

INDIAN
ARCHITECT AND
BUILDER

INNOVATE

I A & B

focus: interior architecture

 **Jasubhai**
M E D I A



the COLOURS of context

As expansion morphs the country's urbania, architects find the time opportune to converge creative enterprise and efficient infrastructure. Goa-based Rahul Deshpande's practice explores this change with a touch of contextual flavour as they build facilities for the rejuvenated Goa State Transport and D-Link's corporate premise in Bangalore.

*Text: Ajay Nayak & Shweta Dharia
Photographs: courtesy the architect*

Change evolves out of contemporary mindsets and need. For landmarks to be built the thirst of the client should match the architects' ambition. While architectural practices are consistently overflowing with inspirations it is only the last decade that has seen a rejuvenated ambition in the mind of the State for urban revolution. An ambition matched by private multinationals that has finally given architecture the much needed muscle of investment. As the financial muscle is made available for this forward march it is also opportune to gauge what are the priorities in the minds of the design professional today. What are the thoughts that run behind the ever increasing palette of colours, materials and potentials that are offered by the market today? And in their rendering what role has the end user, climate and culture played? And when architects use terms like sustainability what considerations map its development?

For Goan Architect, Rahul Deshpande, this situation of change was opportune to argue out architectural efficiencies and contextual concepts as he applied them in developing bus stations in Goa and the corporate premises for D-Link at Bangalore. These projects allowed the architect and his team to make an attempt to what they see as an influx new energy via alternative ideas into what they see as stalemates in the architectures of public infrastructure and corporate environments. For Rahul himself the projects support his basic approach that dwell in his dual education in engineering and architecture, as he says, "The science of buildings is an integral one. I am a structural engineer first and then an architect. Generally, in architectural practices in India, the structure is kept out while visually appraising the buildings. Thus the structure never becomes a part of the architectural design and that's what I try in my buildings-bring in the structure & make it a part of the design process."



THE PUBLIC REALM: BUS STATIONS AT CANACONA & CUNCOLIM

When designing in your native land, even simplistic and clinical infrastructure takes on personal hues. For the Bus Stations in Goa, Rahul sought to keep personal values tied to architecture creating space for state of the art design. The will of the Goan Government to emerge as a center for real estate investment became a tool for the architects' team to push the State for higher investment into qualitative and quantitative infrastructure. The two bus stations in Goa, at Canacona and Cuncolim respectively, serve the function and the well being of the commissioners (Goa State Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd - GSIDC; Goa State Urban Development Authority - GSUDA), while providing an interesting site for all those who happen to walk by and use it. If the range of feedback received from the end user and the Government officials is to go by, then these two structures have changed the architectural perception of transport infrastructure in the State, proving that it can be cost effective, functionally strong and yet a delight to the eyes.

