

INSIDE OUTSIDE

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A SUPERB STRUCTURE

BAYER HOUSE, DESIGNED BY HAFEEZ CONTRACTOR, IS AN ENERGY-EFFICIENT BUILDING, EQUIPPED WITH STATE-OF-THE-ART OFFICE COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS AND AN AMBIENCE WHICH IS CONDUCIVE TO WORKING EFFICIENTLY.

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Situated on a triangular site in Hiranandani Gardens, Powai, a suburb of North Bombay, the building looms upwards, majestic and stately in off-white. Built in the classical style Bayer House stands out when viewed from any angle. The site opposite the picturesque Powai lake, with its lush green foliage, and against the backdrop of hills, is magnificent.

The Bayer House project required architect, Hafeez Contractor, to visit officials at the Bayer headquarters in Germany for a final approval of the design. 'But,' says Contractor, 'Bayer House India has absolutely no resemblance to the headquarters at Germany. This building is done in

the classical style in keeping with the surrounding site. It has an extremely strategic location, and the two shopping centres nearby will complement the whole area.'

Once inside, the colour white is predominant. The triangular-shaped interior has an atrium which provides natural light to the entire work area. On looking down from the upper floors, one sees a huge lion mosaic, the former symbol of Bayer, made with coloured tiles in blue, peach and brown shades, imported from Germany.

Talking about the interior, Contractor explains, 'The ambience does not segregate one floor from the other. The interior concept is such that everyone intermingles here, yet at the same time the

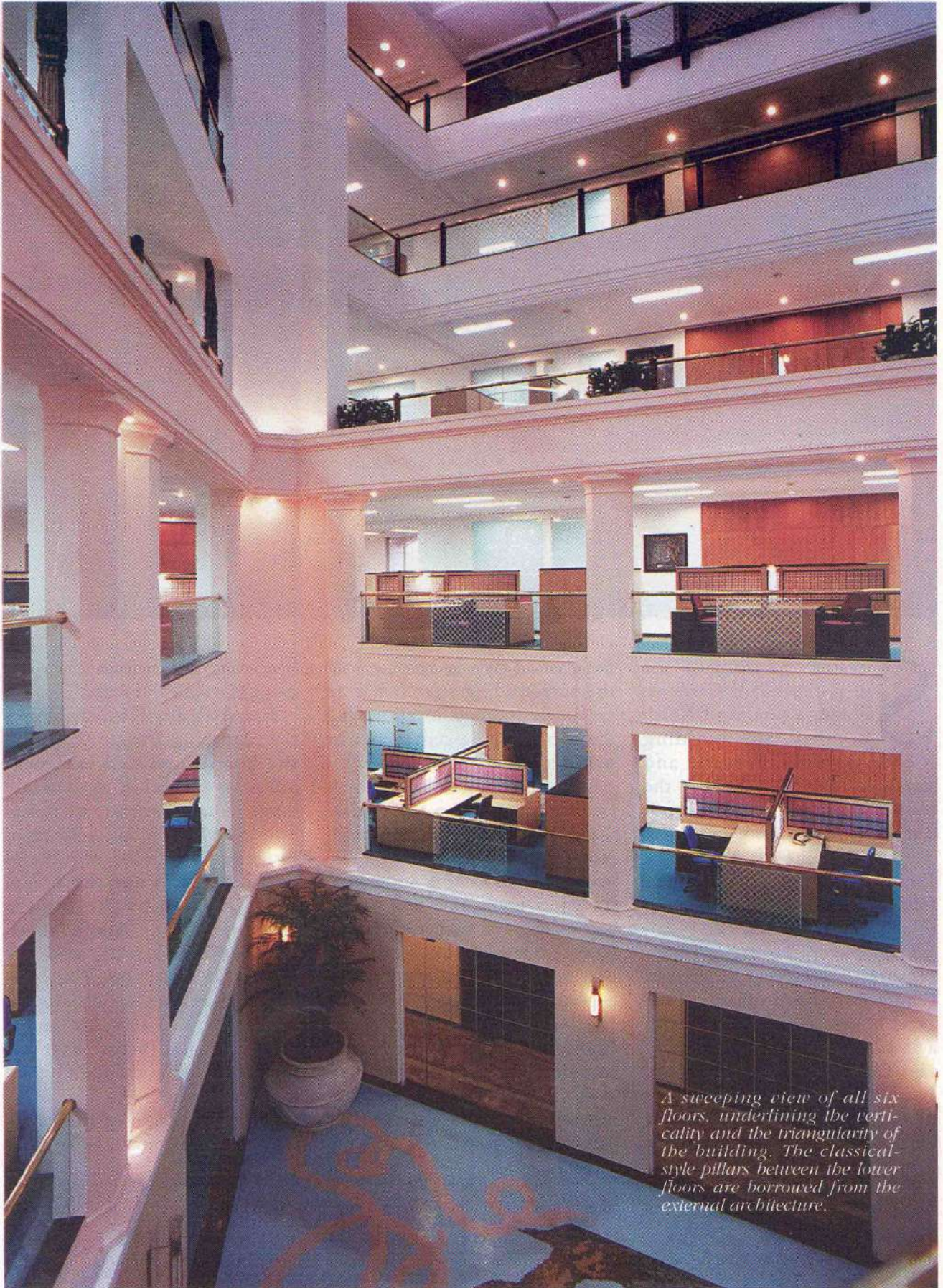
hierarchy is maintained by the usage of colour and decor.'

