



Zydus Corporate Park | 2014-2022

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Location: Ahmedabad, India
Architects: Morphogenesis
Lead Architect: Sonali Rastogi
Design Team: Neelu Dhar, John Alok De Cruz, Aakansha Aggarwal, Munazza Akhtar
Client: Zydus Cadila Healthcare Limited
Photographers: Noughts & Crosses LLP



Project Description

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. The building's fortress-like form references medieval-era monuments from the walled city of Ahmedabad such as Forts, the stepped courts of Adalaj, and the traditional 'Bhunga' architecture of Kutch.

The Pavagadh Fort provided key contextual cues for the three rampart-like walls forming the western facade, effectively screening the interiors from the harsh summer sun and providing a thermal buffer against extreme temperatures. These doubly curved steel surfaces (14,200 data points) were inspired by the traditional metal work of the 'Kansaras' (vessel makers) of Gujarat, and their complex geometries were plotted through computational programming. The primary architectural challenge was to marry the age-old knowledge of craftspeople who build by hand, to the precision required in the geometry of the walls. In an amalgamation of technology and tradition, the parabolic bending of these trapezoidal surfaces, in accordance with the digital drawings, was entirely carried out by the workforce on site.

The prismatic glass tubes embedded within the walls are inspired by mirror work on 'Bhungas', vernacular Kutch dwellings venerated for their architectural resilience and ornamentation. Spanning from east to west, the walls shield and create an oasis for the north-south-oriented office towers. The towers shade the stepped courtyards between them, thereby generating a microclimate to encourage outdoor engagement. The column-free work halls are 100% glare-free, 100% day-lit, and blinds-free. The use of passive design and climate-responsive strategies contribute to a significantly reduced EPI of 56 kWh/sq.m./yr, resulting in the building consuming 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 2000-strong workforce. Circulation areas between the walls 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.