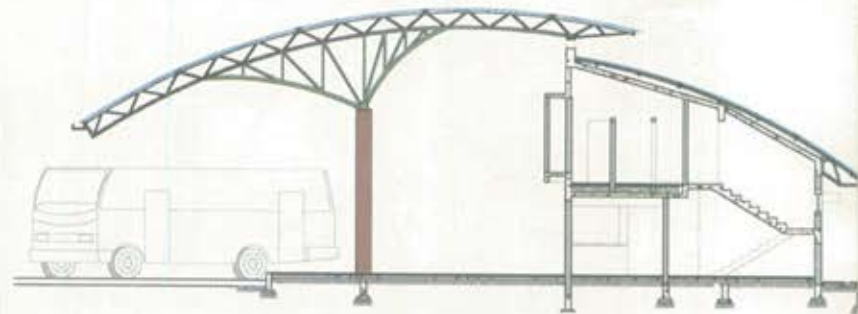
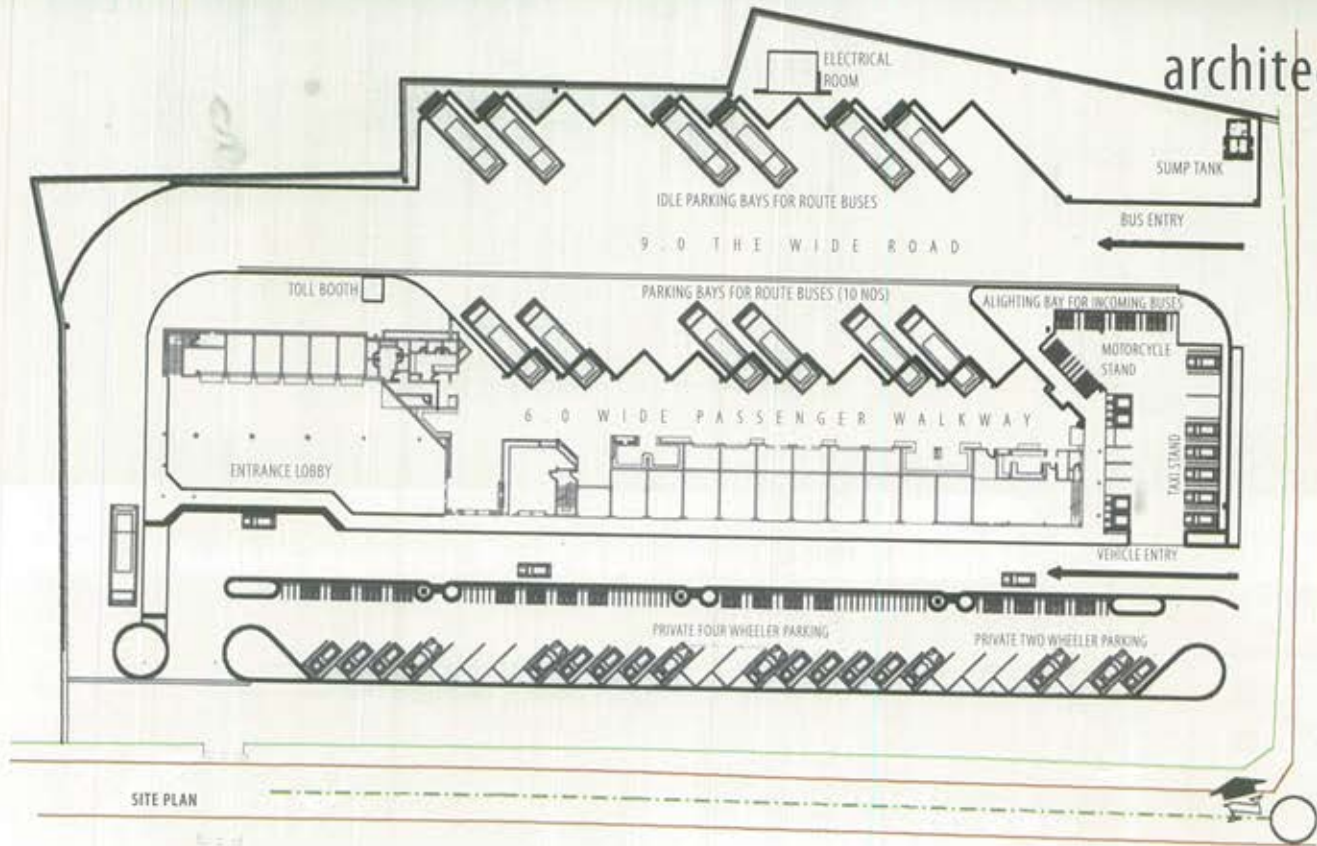
Canacona, the first bus station was designed on the sparsely populated, southern-most tip of Goa. In spite of being a busy gateway to the south of the state it was being ill-served by rather rudimentary facilities. Rahul's bus stand takes its inspiration from the nearby beach of Palolem, renowned for its pristine beaches, its rows of compacted, willowy palms and its reputed highest waves in Goa (thus a favored destination for surfing). Another contextual point of reference for the design is the colourfully exuberant annual festival of sigo, akin to Holi, which is celebrated locally. Says Rahul, "Blue, Yellow, Red are the three colours used in Gulal and sindhur which also adorn the local deities. These shades became the dynamism providers and changed the way of perceiving the bus-stand."

