

REDEFINED

A Box Within a Box





ABOVE
Semi enclosed
courtyard which acts as
a community space

RIGHT
Reception during the
evening



Text: Team Design Detail

As Delhi continues to expand as a metropolis, the organic settlements that once dotted the surrounding landscape are gradually being subsumed into the city. Existing linkages to suburban nodes are also strengthening as traffic volumes increase and the city's hugely successful mass transit system spreads into the erstwhile hinterland. This evolving fabric of the city is creating a complex confluence of building typologies, as





ABOVE
Wall dedicated to awards and achievements of the studio

BELOW
Spaces are conceived as a box within a box for both private and communal use.

pioneering entrepreneurs seek out the elusive combination of large flexible spaces and lucrative capital investments. Located just off the main arterial connection to Gurgaon, the DCA office simultaneously inhabits a setting shaped by a plethora of influences,

the strongest of which is the dichotomy of adaptive reuse within an old structure and the local context of an indigenous settlement.

Designed as a studio space for an architecture and interior design firm within an existing warehouse structure, the main challenge was to retain as much of the original structure as possible, while retrofitting the interior to meet the stringent parameters laid out in the design brief created by the partners. The space was to be daylit as far as possible and needed to provide a naturally ventilated and flexible workspace for a growing team of design professionals. Additionally, the studio needed to foster a high level of interaction between the two verticals within the company - the studio and the projects team. Conceived as 'a box within a box,' the office space provides engaging spaces for both private and communal use, fostering a sense of creative continuity, allowing spaces for brainstorming and focused work alike.



DCA ARCHITECTS



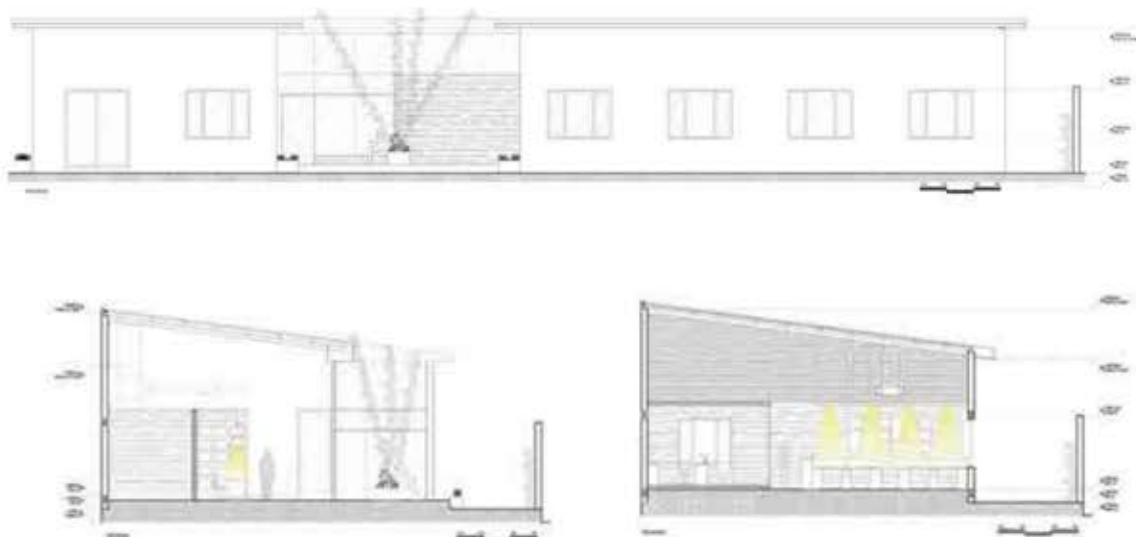
DCA Architects is an award-winning design consultation firm based out of New Delhi, India. Founded in 1996, the firm has accomplished design projects across diverse scales over the last two decades and is headed by two partners, Amit Aurora and Rahul Bansal. Driven by its team of experienced project managers, DCA Architects is equipped with the expertise, experience and capacity to deliver design, planning and interior design solutions and development/implementation of brand identities. Through their individual expertise, each of the partners has contributed towards the firm's robust image in the industry with a distinct focus of delivering design excellence and innovation.

