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# ARCHITECTURE+DESIGN

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## architecture for a cause

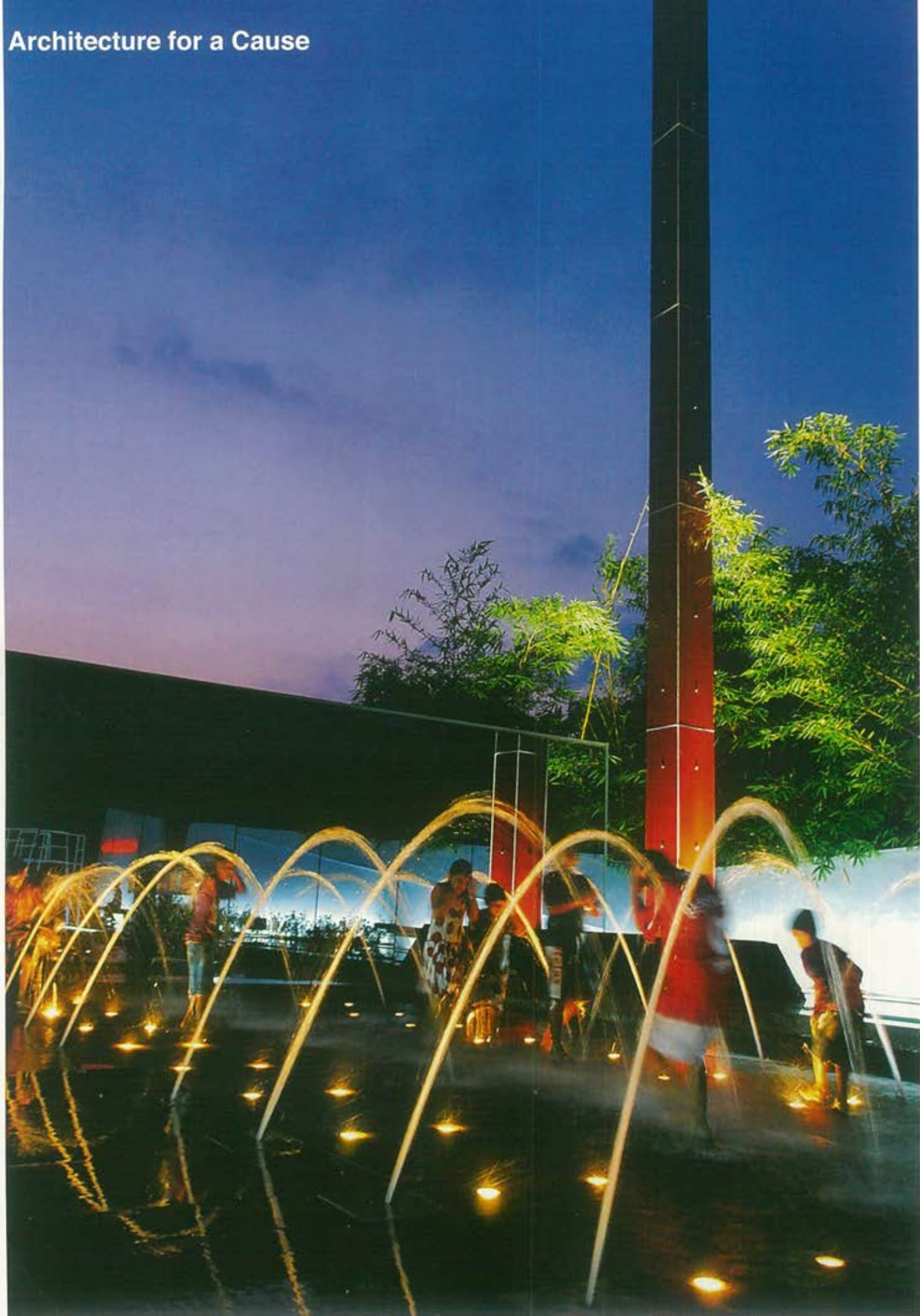
pattern and colour on facades

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# Incorporating the Symbolic Spirit of Freedom