The architects felt that global norms of architectural practice for public buildings receive less consideration in India, where the architects engage all

1. Austere functional form marks the presentation of the Canacona bus stand.
2 & 3. The exterior monochrome bursts into a cultural panorama of colours & context inside.
4. The Architect synchronises structural expertise with architectural context as columns reminisce Goan Palms.

the stake-holders in the project. This includes suggestions from the elected local bodies like the neighbouring panchayats and municipality, government bodies such as the Town Planning Department, Traffic police, the public Works Department and above all, local inhabitants. The bus Transport Company operating in the area, Kadamba Transport Corporation Ltd (KTCL), was also consulted. Rahul also visited bus stands in Bangalore, Mangalore, Hyderabad and Hubli noted for their innovative designs and creative attention to user needs. Rahul expressly felt he wanted to provide something more, both in terms of amenities and aesthetics than that provided by the average facility like a bus station. Even though aware of the relatively limited scope of the project, bearing in mind that Canacona was not a major hub or terminus, he felt a need to rearticulate the rather utilitarian manner in which such buildings are usually conceptualised. Simultaneously, he was attempting, through substantially increasing the range and quality of facilities, not only to simplify travel and make it a more pleasurable experience but also to heighten popular expectations from public architecture.

The rather austere Grey and white exterior of the bus stand leaves you unprepared for the sheer vitality and colour of its interiors. The roof itself is designed as a wave supported by columns and trusses representing palm trees. Different vibrant colours mark out different functional spaces, such as the purple balustrade of the cafeteria, the uniform grey and blue frontage of the shops, yellow of the waiting area and orange of the washing facilities. At the back of the bus stand, the service areas of the first floor are concealed by concrete cubicles in shades of blue. The differential shading of the cubicles moves the eye inwards, from the stronger blues at the end towards the more muted shades in the center and then outwards again. The concave effect of this blue wave is again heightened by the generous light aperture directly above.



