

world of decorama

MAY 2016 ₹200

SPECIAL FEATURE

India Ink

DESIGN TALES

Kalhan and
Santha Mattoo

LUXURY RESORT

Raefer Wallis

REMEMBERING

ZAHA HADID

A Creative Association

India-based Collaborative Architecture and Berlin-based architecture firm J. Mayer H have joined hands to share knowledge, technology and ideas to bridge the creative gaps in the architecture industry across the globe



PHOTO: DAVID FRANCK

A mixed-use Sonnenhof complex by
J Mayer H in Jena, Germany

A proposal for Volt Berlin by JMH Architects



Metropol Parasol, a freestanding wooden structure, designed by JMH at Spain



JMH and Collaborative invest a lot in design research and formal investigation of architecture; we are passionate about innovation and appropriating latest technology into the design and construction process

Collaborative Architecture, headed by Principal Architects Lalita Tharani and Mujib Ahmed, are game-changers in the Indian industry by initiating a one-of-its-kind collaboration with a renowned German architect Jürgen Hermann Mayer of his namesake firm J. MAYER H. The intent behind the move is to join forces on a creative level to share research ideas, innovative concepts and collaboratively build interesting projects. DECORAMA talks to them to find out what brought them together, their design ideologies and what their future plans are.

What brings the two firms together?

JMH: The most important factor that brought the studios together is the ability of both practices to zoom-in and zoom-out of a project. In other words, we are both capable of looking

at projects at macro levels and micro levels with equal intensity. This enables overlapping ideas and converging points at different levels of design thinking. Intuitive thinking as generative process is common in both firms methodology. JMH and COLLABORATIVE invest a lot in design research and the formal investigation of architecture. Both are passionate about innovation and are appropriating latest technology into the design and construction process. JMH goes steps ahead, developing new technologies and material research as the projects and infrastructure allows this important exploration. But, more than the overlapping strands, we believe our biggest strength in the collaboration will be our divergent directions – divergence of geography and divergence of applying technology to specific buildings cultures, low tech and high engineering.

CA: We have been friends for several years and have been following each other's work for a while. We did see a lot of overlapping synergies in the positioning of both studios and in the way we look at design and the built environment. We also found an opportunity for a collaboration of this kind in selected markets, like India, China and Middle East. Collaborations between two firms, existing in Indian scenario, in all cases, have been project specific, and the Indian entity end up doing more or less the drudgery work, than being a part of the design process. A lot is lost in translation from the original design intent. Collaboration between COLLABORATIVE ARCHITECTURE and J.MAYER.H is unique, as we work together from the concept level to the completion of the project as single entity offering great value addition in the process.

How is the collaboration helping your firms individually? What have

you learnt from the other's distinct style?

CA: There has been continuous flow of information between studios, not specific to the work in hand but as a general case of knowledge sharing.

