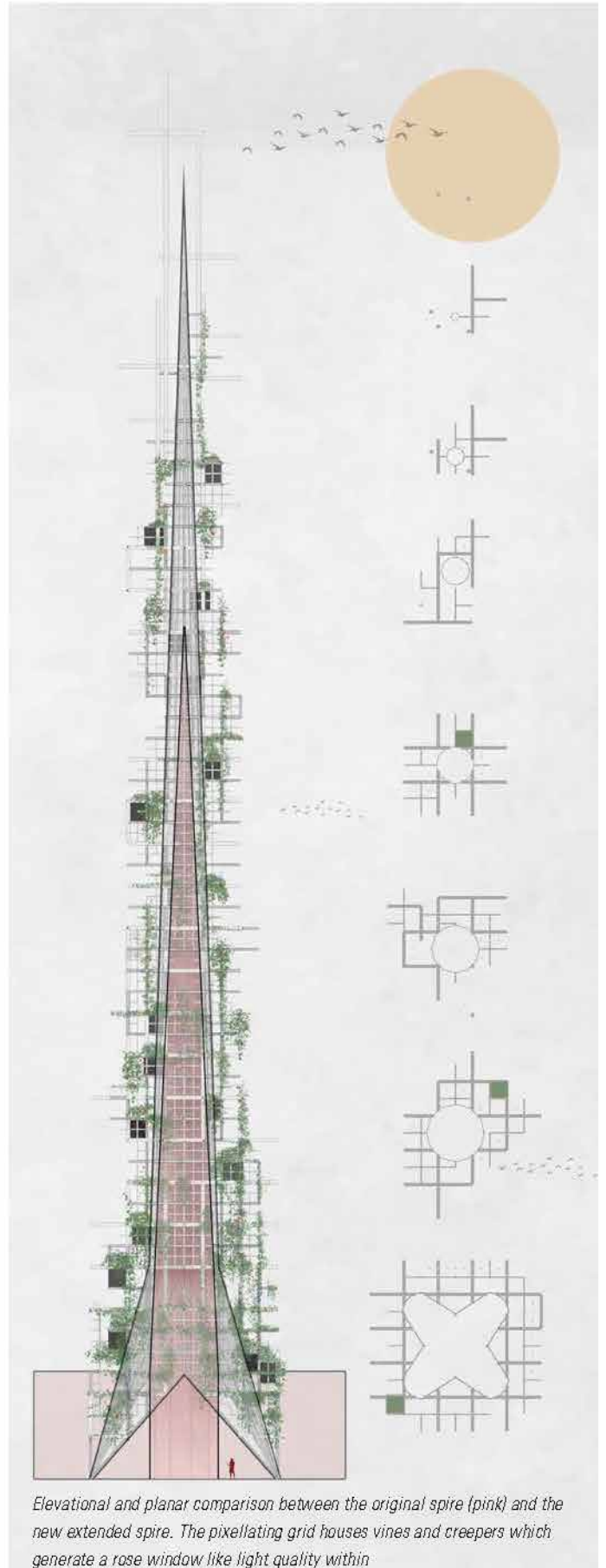
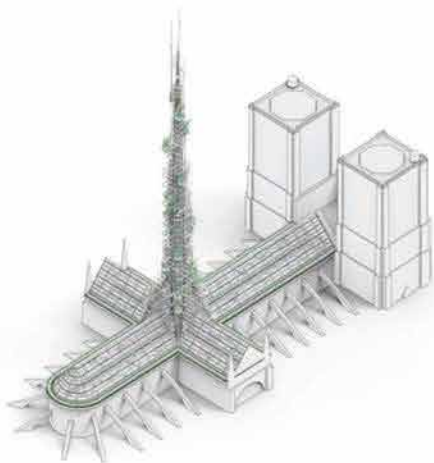
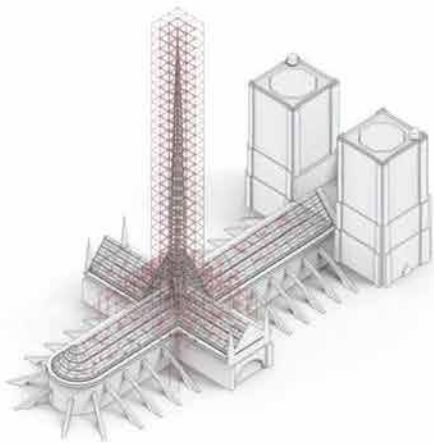
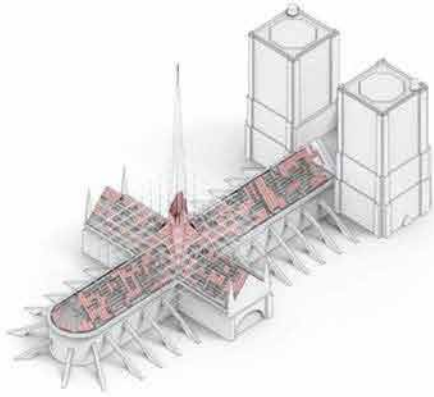
Explaining the design scope, the team mentions, "The Brief of the competition was to rethink the role of heritage in today's culture and explore possibilities to facilitate a dialog between past and contemporary architecture in a present-day context. It urged participants to seek strategies for reactivating Notre Dame precincts and articulate its heritage and cultural values with contemporary habitability."

Their winning submission responds to this brief by attempting to resurrect the spire like a Phoenix bird rising from the ashes of its destruction. Thus, the design chooses to incorporate the visual memory of the blazing fire that destroyed the spire, one that will undoubtedly remain etched in people's memories for generations. Elaborating their design, the team says, "We believe that any act of rebuilding must take into consideration this powerful notion of the presence of the absence. We envisage the emergence of a new spire as a participatory project for the city in a state of perpetual construction activity. A glass cone reminiscent of the original spire caps the void left by its absence. A system of scaffolding pixelates gradually as it encircles the cone, creating a blurred silhouette of the spire visible across the Paris skyline. A cascade of green integrated with the scaffolding simulates the organic and ephemeral feel of the existing rose window as it allows light to filter in through the spire."





