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# LOBBYIST

## Reflected Topography

Bengaluru, India

Collaborative Architecture

Photography by Lalita Tharani and Manish Gala



One could argue there is no cookie-cutter approach to designing an office building's ground-floor lobby. In fact, almost anything goes – and often it does. In Hong Kong, where space has always been at a premium, Grade-A office towers such as ICC and Two IFC offer large, climate-controlled lobbies that facilitate easy flow of traffic. Yet it is obvious from these two landmark buildings that the aim of Hong Kong lobbies is always to keep people moving; loitering is discouraged through lack of seating, and security guards wordlessly exert a formidable presence. It is also common for sections of office lobbies to be let out to shops and restaurants to generate additional revenue as well as providing value-added services such as banking and dry cleaning. For the Bearys Group in India's hi-tech capital, however, an office lobby presented the opportunity to encourage its building's tenants to interact more meaningfully. And so it looked to Mumbai-based Collaborative Architecture to transform a lofty 12,000sq ft lobby into much more than a mere space for a visitor to pass through in order to access the higher floors.

The roughly 32m by 32m space contains 9m-high ceilings with a central column dominating the area. Two adjacent sides with full-height glazing meet at a corner entry, while the opposite two sides are devoted to core services such as lifts, toilets and back-of-house rooms. Collaborative Architecture decided to faunt

the column, cladding it with white Corian panels while fashioning it as a tree that anchors the cavernous space. Architectural lighting dropped from the waffle-slab ceiling system radiates from this centre, like foliage meandering and climbing toward the sun.

The undulating circuits of the ceiling's lighting pattern are mirrored in the furniture groupings below. The C-shaped sofas encourage private discussions while allowing natural light and views to be enjoyed. Strip lighting running along the base of each sofa unit makes the seating – upholstered in red or black – appear to levitate, tying them into the glowing grid above. Four meeting rooms cantilevered off the existing mezzanine slab allow for more focused dialogue while providing full visual access to what's going on in the lobby below. As it is in use for approximately 18 hours daily, the space is equipped with BMS and Dali ballasts for daylight harvesting, besides LED-based light sources.

Reflected Topography demonstrates how Collaborative Architecture has transformed a typically utilitarian space into one where users will want to pause and stay awhile. It is a textbook example of a design invested with earnest thinking.