SECTION A2 - A2

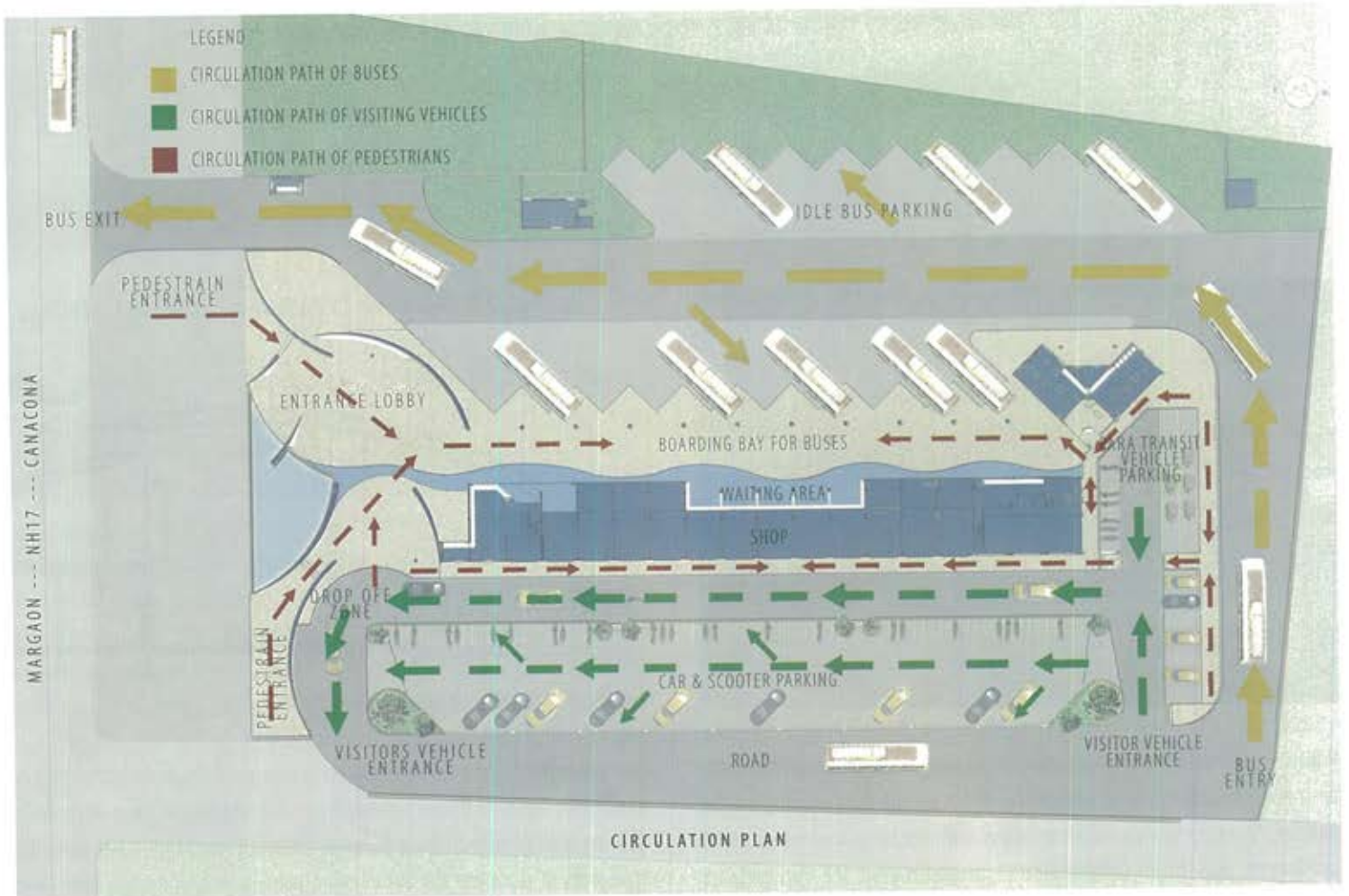
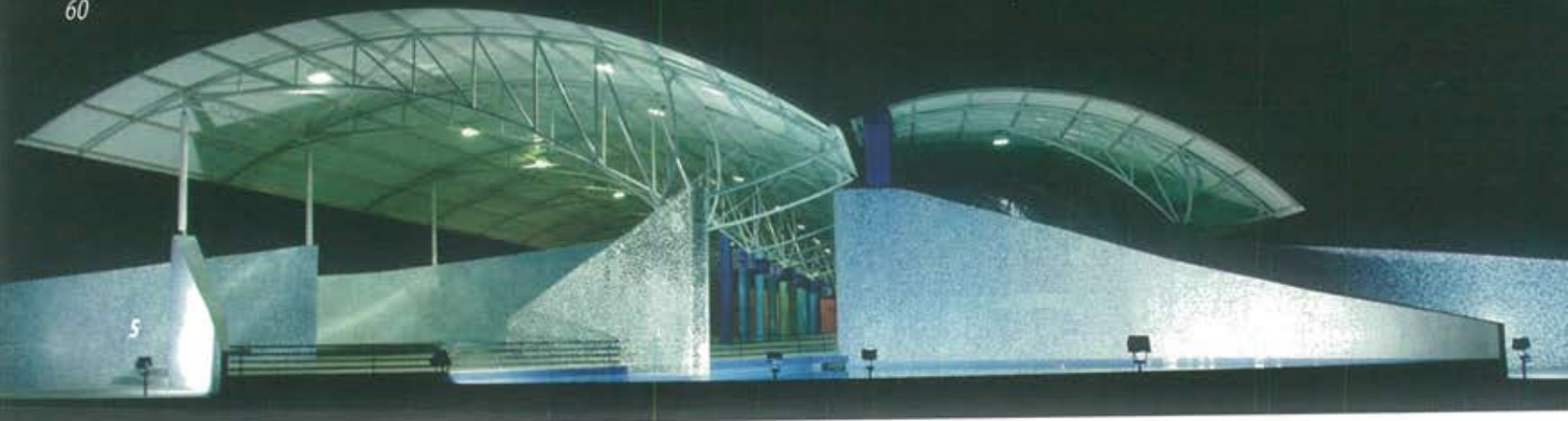
While the aesthetic sensibilities are integral to the design of the bus stand, aesthetics were in no way allowed to dominate the functionality of the building. The step by step requirements, of both the incoming and outgoing passengers, was first carefully plotted to ensure that the facilities are accessible and user friendly as well as logically located so that the user does not have to retrace his steps at any stage. Passenger movement is thus, linear and progressive. Bus entry and exit are separate and independent from commuter entry. The only points of contact are the alighting and boarding platforms. The floor height in the bays is aligned with the first step of the bus for easier access and it is probably one of the first bus stands in India to take into account the special needs of the physically challenged. This is complemented with generous provision for para transit and vehicular parking, shops, restaurants, toilets, restrooms, pay phones and orderly provisions for taxis and autos. Built initially for a population of 6000 persons, the infrastructure is designed to accommodate the expanding needs of the community for the next 25 years.