↑ *Concept diagrams.*



Elevational and planar comparison between the original spire (pink) and the new extended spire. The pixellating grid houses vines and creepers which generate a rose window like light quality within

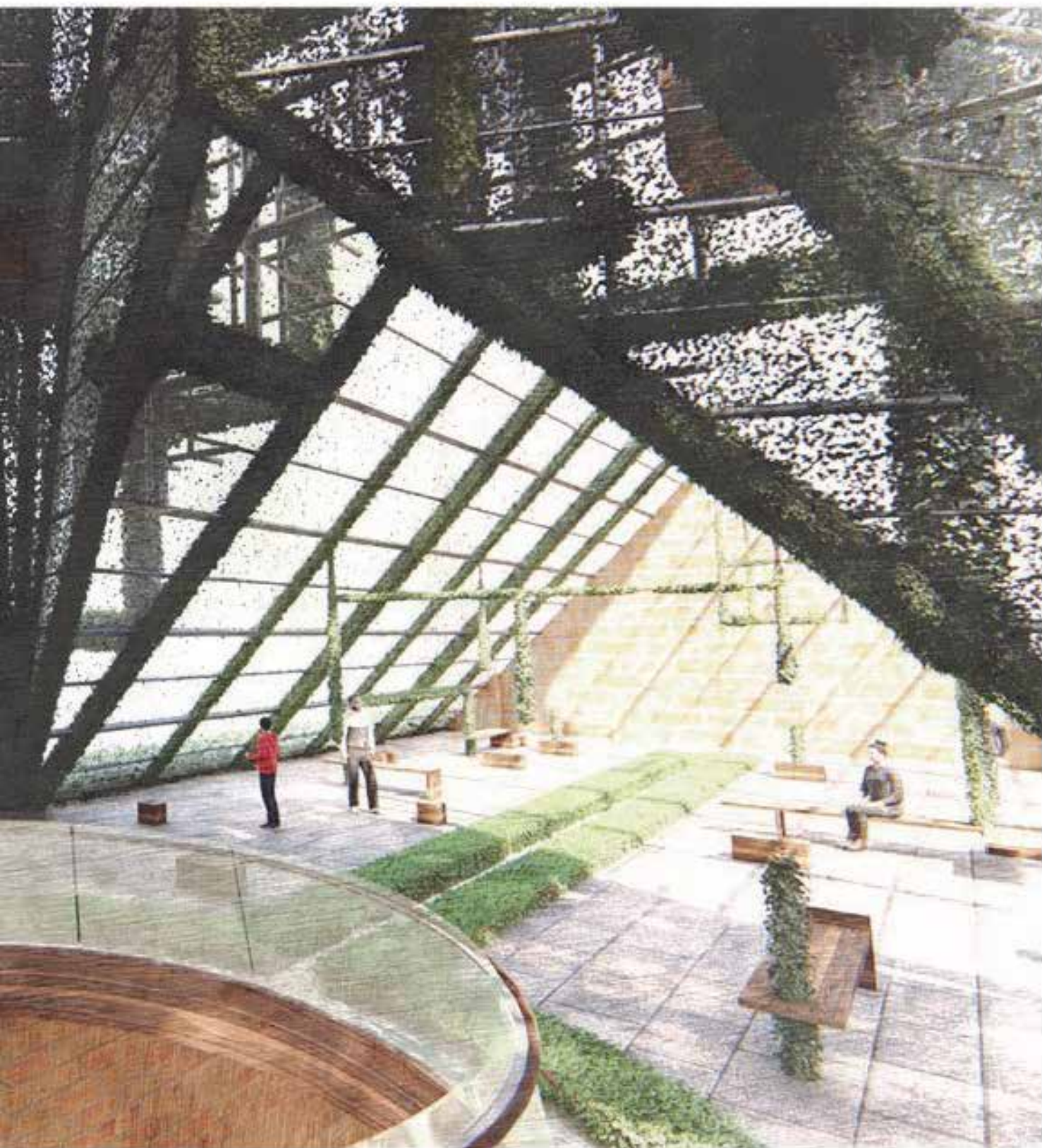


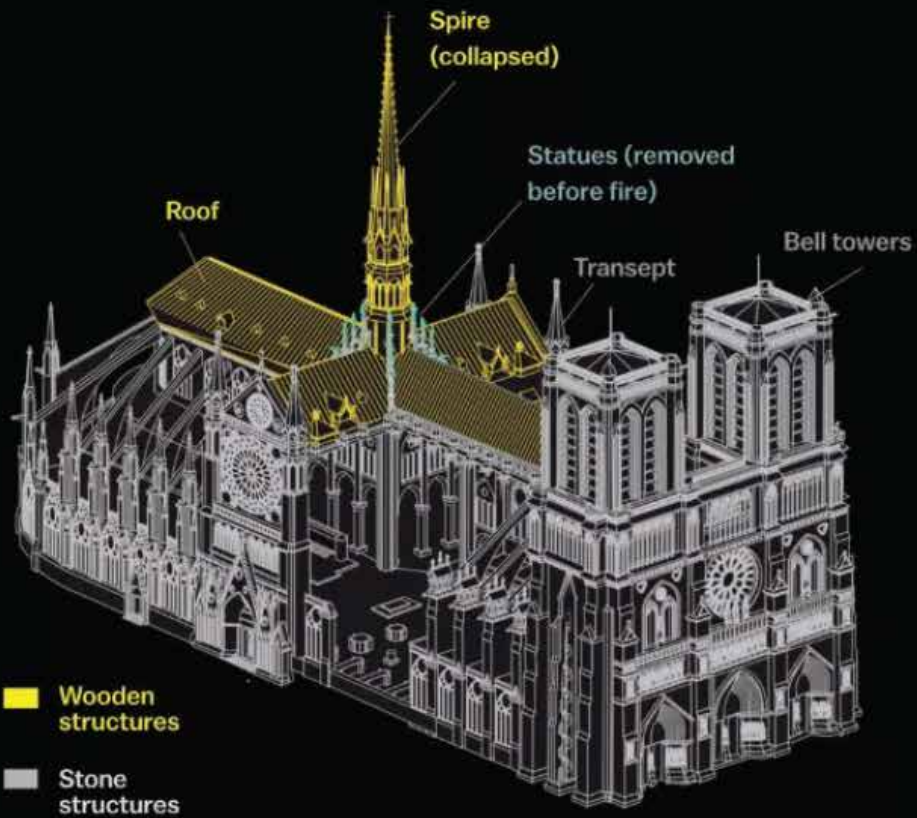
† Before-After Proposal.



