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VERTICAL OFFICE PLANNING

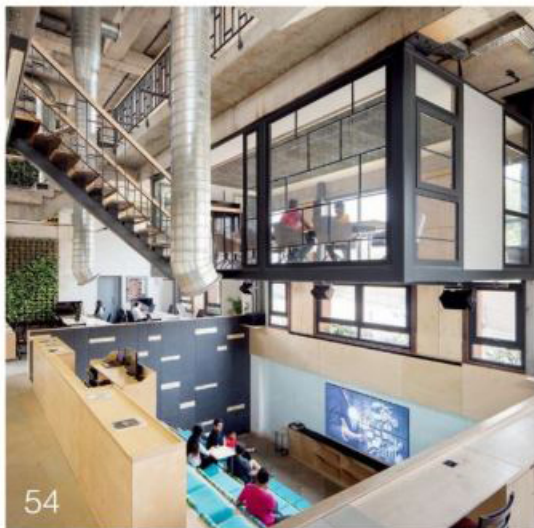
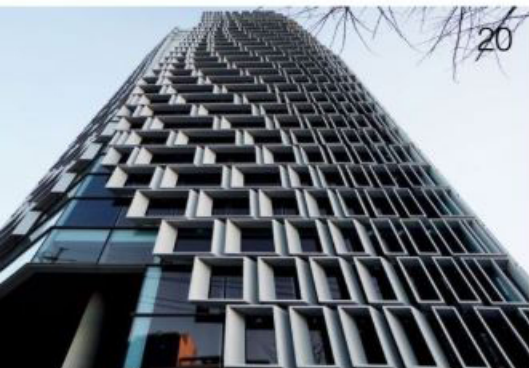
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Vertical Office Planning





SECTION

Abstract Cubism...

Project: The CommuNIOLE Marketing Solutions Office, Gurugram
Architects: groupDCA, New Delhi

The project creates a modern and egalitarian workspace in an effort to foster creativity, collaboration and conversation. Its spatial planning emerges as a direct result of this intent: where, an open-plan office format is chosen that is symbolic of transparency. Disregarding traditional notions of professional hierarchy, this configuration instead encourage democratic engagement within the workforce. The architectural design, as a result, reflects the company's guiding philosophy, which is predicated on establishing parity across the board to enhance employee experience, productivity and well-being.



1. AMPHITHEATRE (KNOWLEDGE CENTRE)
2. WORKSTATION AREA
3. MEN'S WASHROOM
4. WOMEN'S WASHROOM
5. BALCONY
6. PANTRY
7. INFORMAL MEETING ZONE

FIRST FLOOR PLAN
N



1. MEETING ROOM
2. DOUBLE HEIGHT SPACE WITH WORKSTATIONS BELOW
3. MEN'S WASHROOM
4. WOMEN'S WASHROOM
5. BALCONY
6. MEETING AREA

SECOND FLOOR PLAN



1. WELLNESS CENTRE AND YOGA STUDIO
2. TERRACE
3. WASHROOM

THIRD FLOOR PLAN



SECTION

The office is housed in a three-storeyed building that crafts a distinctive identity for itself within its immediate urban context. The architectural vocabulary is unmistakably brutalist: the facades are an expanse of exposed concrete punctuated by the measured use of corten steel. Honesty—structural and material—and humanism are central to the idea of brutalism; its choice, therefore, reflects the architects' strong belief in the movement's foundational principles of modernism and socialism.

On the ground floor, a short porch—at the end of which stands a custom-designed sculpture, leads the visitors to the entrance foyer. The upper floors house the workspaces within a seamless two-floor volume, accommodating a diverse mix of functions. In order to optimize penetration of glare-free daylight into this volume, its northern and southern edges are designed to be porous; the fenestration scheme was arrived at through a metric-based daylight analysis. To reduce the ingress of heat into





the building, the western edge—which forms its primary façade—is completely blocked with a massive wall and an added layer of insulation. The majority of the office space is planned in the bullpen configuration with communal tables in a nod to firm’s ethos of equality and cooperation; various levels are designed, however, in order to delineate space for different teams—this provides a semblance of privacy, while their placement within the larger, singular volume helps sustain visual connection. Along the southern edge, informal, semi-open meeting areas are conceptualized at both ends of the volume to provide intimate spaces for discussions and conversations. All services are designed at one end of the floor-plate to facilitate maintenance operations and easy circulation.

