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**A bungalow in Vadodara by Dipen Gada
delicately skirts existing trees**

Holding Water

Vishwanath & Associates,
Bengaluru, design a
smart corporate office
for Waters India (Pvt) Ltd
in the city.



Clear glass was deliberately used for the atrium-lobby to showcase the interiors to those outside. The ratio of glass and solid walls was optimized for minimal loss of air-conditioning and to keep natural light flowing through the office spaces.

TEXT: BRINDA GILL
PHOTOGRAPHS: PRASAD

An eye-catching façade, organized workspaces and integrating principles of Vastu shashtra in the design were the main requirements of the client, Waters India (Pvt) Ltd, for their corporate office in Peenya, Bengaluru. With one side of the site facing an arterial road, it was vital that the structure evoked interest in those passing or driving by. And keeping these requirements in mind as well as the international presence of the company, its name evocative of water, the role of the company in producing innovative analytical scientific instruments and the company's passion for precision and attention to detail, the team of architects at Vishwanath & Associates, Bengaluru, designed a smart and interesting structure and interiors.

Making a Statement

As the premises already had one office building of the company, the architects – P R Vishwanath Rao and Anuj Rao – designed the second to fit seamlessly into the site and the architectural language of the first, while standing out. Given a site area of 74,270 sq ft, they designed two blocks, with greater frontage towards the roads, connected with a central atrium lobby, lift and a spiral staircase with broad balcony-style landings to offer interactive spaces between levels. The blocks were set approximately at right angles to each other, spanning

office



The voluminous atrium lobby is neatly organized. The company is alluded to by the letter 'W' etched in steel and set in a large darker granite circle in the floor and another 'W' set directly above – within a circular band – in the ceiling.