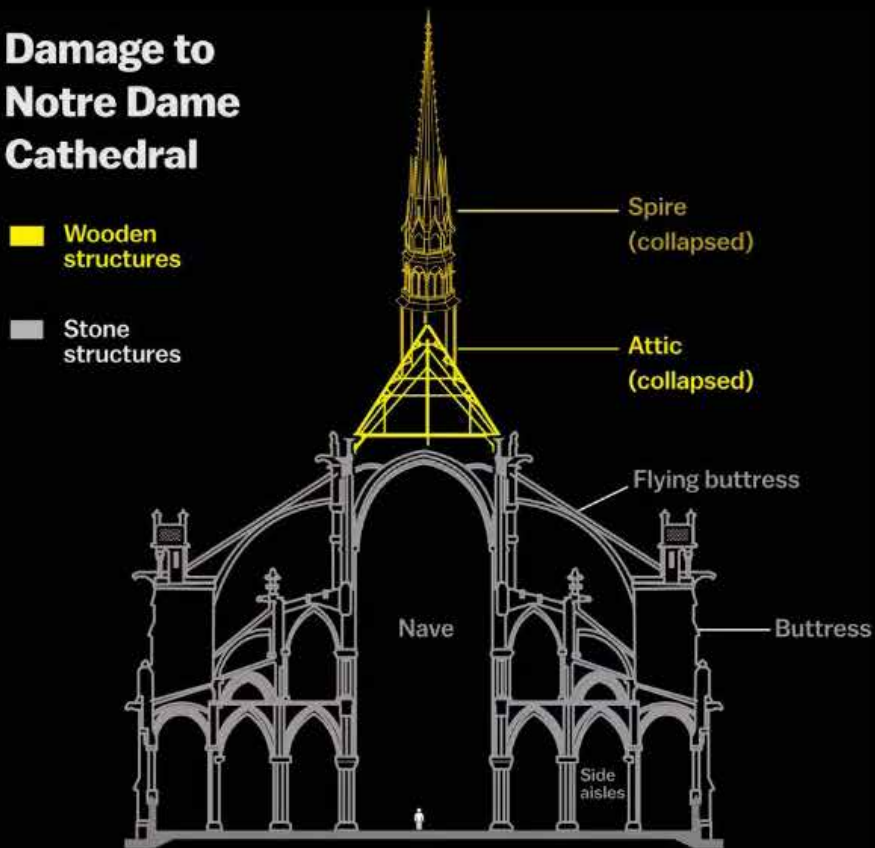


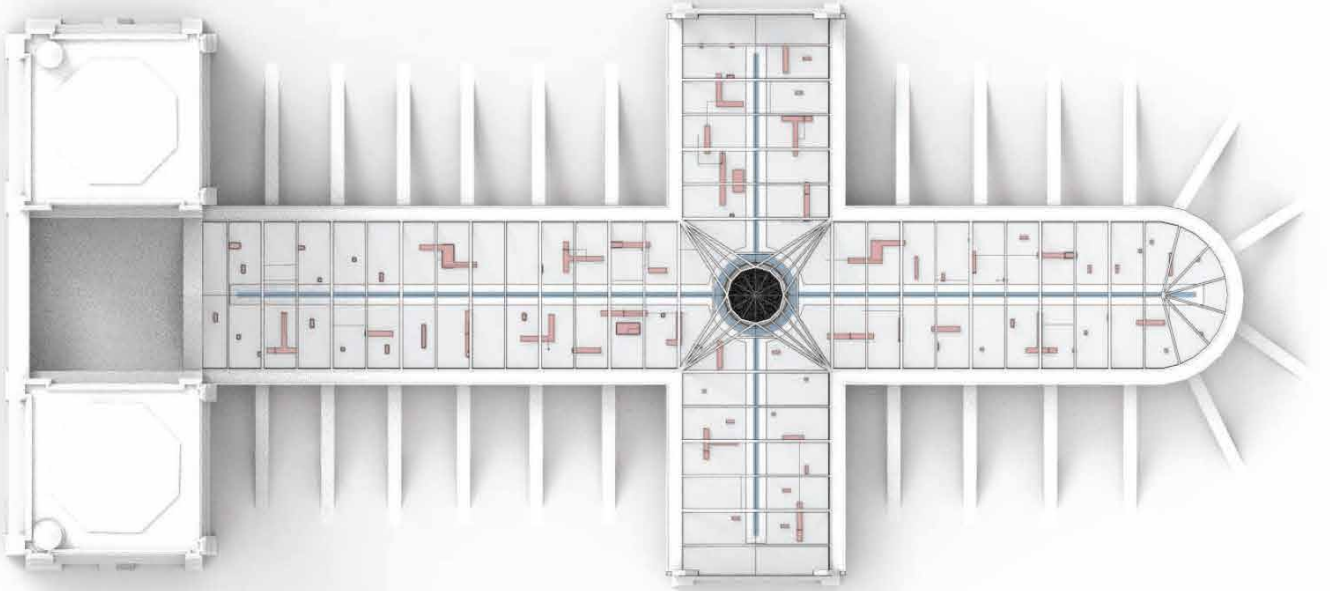
The interior layout reflects as fragmented seating spaces which are held by extensions of the perforated grid of the new spire. The material is chosen with respect to the old aisle and allows for exhibitions and gatherings. The Aisle enhances its form with a water channel running in the shape of a cross, uninterrupted apart from the circular cutout in the center which marks the absence of the old spire and allows patrons to look within.



