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Light and Energy



Collaborative Architecture designs a high-tech corporate office for Bajaj Electricals in Chennai, going beyond the restrictive brief to provide a space which is not only energy conscious, but also has an ambience which boosts employee efficiency.

PHOTOGRAPHS: LALITA THARANI



The theme of the design concept was sustainability as an active strategy through the selection of green rated products, cutting down energy consumption and daylight harvesting.





One expects manufacturers of electrical equipment to set an example, by conserving energy themselves. Mujib and Lalita Tharani of Collaborative Architecture have done exactly that in the Bajaj Electricals corporate office, by providing a design which maximises daylight, yet reduces cooling costs.

Apart from this, they have also attempted to look beyond the functional contingencies of a regular corporate work place and imbued the space with an architectural character and ambience that will generate unparalleled work efficiency.

The architects say the brief they received for the office was ‘typical straight jacketed and hierarchical: cabins for senior managers; cubicles for mid-level managers; and work stations for executives; meeting and conference rooms; staff area and service areas.’ The brief also emphasised they wanted orthogonal spaces in the office, in line with the principles of vastu.

The fundamental theme of the architects’ design concept, right from its inception was sustainability as an active strategy through the selection of green rated products, tools to cut down energy consumption, daylight harvesting and the general orientation of the spaces, to tap maximum daylight and reduce exposure from the southern side to cut down the cooling load.

‘The challenge was to accommodate the highly restrictive guidelines, yet evolve a “design narrative” which would cleverly mask the gridded plan. Consequently, the meeting room is placed strategically to segregate the public interface from the work interface. The contrasting dark colour and the free flowing envelope of its space clearly generate a spatial boundary between the public and the work areas.’

Enclosed spaces like senior managers’ cabins, conference and staff utility areas are positioned along one of the sides,

FACT FILE:

Project Name: Bajaj Corp Office, Chennai
Architects (firm): Collaborative Architecture, Mumbai
Design Team: Lalita Tharani + Mujib Ahmed







allowing the work stations to be placed to tap maximum daylight. The cabins have glazed partitions separating them from the work area, allowing daylight to penetrate into them, while architectural graphics on the wall lend them some kind of privacy.

Every cabin, passage and entry foyer is provided with active tools to cut down the lighting load. The office is equipped with state of the art HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air-Conditioning) and BMS (Building Management System), which is a computer-based control system installed in buildings that controls and monitors the building's mechanical and electrical equipment such as ventilation, lighting, power, fire and security systems, for complete energy efficiency.

Lalita and Mujib with their usual flair and style have created a vibrant and energy efficient office, which seems certain to boost employee efficiency. 



Lalita and Mujib have looked beyond the functional contingencies of a regular office and imbued the space with an architectural character.