Architects Vishwanath Rao and Anuj Rao

Fact File

PROJECT

Corporate Office

LOCATION

Bengaluru

ARCHITECTS

Vishwanath & Associates

DESIGN TEAM

Ar P R Vishwanath Rao,
Ar Anuj Rao, Geetha & Vanitha

CLIENTS

Waters India (Pvt) Ltd

YEAR COMPLETED

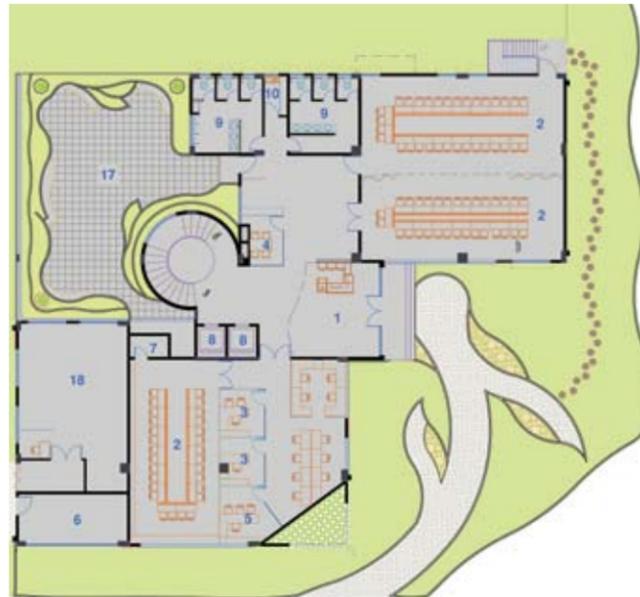
2014

SITE AREA

74,270 sq ft

PROJECT AREA

30,000 sq ft



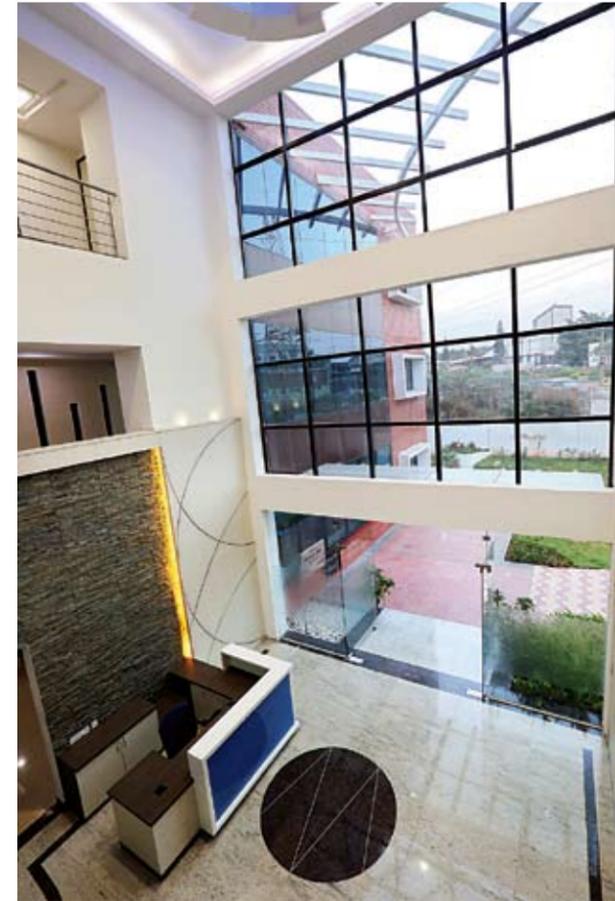
GROUND FLOOR PLAN

1. Entrance foyer
2. Conference
3. Manager cabin
4. Discussion room
5. GM cabin
6. Store
7. Swift room
8. Lift
9. Toilet
10. Pantry
11. Marketing dept
12. Literature library
13. Balcony
14. HR department
15. Utility
16. Admin store
17. Landscaped terrace
18. Trading store
19. E-Com dept
20. Regional office

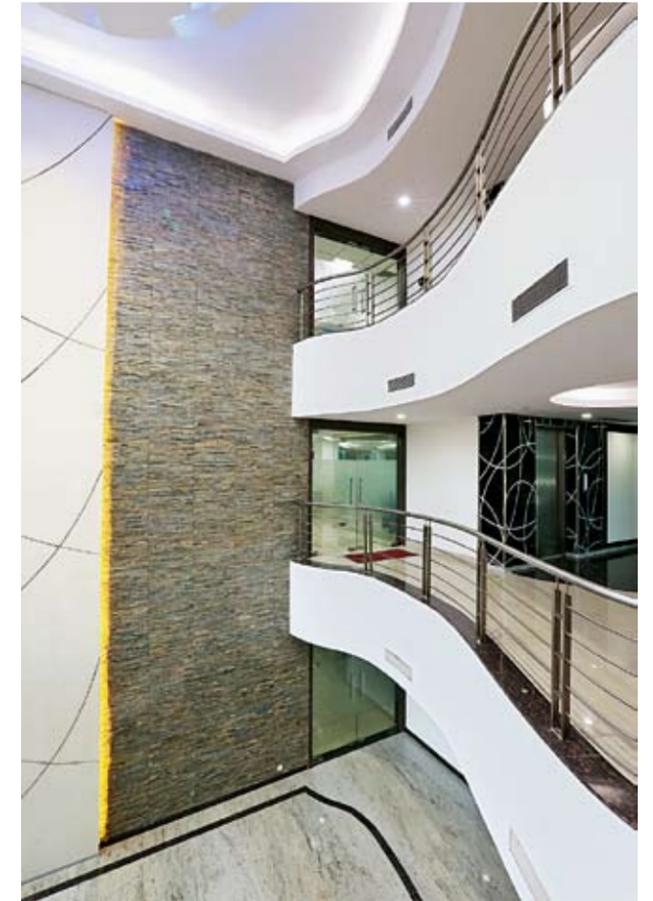
FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