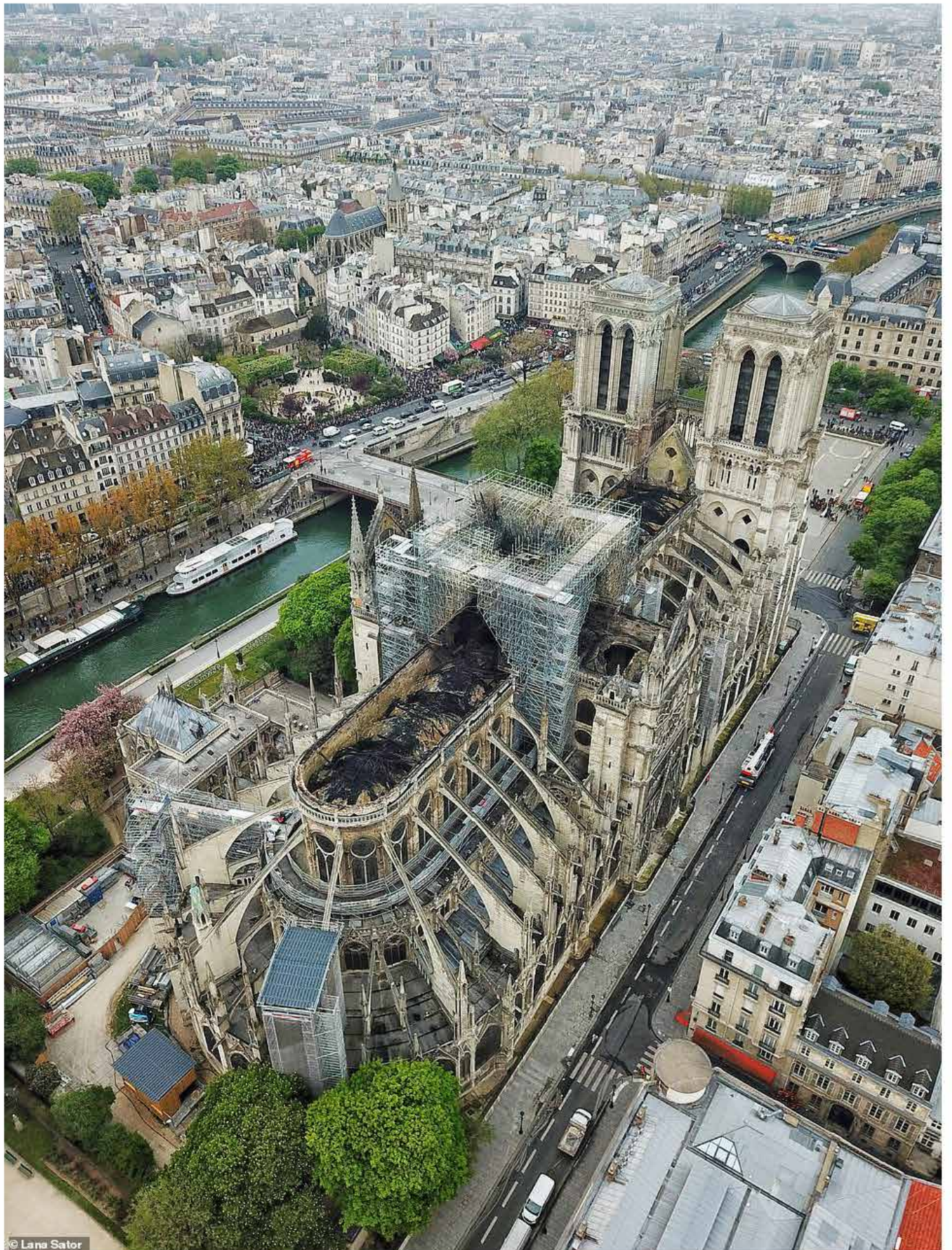


Damage to Notre Dame Cathedral





↑ The vines envelope the spire and over time, nature will take over the spire. The leaves and flowers of the creepers allow only scattered light to enter which create spectacular radiant patterns reminiscent of the iconic rose window.





† Aerial view showing how the new spire sits in the existing context. Replicating the old image of the old spire, the proposal marks itself as a taller and stronger icon in the context of Paris. The aisle acts as a public exhibition space and a space which engages its patrons in nostalgia, melancholy and memory

It is easy to see why this team won an honorable mention. The proposed design is a modern-day interpretation that serves the dual purpose of being a piece of art and architecture, rich in conceptual imagery and cultural significance. It is an extension of the past, but looks boldly to the future; it is tailored for an icon of the real world, but draws inspiration from the realm of fiction.

The design takes its inspiration from the mythical bird Phoenix which is immortalised in a number of popular sci-fi movies as a symbol of regeneration and resilience, giving the general public and immediate frame of reference to connect with the new design. No other entity conveys hope and re-emergence after absolute destruction better than the phoenix, perhaps explaining why it is such a popular element in fiction. And we, as a people, connect much better to fiction - imagined realities that go beyond our mundane everyday lives; which is perhaps why we are conditioned to turn to fictional entities for meaning and explanation to understand and navigate life. Thus, in many ways, the design makes it abundantly clear that the cathedral is the phoenix. It will rise from the ashes of its devastating fire, to once again take its rightful place as the landmark of Europe, not just Paris - with a little help, of course.

But more importantly, the design, and in fact the competition on the whole, raises poignant questions about the nature of restoration, about heritage and the value we attach to its tangible representatives. Restoration, perhaps, is an attempt to improve rather than simply copy. Iconic medieval buildings have all taken years to be completed, sometimes being designed and constructed by multiple people in the process; with time, the design too might have evolved, with each new master perhaps personal preferences and signatures would have been introduced. Does that demean the buildings' value today?

What is the ideal way to approach restoration and rebuilding? Does one blindly copy what was, ignoring the vast possibilities of what could be? But if one is to simply redo what has already been done before, what is the point of all the advancement in technology, architecture, and theory? But then, what happens to the cultural significance, and therefore, respecting the nuances tied to several centuries of cultural reverence and identity? How do we quantify this value? Do we ascribe this value simply based on the age of the building, or does it need to have housed historic events to be eligible? There are so many underlying suppositions that there is no right or wrong answer.

The entry by Prof Pithawala and his team pays homage to the memory of the church, without glossing over the fire. It doesn't try to hide the painful memory of the fire, but makes it a central feature of the design; perhaps a hat-tip to the 'what doesn't kill you makes you stronger' philosophy. But whether or not these winning and honorable entries actually translate to tangible structures is not the point here. Inviting architects and designers - who are in fact design-representatives of the public at large - into the discourse is a great way to collectively reimagine the new Notre Dame. It is also an opportunity to become infuse a part of yourself into history, be a part of something larger than life - that is where the competition and the entries excel. ■

The Generic Urban

Since the urban is now pervasive, urbanism will never again be about the “new,” only about the “more” and the “modified.”

-Rem Koolhaas¹

Text and images: Rupal Rathore

2020. We are in the auto-pilot age where Urbanism is erupting by default. By the highway. Around factories. Near airports. On farmlands. It is a self-feeding phenomenon where *a little bit* leads to *some more*. Towns only need to catch a ripple of the Urbanism Wave discharged from cities to transform their fate. It seems so full of promise that much is thrown in its way to become The Transformed. To happily shed old wisdom and embrace the ‘chaos’.

Stripped of context and history is the Generic. It seeps through storefronts, row houses, schools, industrial sheds, bus stands, streets, billboards and nameplates. That which is not Generic becomes a source of fascination and nostalgia. A ‘link’ to the Past. With the Generic Urban encircling its peripheries, the old tightens its grip and condenses into a denser nucleus. While ‘identity’ is the strongest at the centre, expressing itself most explicitly through the built environment, its range of influence has physical limitations. Once the essence is diluted, the Generic takes over, plugging on to the core to initiate a cycle of systematic exchange and inter-dependency. Of course, this is easier to read in towns than cities because of the