The sixth floor which houses the Managing Director's offices, the boardroom and executive offices, is a blend of modern and international features, and Indian ethnic styles. 'Being a German firm the furniture is of international standards and the Indian touch is given by the antique columns from Ahmedabad, Tanjore miniatures, and art objects like metal pots. This combination exudes a rich atmosphere but we haven't spent much. It's just that we have put the right thing in the right place,' says Contractor.

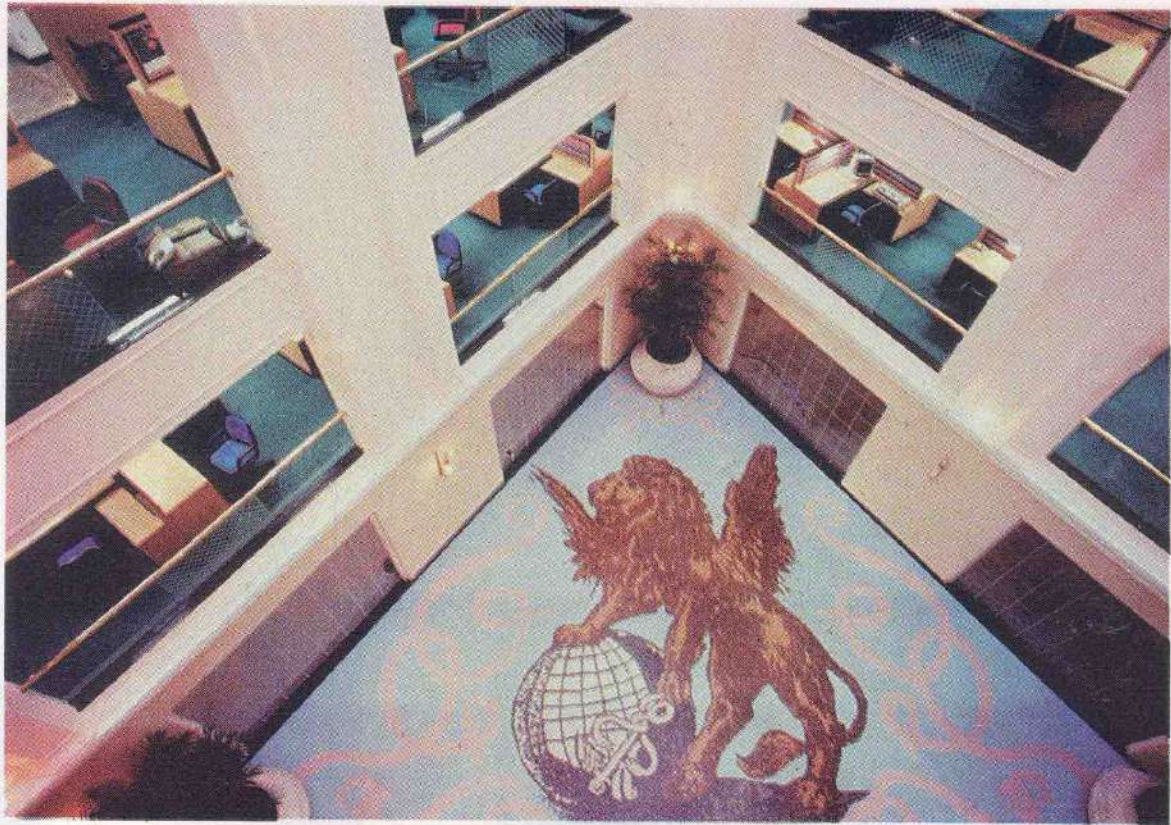
The construction of the building began in February 1994. The