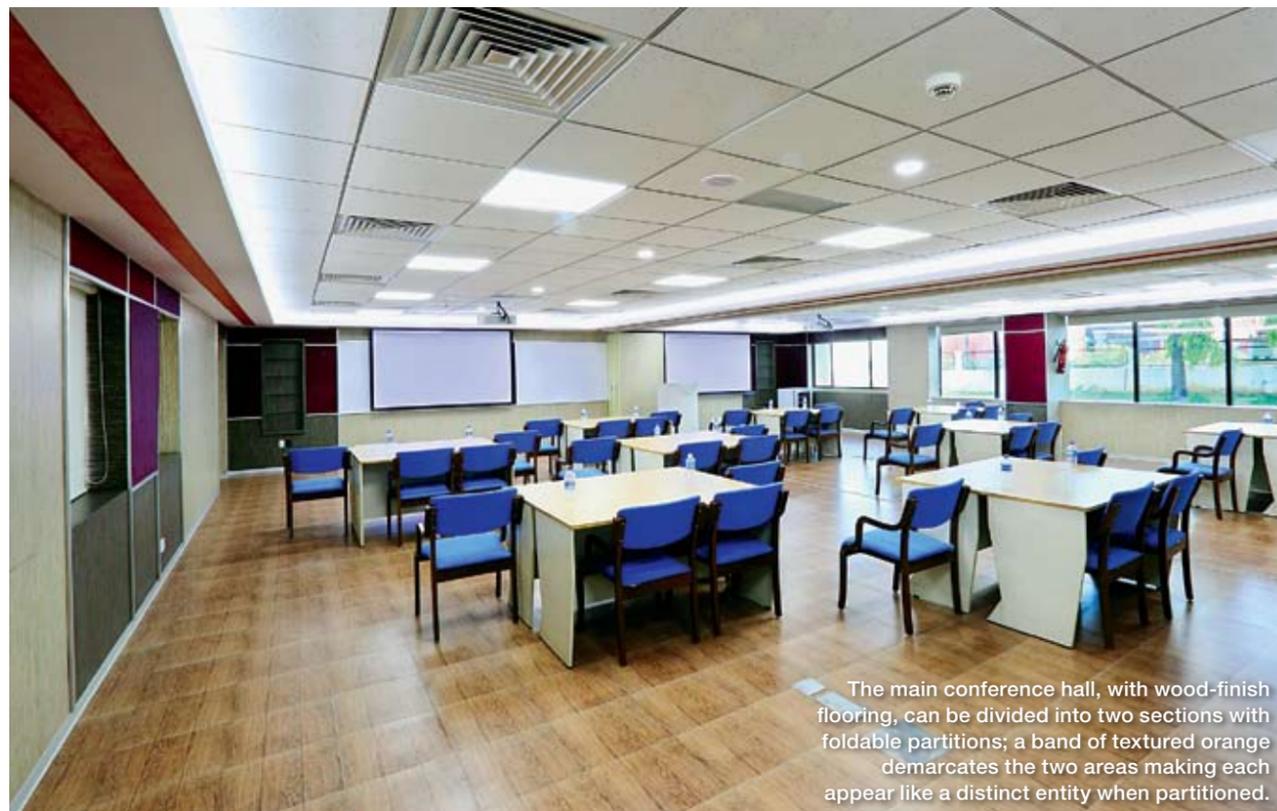
Broad balcony-style landings, common to the staircase and lift, offer interactive spaces between levels and a view of the entrance lobby.



The two blocks and levels are connected by an atrium, lift and spiral staircase. Blue – the company colour – features on the walls of the staircase.

30,000 sq feet and three levels – ground, first and second floors – with the atrium bearing additional space that accommodates two meeting rooms.

Alluding to the scientific precision of the company's products, the building's exterior was rendered in straight lines. Continuing this thread of design, the interiors were designed in straight lines as well as curved forms to suggest the clear, pure, smooth, unhindered flow of water for a discreet reference to the company's name. And the design was realized by minimizing the selection of materials used to make for a simple yet impressive structure.