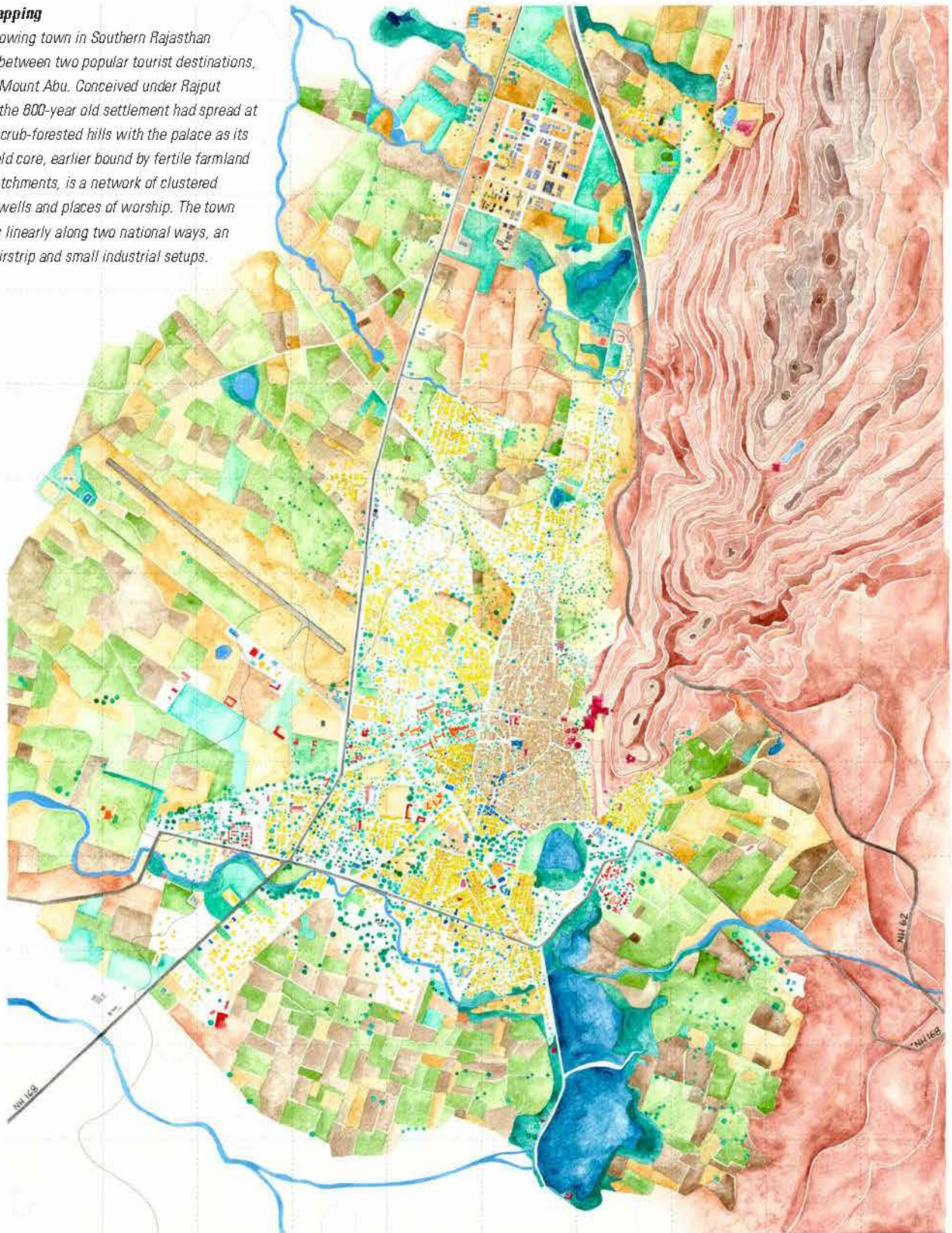
absence of additional factors-of-complexity and triggers-of-growth. A simplified equation.

For an architect, the ongoing flux between the old and new can be an engaging study, for it is a reflection of the society’s aspirations and despairs. It represents the pace at which it is allowing and (or) resisting change. Architecture itself is the assertion of this transition. Organic settlements organised on the basis of caste or trade seem to be surviving on the sole merit of being heritage precincts. They certainly demonstrate an informed relationship with the landscape, a living that makes ecological sense. They have supported, most intelligently, a community-oriented cycle of give and take- smart economics. They have harboured the legacy of passing on the skills and techniques of native crafts, a system that ensured contributing individuals in the functioning of the collective. They have managed to integrate utilitarian infrastructure in a closely-knit fabric of houses, such that stepwells, bridges, animal shelters, burial grounds, pathways and grounds were only seen as an extension of everyday lives. Public and private were two frames that casually intersected on attached terraces and stepped plinths.

¹ *Whatever Happened to Urbanism, 1995*

Landuse Mapping

Sirohi is a growing town in Southern Rajasthan sandwiched between two popular tourist destinations, Udaipur and Mount Abu. Conceived under Rajput governance, the 600-year old settlement had spread at the base of scrub-forested hills with the palace as its centre. The old core, earlier bound by fertile farmland and water catchments, is a network of clustered houses, stepwells and places of worship. The town now expands linearly along two national ways, an emergency airstrip and small industrial setups.

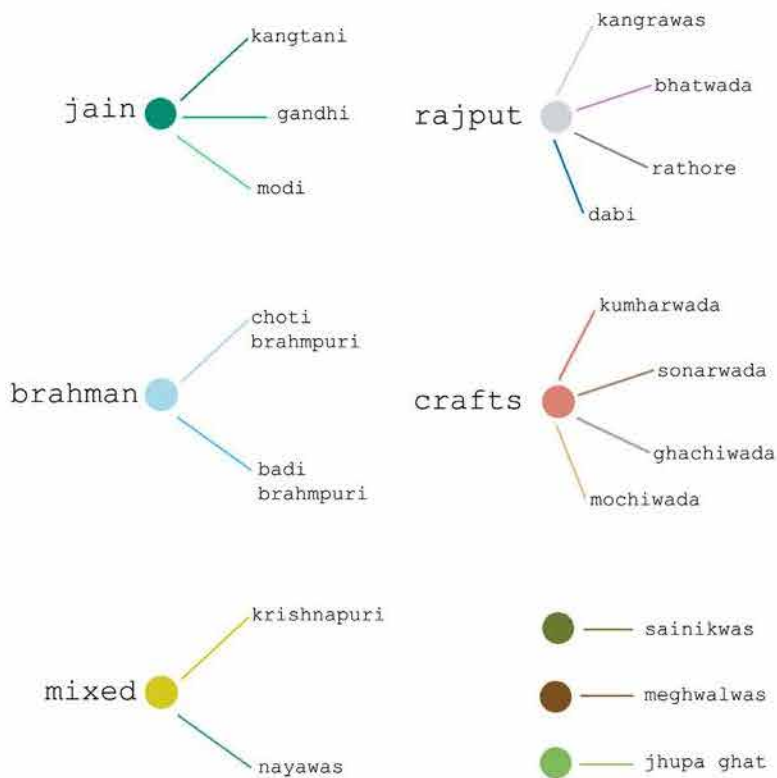


<p>0 500m 1km</p>		<p>SIROHI</p>		<p>N</p>	
<p>WATERBODIES/CHANNEL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ seasonal ■ perennial 	<p>VEGETATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ scrub forest ■ cultivated land ■ fallow land ■ wetland ■ gardens/parks ■ trees 	<p>BUILDING LAYOUTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ open ground ■ old settlement ■ new residential ■ mixed urban land 	<p>INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ heritage/religious ■ institutional ■ industrial ■ national highway ■ airstrip 		

Older community settlements now are seen as the exotic remains of a colourful bygone era threatened to be consumed by the Generic Urban. A tiled façade in a cluster of lime-plastered walls may strike as odd, almost obscene, but it is one of the liberated few. It has caught up with the global movement of mass homogenisation. What is local now, anyway? Not stone, clay or dung. What is affordable? Not slaked lime and marble dust. Yet, the tourist keeps up his 'perpetual quest for character'² often reducing traces of authenticity to mere money-making. That said, isn't *adaptation* the only means to escape *exhaustion*? Whilst the Generic Urban expands uninhibited, the city core struggles to hold on to its dual nature. To remain disguised behind a blanket of crumbling walls. To be both old and new together.

