

SOCIETY

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AR. ARUN SHARMA'S ECLECTIC APPROACH

DESIGN FOCUS ON RETAIL SPACES

+ INNOCAD | PINAKIN PATEL ASSOCIATES
HEJC ARCHITECTS COMBINE | RAAJEEV KASAT | KHALID REHMAN
USHA RANGARAJAN | RAMPRASAD AKKISSETTI NAIDU

cohesively DESIGNED

DESIGNED BY PUNE-BASED AR. USHA RANGARAJAN, MAPLE GROUP'S SWANKY CORPORATE OFFICE IN PUNE APTLY REFLECTS THE COMPANY'S VISION AND WORK CULTURE.

What should a new-age corporate office look like? Does it need to have a particular look and feel? Are these the most debatable topics for most professionals? Not necessarily, feels Pune-based Ar. Usha Rangarajan, who has designed the corporate headquarters of Maple Group in Pune.

Spearheaded by Usha and her colleague Savita Shikhare, Navin Agarwal, Director of Maple Group, who is also an interior designer, were passionately involved in the design process.

Her design for the office proves that colour, when used sparingly and strategically, can be quite striking. Explaining the design concept for this office, Usha says, "My approach to office design has always been based after a deep understanding of the client's needs.

The unusual reception desk, textured wall and appropriate lighting lend a bright and vibrant look to the reception area.



ABOVE: Note the synergy of the niches and similar pattern on the ceiling breaking the monotony of the plain surfaces in the MD's cabin.

BELOW: The warm and inviting lounge area.

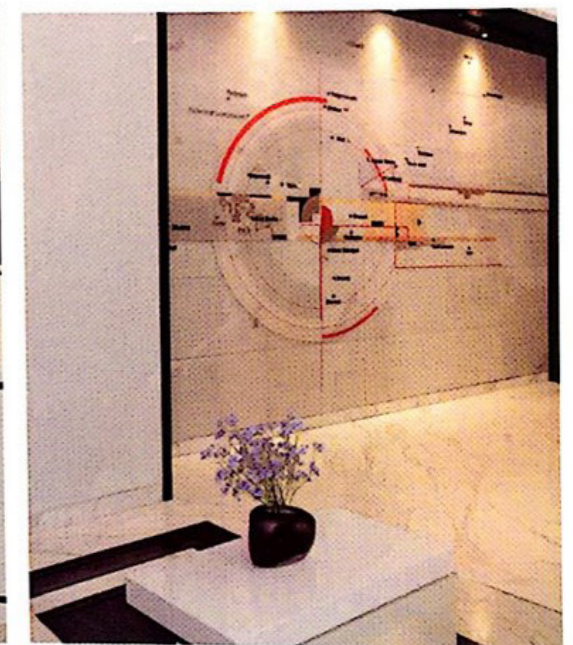
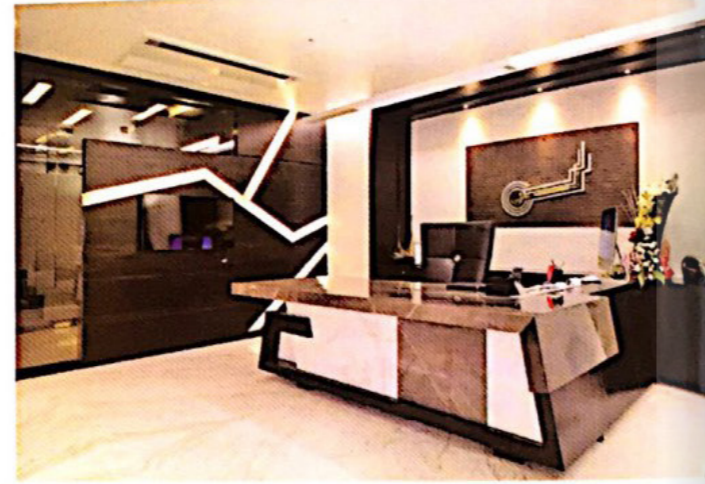


When I started designing this space, I realized the similarity between designing for hospitality projects and a workplace. Both these segments have similar goals; to strongly reflect the brand identity, engage people and build loyalty. We have subtly incorporated all these aspects in our design."

Taking cues from the hospitality industry, the entrance of the office has been designed to create a perceptible 'sense of arrival'. As one steps out of the elevator to enter the well-defined lobby, you can't miss the walls that are entirely clad in basalt stone and the high-gloss steel panels. On the ceiling, spotlights draw one's attention to the company logo and also accentuate the play of textures. Further on, the main reception area is a complete contrast to the lobby. It is a well-lit space with natural light streaming in through the day and in the evening the same space is lit with mood lighting.

ABOVE, LEFT & RIGHT: Lights, materials and graphics lend a personalized look to the director's cabin.

BELOW: The passage leading toward the director's cabin has a plush material palette.



