

Inside Outside

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TADA O ANDO
Visits Mumbai

ZZ ARCHITECTS
A Profile

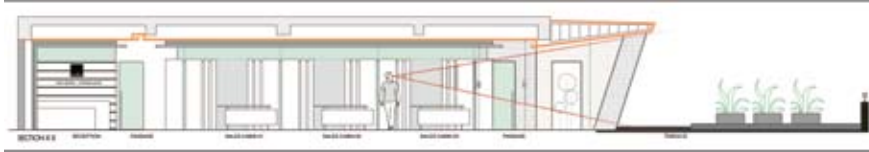
OPTIMISING
Small Spaces

Also featuring
Rajiv Saini,
Anjali & Ashwin
Lovekar, Shabnam
Gupta...

COVER: A BRICK BUNGALOW IN DELHI BY VIR.MUELLER ARCHITECTS

Efficient & Energising

Architects Anjali and Ashwin Lovekar believe that design has to look effortless, seem tailor-made for the premises and blend with the surroundings. Their philosophy is reflected in a recently completed office for Rainbow Housing in Pune.



Text: Brinda Gill
Photographs: Sameer Chawda,
Courtesy the Architects

SONIA BHAT

The office enjoys the natural advantage of being open at the corners and awash with natural light, without intense summer glare.





Pune-based architects Anjali and Ashwin Lovekar were asked to design the corporate office of Rainbow Housing, a real estate company. Over an informal meeting with the partners, their brief merely detailed the company's functional needs. With the look and ambience left entirely to the architects, the Lovekars brought their design sensibilities to the drawing board, and created a smart functional office with a modern, light and open style.

The 4,800 sq ft space, with a north-facing 2,000 sq ft terrace on the seventh floor, enjoys the natural advantage of being open at the corners and awash with natural light without intense summer glare. The company has three partners, Sunil Nahar, Sachin Nahar and Arun Shinde; the architects designed their offices in the three corners of the space, with the entrance at the fourth. This layout opens up the spacious central area for staff cabins and workstations. To enhance the sense of space, light and the outdoors, they created broad passages for easy circulation, landscaped the terrace with natural elements and hemmed the north side with large glass panels to frame the views.

The three partners' offices were customised according to their needs. Arun and Sachin required dedicated staff sections so their cabins were placed in the north-east and south-west corners, while Sunil, who only needed space for a PA and a small ante-chamber for meetings, was placed diametrically opposite the entrance. The boardroom overlooks the terrace, while the staff and amenities areas are in the central expanse. A central axis was drawn to provide circulation and funnel the view of staff and visitors towards the sight of the terrace and sky. The design is clean, simple and uncluttered with judiciously selected elements, colours, lighting, textures and materials.

Stepping into the office, a wall with motivational words (laser cut on MDF and spray painted) inspires the partners and employees to give their best, while conveying the company's ethos to visitors. Back lit glass panels, with film printed with the company's projects, showcase their profile in the lobby. The reception and waiting lounge is in white and greyish-brown, but most striking, is the huge expanse of glass hemming the two passages, where




The terrace makes for a refreshing extension of the office, with its greenery, channels filled with river bed stones, a water curtain, and a horizontal stone water panel inspired by the patterns in Mughal and Rajput gardens.