The Generic Urban, on the other hand, is unpretentious. Blatantly so. It accommodates students, techies, designers, social workers, migrants and refugees in places where they could have never belonged. It shifts farmers further out, squeezes rivers further in and displaces forest tribes altogether. It helps *progress*. It has fused cuisines, attires, buildings and markets into a hybrid variety made available in almost all parts of the world. It has concentrated populations, collected talent and bred opportunities in singular pockets of land. It has hoarded resources and put a price tag on every damn thing.

If we are to think that the individual (instead of the family) is now the building block of the community (which is not a neighbourhood,



[†] **City Core:** A product of mature occupation-based organisation and social hierarchy, the city core camouflages traces of deterioration and abandonment with specimens of a glorious past in the historical fabric. Crafts like sword and juti-making find their means of survival in the local market besides imported cheese and broccoli.

island or country but the entire world), there seems to be no practical alternative next to standardisation. Of airports, parks, and houses. Of beaches and hotels. Of souvenir shops. Their ability to exist in isolation, indifferent to the surroundings, is perhaps what makes them Generic. If they start scraping deposited layers of history and have a story to tell, they wouldn't quite qualify.

The Generic Urban can be beautiful.

There is harmony in repetition. Comfort in the familiar. Safety in the crowd. Hope in the populous. Free from the 'captivity of the centre',

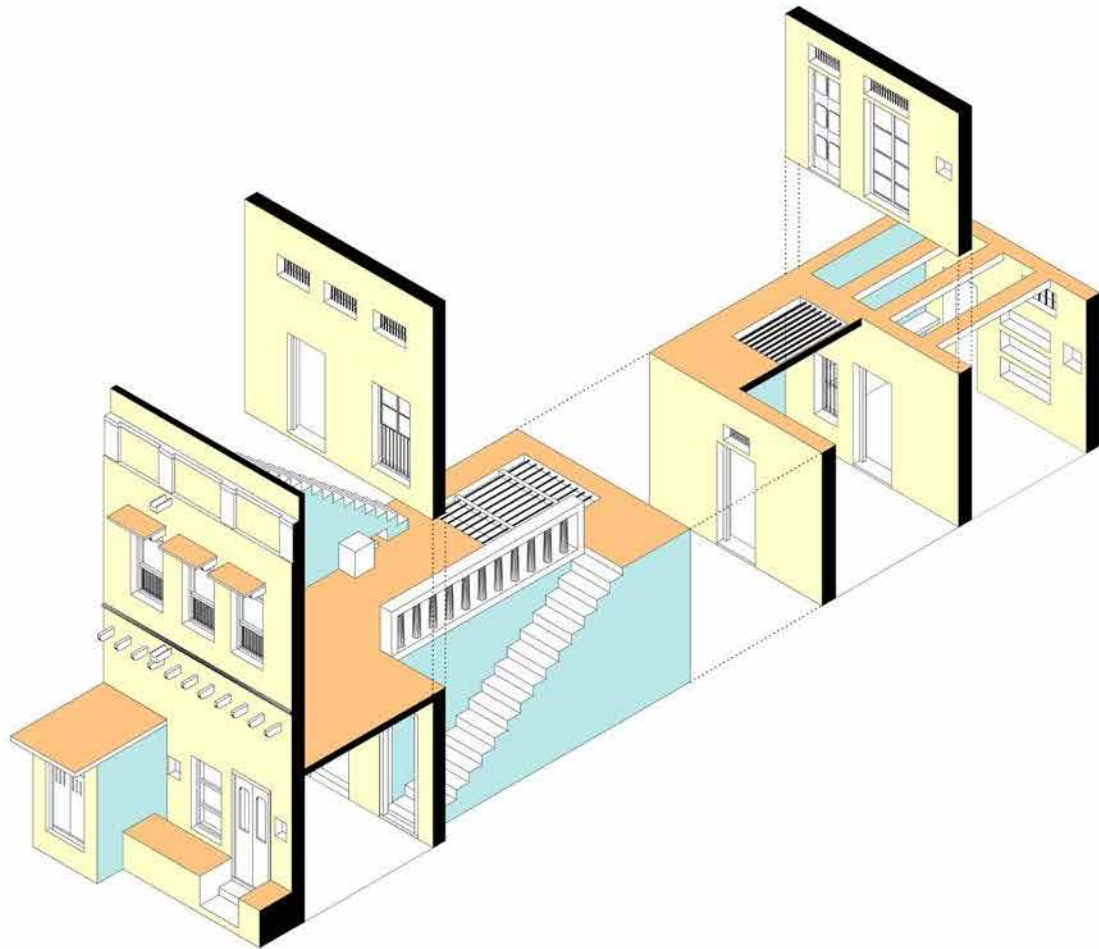
² *The Generic City*, Rem Koolhaas, 1995

³ *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson, 1983

⁴ *Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations* 983

the city grows purely based on present needs. It reflects the mundane truth. It absorbs multi-cultural identities and maintains the existence of virtual or *imagined communities*³. In fact, it allows one to shed the baggage of previously subjected identities and start afresh. It breaks its own patterns and punctuates ordinariness with something iconic, generically iconic. It prefers speed over stroll, efficiency over effort and utility over leisure. It does not claim to solve everything but seeks to make instant arrangements. It is criticised, challenged, rejected and yet, is constantly occupied. UN reports claim that India will have added 416 million to her urban demographic by 2050⁴.