The 7,000 sq. ft. office is spread over one level with the reception area forming the main hub flanked by the Finance and Marketing departments on one side and Construction, Administration departments and Work Zone on the other. A circulation spine runs across the length of the office, the edges of this spine are designed to seamlessly meld with the functional zones. Adjoining the reception area is a visitor's lounge for special guests. There is also an informal meeting space with a curved low-height enclosure accessible from the reception area. The work zone has an open office concept, but is partially segregated by sculptural figurines that add character to the space.

ABOVE: Note the semi-circular discussion room with an unusual ceiling light.

BELOW, LEFT: The passage leading to the general work area.

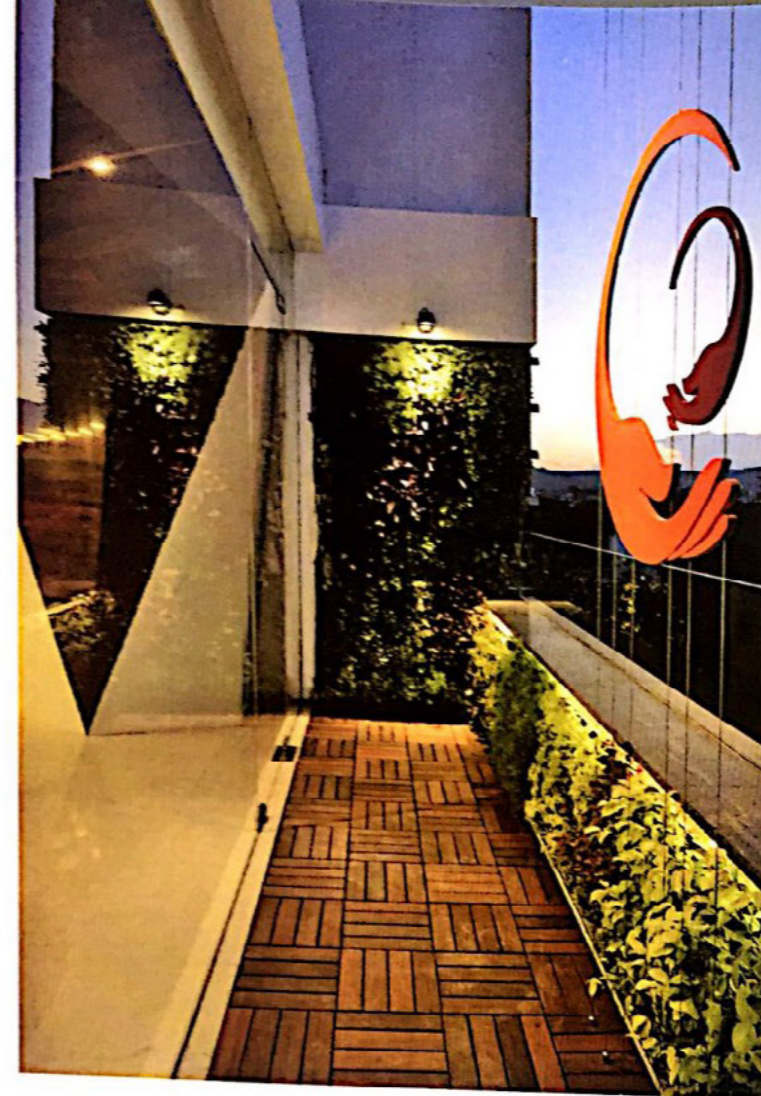
BELOW, RIGHT: Note the detailing on the walls in one of the director's cabin.



ABOVE: An interesting collage of projects designed by the group is displayed on the panels.

CENTER: One of the director's cabin has sleek and streamlined furniture.

BELOW: A view of the general work area.



ABOVE, LEFT: A view of the terrace garden.

ABOVE, RIGHT: Note the use of pebbles lending an unusual touch to this bathroom.

CONTACT DETAILS

ARCHITECT USHA RANGARAJAN

Plot No.:16

Sector No.:24

Pradhikaran

Nigdi

Pune 411044

☎ 020 27653550/5659

✉ landmarkdg@gmail.com

MAPLE GROUP

7th floor

City Square Building

Behind Pride Hotel

Pune 411005

☎ 020 4901111

For the personal cabins, she opted for a thematic approach wherein the spaces are designed as per role and function of the person. The themes in the directors' cabins range from envisioning growth areas in the city, marketing and image-building to the nitty-gritty of construction management and planning. The team has designed individual cabins for the heads of the company by opting for materials based on the theme. For instance, in one cabin they have used a combination of marble and natural wood flooring with veneer and wallpaper cladding on the walls, leather-tiled flooring with wallpaper and marble clad walls in another and textured Kadapa flooring combined with wall finish in the third one.

The work zones for the staff are designed around the theme of instilling pride and ownership in an individual as well as to promote teamwork. Instead of compartmentalizing the spaces for various departments, the design team has provided an open office environment, allowing seamless interaction. The workstations are also not set out at right angles, but a more casual arrangement has been created. A hint of colour is introduced into this space through artworks such as sculptures and graphics, which also reinforce the theme.

Usha's thoughtful design featuring a few elements of the hospitality industry has resulted in an inspiring, creative and efficient workspace.

Text: Swati Balgi Photographs: Anand Diwadkar