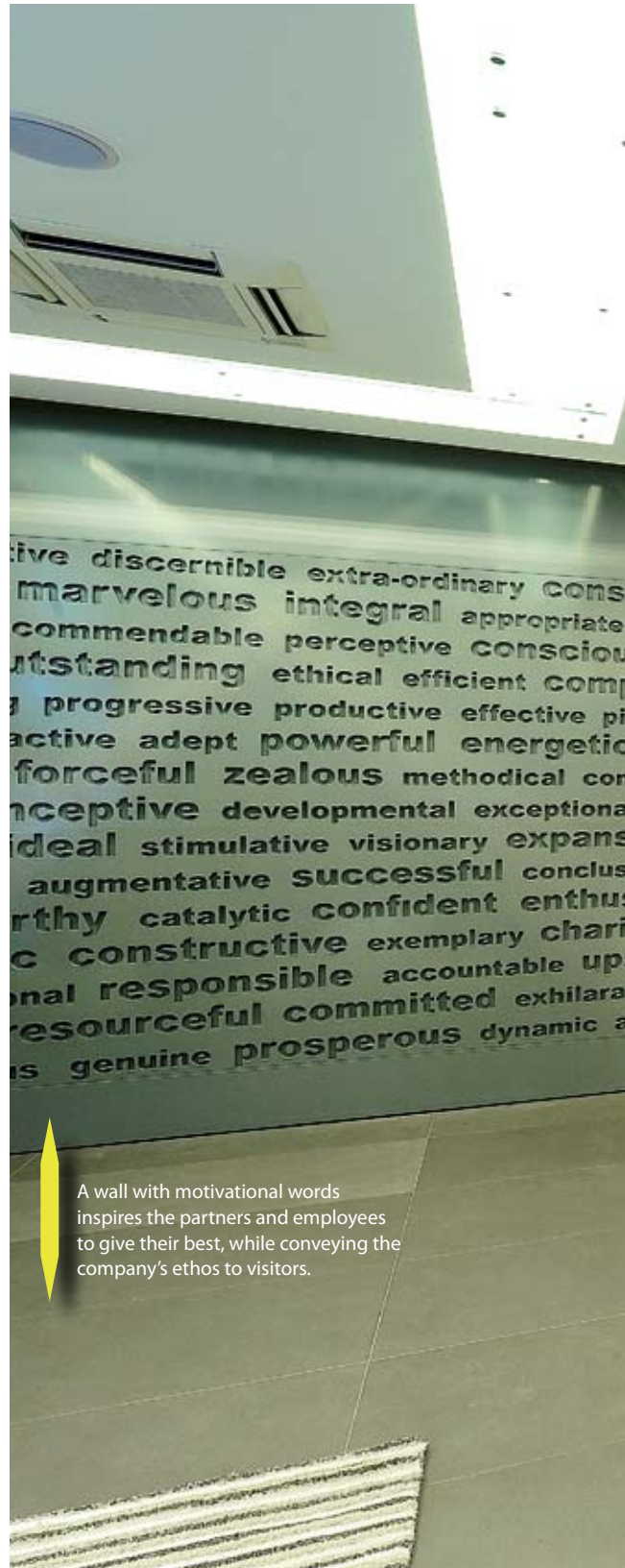
clear and frosted glass walls contrast with panels of solid walls. Standing at the reception desk, one glimpses a matrix of green, a water wall and beyond it, the expanse of the sky. This, coupled with glass walls that demarcate cabins and passages, creates a tremendous sense of openness.

Although the same design elements create a sense of continuity, different styles give each space a unique identity. From the white surfaces on work stations and ceiling panels, to a Venkat Yerramshetty sculpture and mirror surfacing of a solid column in the boardroom, solid forms are infused with lightness. Lighting with a colour tone that simulates daylight in the LED spots and concealed recessed strip lights which provide soothing, functional light, create a calm work ambience. Storage cabinets with recessed lighting below, have no knobs or handles and appear more like horizontal panels, rather than boxy cabinets. Graphics of modern high-rises by Mukund Athale of Sarvasva Designs, vinyl printed, pasted on glass and back lit, link the spaces.

The terrace, landscaped by Vandana and Vikas Labba of Designterra is a refreshing extension of the office. It is a charming area, designed with an artificial lawn, plants, channels filled with river bed stones, a water curtain, and a horizontal stone water panel inspired by the labyrinth patterns in Mughal and Rajput gardens. Accomodating two raised canopy seating areas on either end, it was consciously designed as a simple, open and refreshing green spot to blend with the ambience of the interiors. 



1 Entrance, 2 Reception & waiting, 3 Cabin 1, 4 Cabin 2, 5 Director's cabin 1, 6 Filing store, 7 Staff, 8 Cabin 3, 9 Sales cabins, 10 Director's cabin 2, 11 Ante room, 12 Conference, 13 Director's cabin 3, 14 Cabin 4, 15 Pantry, 16 Toilets, 17 Cabin 5, 18 Lawn, 19 Deck 1, 20 Deck 2.



A wall with motivational words inspires the partners and employees to give their best, while conveying the company's ethos to visitors.



Concealed strip lights and LED spots in a colour tone that simulates daylight, are functional and make for a soothing office.

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