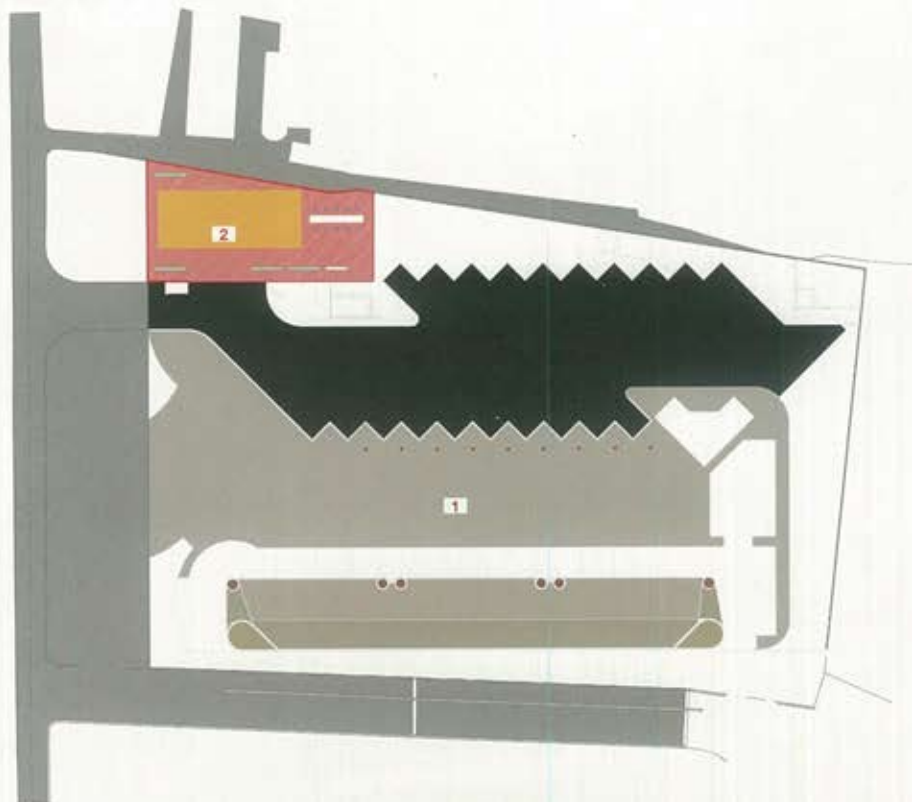
**Project:** Cuncolim Freedom Fighter's Memorial, Goa

**Architects:** Rahul Deshpande & Associates, Goa

Cuncolim, a small town in South Goa district, is known for its brave and patriotic citizens who were the first to revolt against the Portuguese regime and were suppressed, tortured and brutally killed in their long war with them; which eventually ended in liberating Goa on December 19, 1961.

War memorials are embroiled in local, ethnic and religious tensions either reflecting the contribution of particular groups to the conflict or being rejected entirely by others. Architecturally, war memorials are relatively conservative in design, aiming to produce a tragic but

comforting, noble and enduring commemoration of the war dead; generally through a lush green landscaped area with a symbolic exemplification of their undying resolution, with either a tower or a flame. The design of this war memorial proved an emotionally intense and challenging task as it had to pass on the message to the next generation and result in an engaging and distinctive public space which encourages interaction, attention, thought and questioning at the same time. The design of the Cuncolim Freedom Fighters' Memorial attempts to metaphorically portray the spirit, power, intimidation,