RIGHT
The Design Studio

BELOW
Exposed ducts as well as steel columns and beams of the previous structure were used to retain as much of the original structure as possible



Approached from the exterior, the building unfolds in a series of planned and unplanned architectonic gestures. The front facade is virtually transparent to the eye, the emphasis being on traversing a circumambulatory path around a mostly glazed pavilion. As one rounds the corner, an intimate courtyard reveals itself to be carved out from within the rectilinear volume. Minimally adorned with a steel planter bench, one involuntarily pauses to take in the unrestricted views through the studio and into the reception, transposed against a white brick wall set within a glazed envelope delineated only by the thin members of the dark frame. A rough hewn stone wall on the right has been raised to the same height as the building, creating the appearance of a walled-in-court in the spirit of Luis Barragan, removing distractions and allowing contemplation of the sky and conversations with the passing clouds.



ABOVE
Elevations

BELOW
These crisp glass cubes create transparency between the individual rooms and the larger workspace while affording the senior management their required privacy

Upon entering, a stark reception area divides the space into two parts - the common interaction zone and the studio itself which is the bulk of the workspace. The interaction zone is designed as a large hall with two glass and wooden boxes that are used for meetings

FACT FILE

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| PROJECT | : STUDIO FOR GROUP DCA |
| LOCATION | : SULTANPUR, NEW DELHI |
| ARCHITECTS | : AMIT AURORA, ANUPAMA KUMAR |
| CLIENT | : GROUP DCA |
| SITE AREA | : 11,000 SFT |
| BUILT AREA | : 5000 SFT |



with clients and vendors. The large remaining space serves as a multipurpose hall which is used for more hands-on design activities and engagement such as demonstrations, mock-ups, internal team meetings and training sessions that happen regularly in the studio. This space also acts as a lunch room and a resource center.

Strategically situated next to the entrance between the two zones is a visually engaging pantry space. On the other side of the reception, a cavernous studio space reveals itself. Four glass boxes within the studio enclose cabins for the partners, the finance team and projects heads. These crisp glass cubes create transparency between the individual rooms and the larger workspace while affording the senior management their required privacy. To allow for privacy and a quiet environment, the accounts department is segregated from the studio.

The raw, industrial appearance inherited as a part of the old structure is further enhanced



ABOVE
Library and
conference area
for brain storming
activities

RIGHT
Modular mild steel
open pantry

BELOW
Studio DCA
layout plan

with the use of raw wood, rough unpolished kota stone and unfinished steel in the pantry and toilets with basic lacquering/waxing to seal off the untreated surfaces. The ceiling insulation was critical to maintaining a comfortable working environment and was tackled at the outset to ensure that the air-conditioning system was more efficient and did not unnecessarily waste electricity.

In line with the industrial aesthetic, the unplastered walls are simply painted upon, the concrete floor retained and the services remain exposed across the ceilings. The finishing and joinery of the materials and





ABOVE
Box in box meeting room.

RIGHT
The interaction zone is designed as a large hall with two glass and wooden boxes that are used for meetings with clients and vendors.



its details gives a natural and minimalistic feel. Rubberwood is used for the work desk partitions, while tables and glass supported ceilings are used in the cabins. A carpenter's worktable, commonly known as an "adda", has been ingeniously repurposed as a conference table, its original form retained for holding open discussions in the library.

Working within a small budget and in an attempt to make no design compromises, the space has been successfully transformed from an old storage unit to a fully functional workspace. A combination of old and new furniture, along with elegantly detailed new lighting aids in creating a befitting ambience. The executed design successfully employs a complex layering of spatial hierarchies that caters to the flexibility essential for a growing design services firm.

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