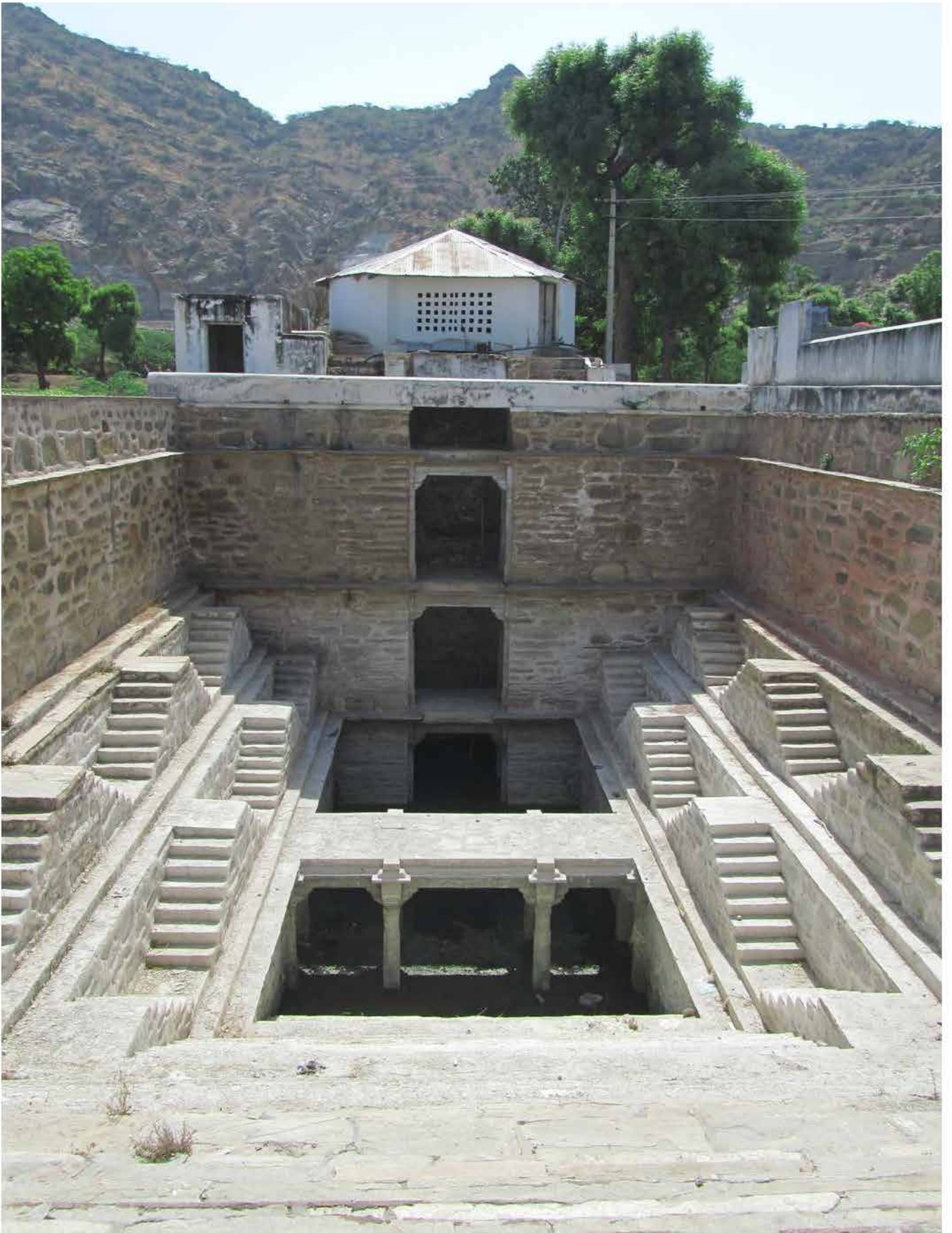




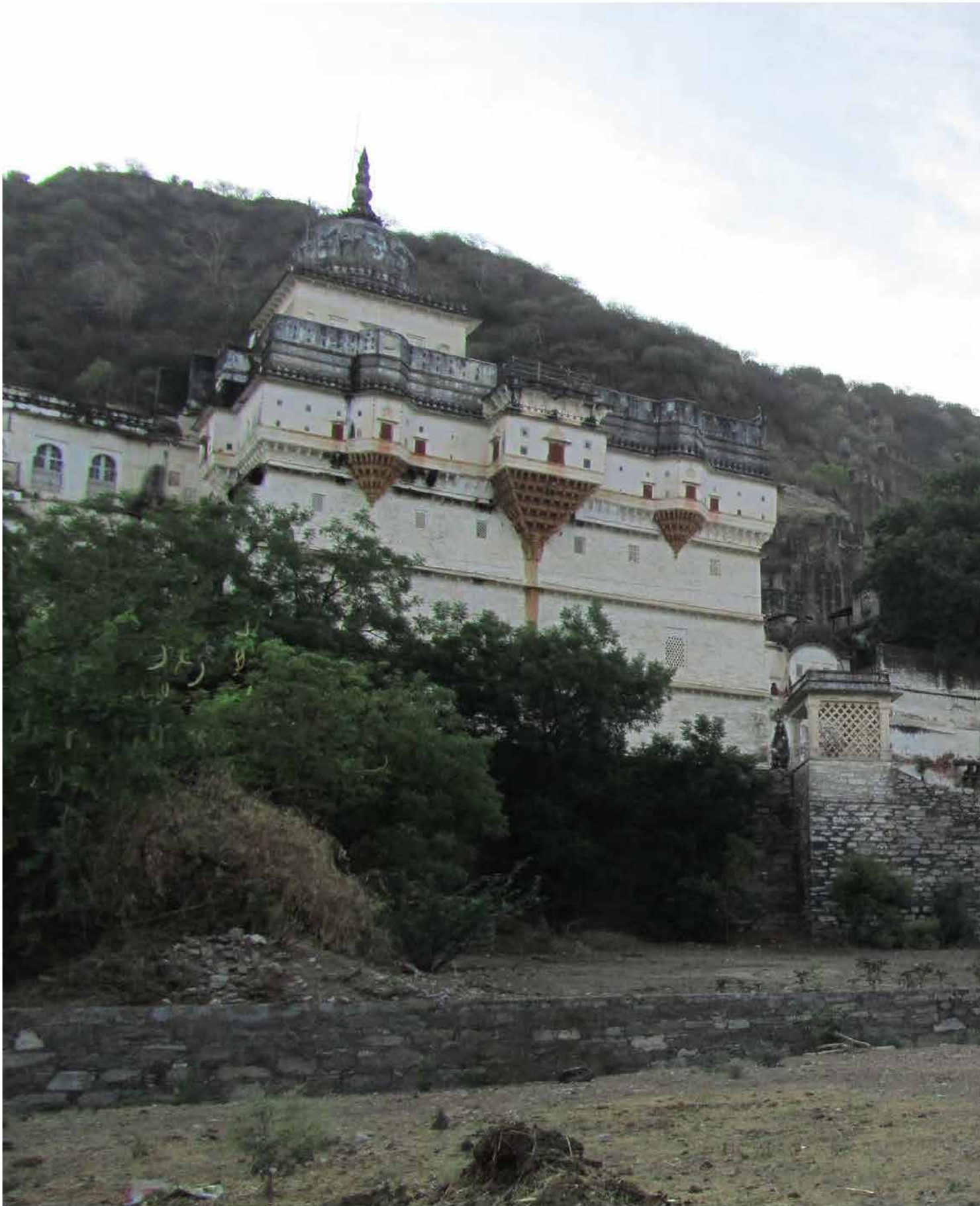
† **Courtyard House:** In days when artificial lighting had not been introduced, the courtyard served as the central workspace for the household, flanked with functional spaces like the kitchen. It helped members of a large joint family remain visibly connected to each other and ventilate houses that shared walls with their neighbours on either side.



