

PROJECTS

# Come face to face with the future of facade design in these 6 office buildings

With walls that mirror the sky reaching lengths that deceive the eye, glass facades are the preferred choice for commercial buildings in the urban playground. The transparency it offers workspaces combined with efficient aesthetics allows architects and designers to mold malleable spaces. Apart from lending a contemporary identity to the structure, glass façades make a significant contribution to energy consumption broadly including thermal and solar control.

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Where Mumbai makes up for lost space with facades that breathe with the biophilic layers, Hamburg replicates the elaborate history of its city through a reflective envelope. Protected with passive design and shaped with cultural references, Ahmedabad makes a modest addition to its commercial skyline. While a diamond shines bright in the streets of Mumbai, a vibrant colour palette takes over Cologne's canopies. Break the boundaries between architecture, nature and city with China's human-centric design and explore the endless possibilities of the future of facades.

## Shielding the sun

Zydus Headquarters, Ahmedabad by Morphogenesis



Envisioned as a resilient 21st-century workplace that borrows from Gujarat's vibrant architectural and cultural heritage, the head office of Zydus, located along a busy highway in suburban Ahmedabad sensitively responds to the region's extreme hot-dry climate.

A robust monolith with a peaked profile, the building's fortress-like form references mediaeval-era monuments from the walled city of Ahmedabad: The Bhadra Fort, the Pavagadh Fort, the stepped courts of Adalaj, as well as from the traditional 'Bhunga' architecture of Kutch. The Pavagadh Fort provided key contextual cues for the three rampart-like walls forming the western facade that effectively screens the interiors from the harsh summer sun and provides a thermal buffer against extreme temperatures.

These doubly-curved Corten steel bulwarks (14,200 data points) are articulated in the intricate geometries of Ahmedabad's traditional metal craft of the 'Kansaras', translated parametrically through computational design. The triangular glass tubes embedded within the walls are inspired

The use of passive design and climate-responsive strategies contribute to a significantly reduced Energy Performance Index (EPI) of 56 kWh/sq.m./yr, and the building consumes up to 50% less energy than stipulated by the best Green Building standards.

In addition to functioning as an environmental shield, the building's walls house the entire social incubation space for the two thousand-strong workforce. Circulation areas between the walls that run along the length of the site consist of breakout spaces, alcove seating, bistros, employee engagement zones, visitors' lounges, and booths for brainstorming sessions and informal meetings. This spine connects all the formal work areas in a vertebral configuration. In today's context this zone also doubles up as a social distancing space to spread out the workforce.

The project exemplifies the ideology of equity and transparency in the workplace as an integral part of its architectural vocabulary. Reimagining Gujarat's rich crafts traditions in a contemporary idiom, and through its focus on simple passive design and efficient building principles, the building aspires to be an exemplar of globally and locally relevant commercial architecture.

**Fact file:**

Name of the project: Zydus Headquarters

Location: Ahmedabad, Gujarat

Area: 8,40,000 sq ft

Design firm: Morphogenesis

Design team: Neelu Dhar; John Alok De Cruz; Aakansha Aggarwal; Munazza Akhtar

Façade Consultant: Meinhardt Façade Technology

Year of completion: 2022

Photography: Noughts & Crosses LLP