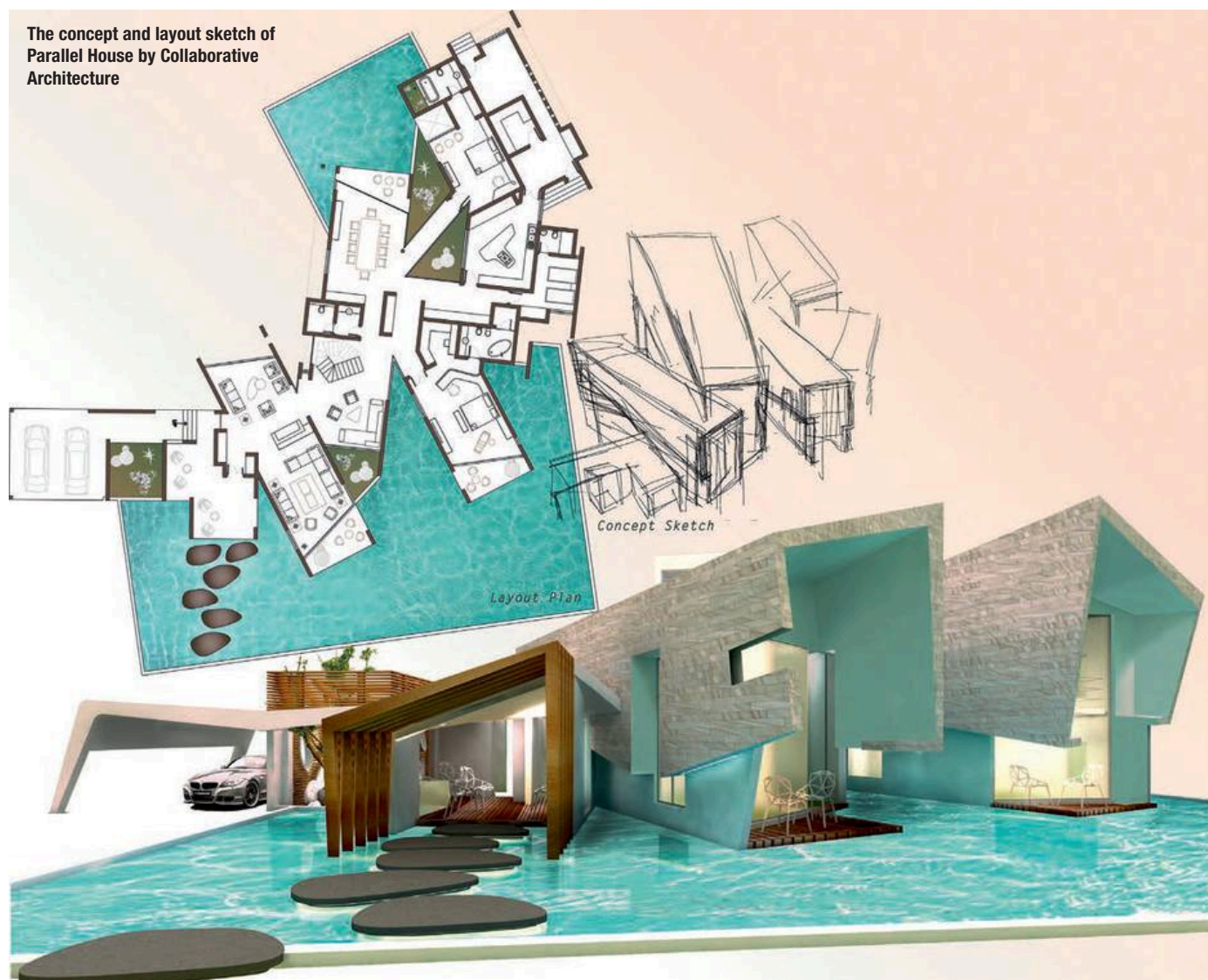
JMH: Both studios operate in diametrically opposite work environments. We operate in a more matured, technology driven and quality conscious environ. Collaborative has been working with clients and organisations with more or less same expectations as ours, but framework for architectural production is by far unorganised. There are a lot we assimilate from each other.

The primary drive of this collaboration is to facilitate exchange of knowledge. What are the key areas in which the exchange is taking place: technology, design, innovation, strategy, execution? Elaborate.