OPPOSITE: The imposing structure of Bayer House. A triangular building, designed in the classic style, it has a dome over the front portion.

ABOVE: The lift lobby and reception, found on every floor, is clad in Nepali marble and has huge containers of greenery to break the biscuit and white scheme.



A sweeping view of all six floors, underlining the verticality and the triangularity of the building. The classical-style pillars between the lower floors are borrowed from the external architecture.



ABOVE: The old symbol of the company, a winged lion holding the world, is created on the ground floor with mosaic tiles, and can be seen from every floor.

BELOW: Behind the chamfered corner of the triangle. The wall portion hides all the service ducts.

On the topmost floor, where there are only the MD's offices, boardroom and other executive suites, the reception area is larger, more lush and the elements are more decorative.









'As an architect, I would rate this building as one of my best. And since I am in the profession of creating, I am not restricted in my likes and dislikes,' concludes Hafeez.

most important criterion, was that the new office should have a good working ambience and better staff amenities.

Open-style workstations, shining brass railings, etched glass, balcony walls, antique wood carvings from Gujarat, an idol of Lord Ganesha and metal screens are some of the striking features of the decor. Each floor has a differently designed reception area. The dominating colours of the interiors are white, cream, and blue. No walls are used to segregate workstations, thus giving the feeling of openness making the entire building seem like one unified space. No staircases are visible from any point; and doors in brown discreetly shut them out of sight.

The structure constructed on a triangular base, has an imposing dome. The dome is covered with Shaun tile mosaic, and houses the lift machinery and water storage tanks. The atrium has a polycarbonate double sheeting roof.

The building's pleasant ambience and natural lighting is conducive to better productivity. 'I think this is a most energy-efficient building. Because of the central atrium during daytime you require less light than other

Colour has been used in a very subdued fashion in the interiors of Bayer India.