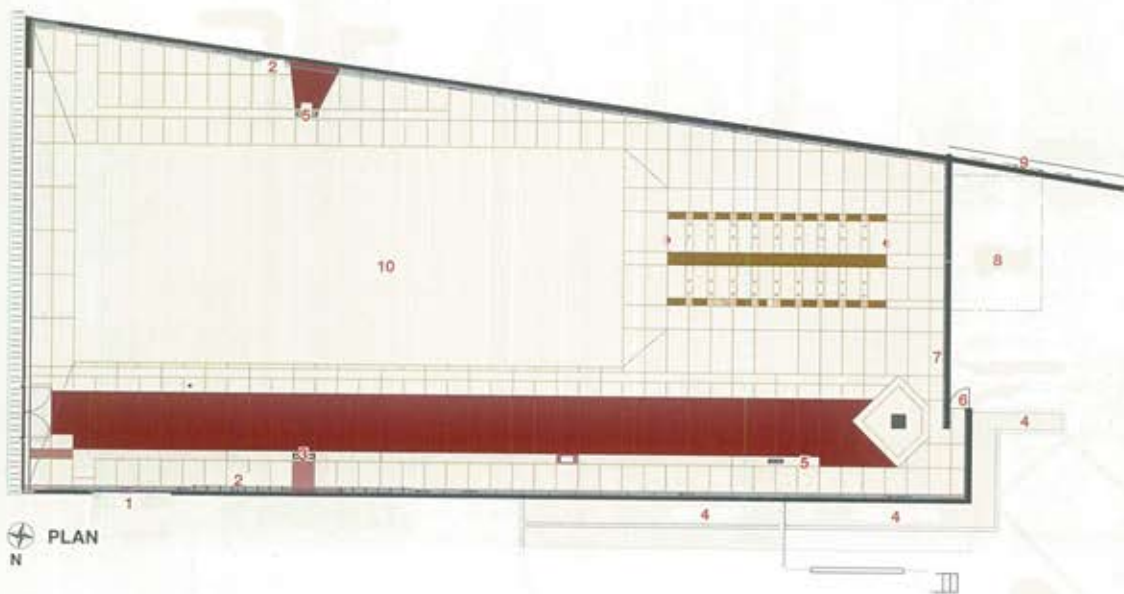


SITE PLAN

1. CUNCOLIM BUS STAND
2. PROPOSED SITE FOR CUNCOLIM FREEDOM FIGHTERS MEMORIAL







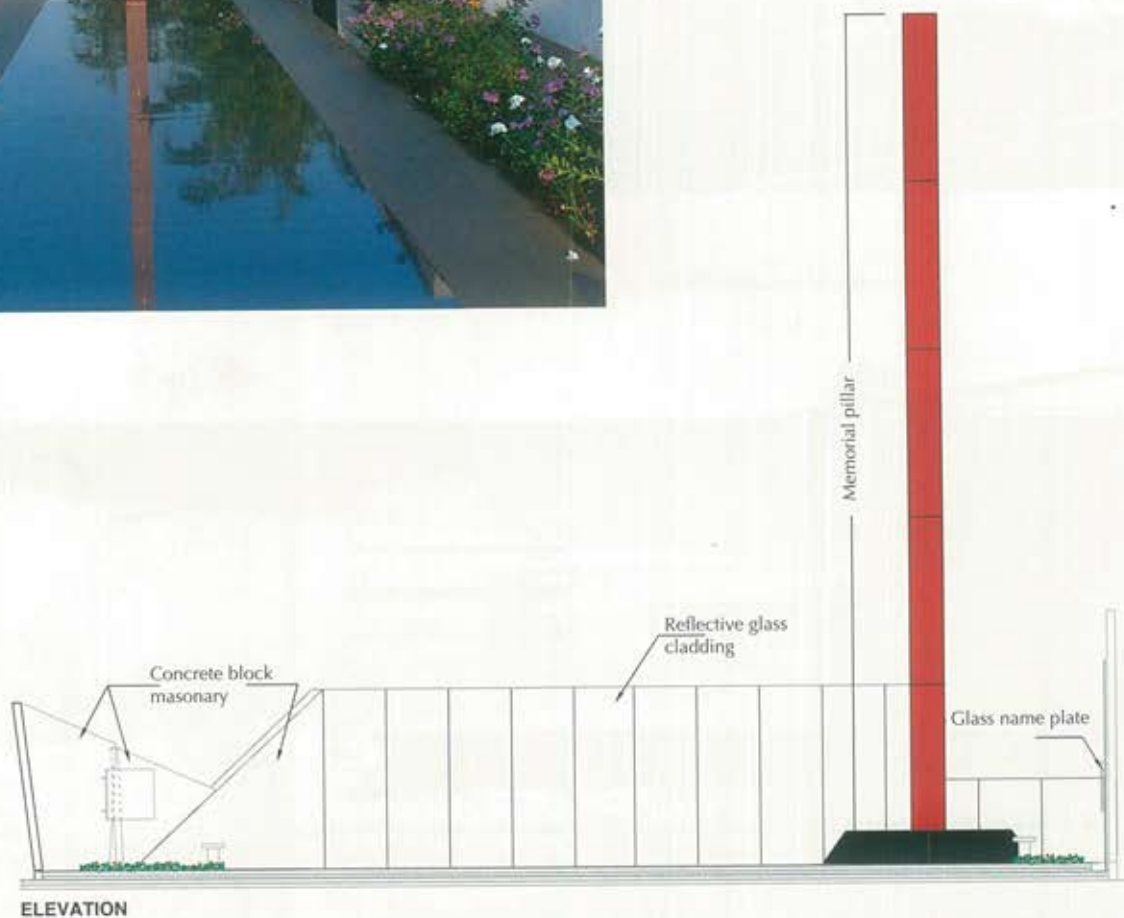
1. EXISTING SECURITY HOUSE
2. NAMEPLATE GLASS
3. SEATING 1
4. BAMBOO PLANTER
5. SEATING 2
6. GATE
7. STRUCTURAL GLAZING
8. PUMP ROOM AND FILTRATION UNIT
9. EXISTING DRAIN OUTSIDE THE PLOT
10. SAND PIT/ PLAY EQUIPMENTS