The main conference hall, with wood-finish flooring, can be divided into two sections with foldable partitions; a band of textured orange demarcates the two areas making each appear like a distinct entity when partitioned.



A conference hall with storage along one wall that appears like a design; small knobs indicate the openings of the storage spaces.

Exposed brick; clear glass, reflective glass and glass blocks; and bands of wood-finished aluminium composite panels were selected to allow the façades to blend into the landscaped premises.

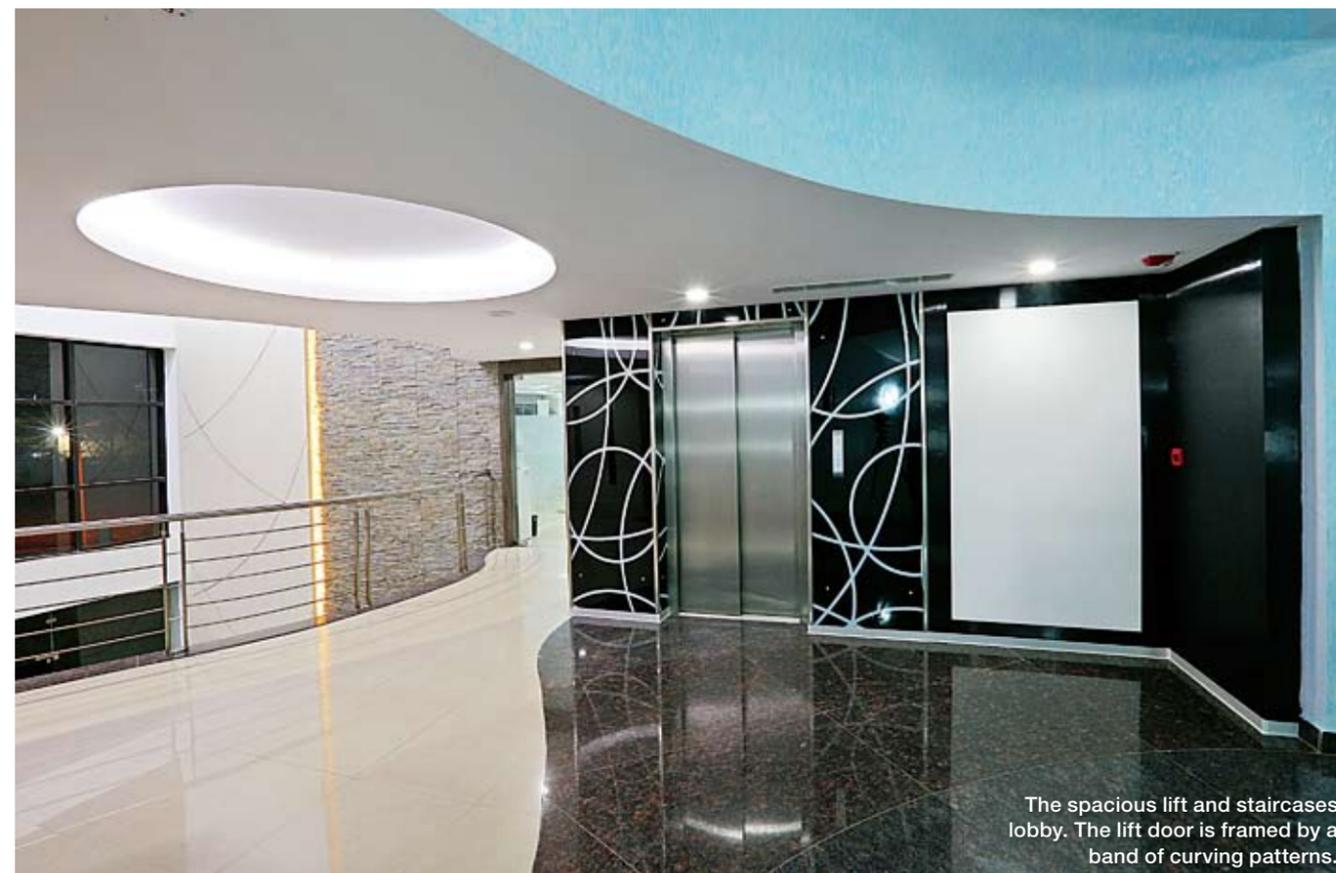
A play of lines and forms, in terms of the placement of these elements, creates interest in the structure's symmetrical architecture and a long curved pergola near the roof level, infused with the lightness of a swing, connects the two blocks visually. And this nifty arrangement of elements reveals itself as one walks along the curving path, hemmed by lawns, towards the entrance passing the building's façades. The road-facing façade bears a staggered placement of long and narrow windows with glass blocks and the name of the company above, while the other façades reveal glimpses