bus stand. The bus stand was consciously planned to be as maintenance free as possible. The Kota flooring is tough, durable and easy to clean while walls abutting high density traffic are clad in ceramic tiles. Rahul made palm like structures to represent the surrounding palm groves using Tata Structura's rectangular and square hollow sections known for their aesthetics and superlative strength criteria. The simplicity of the exterior grey tiles and white concrete is also amenable to easy maintenance. The supervisors room has visual access to all corners of the bus stand, obviating the need for multiple personnel and service centers.

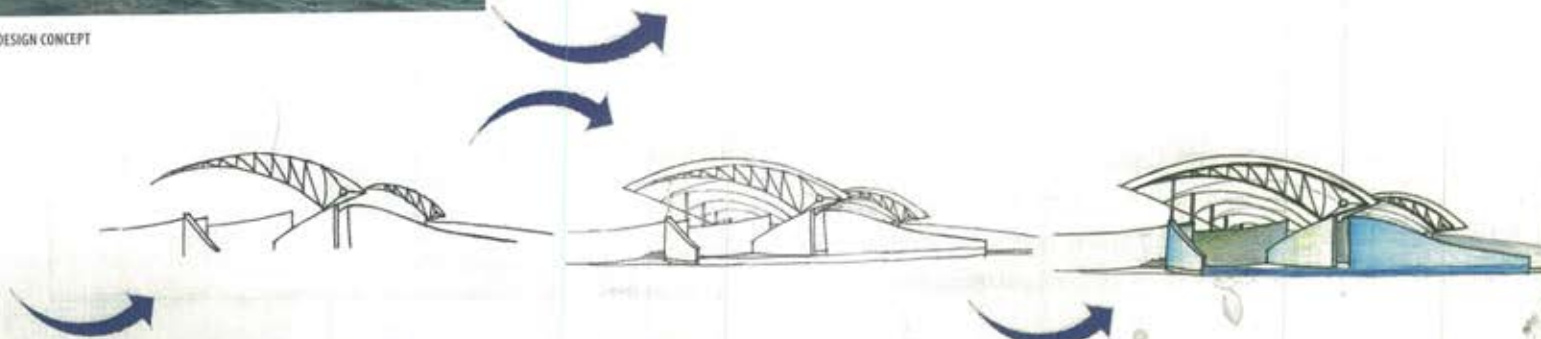
FACT FILE:

Project Name:	<i>Canacona Bus Stand, Chaudi-canacona-goa.</i>
Client:	<i>Goa State Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd.</i>
Civil Contractor:	<i>D.S. Contractors Pvt. Ltd.</i>
Electrical Contractor:	<i>D.S. Contractors Pvt. Ltd.</i>
Landscape Contractor:	<i>Hariyalee Nursery</i>
Project Cost:	<i>Rs. 280 Lakhs</i>
Period Of Completion:	<i>6 months</i>
Completed / Inaugrated:	<i>18th August 2004</i>
Architects:	<i>Rahul Deshpande And Associates</i>
Creative Team:	<i>Rahul Deshpande, Milind Khade</i>
Structural Consultant:	<i>Rahul Deshpande, Anil Palekar, Siddhesh Tuenker</i>
Electrical Consultant:	<i>Castellino Consultants</i>

Contrary to prevailing dogma regarding heavily used public facilities, the best quality of appropriate materials were used in the construction of the

