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Morneau Shepell, DC studio

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Axis Vanam, The purple ink studio
In The Mountains, Ant Studio
Shikhara, Wallmakers

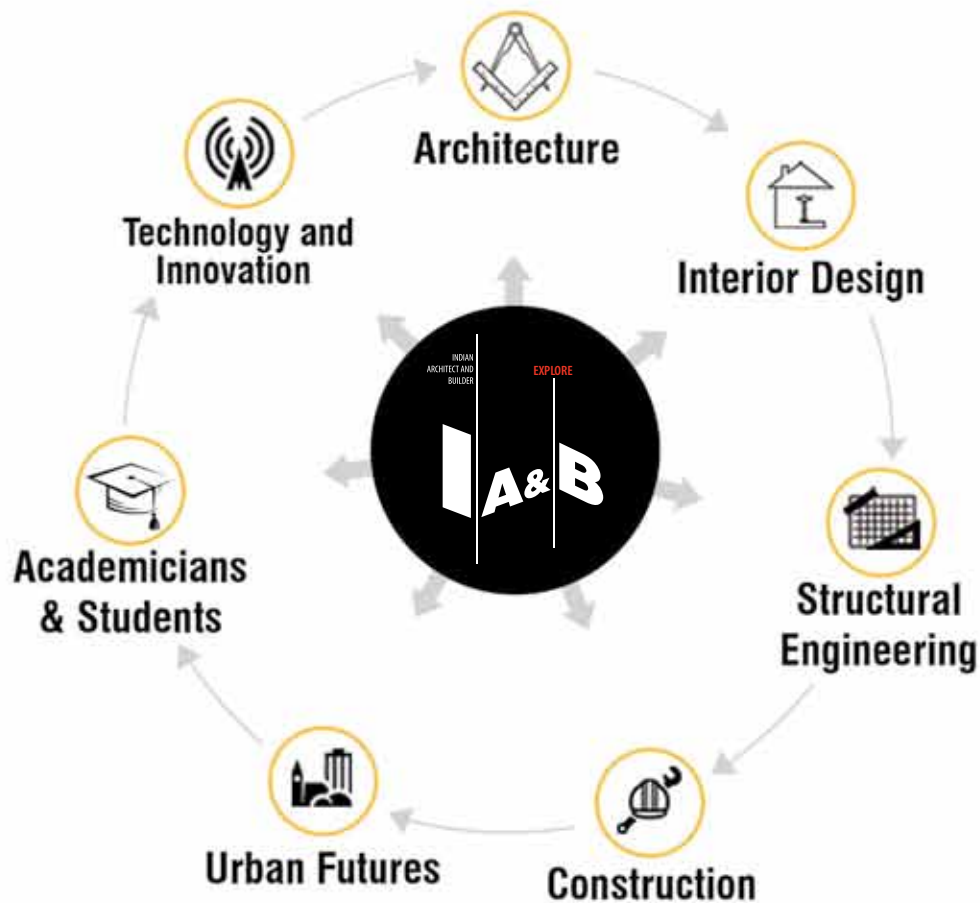
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PALEKAR

ARCHITECTS



† **Ar. Sapana Palekar & Ar. Nikhiil Palekar.**

Ar. Sapana & Ar. Nikhiil C. Palekar are Alumni of N.D.M.V.P.S.'S College of Architecture in Nashik of 2006 batch. Within 3 years they co-founded Palekar Architects in 2009; with a view to create design benchmark in the city of Nashik dominated by large provincial city's old quarter having some intriguing wooden architecture, interesting temples that reference the Hindu epic and some huge bathing ghats.

As Principal Architects of the firm, their focused is on giving personal touch to each of their project and over time the practice has grown significantly offering bouquet of professional design services & comprehensive consultancy in architecture, interior design and valuation. Palekar Architects maintains a diverse portfolio of completed work ranging from small-scale residential bungalows to large scale residential and commercial buildings. Firm has developed an expertise in Multi-family dwellings, Apartments, Row housing, Hospitals & Renovations; as well as residential and commercial interiors.

The philosophy of firm is that all projects benefit from a process involving the client, architect, builder and other specialists in an informative collaboration, and that successful projects are made possible through the management of all participants involved. Also encouraging the collaboration and act as a guide through the process of design and construction so that each project benefits from the participation and strengths of each team member.

The final goal is to produce detailed, design-oriented work on a variety of projects and to provide added value for our clients and collaborative partners by remaining focused on the architectural vision that makes Palekar Architects' projects both distinctive and successful.

In addition to professional practice the founder duo is passionate about education and advocacy. Ar. Sapana is involved in academics as an assistant professor at B.VOC - Interior Design course and Ar. Nikhiil is an active member of Indian institute of Architects, Nashik Chapter.

Rinishaa PentHouse, an interior design project completed by Palekar Architects; is featured in this issue. ■

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UPBEAT - ERGONOMIC AND AESTHETIC WORKPLACES

'UPBEAT' modular furniture system is a fresh and youthful desk-based workplace system design for which will enable organizations to create more engaging workspaces.

In the age of rapidly transforming businesses, workspaces are also becoming increasingly dynamic. Today, workspace is no longer just a place where people sit and work; it is meant to serve as an extension of our ideas, personality and the way we get work done.

New-age workspaces need next-gen furniture solutions that inspire optimum performance. Solutions need to be designed to fit every individual's personality, not only is there a requirement of furniture that helps improve performance but also generate a benefit action in the environment. Sustainable furniture is the way forward.

Keeping this in mind we launched 'UPBEAT' modular furniture system. Upbeat is a fresh and youthful desk-based workplace system design for which will enable organizations to create more engaging workspaces. While designing UPBEAT we also kept in mind the configurations Such as - Regular tables, High tables, mobile tables, meeting tables, conference tables and created a set of under-structure options which will enable designers to create unique identities.

Sitting in one posture for long hours without break is bad for your health. Doctors advise taking regular breaks which help relieve static pressures on your spine. With increased usage of technology and deadline pressures, we found that employees are glued to their desks and chairs unknowingly working in static postures which are bad for their health. We therefore introduced MOTION chair which is designed to make people move even when they are sitting. This releases static pressures on spine and contributes to employee health.

'Motion Chair' is based on a unique concept where the product is responsive to the natural postural change needs of the user and enables active sitting and dynamic body movements for overall wellness and efficiency of the user. ■





Shaw Contract Introduces Campus

Campus is a new Cradle to Cradle Certified Silver Collection carpet tiles that reflect the spirit of the modern campus.

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This collection, comprising three styles -- commons 5T323, quad 5T324 and makerspace 5T325 -- interweaves strands of creativity, contemplation, and collaboration that reflects the spirit of a modern campus.

For more information, visit www.shawcontract.com ■

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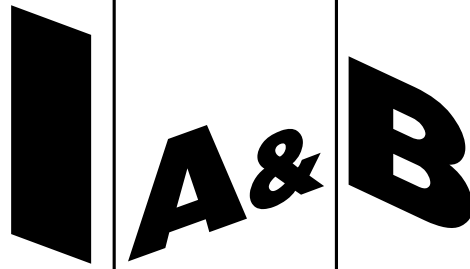
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Cover Image: © Ant Studio

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A Traditional Contemporary Home

Rinishaa PentHouse, Nashik, Maharashtra

Celebrating the blend of Old and New

Text: Monica Thakur

Images: Palekar Architects

Photography: Ram Pawar

House transforms into a home when it is livened by its members, when it becomes a framework of their habits, their tastes, their daily activities and their comfort space. The Architect couple, Ar. Nikhil Palekar and Ar. Sapana Palekar from Palekar Architects, have transformed their abode from the framework of building materials to that of a home.

The home designed is a combination of the traditional and the contemporary. It presents a medley of the wood usage in an elegant manner. The home is balanced by setting up traditional furniture in

line with walls and floors finished in a more contemporary fashion. The traditional design stems from the desire to seek and maintain the comfort of the old styles. The furniture is transported from Indonesia, designed with the architect's inputs.

The wood in the interior of the home gives an aura of stability, warmth and security. Its presence allows one to relax due to its texture reminding one of laying amongst the nature. The traditional furniture with the usage of wood specifically emits warmth, a sense of security due to its organic vibe.



† The design of the floor plan is an open one, a more contemporary setting which diminishes the restriction and offers easy access between kitchen, tea area, living and the dining area, without any door barring one's way.



† To maximize the functionality of the kitchen's narrow footprint it is designed like an island which not only increases its workability, but also uses the contemporary floor space to remain connected to the adjoining dining and gallery area.



↑ *Floor Plan.*

On entering the living room, one is drawn to the sofa, the chairs, it seems to be a perfect setting to relax after a hard day's work and even a good place to have a long due chat with old friends. A round mirror just opposite the wall where the television is mounted; is placed in the center with sleek lines running through its out frame, making it seem like the sun. The whole setting is comfortable, yet elements like that of mirror imposes the quality of discipline in the home, one that surely allows comfort but resists lethargy, allows one to assess themselves through their own reflection. With the furniture designed and placed in a traditional style, the home restores its desire of nostalgia, the one of childhood, it is a reminiscence of their own worlds in which they grew up.

The south facing small terrace has a traditional bamboo like furniture set. With a railing separating the inside and the open sky, along with the coffee table and lounge chairs creates a cozy space to enjoy evening coffee and daily chit -chats.

The interior of every bedroom is distinctive in certain aspects and needs with respect to its occupants. The bed and the allied furniture display the traditional royal imagery that is present everywhere in the house. The master bed room is designed with the consideration of luxury and comfort in mind. The lighting design, the glass profile shutters and creatively designed 'made to order' furniture, all add to the elegance and comfort of the space. The children's bedroom has



↑ The line of grass running through the space with the accent light running on the same line diagonally is symbolic of the little part of the 'Angan' the architect's wished to have.

a slight, yet evident and complimentary change. The twin sisters' wardrobe has an imagery of a tiger in wilderness along with some alphabets scattered. The room catering to the need of the kids has a study table. It emphasizes the growing years of the children and gives the room, both a playful vibe and creating an ambience fir for studying. The distinct feature present in the bedroom is the presence of a television along with a TV unit, while the other room has a small balcony with chairs and a small teapoy to enjoy evening supper with fresh breeze.

The house has got a private terrace which is accessed through a minimalist wooden staircase with a glass railing. The terrace's floor texture changes with a different tiling, to that of a stone. The partially covered terrace allows one to seek shelter and enjoy the openness simultaneously. It again brings the rawness and the comfort of the nature.

With its stone textured floor, the wood furniture and the presence of the plants, it is a perfect spot to be enjoyed at any hour of the day, at any season of the year. The furniture here also follows the same core theme of 'contemporary traditional' aesthetics.

The white coloured walls contrast the varied wood tones used in the house and enhance their textures. The cream color elevates the whole setting when different kinds of lighting are used in various



↑ The terrace provides a perfect earthy setting for private and informal family gatherings.

spaces. The showpieces, many of them being of geometric shapes are used almost everywhere in the house giving it a modern look. These showpieces being of varied darker tones of brown are highlighted with different accent lighting against the cream coloured walls. The bronze coloured window frames in the interior too match the colour palette of the house.

The lighting of the house is specially emphasized as it is a major factor that contributes to the ambiance and mood of the space. The ceilings and walls are designed to display this theme of 'rays of lighting' that runs through the spaces and establish the visual connections between them, like that of the earlier description of a sun like feature of the living room.

The nameplate outside the main door features the name of every member of the house, it states the importance of every member, that each and every crook and corner of the house is designed with respect to every member.

The house, in overall, pays special attention to small details and the creative use of contemporary materials and textures having slight traditional undertones. This creative and visual blend of contemporary and traditional in the house demonstrates the core values of the architectural practice of Ar. Nikhiil Palekar and Ar. Sapana Palekar from Palekar Architects. ■



↑ The sync of the interior color palette is extended to the exterior of the house too, i.e. the lobby area.



↑ Morneau Shepell, Gurgaon.

“ENVISAGING AN ACTIVE WORKPLACE”

Morneau Shepell, Gurgaon

Morneau Shepell is the leading provider of technology-enabled HR services that deliver an integrated approach to employee well-being through their cloud-based platform. Their focus is providing world-class solutions to their clients to support the mental, physical, social and financial well-being of their people.

Text, images and drawings: DC studio



THE DESIGN STRATEGY:

Keeping in mind the nature of the work, the design intent was to create an active workplace - a space that is safe and promotes health and wellness for all. Keeping in mind the diverse and inclusive approach of the organisation we devised a Universal Design approach. It involved designing spaces that can be used by the widest range of people possible.

A hierarchy of spaces has been created to choose from in order to activate all the five senses of human body with loads of natural light and green elements inside the office space.

The long workhours in a developing country ends up with long sitting hours for the employees. With our design we seek for opportunities to change the behaviour of the employees. High discussion tables introduced at the vicinity of the workforce to make people take a little walk to boost their energy and focus levels. Making it socially acceptable to walk a little and have standing meetings.