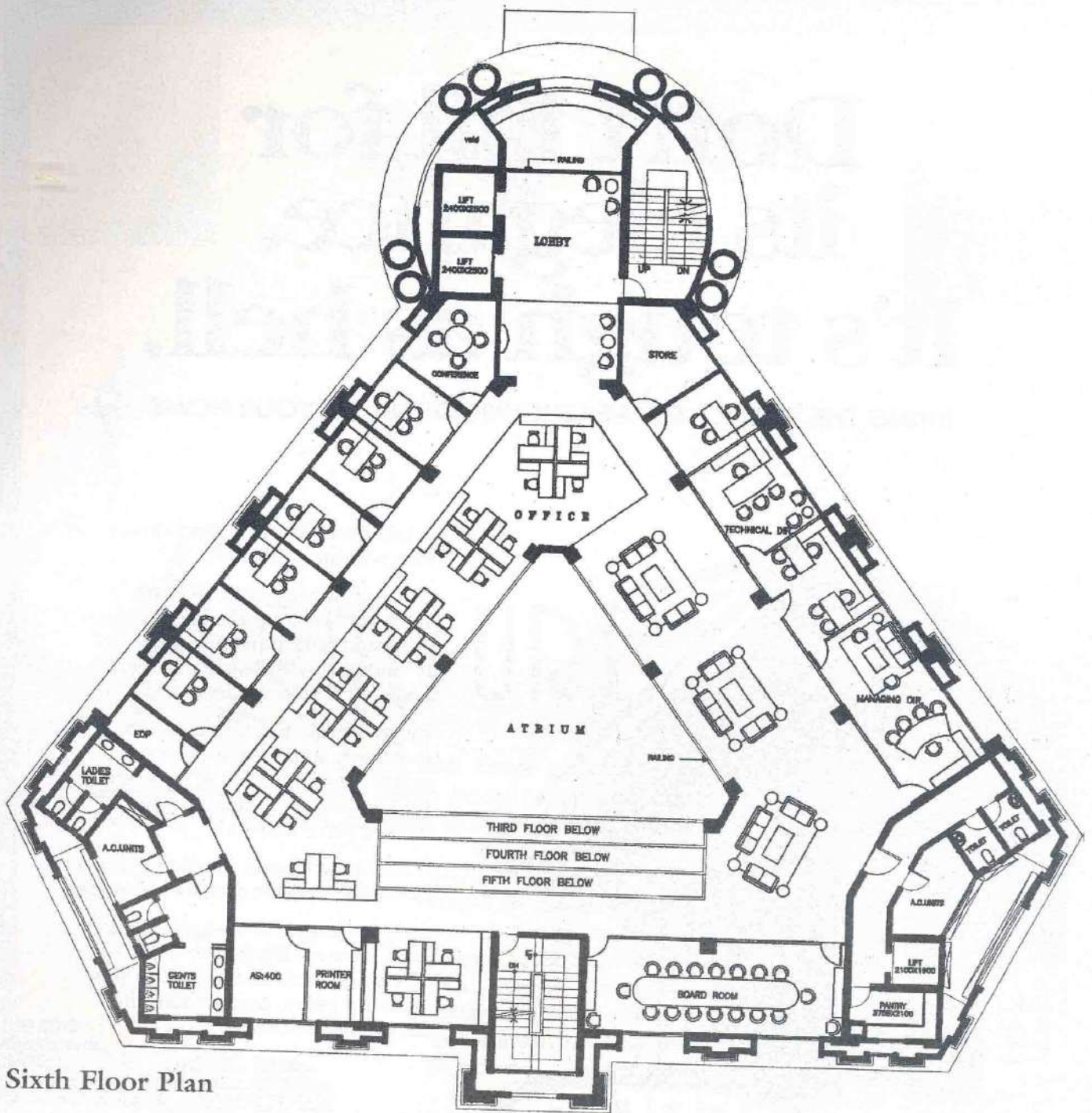




OPPOSITE ABOVE: A closer look at the workstations along one side of the inside of the triangular building.

OPPOSITE BELOW: A typical storage wall which forms a corridor between the open central area overlooking the atrium well on one side and the outer areas of the building.

THIS PAGE: A dramatic view of the elegantly angular interior wall of the building with the horizontal slashes of the brass railings adding their own gleam.



Sixth Floor Plan

conventional buildings, thus conserving electricity,' says Hafeez Contractor.

Commenting on the 'five-star' ambience, Contractor says, 'This kind of ambience is a necessity. With globalisation, we have to be at par with international standards. What is a necessity abroad is a luxury here.'

In spite of the 'tight' spaces, the impression one gets is that of an extremely spacious interior.

Explains Contractor, 'The usage of glass is a necessity for tight spaces. It is a good material to work with and has many advantages like transparency. The central atrium too makes the spaces appear large. The total area of the building is 60,000 sq ft and with around 274 people, after taking off certain areas, it leaves very little space per person.'

Contractor believes that the triangular office plan is nothing

unique. 'Every junction has a triangular building, for instance the buildings at Dhobi Talao and Kalbadevi. You only need a person to identify that trend and take it to the right place. As an architect, I would rate this building as one of my best. And since I am in the profession of creating, I am not restricted in my likes and dislikes,' concludes Hafeez. **O**