† **Street Section:** Most old houses have doors and staircases opening directly into the street. Nodes and chowks are informal social gathering spaces linking lanes of varying widths to form an organic web.



† **Ratan Baori:** Commissioned by the royalty, stepwells were an indigenous means for water conservation and provided a platform to perform sacred rituals and celebrate festivals like Gangaur.



The Sirohi Palace, wrapped in its fortified walls, is now uninhabited.





Urban Sprawl.





↑ *The Generic Urban*

Flexibility can be considered as an effective virtue of the Generic Urban. Buildings don't need to last forever. Nor do cities for that matter. Non-permanent designs are welcome. Remember the nook around the street corner where you played hopscotch as a kid? It has a Starbucks now. If you plan on going next week, it may have swapped its cream white paint with a charcoal grey and turned into a local pub. Adaptive reuse is by far the most convincing course adopted to preserve heritage and keep the financials going. The city has green belts, vegetated dividers and botanical gardens as an extra 'facility'. A perk. Recreational hubs, pleasure areas, amusement parks, fun zones... are accepted programs proposed by architects and bureaucrats alike.

The Generic Urban is also hypothetical.

For as soon as it is *placed* somewhere, anywhere, it acquires relevance. Roots. Tactility. It now has a narrative that is specific to the land and its people. Their professions and engagements. Ancestries and erasures. It is one end of the stick and nobody is there yet, because what is there after but to fall off in empty space. The flux we are in

can only be expressed after stating the two extremities. It can only be written about fluctuating between poles.

Each village, town, city and mega-city is negotiating the potentiality of growth with their physical and ephemeral realities. Each is defining what growth means during the process. We are witnesses to the dynamic churning of built environments where the city aspires to become the Generic Urban and simultaneously tightens its hold on the ancient. Perhaps all ages have been spectators to such a shift but not one as rapid as this. That's the story and we can now go back to playing our respective roles. ■

Rupal Rathore is an architect practising in her hometown, Udaipur. She is a graduate from Balwant Sheth School of Architecture, NMIMS, Mumbai. She undertook the study and documentation of Sirohi as part of her research thesis and presented her design proposals to the municipal body of the town. She has previously been engaged in rural interventions in Uttarakhand with the Ahmedabad firm, Compartment S4. She is currently working on a Shelter for Injured Animals to be built in Sirohi in collaboration with the government.



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Opening Address by P.V Somasundaram, Executive Director, Armstrong World Industries Pvt Ltd



Pinkish Shah, S+PS Architects, India



Prashant Dhawan, Biomimicry, India

Thank so much for organizing the very interesting and insightful conference. I know that we will keep in touch in the future and it has created a network of professionals that is very relevant and necessary.
- Martha Thorne, Executive Director, Pritzker Prize



Vishwanath, Vishwanath Associates, India



Alireza Taghaboni, nextoffice, Iran



Olga Chepelianskaia, UNICITI, France



Rohan Shivkumar



Naresh Duble, Armstrong



Peter Bradfield, Forestry Innovation Consulting India Pvt Ltd

Thank you for having us here. It has been a pleasure sharing our works and thoughts with the audience.
- Enrico Dini, Dini Engineering, Italy



Devendra Pandey, UltraTech Cements



V Murali, Tata Structura



Panel Discussion- Designing for the Future



Paolo Carboni, Italy



Monish Siripurapu, Ant-Studio, India



Ayaz Basrai, The Busride Studio, India



Closing Axioms

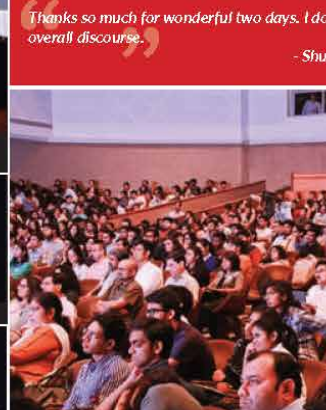
Thank you for your invitation to take part in the 361 Degree Conference. It was a great event and a huge success.
- Michael Green, Michael Green Architects, Canada



Closing Axioms



Thanks so much for wonderful two days. I do hope I could contribute to the overall discourse.
- Shubhra Raje, Built Environments, Ahmedabad



Closing Axioms



Shubhra Raje, Built Environment, India



Dr Reinhard Koenig, Germany

I'm absolutely delighted with the way the 361 Degrees Design Conference was organised. It was a wonderful opportunity to interact with prominent professionals and have meaningful exchanges with them as well as with participants. Congratulations for carrying forward such a significant event!
- Olga Chepelianskaia, UNICITY, France & India



Michael Green, Michael Green Architects, Canada



Gurjit Singh Matharoo, Matharoo Associates, India



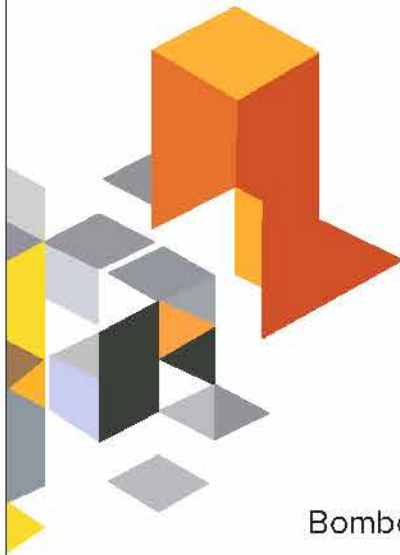
Closing Axioms

361 conference had a fairly good range of speakers engaged in some exemplary projects around the world.
- Percy Pithawala, Vadodra



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- Manufacturers of Pre-treatment and Corrosion prevention chemicals
- Manufacturers of Spray-guns and other paint application equipment
- Paint booths for OEM applications and quality assurance systems
- Decorative Paint Manufacturers
- Decorative Paint Applications Tools and Devices
- Paint Mixing, Conveying and handling systems
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- Manufacturing & Capital Equipment
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