

Indian Architect & Builder

Focus : AIRPORTS

Architecture: Nitin Killawala
Shirish Beri

An Eclectic Paradigm

Mumbai-based architect Nitin Killawala designs an R&D Centre in Mape, Navi Mumbai and in the process creates more than just another work place.

Text: Savitha Hira

Photographs: © Dinesh Mehta and BS Kumar



The impact of design on a space is the potency with which the blank space visually communicates with its users. This is a maxim well exemplified in the new Research & Development Centre for Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Pvt Ltd, which began operations a few months ago. Yet again, the structure bears testimony to architect Nitin Killawala's seasoned skills in space planning. Set on a rectangular plot of approximately four acres, the building, situated close to the Millennium Park in Mape, is structured in a triangular shape with a central courtyard and a trapezoidal entrance lobby. Accessed through a beautifully landscaped driveway, the entrance has light seeping through the pergolas presenting an inviting facade. The expansive entrance is guarded by an equally large gate that remains open throughout the day. International norms are strictly adhered to and the built-up area of 75,000sq ft is chiselled with the architect's distinct treatment of double-height ceilings, varying floor levels, staircases and the flow of space across contours and straight lines, geometric forms and expanses, thus creating personalised areas. Conceptualising and planning revolves around two primary demarcations - laboratory and non-laboratory areas. The lab area is divided into the chemical, biological and analytical labs and is highly controlled in terms of movement, security and utility. It is strategically located in the centre as a focal point for easy access. The front office, library, cafeteria, administration, boardroom and scientists' offices constitute the non-lab areas.



The entire building houses three levels - the ground, first and the basement. The non-lab areas and a few labs occupy the ground floor, while there are others located on the first floor level aggregating to 14 labs, with an area earmarked for expansion. The basement houses the animal room with its highly sterile conditions and the essential



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services. NMR or nuclear medicine labs and an auditorium are on the agenda for a future expansion. Blending functionality and aesthetics with simplicity and aplomb is a longitudinal walkway along the length of the central axis, connecting one vertex of the triangular courtyard with the scientists' cabin at the entrance. This directs one's sense of access through the structure. Large labs flank the sides of the atrium with point-to-point visibility and easy access as the primary keys to their design in order to facilitate immediate action in case of an emergency. While the categorisation of the labs is based on research mandates, the biological labs have been distinctly located to one side with the animal house below and a separate elevator and preparation facilities to ensure the requisite high standards of sterility.

The sanctity of the labs is strictly maintained through restricted entry. The areas for scientists and technicians are demarcated from the areas of general access. This not only optimises attentiveness but also conserves air-conditioning costs. Lighting is generally task lighting while waste disposal has been conveniently directed with the due precaution undertaken of first passing it through an incinerator. Signage forms another important element of the interiors.

Landscaping has been treated as an important factor for creating a pleasant working atmosphere. The exterior wall has been chiselled to form distinct niches that create an identity. Red is used as part of the colour scheme on the exterior, generating an element of interest. Similarly, a distinct identity is enthused with two distinct diagonal walls -



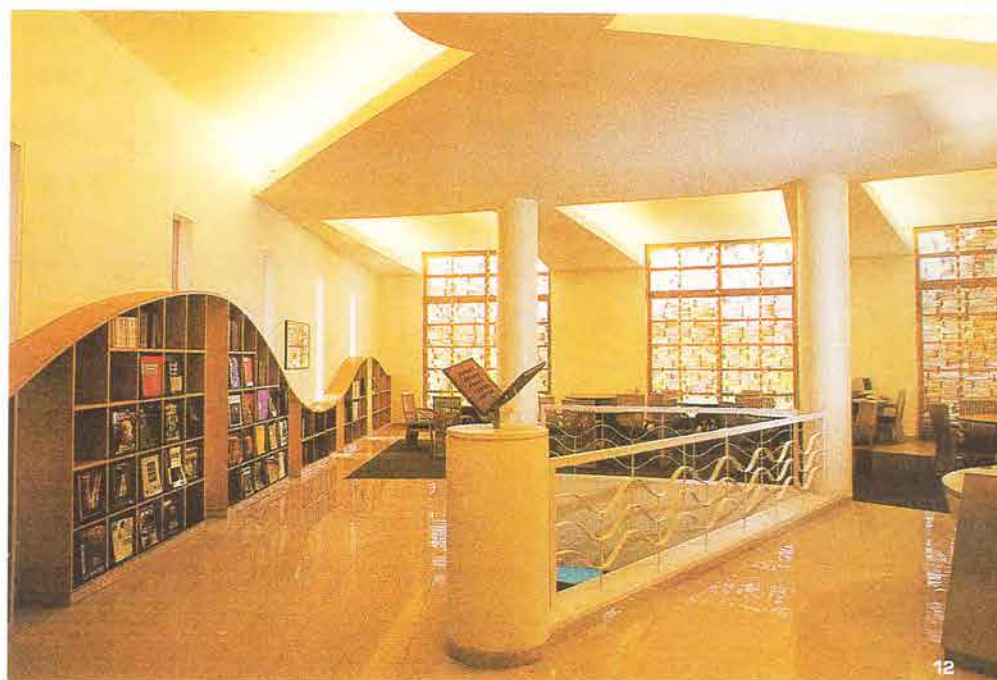
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FACT FILE:

Project	: Glenmark Research Centre
Architects	: Group Seven Architects and Planners Pvt Ltd
Design Team	: Nitin Killawala, Sanjeev Doshi, Shailesh Panchal
Structural Consultants	: Pravin Gala Consulting Engineers
Utilities Consultants	: Design Bureau Consultants Pvt Ltd
Landscape Design	: Vikas Bhosekar
Graphic Design	: A & A Design
Civil and Sanitation	: Sharad Construction
Electrical	: Gabriel Electrical Works
A/C	: Suvidha Engineers (I) Ltd
Utilities	: Mark Engineers
Painting	: A P Decors
Interiors	: Shiv Interiors
Fabrication	: Vishakha Enterprises
Landscape	: Shailesh Kapadia
Area of Plot	: 4 acres
Built-up Area	: 75000sq ft
Period of Completion	: 18 months
Cost of Project	: 15 crores



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yellow and blue, which define the library and the cafeteria along with their respective courts. Unlike routine institutional canteen facilities, the cafeteria here has been designed on the principles of a trendy café where the technicians and scientists can take a break from their heavy workload. Similarly, undulating forms characterise the ambience of the heavily stocked library demarcating the ground and first floor levels into stacking, reading and circulation areas. A triangular vault synthesises the space and optimises visual communication.

Aesthetics have been catered to through numerous little details like skylights, eye-level openings and works of art that provide the much-needed respite from an otherwise demanding academic atmosphere. Emergency exits and highly specialised safety measures further endorse compliance with international standards. Apart from the administrative offices, the rooms that have been carefully thought out are the scientists' offices. Care has been taken to provide each of these rooms with a wholesome view of the landscaped exteriors. The entire project is need-based and distinct in its approach, the highlight being a lively use of colour that imbues a human touch to a clinical set-up.

9. Double-height spaces marked with skylights and a hierarchy of openings form the integral part of the design vocabulary.

10. The cabins for the labs-in-charge formulate the main circulation space complemented by reflective terracotta tile flooring.

11. The cafeteria-cum-coffee shop, complete with high ceiling and exposed AC ducts, opens out to the cafe-court when there are large gatherings.

12. Free-flowing forms in the library or the Information Resource Centre become the racks for the magazines, while the reference section along the north opens out to the library court.