Spaces like "The Energy Corner" created outside the boardroom are breakout zones to act as a platform to voice to the employees, partners and thought leaders. Also designed alongside this Energy Corner is the "Fuel Well" which allows people to stay hydrated and they could also help themselves to healthy snacks.



↑ Adhering to the diverse and inclusive approach of the organisation, the designers devised a Universal Design approach which involved creating spaces that can be used by the widest range of people possible.



↑ Layout.



↑ Use of timber in light fittings offers a warm and natural feel to the naturally lit workhall. The vertical green-wall and plants bring in subtle message of sustainability to the place.



↑ "Opportunities to change employee behaviour" - Design of spaces to enable people to stand during calls, stand in meetings, walk with colleagues instead of email.



↑ "The Energy Corner" - Structural systems like columns have been clad with the surface like glass to ensure writing surfaces besides various seating and healthy snacks to enable a healthy and constructive collaboration.



↑ The cafeteria.



↑ Engage, network & enjoy sharing ideas: the best innovation is driven by collaboration and alignment over food

The spaces like cafeteria double up as congregation spaces to enable team meetings and town halls. Considered as the Fuel Well select choice of food and drinks served to ensure healthy choices of employees. Recreation spaces next to the cafeteria is equipped with traditional games like billiards to modern gaming consoles.

The motto of “Be well, Move More, Sit Less” for our design is aptly reinforced by the Shaw carpet tiles used for the project. The dynamic compositions created by the use of three styles and for colours of the Active Series introduced youthfulness and colour to the office besides inspiring people to walk their talks by following the energy lines. ■

FACT FILE:

Project	:	Morneau Shepell
Client	:	Morneau Shepell
Project Area	:	60,000sqft
Location	:	DLF Silokhera, Gurugram
Design and Build Partner	:	Jones Lang LaSalle
Architect	:	DCStudio
Principal Architect	:	Devarshi Chakrabarti
Design Team	:	Devarshi, Adwait Kumar, Pribhu Singh, Shubham Tewari
Initiation of Project	:	October 2019
Completion of project	:	February 2020
Photography	:	Rohit
Flooring Materials	:	Shaw Contract Carpet Tiles



“Energy Lines on the floor pattern encourage people to walk when having a discussion that doesn’t need technology”



Functional aesthetics for people-centric spaces

Visage Beauty and Health Care Products Pvt. Ltd., Noida

The corporate office for Visage Beauty and Health Care Products Pvt. Ltd. in Noida by groupDCA is a practical, visually vibrant space that reflects the skincare brand's ethos and values at the very core of the design.

Text: Sharmila Chakravorty

Drawings: groupDCA

Images: Suryan // Dang

Noida-based Visage Beauty and Health Care Products Pvt. Ltd., as a company, prides itself on being one of the most pioneering professional skincare-product makers. They aim to provide discerning consumers with not only technologically advanced products but also knowledge and access, at par with international brands. Their products are known to be environmentally conscious, high quality, and focussed on their positive feeling and wellbeing, in addition to results. When DCA Architects were tasked with creating a corporate office space for the brand, these defining qualities and characteristics, perhaps subconsciously, seem to have trickled into the very of the design, making the office very well suited for the brand, its people, and its many endeavors.

Speaking of the brief, the architect says, "The corporate office for Visage was envisioned as a contemporary workspace that facilitates engagement, collaboration, and employee efficacy." The design thus ensures that the interiors are made more dynamic, optimized for the necessary balance between employee productivity and wellbeing. To do so, the design transforms the previously flat floor plate into an office space that reflects the growing ambitions of the brand and makes a stunning statement in its immediate surroundings, while not losing sight of employee requirements and comfort.

In keeping with the brand's values, the architecture too is people-centric. The design focusses on people, making no distinction between the wellbeing and interests of employees and visitors alike. Any person spending time at the office should feel comfortable, motivated, and positive - that seems to be the underlying idea driving the design. For instance, the architect incorporates into the design a three-storied void - in the form of an amphitheater. It is one of the first and most prominent features of the office building and maintains an unbroken visual connection throughout the office space. It provides a dedicated space for enhanced user experience - for the brand's employees, as well as temporary visitors and clients, occupying the

space. Explaining the thought process behind the design decision to include this void, the architect says, "With uninterrupted horizontal and vertical views across and between floors, this void presents a clear view of everyday life at the office and invokes a deep sense of connection and belonging within the employees. Moreover, the stepped amphitheater doubles as an impressive platform for open discussions and presentations."

To facilitate focussed work or productive, collaborative team tasks and employee bonding, the design ensures adequate workstations, conference rooms, and other mix-use zones that can be used as required. What's common between all these spaces is the sense of openness and spaciousness triggered by the abundant natural light the indoor spaces receive. The design provides all the material comforts and modern facilities necessary for a contemporary office, all the while maintaining a visual connection across the interior space. "The notion of teamwork and collaboration continues in the furniture systems and layout of each floor. Bespoke height-adjustable desks are laid out in clusters allowing for privacy, personalization, wellbeing, and collaborative working."

The facade is a remarkable example of functional beauty. Explaining the genesis of the design thought, the architect mentions, "The southwest and southeast parts of the building receive the maximum sunlight during the day, leading to massive heat gain. So the facade is designed based on volumetric analysis - with carefully designed fins and fenestrations crafted to block the summer sun completely and allow penetration of sunlight during winters. The superposed second façade - the fins - step-up as solar protection, while giving the elevation increased depth. These panels are geometrically abstract in their unmistakable contemporary intentions, like a sun-shading den reducing heat gain and at the same time optimizing daylight." In effect, a single design element fulfills a dual purpose - one based on functionality, and the other, based on aesthetics, making a striking visual statement.



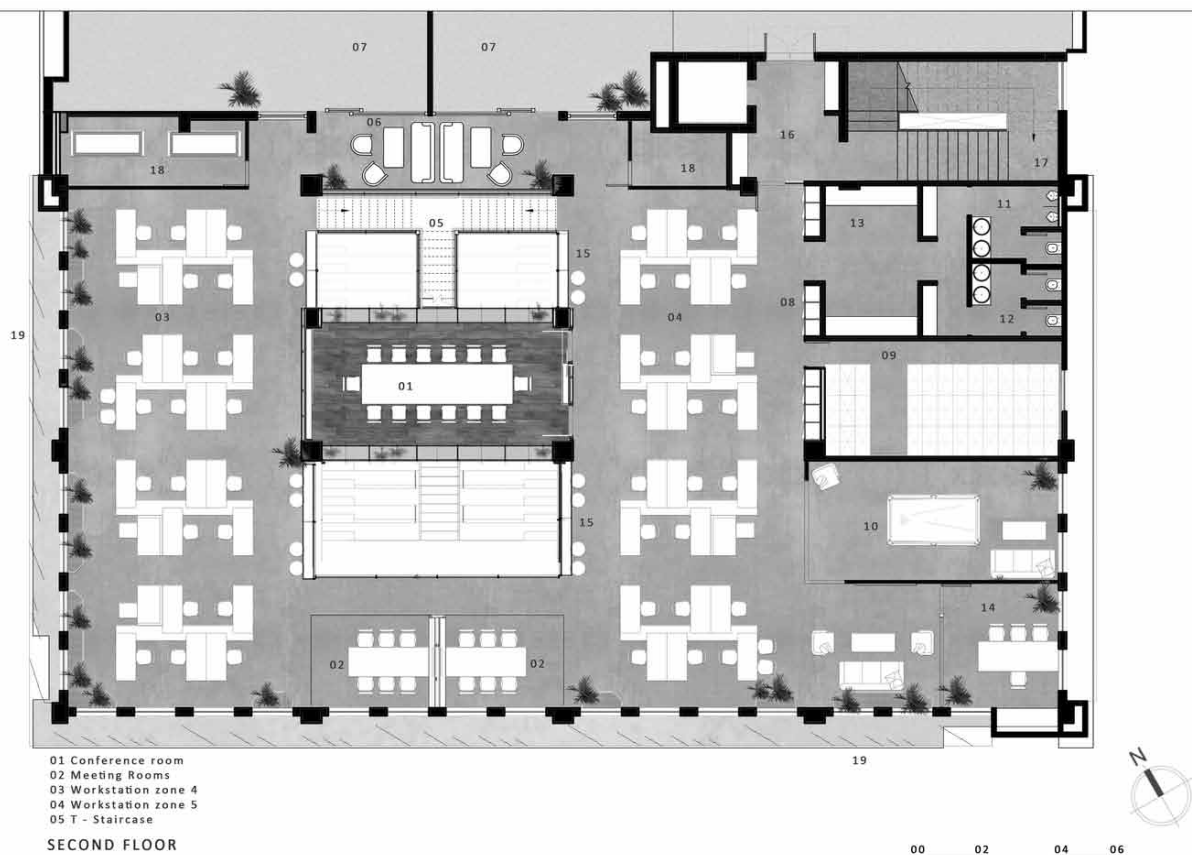
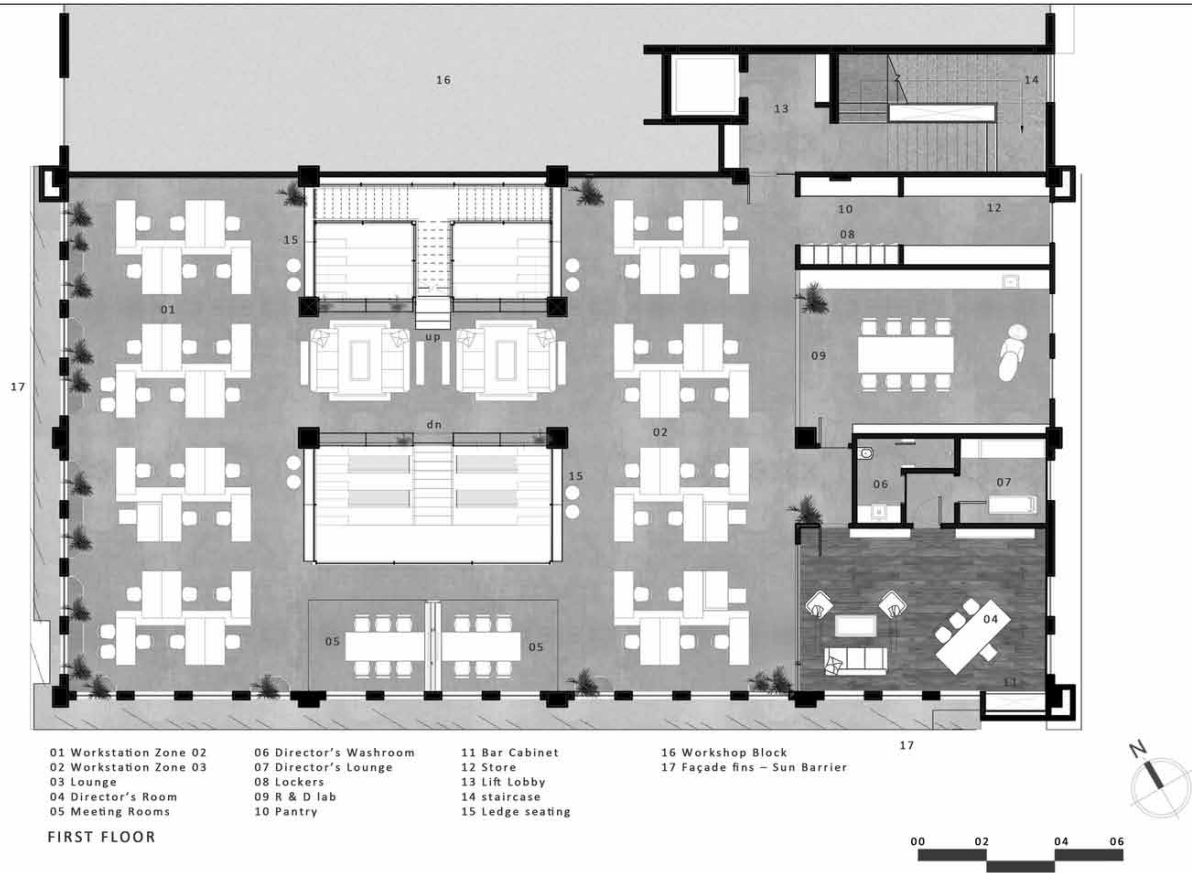
↑ So the facade is designed based on volumetric analysis – with carefully designed fins and fenestrations crafted to block the summer sun completely and allow penetration of sunlight during winters.



- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 01 Entrance | 06 Washroom – W |
| 02 Reception | 07 Washroom – M |
| 03 Waiting Lounge | 08 Lift lobby |
| 04 Helical staircase | 09 Workshop Block - Parking |
| 05 Staircase – 02 | |

LOWER GROUND FLOOR





**north west elevation**

0.0 0.2 0.4 0.6 1.0m

**south east elevation**

0.0 0.2 0.4 0.6 1.0m



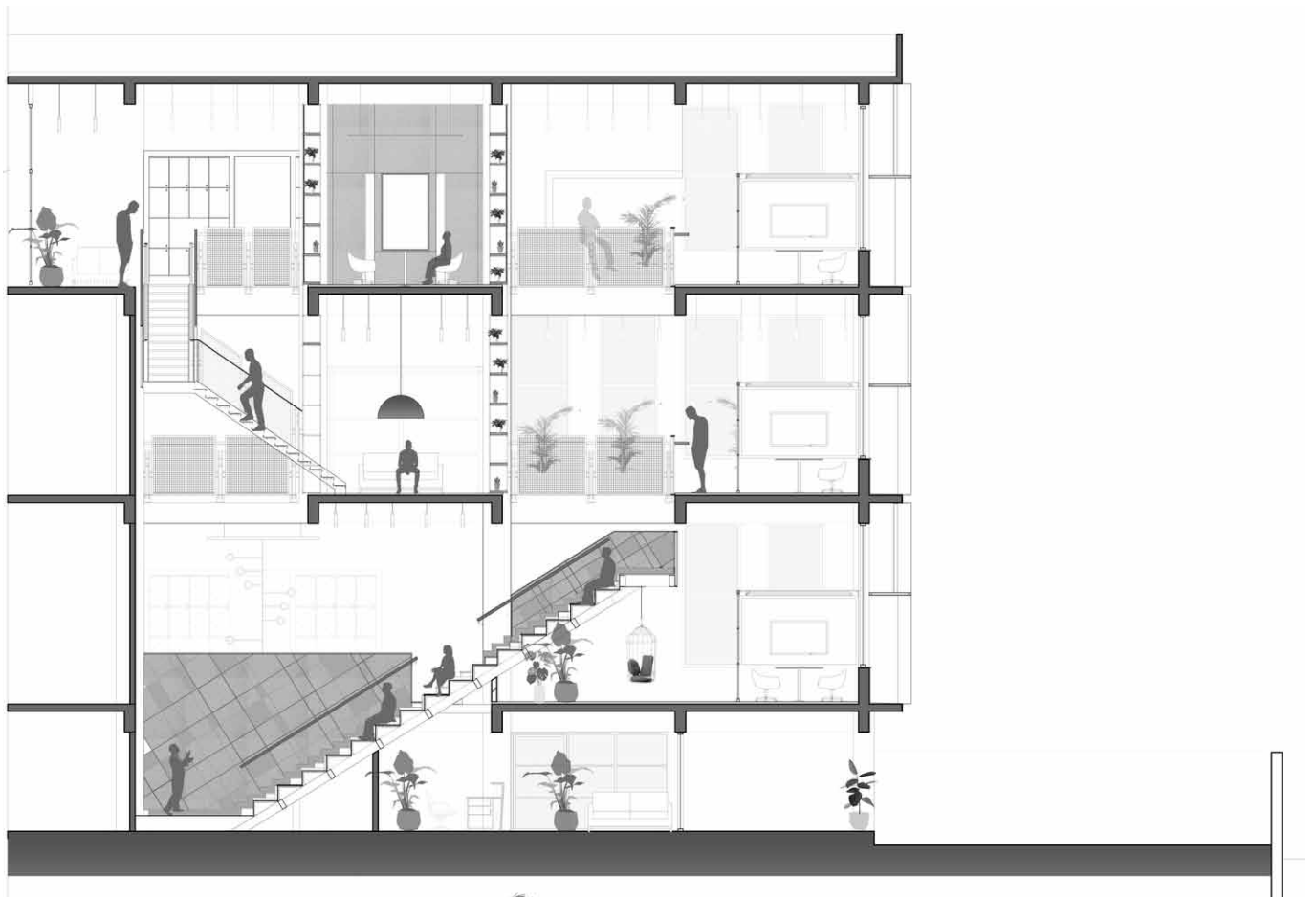
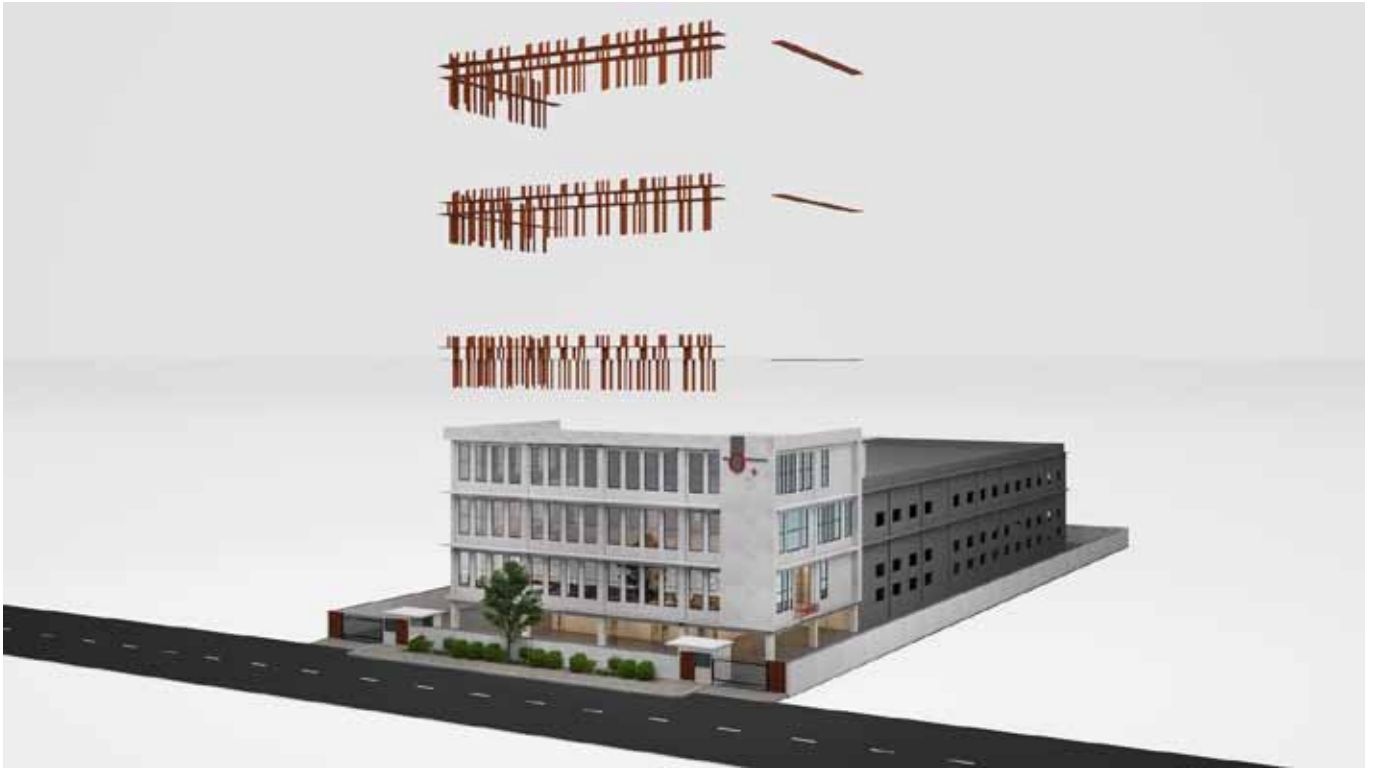
south west elevation

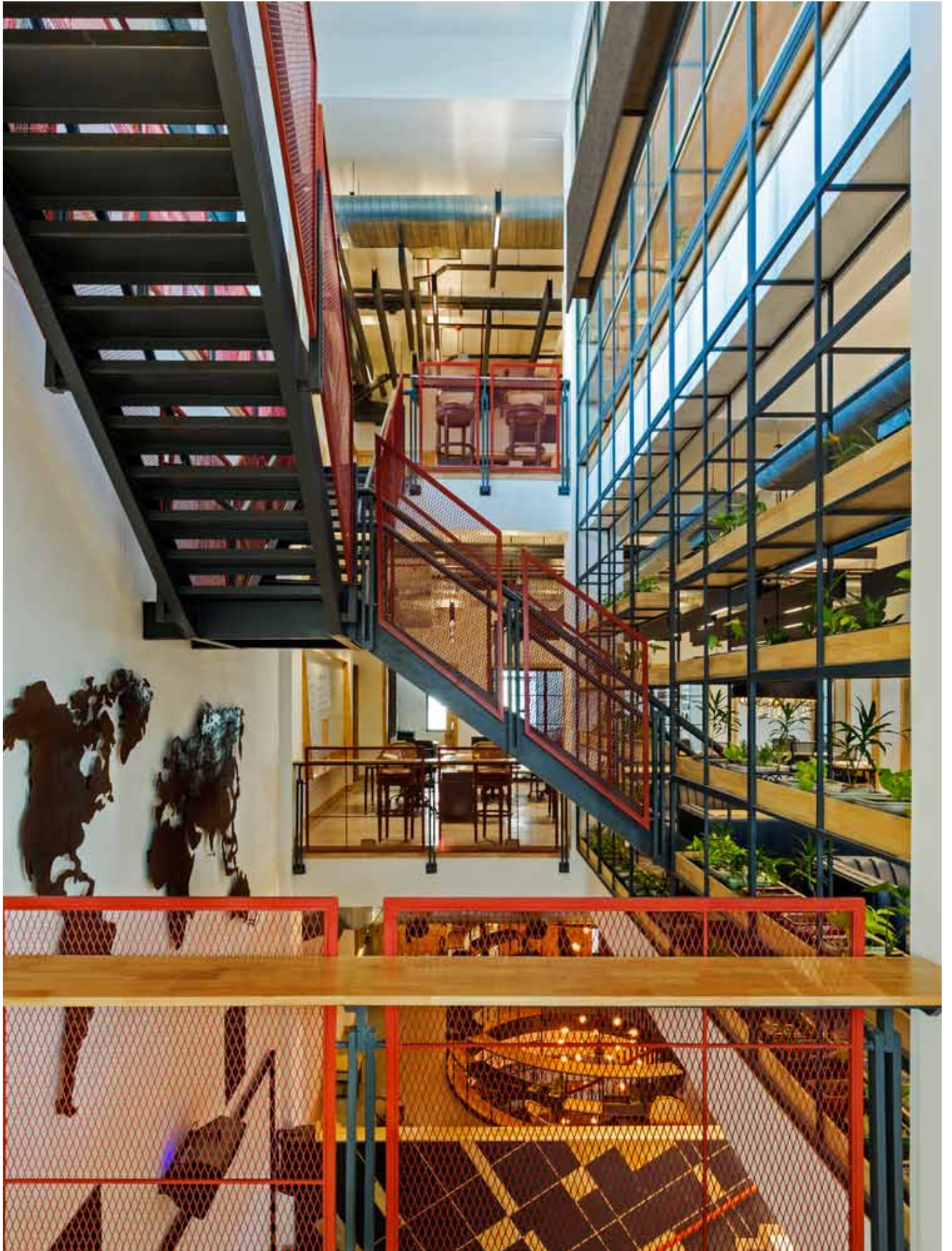
0.0 0.2 0.4 0.6 10m



south west elevation

0.0 0.2 0.4 0.6 10m





↑ *The design impresses in its simplicity and minimalistic approach while fulfilling every requirement a modern office might have.*



† DCA Architects' design goes beyond traditional office space design to ensure ample natural light and indoor plants - with the longitudinal system of planters that runs vertically through the interiors



† In a long-standing collaboration between design and engineering, the workplace has been created, where the exchange of skills knowledge and central tenets of work culture are not only facilitated - but lived by all. “



And it doesn't stop there; the fins have other functions too. The building's personality is further conveyed by the rust Corten steel texture of the fins. They take on a unique character when reflecting light - be it natural daylight or artificial illumination during the night - intriguing onlookers and creating visual interest. From the interior, the arrangement of the fins, and the facade in general, reinforces an impression of lightness. The planes superposed on the concrete volume reduce the visual heaviness, while also setting the field for a dramatic play of light in the interior space throughout the day.

Fins are also used in the interior space, making up the customized ceiling. This, the architect mentions, is done so as to elevate the dynamics of the interior architectural elements. "These fins in the ceiling hide the services and have efficiently designed downlights for tasks and up-lights for general illumination. They are also clad with acoustic panels. The calculated quantity and positioning of these panels provide excellent auditory comfort."

Today's young workforce demands an office that is stunning but also enables them to deliver their best work. They want a space that reflects the brand, its ethos, and its values. It is important for them to feel connected to their organization, as well as have a positive perception of their employer. DCA Architects' design for the Visage office takes into account all this and more. It goes beyond traditional office space design to ensure ample natural light and indoor plants - with the longitudinal system of planters that runs vertically through the interiors - that have been proven to impact employee well being.