The highlight of the volume, however, is a mezzanine conference room that floats above an amphitheatre-style, multipurpose event area. The fact that the heart of the volume is occupied by collaborative and flexible

spaces as opposed to a director's room reflects the architects' intent to do away with physical metaphors of authoritarianism.

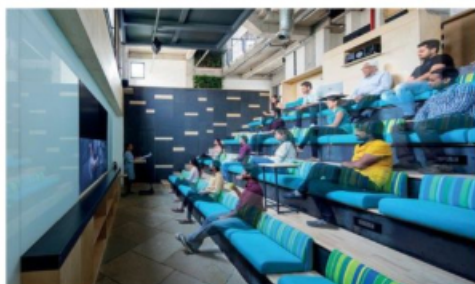
The third floor is conceived as a large unified space; the Wellness Centre stands centrally in the floor-plate, opening to wide terraces on both sides. This provides an uninterrupted space that can host a multitude of communal events such as yoga and prayer meetings and parties.

The larger design strategy—biophilia—endeavours to enhance human engagement with nature in order to craft working spaces that promote happiness, good health and well-being: 'by facilitating the elements of air, of light and of the greens,' as expressed in the architectural firm's core values. Large windows, lined with planters, are designed along the northern and southern edges of the floor-plates; they open to beautiful views of the surrounding greens, while their careful placement and sizing ensures adequate daylight ingress. In addition, vertical green walls run along

the entire two-floor length of the volume along its eastern and western edges, and treated fresh air is brought in to improve indoor air quality. This strategy ties in with the attempt to optimize the building's thermal performance as well. In order to ensure reduction in the building's energy consumption and its use of resources, a thoughtful, scientific approach is adopted. All of the windows are double-glazed, while glass wool is used as an insulating material on the western façade. Acoustical treatments—polyfiber wall and ceiling panels—were integrated within the design from the very beginning of the process to reduce indoor noise levels. The use of modern technology extends to artificial lighting design as well, where a simple yet intelligent system is chosen to augment natural daylight, creating optimal working conditions throughout the day.

The interior spaces are a celebration of brutal materiality. The wall and ceiling surfaces—concrete, brick and corten steel—are left exposed in their natural,





unfinished states. The furniture is carved out of birch plywood, while the flooring is largely done in locally procured, multi-hued limestone. The air-conditioning ducts take on a sculptural quality; left unconcealed, they seem to float in mid-air, adding to the raw and industrial look of the space. These material choices help bring down maintenance costs significantly, while simultaneously enhancing user experience of the spaces.

The office provides a workspace that augments the well-being of its users in addition to their professional productivity, by creating architecture that celebrates transparency, free thought and collaboration—architecture that is inherently socialist at its heart. ✚

Photo credit: Andre J Fanthome

Factfile

Client: Mr Tarun Agarwal

Design team: Amit Aurora, Rahul Bansal, Vini Sam, Priitha Mitra

Consultants: Devendra Damle, SV Damle Consulting Engineers (Structural); Hameet Singh, Design Matrix (Electrical), DS Rawat (Plumbing); Weather Comfort (HVAC)

Contractors: DCA WORKSHOP (General); Weather Comfort (Mechanical)

Built-up area: 7558.95sq ft

Year of completion: 2018

Company names of products/materials used: Schindler – Elevator; IGuzzini – Recessed Laser Blade Lighting; Triflux – Suspended lights over workstations; Weather Comfort, Toshiba – Air Conditioning; Asian Paint – Wall Paint; Saint Gobain – Glass; Kohler – Sanitary Wares; Jaquar – Sanitary Fixtures; Local Stone from Andhra Pradesh – Flooring