struggle, revolt, bloodshed, resolve and the triumph of liberation through its scale and elements.

The memorial is conspicuous in its setting; by its tall, sharp edged mighty white walls surrounding and enclosing the memorial functionally and securing the space. The walls in fact depict the powerful and overwhelming Portuguese and their ruthless regime through their sharp edges. The entrance has a short but distinct railing designed as prison bars which leads one into the memorial, thus subtly making

one realise the fate of the freedom fighters and the long years of imprisonment they faced. A dark shining, polished granite path welcomes to lead you to the red memorial Tower of Triumph, perched at the very end of the pathway. The use of black granite partly polished and partly rough is deliberate; symbolising the suppressed dark skinned native Goan.

The walk towards the tower is very significant. Every view from the path has a well etched role; a story to tell; a



message to convey. The linear view in the direction of the pathway leads the eye to the reflection of the red tower on the granite floor, symbolising the resolve of the natives which made them emerge forcefully from the ground; celebrating the victory and the freedom of their motherland.

Mid-way on the right, one confronts the names of the martyrs etched in red on white glass panels portraying their sacrifice and the blood they shed for their motherland. The names glow in red at night as the panels are backlit

and are complemented by the diffused lighting of the white walls amplifying their presence and rendering calmness in the park.

Allegorical and symbolic features have been deployed ubiquitously in the Cuncohim Freedom Fighters' Memorial design to communicate themes of self-sacrifice, victory and liberation. The design of a war memorial—encumbered in historical tensions and sentiments of both pride and loss along with the varied expectations of the families of





the martyrs is easily one of the toughest challenges for a designer; and to get it right, perhaps the most fulfilling.

As one moves further on the pathway on the left one encounters a children's play area, bundled with play equipment and white sand, to be followed by an array of fountains where the children play and make merry with delight and excitement along the side of the memorial. This happiness, the enthusiasm and the glee on the face on every child is the true and ultimate purpose of the memorial; to express liberation and freedom. The idea of having a children's park contiguous to the memorial has irrevocably changed the mood of the entire site.

The design acts as a link between the past and the future. A black mirror was placed behind the memorial to pull off a mirrored effect which would double the size of the park and metaphorically creating two worlds; a bright and promising future reflected by a dark past. The visitors create an emotional connection themselves and the memorial was designed with such subtlety to facilitate that response, not to create it.

The wars of the last century may have faded from our collective consciousness, but those who were there, and those who lost a friend or family member, will never forget. This memorial stands as an undying tribute to the many that died defending the honour of their land and their fellow countrymen. The memorial itself holds the promise the countless have died protecting – a liberated future for the generations to come. ✚

### Factfile

**Client:** Goa State Urban Development Corporation (GSUDA)

**Design team:** Rahul Deshpande, Anil Palekar, Archana Mahambare Karpe & Nisarg Gaude

**Consultants:** Rahul Deshpande and Ranjeesh Gopal

**Contractors:** M/s Shirka Constructions

**Built-up area:** 700sq m

**Cost of project:** 73 lakhs

**Year of completion:** 2009