The design impresses in its simplicity and minimalistic approach while fulfilling every requirement a modern office might have. Concluding his thoughts on the design, the architect mentions, "A relentless pursuit of technical excellence, a commitment to pushing boundaries and consistently challenging norms have been driving forces in this office project for Visage. In a long-standing collaboration between design and engineering, the workplace has been created, where the exchange of skills knowledge and central tenets of work culture are not only facilitated - but lived by all." ■

FACT FILE:

Project Name	: Office for Visage Beauty & Health Care Pvt. Ltd. - O3Plus
Location	: Sector 85, Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201305
Status	: Completed
Expected Completion	:
Completion Date (If project is completed)	: Jan 2020
Site Area	:
Gross Floor Area	: 20000sqft
Number of Rooms	:
Building Height	: 18m
Client/Owner	: Visage Beauty & Health Care Pvt. Ltd. - O3Plus
Architecture Firm*	: DCA ARCHITECTS
Principal Architect*	: Amit Aurora
Main Contractor	: DCAW
Mechanical & Electrical Engineer	: Mistral
Civil & Structural Engineer	: Builtech Services Inc
Images/Photos (credit to)	: Suryan // Dang





Bridging breaches in urban fabrics

Axis Vanam, Bengaluru, Karnataka

The apartment typology is criticised with a vengeance. But Bengaluru-based THE PURPLE INK STUDIO illustrates that apartment buildings need not be boxed into cookie-cutter structures. Their project Axis Vanam is an endeavour to create a green oasis within the chaos that envelops urban areas and aims to restore balance between both.

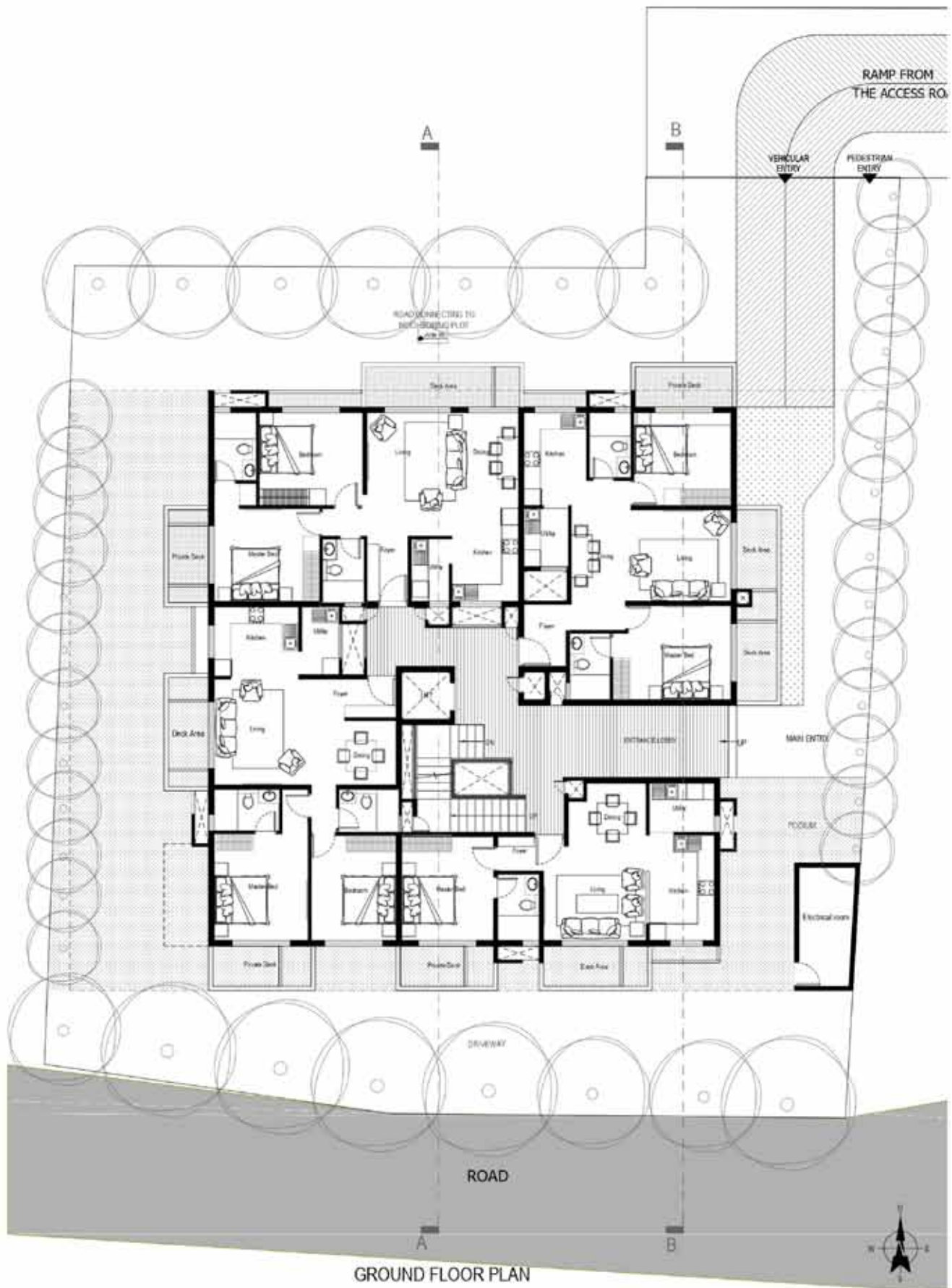
Text: Shriti Das

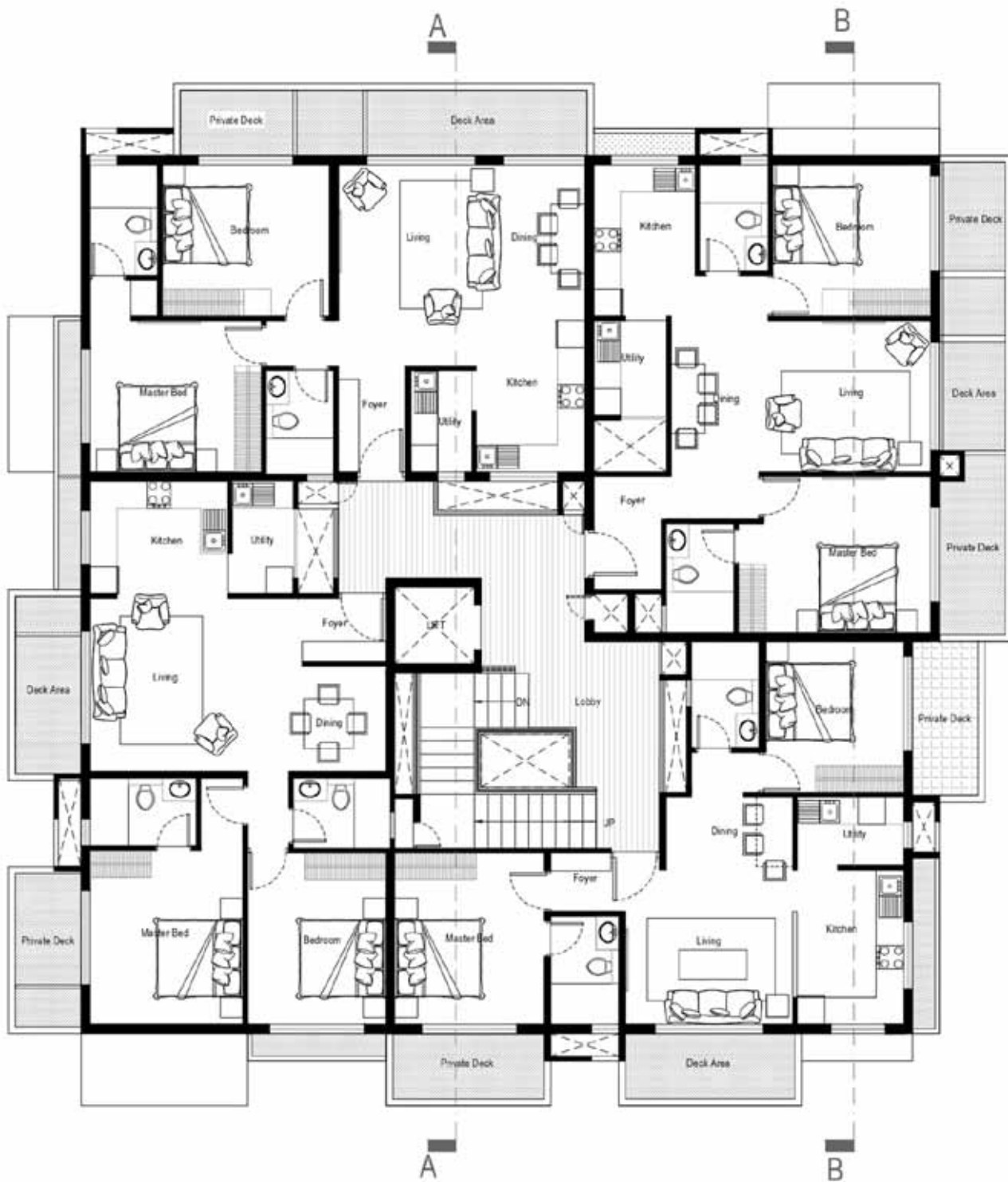
Images: Nivedita Gupta

Drawings: THE PURPLE INK STUDIO

A common narrative follows every Indian metropolis. Tall buildings, high-rise apartments and vehicular chaos encircle human beings as trees, forests and green-cover increasingly vanish from this bubble of infrastructural development that is often deemed as 'advancement'. But there is no denying that this infrastructural advancement is a sign of economic progress, purchasing power and spending capacity. And most developing cities will and have started exhibiting the phenomenon. Bengaluru has witnessed the spectrum of being the country's blue-eyed boy with its lakes, gardens to the Silicone Valley of India which sadly soon deteriorated into an inhospitable and unliveable metro given its alarming pollution levels.

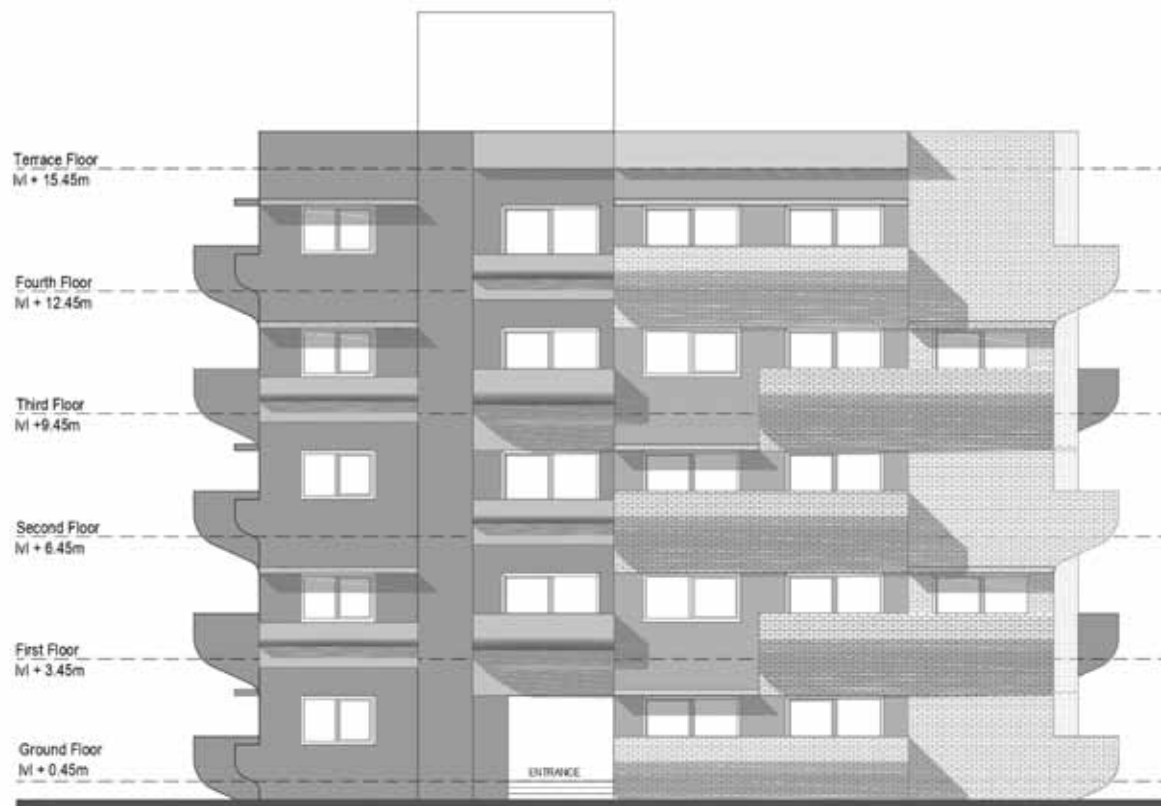
Perhaps a sound quality of life, a holistic living space could shield city-slickers from the inevitable perils of urban living. But homes in metros are contained within apartments, the apartment typology being a direct indicator of development in upcoming cities where prices are high and land is scant. Urban development followed by the rise of high-rise residences is perhaps predestined. But again, these apartments are usually designed from the purview of maximising saleable land with a spattering of greens solely for visual effect. The quality of life offered by these apartments, in metros has been often questioned and criticised. And this has been more than evident post the COVID-19 pandemic wherein citizens across the globe have been confined into their homes.