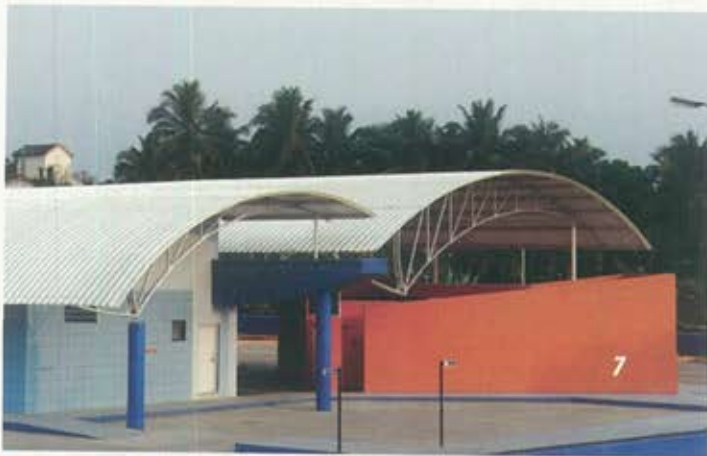


DESIGN CONCEPT





5 & 6. The dolphins that inspired the truss get profiled in these day & night impact shots of the bus station as surface treatments below anchor the formation.
7. The super structure evolves as a composition of planes and surface treatments.
8. Structural finesse is balanced with communication details.
9. The parking bay completed the hygiene competency of the bus station.



For the Cuncolim Bus station in the town of Cuncolim in Salcete District, the heartland of the Goan South was conceptualised from research on "what bounds every Goan's life?" and the answer was simple - 'Fish', the culinary staple diet in Goa. This concepts suggested itself as a motif that was translated into architectural design, when inspiration touched the architect on sighting two dolphins leaping up from the surf. The simple, curvy, flowing form of the sporting dolphins, amidst glinting waves was seamlessly translated into an elegant truss.



The next challenge was to put a modernistic construction on the design of a bus stand, involving as it does the context – a small town with a rustic feel, the fish as a motif and a site among fields and palms. It was equally important that the structure respond to its environs and so the play of proportion, of scale, of balance factored into the design concept. Finally, things fell into place and the structure was made possible with use of Finolex PVC 2mm thick roof sheets shaped like dolphins jumping out of the waves. The sheets proved ideal due to its excellent insulation and lightweight properties. The entire building is clad in ceramic and glass tiles making it a structure that is easy to maintain. These efficiencies are supported by the thought that in a place like Goa, the point of view at which buses and passengers converge and disperse ought to reflect the lifestyle of its users.



FACT FILE:

<i>Project Name:</i>	<i>Cuncolim Bus Stand, Cuncolim Goa.</i>
<i>Client:</i>	<i>Goa State Urban Development Agency</i>
<i>Civil Contractor:</i>	<i>D.S. Contractors Pvt. Ltd.</i>
<i>Project Area:</i>	<i>2000 Sqmts</i>
<i>Project Cost:</i>	<i>Rs. 386 Lakhs</i>
<i>Initiation of Project:</i>	<i>June 2006</i>
<i>Completion of Project:</i>	<i>March 2007</i>
<i>Architect:</i>	<i>Rahul Deshpande</i>
<i>Design Team:</i>	<i>Rahul Deshpande, Yogita Ghorpade and Larrisa Lobo</i>
<i>Structural Design Team:</i>	<i>Anil Palekar and Vinish Desai</i>
<i>Electrical Consultant:</i>	<i>Castellino Consultants</i>