of activity within the office or reflect the foliage of trees and the curving form and slats of the pergola.

An Impressive Entrance

The interest in the space continues as one steps in through the main entrance – protected by a pergola with glass – and into the voluminous atrium-lobby. While clear glass was deliberately used for the atrium-lobby to showcase the interiors to those outside, the ratio of glass and solid walls was optimized for minimal loss of air-conditioning and to keep the natural light flowing through the office spaces.

Filled with light from the glass façade, the lobby enjoys a sense of space and height that is enhanced by Himalayan White granite flooring, and white and grey walls. The company is alluded to by the



The spacious lift and staircases lobby. The lift door is framed by a band of curving patterns.

letter 'W' etched in steel and set in a large, darker granite circle in the floor. And looking at the ceiling, this letter is also set – as if reflected directly above – within a circular band, with cut-outs, in the ceiling. The band, inspired by the design of the company's precision instruments, is created to represent a tectonic plate, as if floating notwithstanding its weight, indicative of the vision of the company as a pioneer of precision instruments. LED lights set in the band enhance its aura, especially in the evenings.

Smart Interiors

In keeping with Vastu principles the entrance was kept east-facing, all the managers' desks were placed to face north or east, the northwest corner was kept open in the form of a landscaped terrace for informal meetings, and the

southwest corner reserved for the GM's cabin as this location is the designated location for the person who heads or controls the related department.

With these placements decided, the architects went ahead with a functional plan focused on easy movement within and between levels, organised workspaces, ample natural light and interactive common areas. Conference halls and meeting rooms were placed on the ground floor, and the upper floors dedicated to the office area with cabins and workstations. The main conference hall, with wood-finish flooring, can be divided into two sections with foldable partitions; a band of textured orange demarcates the two areas making each appear like a distinct entity when partitioned.

The cabins of the general managers on the first and

office

The corporate office building is designed as two blocks set approximately at right angles to each other and connected by a central atrium, lift and spiral staircase. A long, curved pergola, near the roof level, visually connects the two blocks.



The road-facing façade bears a staggered placement of long and narrow windows with glass blocks and the name of the company above.

second floors are located on the sides with the open office for the marketing and HR departments in the centre to allow light from the cabins to filter inside; had the cabins been located in the centre and the open office to the sides, one row of cabins would have had low natural lighting during the day. The open office workstations are designed with glass partitions to give a sense of transparency and uniformity whilst defining work areas. A combination of warm white (for the circulatory areas), yellow light (for cove lighting) and pure white (for work stations) ensures ample light through the day.

Blue – the company colour – occurs in different areas such as the reception counter at the lobby, the walls of the spiral staircase and the

chairs. The ceilings of the circulation passageways in the open office areas are accentuated with an undulating band, designed with white and blue sections, to reiterate the fluidity of water as well as the company colour and subtly indicate the exit.

On completion, the architects were pleased to find that the design of the building caught the eye of passers-by, the employees found it a comfortable space to work at and visitors remarked its design was simple and smart. Given the response to the design, the architects received an appreciative response from the company stating that the employees were pleased by the space utility, ambience and the way the building fit the bill with interesting design elements. 