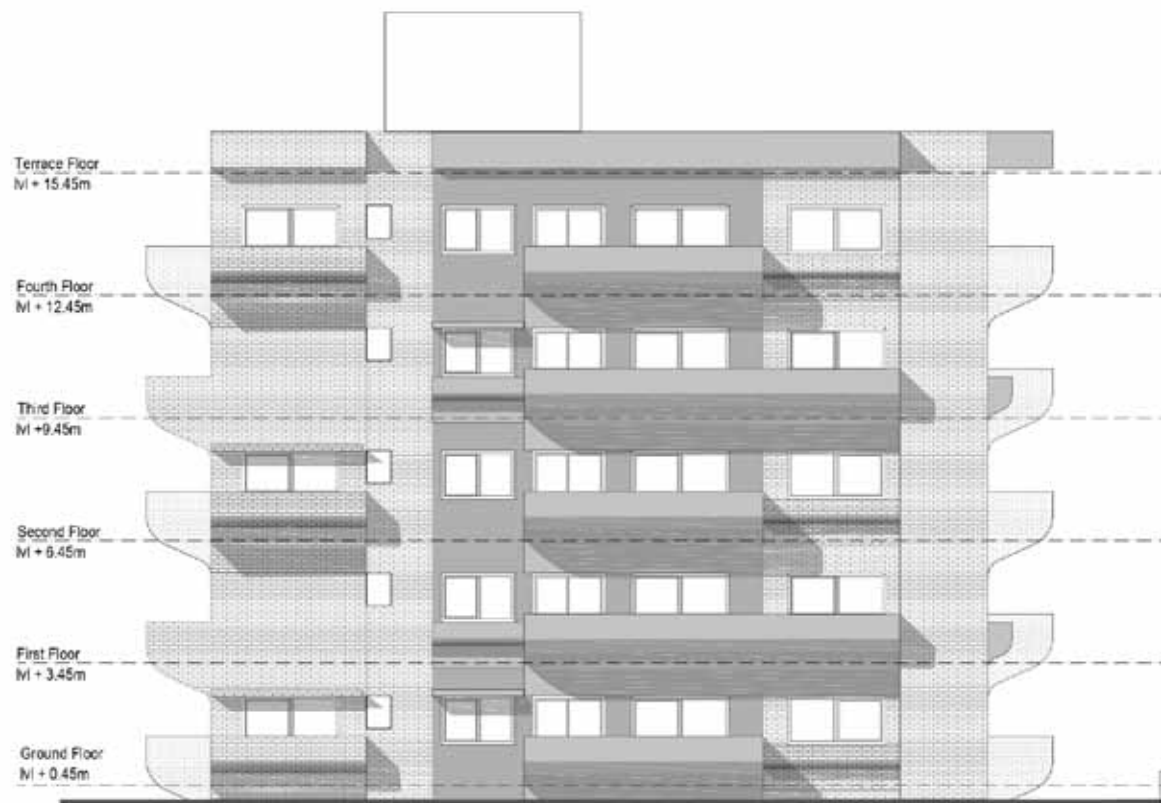


FLOOR PLANS 1 AND 3

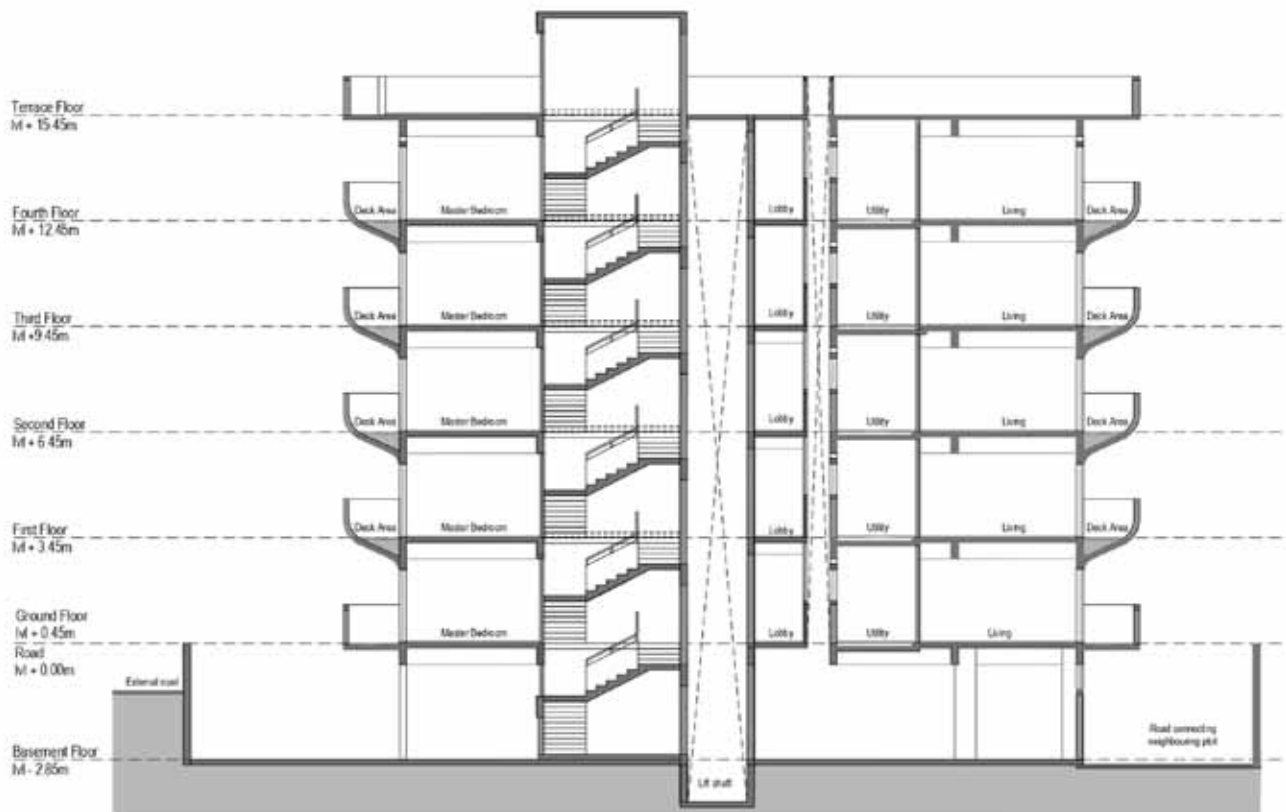




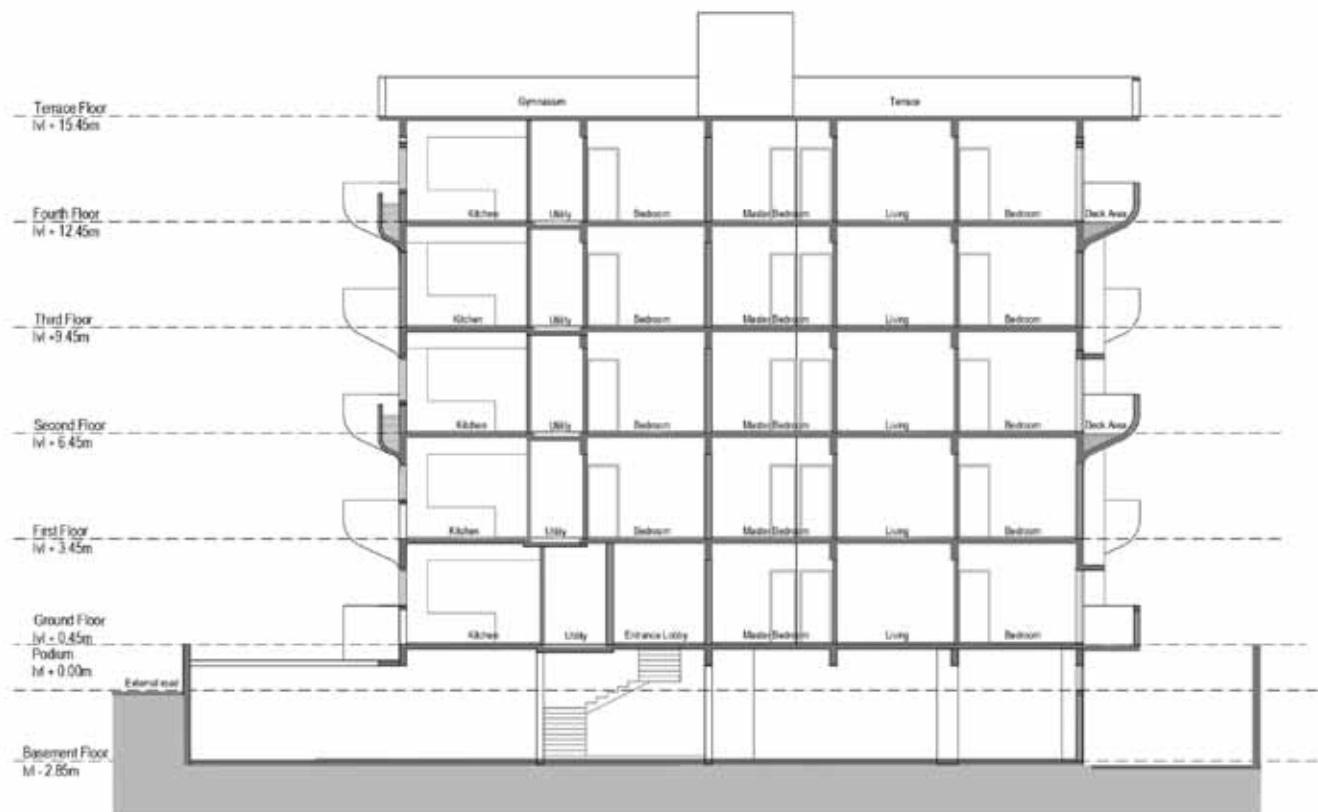
EAST ELEVATION



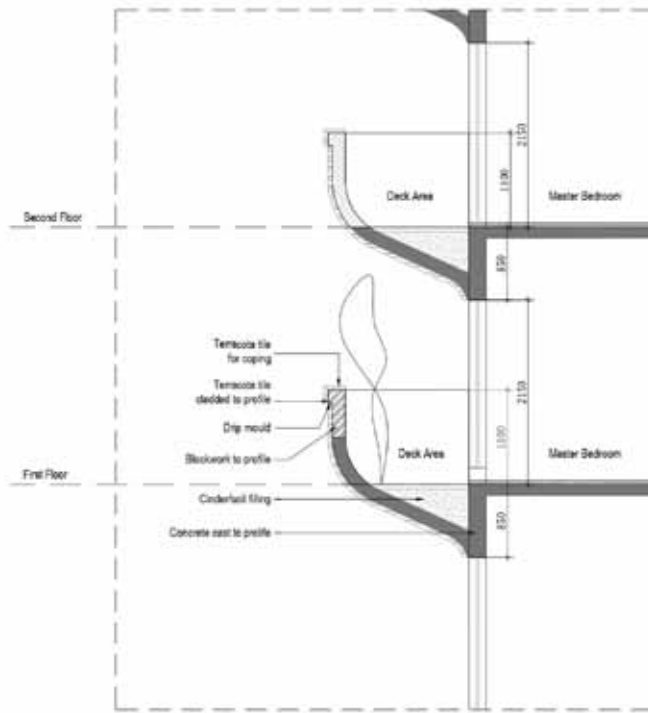
NORTH ELEVATION



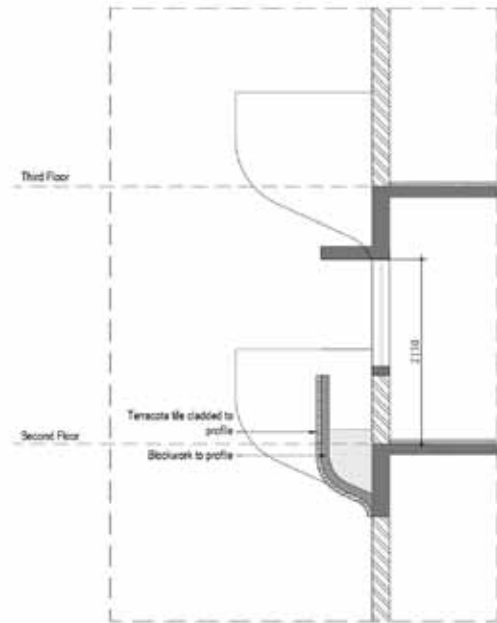
SECTION AA



SECTION BB



BALCONY DECK SECTIONS



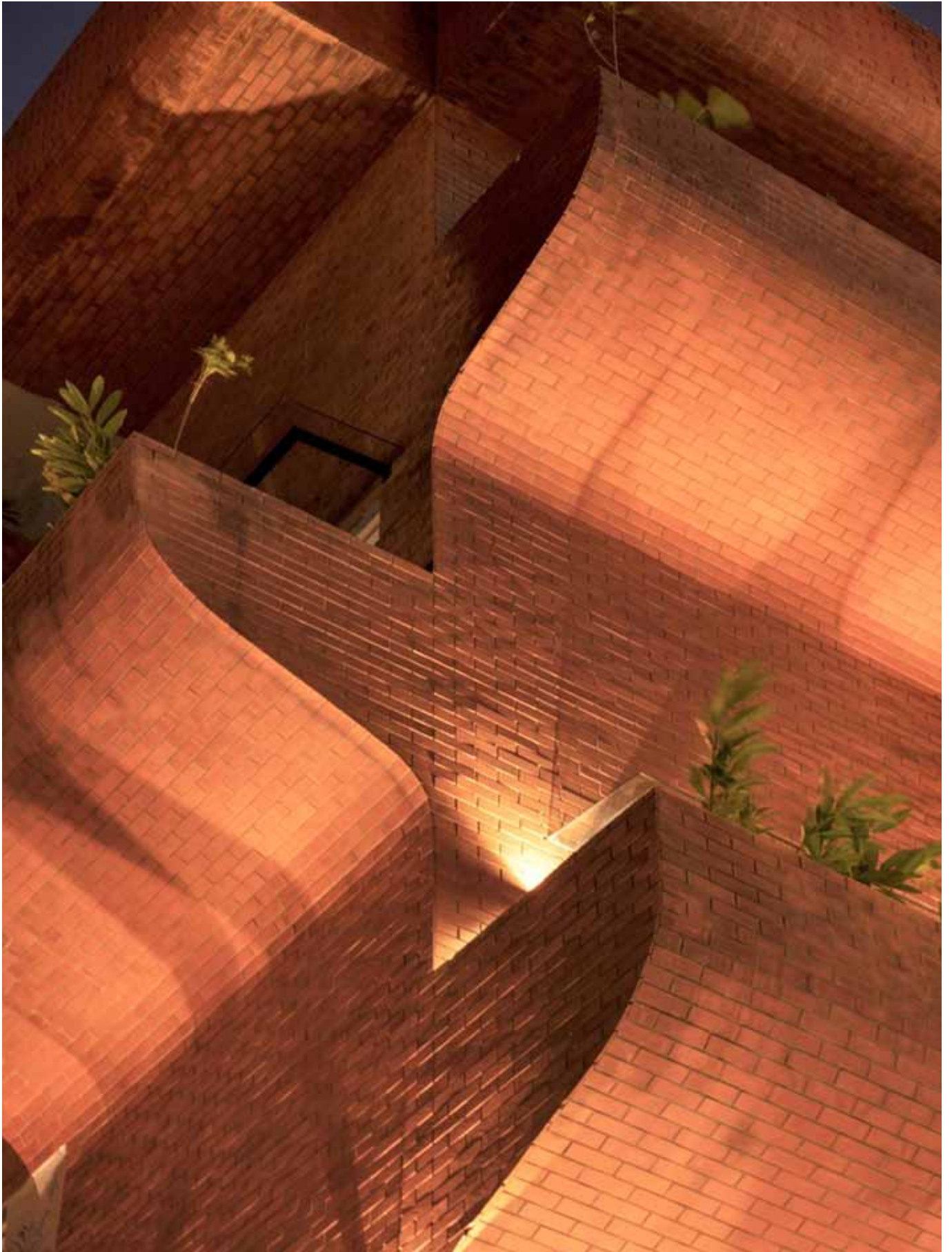
PLANTER SECTIONS



↑ Vanam responds to what the "increasing breach in the urban fabric" by blurring the boundaries between the built and green spaces.



↑ The staggered projections scale down the building to a humane scale while the contrast of brick and grey texture endows an earthy texture despite its height.



↑ The balcony form is constructed in accordance with the soil repose angle, resulting in a fluid curvy configuration that compliments an otherwise geometric building.



† The project is a mid-size housing project with 20 units across 5 levels.



† Each unit is a 2-bedroom apartment with a flexible area that can be extended onto the deck or a green pocket or as the user prefers.

Pandemic or not, cities will continue to emerge and so will the apartment typology. They are fast and economical and with little attention to detail they can prove efficient and liveable spaces. Axis Vanam in Bengaluru by THE PURPLE INK STUDIO is an endeavour to create a green oasis within the chaos that envelops urban areas. Vanam is a Sanskrit word that translates to 'forest'. The precinct has drying lakes and disappearing green-cover. Vanam responds to what the architects call "increasing breach in the urban fabric" by blurring the boundaries between the built and green spaces to restore balance between the two.

The project is a mid-size housing project with 20 units across 5 levels. Each unit is a 2-bedroom apartment with a flexible area that can be extended onto the deck or a green pocket or use it for activities as per the user's requirement and preference. This ensures that every unit is used uniquely. These areas or balconies, attached to the either the living room or the master-bedroom are staggered creating double-heighted volumes. Beyond the design ingenuity, the balcony form is constructed in accordance with the soil repose angle. This resulted in a fluid curvy configuration that compliments an otherwise geometric building, becoming the defining visual element of Vanam. The balcony is provided with a sunk for soil filling. Deeper beams enable the balcony to withstand soil load and the beam bottom also doubles as the lintel for the windows in the floors below. The formwork for casting the balconies was tested multiple times in galvanised iron



↑ Axis Vanam in Bengaluru by The Purple Ink Studio is an endeavour to create a green oasis within the chaos that envelops urban areas.



↑ *Vanam Axis illustrates that designing for masses, in high-rises need not always equal matchboxes stacked atop one another. And that good design is not solely a privilege for the rich.*

before finalising a 4 feet X 6 feet prototype in mild steel. It was pragmatic to pre-cast the balconies but using manual labour and individually casting each balcony was cost-effective. Planter decks follow similar construction and geometry.

The building is clad with 12mm thick brick with exposed grey textures. This is offset by greens from the balconies. The staggered projections scale down the building to a humane scale while the contrast of brick and grey texture endows an earthy texture despite its height. Natural stone flooring is used in the common areas with terracotta jaalis on skylights. The use of plants too, is tropical and native to the region. The entire extended cantilever of the balcony can be used for planting trees and customised to suit the user. These elements are further highlighted by the sun. The sun is also taken into account while planning the layout to ensure natural ventilation and wind.

The apartment, when deduced in terms of construction methodology, deploys standard RCC construction. The plan too, is efficient and

lucid to execute. Neither the design nor the construction techniques are novel or complicated. The design can be prototyped with tweaks for the apartment typology. As prices soar and land becomes scant, apartments and mass-housing is a straightforward and economical solution for residences. Axis Vanam illustrates that designing for masses, in high-rises need not always equal matchboxes stacked atop one another. And that good design is not solely a privilege for the rich. ■

FACT FILE:

PROJECT NAME	: AXIS VANAM
LOCATION	: Bengaluru, INDIA
GROSS AREA	: 20,000 Sqft
CLIENT	: AXIS CONCEPT CONSTRUCTION
ARCHITECTURE + LANDSCAPE	: THE PURPLE INK STUDIO, BANGALORE
DESIGN TEAM	: Akshay Heranjal, Nishita Bhatia, Aditi Pai, Jaikumar, Priyanka Bankapur, Sharanya, Amal.
STRUCTURAL CONSULTANTS	: NAIK ASSOCIATES
M.E.P CONSULTANTS	: CEECON ENGINEERS
PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY	: NIVEDITAA GUPTA, Delhi