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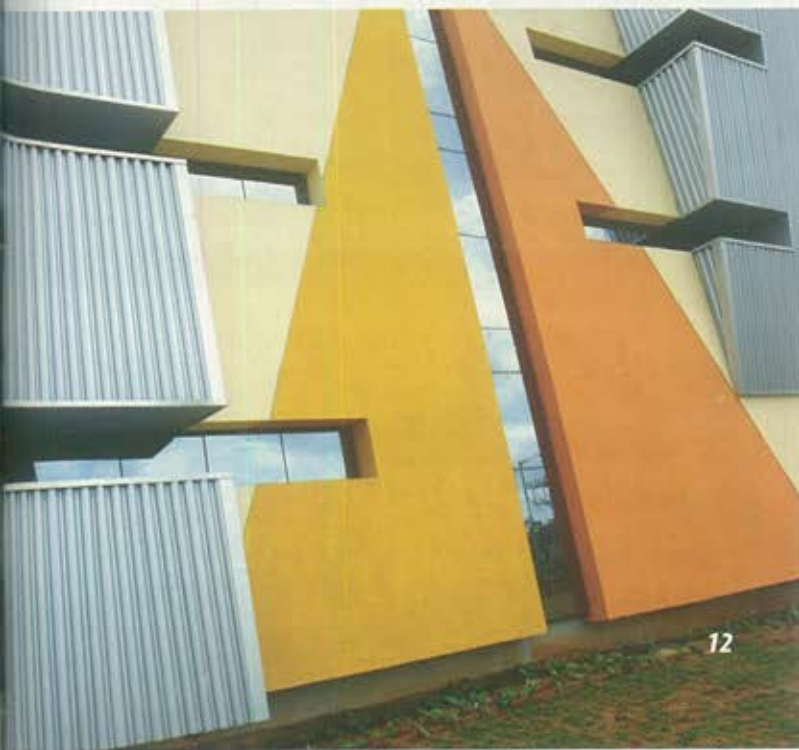
THE PRIVATE REALM: D-LINK R&D CENTER

Designing an Information Technology Research and Development (IT R&D) Center in the IT hub of India, needs some R & D as well. A special approach needs to be brought to the design table. Creating a structure that connects with the users of the structure and an ambience that fosters enquiry, creativity and excellence is a must-have. Rahul pin-pointed that the process of enquiry needs creative thinking and an out-of-the-box approach to questions. Only a daringly different idea can ignite the mind, and set it free from the box of moth-eaten approaches that it is trapped in. Only an explosion of creativity can shatter the enclosure, scattering the fragments of a brilliant idea. Only these shimmering splinters can dictate the design that contains elements of such irregular shapes and their prismatic colours. To quote him, "Research = Out-Of-The-Box Thinking = Brain Wave = Paradigm Break = Splinters of Creativity = Design... If we weld these elements asymmetrically to the idea of up-to-the-minute technology represented by heavy metal, we have the rudiments of a pattern, a design that fits a center of intellectual ferment to a T." Rahul put the concept in practice





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DESIGN CONCEPT



9. & 10. Expressing...Research = Out-Of-The-Box Thinking = Brain Wave = Paradigm Break = Splinters of Creativity = Design.
 11. Diverse yet synchronised, seems to be the message of the D-Link building.
 12. Minimal facial glass emphasises the architects attempt to give an optional treatment for climatic consideration.

and the final outcome was a structure that was vibrant and functional at the same time. Rahul's goal was to use minimum glass and yet keep the image of the structure techno-savvy. He thus used glass only in the corridors where it wouldn't cause inconvenience and at the same time keeps the look intact.

"Glass absorbs more heat and hence, client has to incur extra cooling cost, which means high level of energy consumption. India at this stage, cannot afford to loose so much energy in this way," says Rahul. He thus tries to keep the use of glass to a minimum in his designs. The exterior of the building is painted in seven colours of the VIBGYOR, representing the explosion of the idea. A single ray of light has seven colours which is a metaphor for the splintering of a single idea. The landscape around the place has also been designed to keep in tune with the structure and the concept of splintering of the idea. A star like splattering of spaces with a special kind of grass to supply the effect, has provided the finishing touches to the design.

Rahul's work has proved that, an architect, can keep intact the utilitarian aspect of a structure yet at the same time, play around with the form and incorporate a theme that will add meaning to a structure.

FACT FILE:

Project Name:	Research & Development Centre, Bangalore
Client:	D-Link India Ltd
Civil Contractor:	Thuluvath Constructions Pvt. Ltd
Project Area:	8090 Sqmts
Project Cost:	Rs. 600 Lakhs
Initiation Of Project:	December 2005
Completion Of Project:	June 2007
Architect:	Rahul Deshpande & Associates
Design Team:	Rahul Deshpande, Nandita Namshikar
Structural Design Team:	Rahul Deshpande, Anil Palekar & Archana Mahabare
Electrical Consultant:	Castellino Consultants
Electrical / HVAC / Plumbing Consultant:	Meca Project Engineers Pvt. Ltd.