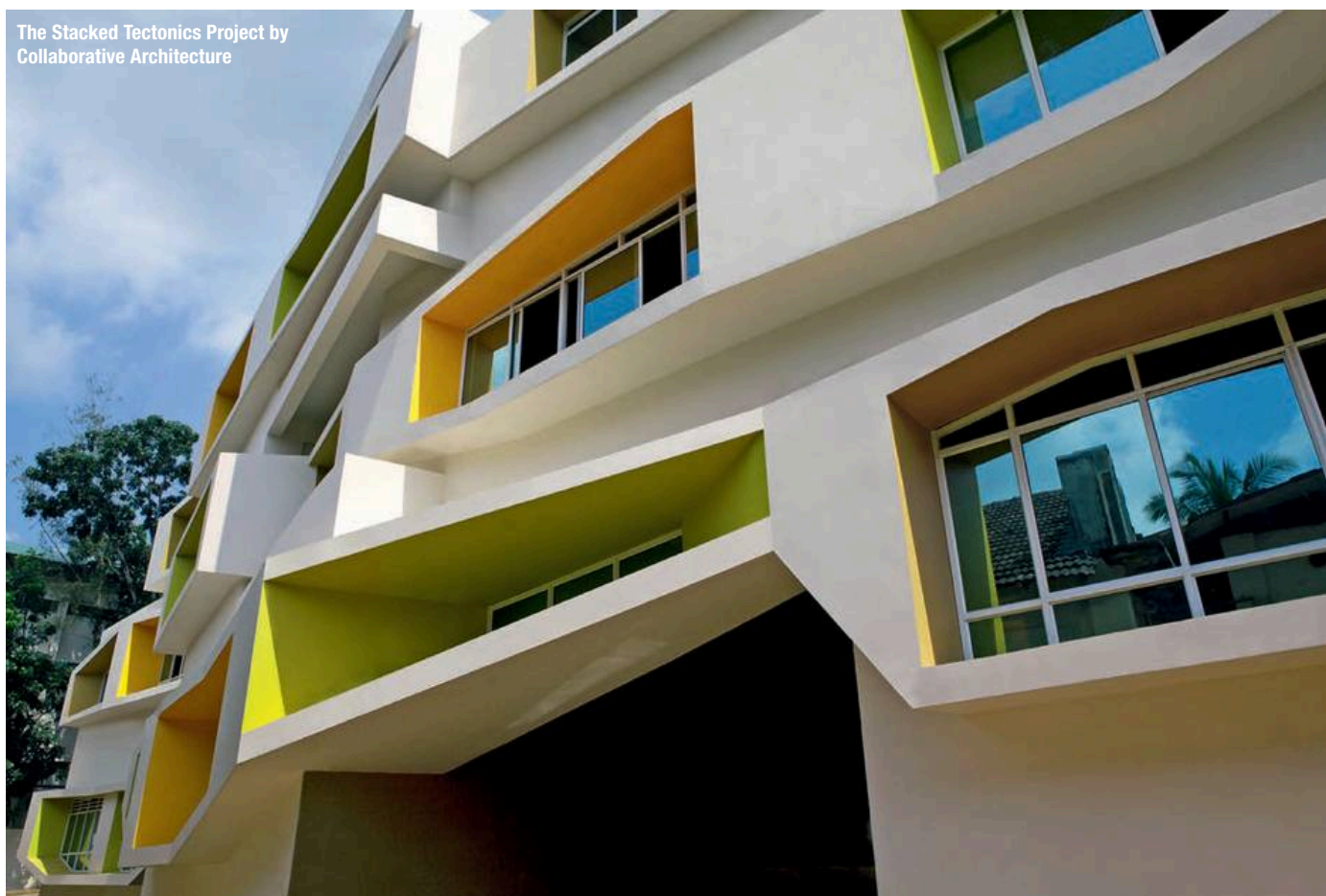


MUJIB AHMED AND LALITA THARANI

The concept and layout sketch of Parallel House by Collaborative Architecture



The Stacked Tectonics Project by
Collaborative Architecture



What makes us an effective team is the extraordinary pain we both take to transform these ideas into buildable and realisable projects for our clients within their realistic parameters

CA: In all areas. We are yet to start working on a project in India though we are in discussion with couple of clients, where this would have multiplier effect on harnessing and value engineering a specific technology and construction process. The project we are working on in China is also equally challenging where we need to make the technology indigenous to China and deploy it accordingly.

JMH: We constantly share research ideas, what is new happening around. And the unique collaboration gives an immense value proposition to our clients.

What are the new innovations in building materials? Are you experimenting with any?

CA + JMH: Both studios push the envelope of conventional architectural production and design thinking. What makes us an effective team is the extraordinary pain we both take to transform these ideas into buildable and realisable projects for our clients within their realistic parameters. J. MAYER H. does some amazing innovations with wooden structures that generate a distinct language, which have been way cheaper here than in Europe. We look forward to bringing their knowledge

and expertise with new technologies and building materials to India. This is the vital intersection of both studios, that design need not be expensive to be innovative.

How is your first project in Beijing coming about? What are the challenges you're facing? How are you overcoming them?

CA + JMH: We are in design discussion stage. The recession looming in China is an obvious challenge and we are trying to revise the programme which could even work in a slowing down economy, by not being carried away by the trademark Chinese propensity to outdo the rest.

What are the key factors that a firm should consider when seeking collaboration?

CA: Passion for each other's work and communication. The rest are peripheral and would eventually fall in place. Not discounting the fact that a broader common vision is the foundation of any successful collaboration.

JMH: The key to enable better collaboration between partners is communication, and a greater understanding of specific markets. **d**