ARCHITECTS WEBSITE	: www.thepurpleinkstudio.com





A haven in the mountains

In The Mountains, Mukteshwar, Uttarakhand

In The Mountains, a residence in Mukteshwar designed by Ant Studio frame is a warm, welcoming home inspired by the terraced cultivation fields around it. The residence is designed to capture stunning views of its locale and forge a close connection with nature while providing its residents the best of modern facilities.

*Text: Sharmila Chakravorty
Drawings: ANT Studio
Images: Jaidev*

For most people, mountains have a unique appeal. It is perhaps the altitude, the closeness to the sky, and the vantage points that give us a renewed perspective. It perhaps makes us realize how small and insignificant we are, and how mighty and timeless the earth is. And how beautiful. It shows us the beauty of nature in ways we couldn't have imagined before. Mountains, arranged as if in a never-ending painting, of varying hues and colours. Some barren, some green, some with the quintessential snow-capped peaks. The sky as the perfect backdrop, vibrant blue with fluffy clouds. Everywhere you look, beauty and wonder await. It is perhaps this realization and awe-inspiring beauty that brings us peace, making mountains the ideal retreat we can't seem to get enough of. But to have a home in the mountains is a different kind of joy; nothing short of a long-cherished dream come true.

For architects, designing this dream home is a series of considerations and calculated decisions. To begin with, how does an architect translate this dream into a habitable space? How do they give a client's hopes and aspirations a tangible form? And when these questions are satisfactorily answered, a new set of concerns begs their attention. How do they do justice to the magnificent views the site affords? How do they frame the mountains, giving the client the best visual experience and quality of life, every day? How do they complement the surreal beauty of the mountains with a manmade structure that the client will call home? Designing under such overwhelming conditions is clearly more than just planning and accommodating programmatic functions within a structural envelope.



↑ *In The Mountains by Ant Studio.*

A particular residence in Mukteshwar, a village in Uttarakhand - aptly called *In The Mountains* - designed by Ant Studio probably had the architects ponder over all these questions and more. Nestled in the mountains, the site has rather charming views of the mighty Himalayas. The architects wanted to offer their client the indescribable feeling of waking up to the first rays of the sun hitting the Himalayan range, washing the sky in hues of golden orange, highlighting the snow on the peaks. At the same time, the architects wanted to ensure that the structure that would enable this experience would blend within the context, becoming an integral part of the site and its terrain. The idea was to “converge the built form with the natural demeanor, and blur the lines between the landscape and the built form,” explain the architects.

The residence is built on a 2-acre site, “organically levelled to be at par with the natural slope and terrain.” Speaking of the form, the architects mention, “With the intent of complementing the rugged beauty of the Himalayas, this residence derives its form from the

contours and slopes of the surrounding mountains; while seeking to become a part of the terrain.” Accordingly, the form of the residence follows the terraced cultivation fields it is surrounded by.

Entry to the residence is enabled by a levelled bridge, opening into a lobby space. A flight of stairs leads to the living and dining space, which lies at a lower horizontal than the lobby. Full-height glazed windows and partially glazed roof in the living area bring in abundant natural light, making the area appear spaciouly large. Dark wooden flooring and muted furniture infuse a sense of warmth in the space, making it cozy despite its size. To ensure thermal comfort, the design incorporates traditional heat sources albeit with a twist. “An accentuating feature that subtly draws a distinct line between the living and dining is a classic fireplace.” Thus, a functional element of design plays a dual role and adds an aesthetic touch too. A guest bedroom opens into the living area, while the dining space is flanked by the kitchen. Beyond this point lie the more private areas of the residence - two bedrooms and a master bedroom.



↑ The idea was to “converge the built form with the natural demeanor, and blur the lines between the landscape and the built form,” explain the architects.



↑ The residence captures breath-taking views of the mountains. It incorporates several courtyards and openings in the 4500 sq. ft. home to ensure optimal views and maintain a constant visual connection with the outdoors.



↑ Site Plan.



↑ Ground Floor Plan.

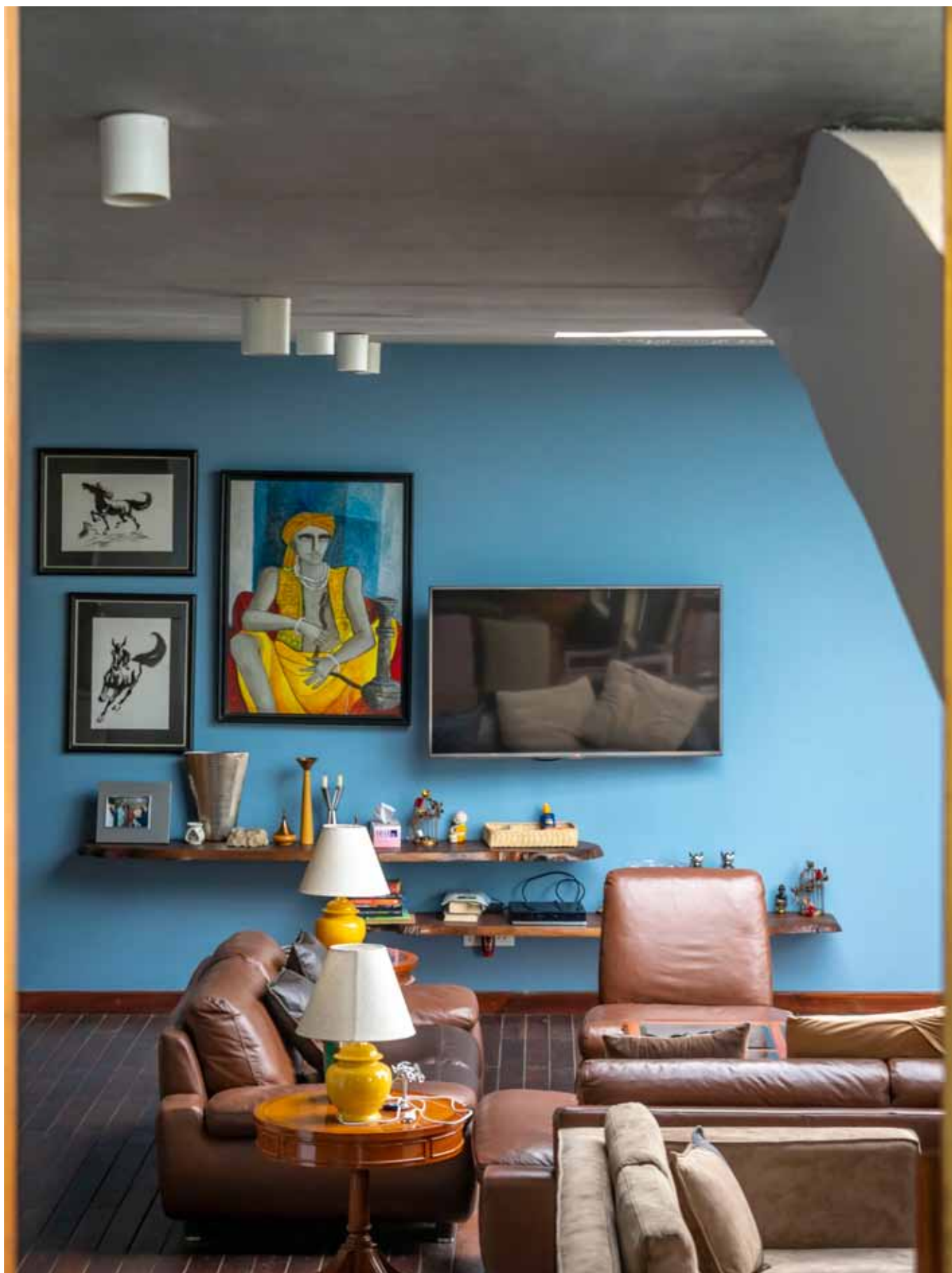


↑ First Floor Plan.



bedroom
bedroom
warm room
bedroom
bedroom





† Dark wooden flooring and muted furniture infuse a sense of warmth in the space, making it cozy despite its size.



↑ *The design elements allow architecture to blend with nature, making the experience of living in this house a unique, immersive one, and giving its residents the opportunity to get up close and personal with nature.*



↑ *"With the intent of complementing the rugged beauty of the Himalayas, this residence derives its form from the contours and slopes of the surrounding mountains; while seeking to become a part of the terrain."*



↑ A flight of stairs leads to the living and dining space, which lies at a lower horizontal than the lobby. Full-height glazed windows and partially glazed roof in the living area bring in abundant natural light.



↑ Living room.



↑ Dining area.



↑ The home is modern in its facilities, but at its core, the design is all about creating and maintaining a connection with nature.



As per the brief and the client's desire, the residence captures breath-taking views of the snow-clad mountain range. The design incorporates several courtyards and openings in the 4500 sqft home to ensure optimal views as well as maintain a constant visual connection with the outdoors. These design elements allow architecture to blend with nature, making the experience of living in this house a unique, immersive one, and giving its residents the opportunity to get up close and personal with nature. The residence truly blends into its milieu, transforming into a stunning light-box at night. The interiors are simple yet striking, invoking a homeliness and warmth that are characteristic of hilltop homes. The home is modern in its facilities, but at its core, the design is all about

creating and maintaining a connection with nature. It opens up avenues for the inhabitants to experience the simple joys of nature, introspection, and ever-changing vistas. ■

FACT FILE:

Typology	: Residence
Location	: Mukteshwar, Uttarakhand
Completion	: 2019
Site Area	: 2 acres
Built up Area	: 4500 sq.ft
Architectural firm	: Ant Studio
Design team	: Monish Siripurapu, Ashok Talwar, P K Sharma
Photography	: Jaidev



↑ Shikhara by Wallmakers.

An innovative expression

Shikhara, Trivandrum, Kerala

Shikhara, a residence in Trivandrum, designed by Wallmakers takes a deliberate step away from the most common architectural style for the home typology in Kerala, to create a modern structure reminiscent of a mountain retreat.

Text: Sharmila Chakravorty

Images: Jino Sam, Siddharthan, Chirantan Khastgir, Akash Sharma, Sagar Kudtarkar

Images: Wallmakers

Architecture in Kerala has long been associated with a particular style of vernacular expression. Traditional low-rise structures with sloping roofs and clay tiles resting on a framework of wood... This is perhaps the most consistent imagery. This particular style has been very popular in the state owing to its common-sense approach to architecture, contextual suitability, and climate responsiveness.

This brings up a number of questions. To begin with, should architecture stick to a particular style if it is proven to be the most suited, most efficient for the region? Should we reinvent the wheel to find other

expressions that would perhaps be more suited? Should we attempt to break the mold and innovate for the sake of innovation? Or should we use best practices from established knowledge systems and add a touch of contemporary aesthetics to create a renewed version of proven vernacular architecture? There is, of course, no wrong or right answer when it comes to architecture and design. In the end, what matters is how well the design, no matter its similarity of difference to existing systems and practices, responds to the aspirations and requirements of its inhabitants, providing optimal comfort - thermal, emotional, and physical, to name a few.



↑ Rainwater Pit: The excavated soil was used for shuttered debris wall.



↑ The shuttered debris wall in progress.



↑ *Mixing and pouring.*



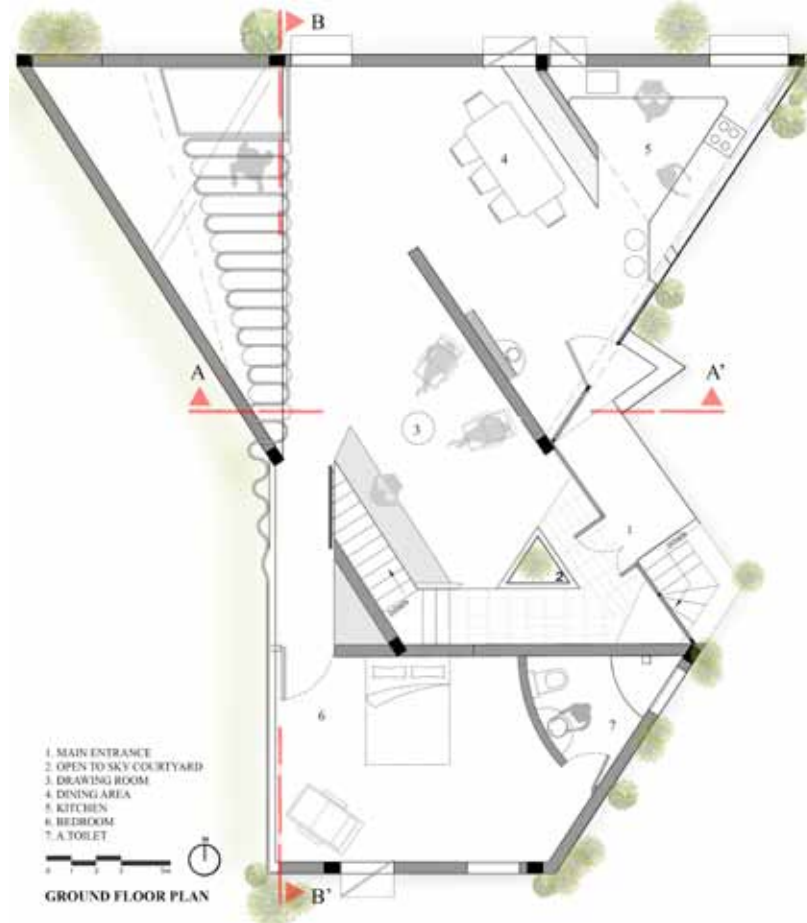
↑ *Fixing the shutters.*

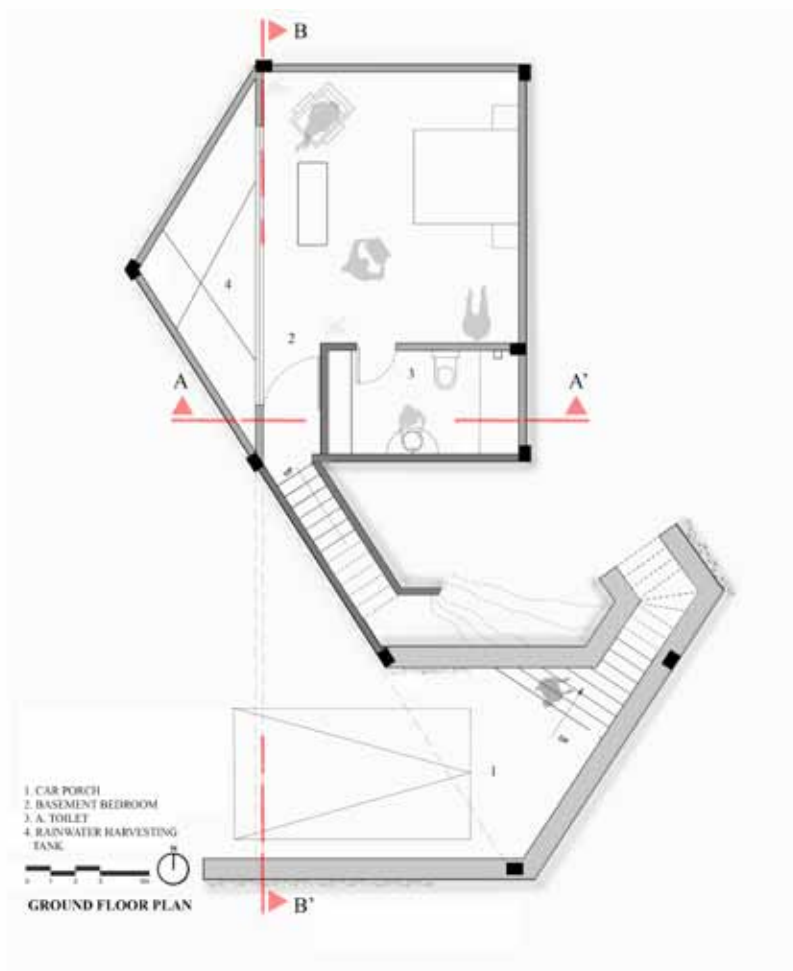
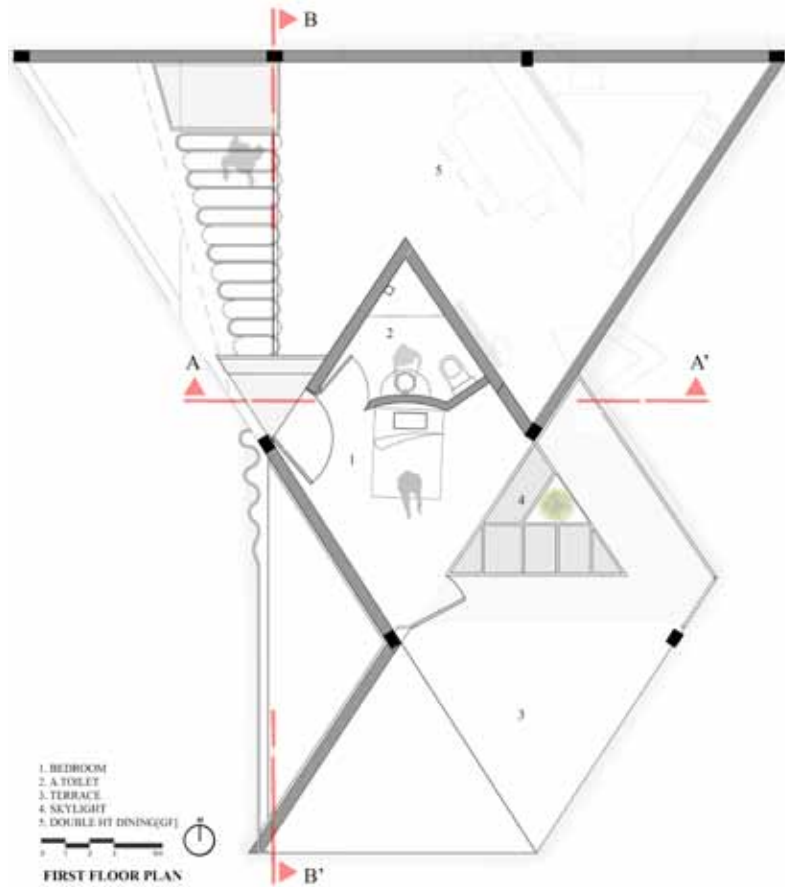


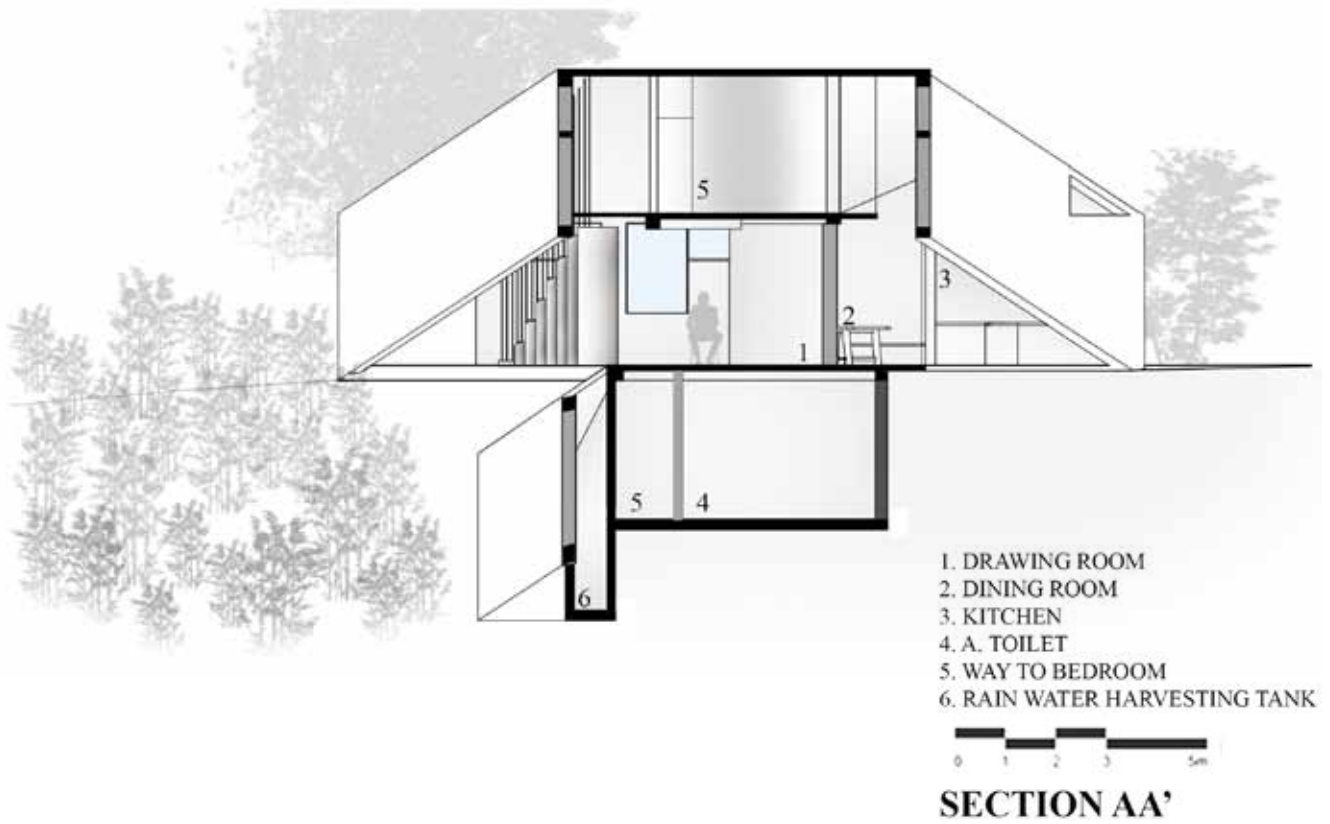
↑ *Roof slab concreting.*



↑ The design evolved from the client's desire to recreate the feeling of a Himalayan mountain home in Kerala. This worked out efficiently, since the site was located at the highest point in the surrounding woods, against the backdrop of lush hilltops.



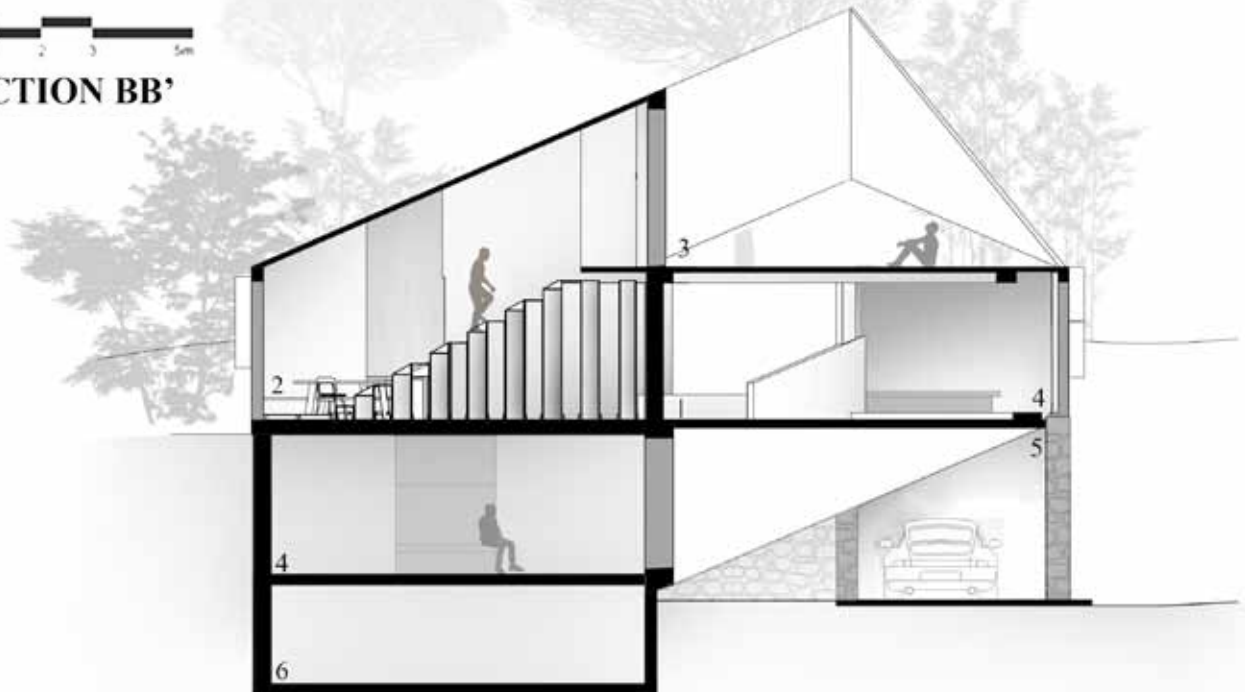




1. DRAWING ROOM
2. DINING ROOM
3. TERRACE
4. BEDROOM
5. CAR PORCH
6. RAIN WATER HARVESTING TANK



SECTION BB'





↑ Staircase construction.



↑ Staircase.



↑ Kitchen.



↑ Dining.



↑ Bedroom.



↑ Bathroom.



↑ *"Being a west-facing site, one would have to hold up their hand to shield their eyes from the harsh west sun. That 'hand' was re-imagined as a slanting wall running along the site, giving birth to the concept of conceiving the residence as Shikhara, or a peak."*



↑ *Shikhara is different from an average Kerala residence. And yet, in many ways, it sits comfortably in its surroundings.*

When Wallmakers were approached to build a residence in Trivandrum, Kerala, their design approach was perhaps informed and influenced heavily by the preferences of the well-travelled client. "The client was somebody who loved to travel and planned frequent escapades to distant lands, all over the country. The Himalayas had always caught his attention and intrigued him the most and he hoped that his abode too would be just as reclusive, set into the lovely hilltop," explain the architects. This set the tone for the architects and the design thus evolved from the client's desire to recreate the feeling of a Himalayan mountain home in Kerala. This worked out especially well given that the site was located at the highest point in the surrounding woods, against the backdrop of lush hilltops.

It was here that the architects encountered the first challenge. Explaining how they turned a problem into the residence's most prominent feature, the architects mention, "Being a west-facing site, one would have to hold up their hand to shield their eyes from the harsh west sun. That 'hand' was re-imagined as a slanting wall running along the site, giving birth to the concept of conceiving the residence as Shikhara, or a peak."

This wall acts as a sun-shading feature, cutting out the harsh, direct Kerala sunlight. Interestingly, this wall is made up of materials procured from the site - in keeping with Wallmakers' commitment to sustainable building practices. Explaining the development of the idea, the architects mention, "The soil procured by excavating the rainwater harvesting tank and the basement floor presented an opportunity in the guise of a problem. The rocky terrain soil was filled with pebbles and debris which was deemed unsuitable for making mud bricks. Therefore, the patented technique of Shuttered Debris Wall was used here, and the slanting waste material wall was born."



↑ *The structure seems to rise from the ground, as an integral part of the ground, taking on the color and character of the ground. At the same time, the brutal style feels alienly modern in a sea of traditionalist buildings, with its sharp contours not in the slightest reminiscent of what we perceive as home.*



↑ *The design approach was perhaps informed and influenced heavily by the preferences of the well-travelled client.*



Another innovation to overcome a cross-ventilation problem was the introduction of perforated Aluminium coin sheets that allow air and light to filter in. "A rhythmic undulating pattern was worked out on it so that this facade doubled up to become the staircase and answer the security concerns," add the architects.

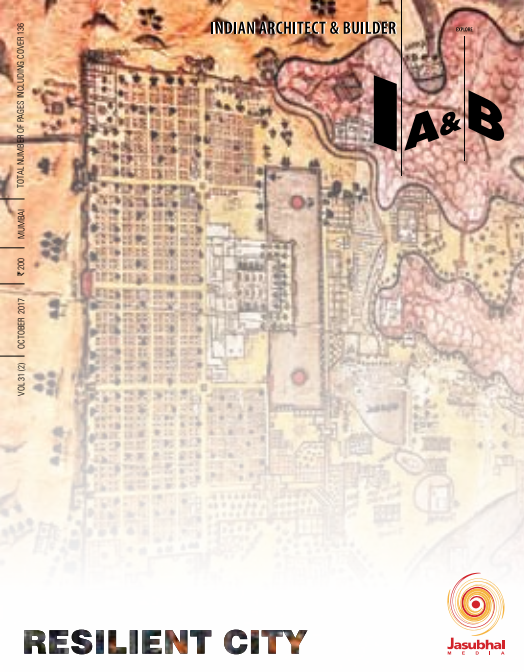
The resultant structure is very different from an average Kerala residence. And yet, in many ways, it sits comfortably in its surroundings. It almost seems to rise from the ground, as an integral part of the ground, taking on the colour and character of the ground. At the same time, the brutal style feels alien yet modern in a sea of traditionalist buildings, with its sharp contours not in the slightest reminiscent of what we perceive as home.

Even though it has an intriguing, almost bunker-like vibe, there are several instances of warmth and homely comfort that unquestionably qualify it as an ultra-modern residence that check's all the boxes for the client's requirement and its site-specific context. Concluding, the architects mention, "The overall experience of living in this residence can indeed be compared to that of being in the mountains - brimming

with nature but also formidable, welcoming but reclusive and above all - a quiet vantage point to view the countryside from." ■

FACT FILE:

Architects	:	Wallmakers
Area	:	177 m ²
Year	:	2019
Photographs	:	Jino Sam, Siddharthan, Chirantan Khastgir, Akash Sharma, Sagar Kudtarkar
Manufacturers	:	AutoDesk, Jotun, EBCO, Rhino, Simpolo, Zydex
Architect In Charge	:	Vinu Daniel
Design Team	:	J.M.Srivarshini, Gayatri Maithani, Sagar Kudtarkar, Pushkar Sharma, Swathi, Oshin Varughese
Interns	:	Vineeth AC, Apoorva Goutam, Harshita G Tophakhane, Smit Zalavadia, Nihal Gafoor, Ayush Nair
Clients	:	Harikumar Karunakaran
Engineering	:	Adcons Infrastructure Private Limited
Landscape	:	Vinu Daniel and team
Fabrication Team	:	Kunjumon James and team, J.K steels
Carpenters	:	Sarath Prasad and team
Masons	:	Deepu and team



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Welcome Address by Maulik Jasubhai, Chairman Jasubhai Group & ChemTech Foundation



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



V.Vishwanath, Vishwanath Associates, India



Alireza Taghaboni, nextoffice, Iran



Olga Chepeliaska, UNICIT, 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



Manish Siripurapu, Ant Studio, India



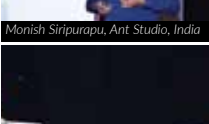
Ayaz Basrai, The Beside Studio, India



Enrico Dini, Italy



Closing Axioms



Closing Axioms



Closing Axioms



Closing Axioms



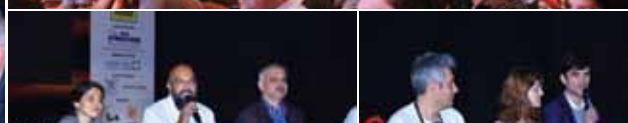
Closing Axioms

"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

"Thanks so much for wonderful two days. I do hope I could contribute to the overall discourse."

- Shubhra Raje, Built Environments, Ahmedabad



Closing Axioms



Closing Axioms



Michael Green, Michael Green Architects, Canada



Gurjit Singh Matharoo, Matharoo Associates, India



Gurjit Singh Matharoo, Matharoo Associates, India



Gurjit Singh Matharoo, Matharoo Associates, India



Gurjit Singh Matharoo, Matharoo Associates, India

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- Percy Pithawala, Vadodra

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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."