

# ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN

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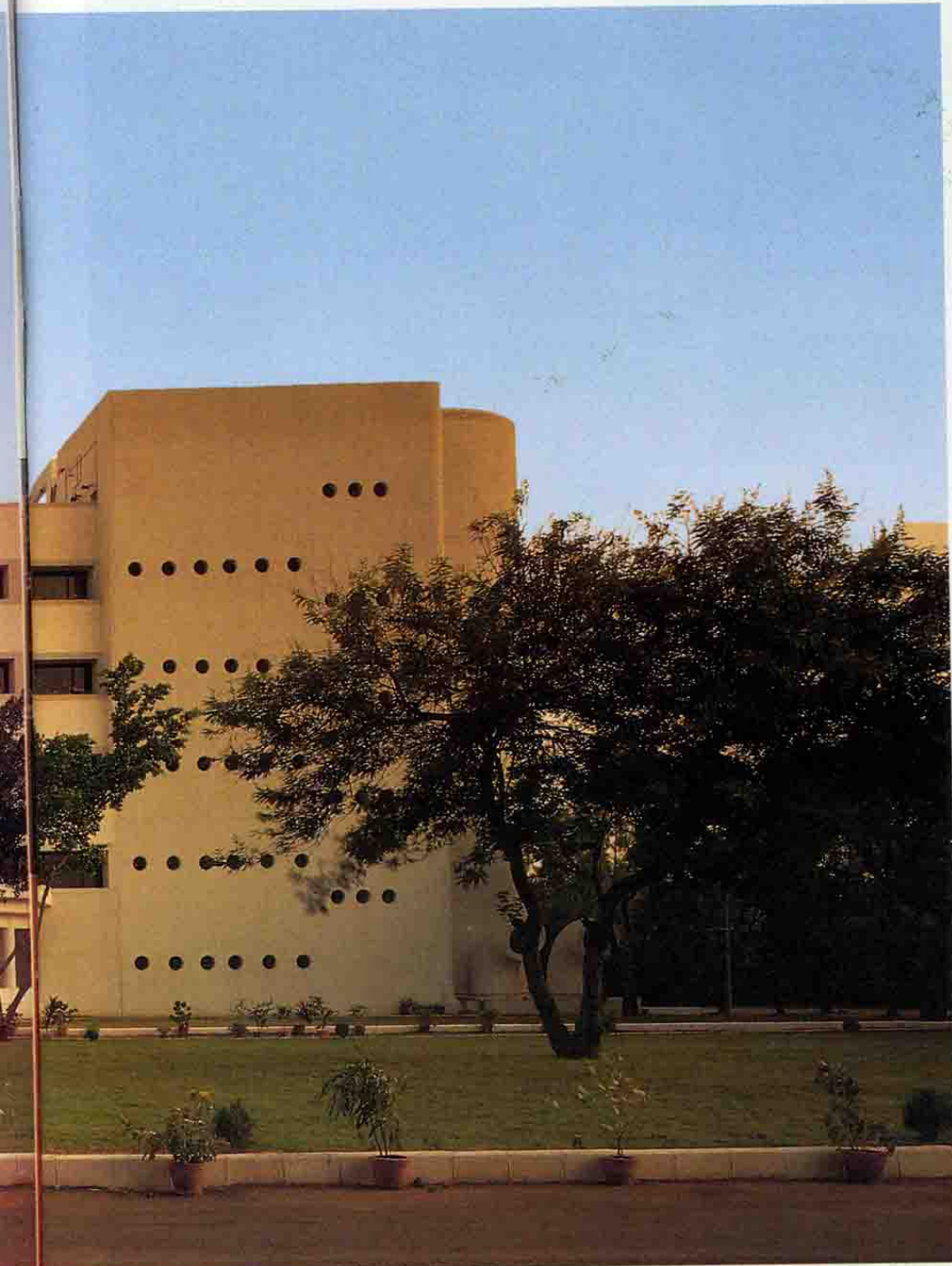
**THE OFFICE BUILDING**

# Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited Bombay

Architect **Hafeez Contractor**



The BPCL extension. Part of the old building can be seen on the left.



The brief for the design of the south wing of the BPCL administration building was very simple: the new wing should incorporate the elevational features of the existing north and east wings and provide additional office space of about 6,505.6 sq m. The amenities were to be located on the ground floor, general offices on the first, second and third floors, and the senior management staff on the fourth.

The formidable entrance lobby with its atrium was conceived as an element to interrelate the existing and the new wings in keeping with the solid stature of the Corporation. A sloping wall in concrete makes up the entrance wall and front facade, and the conical vault puncturing this forms the entrance to the atrium. Thus, this space is central to the whole complex. The deliberate absence of windows opening to the exterior has resulted in diffused natural lighting by means of the pyramidal skylight. All other lighting is artificial.

The circulation pattern necessitated locating the elevators within the atrium. The single elevator point also offered better economy of service. The entire rear wall is spanned by a waterfall, creating a stimulating and actively visual circulation space connecting all levels of the new extension with each other and also as the point of interrelation between the old and the new. The emphasis here is on arches and semi-circular ornate arrangements.

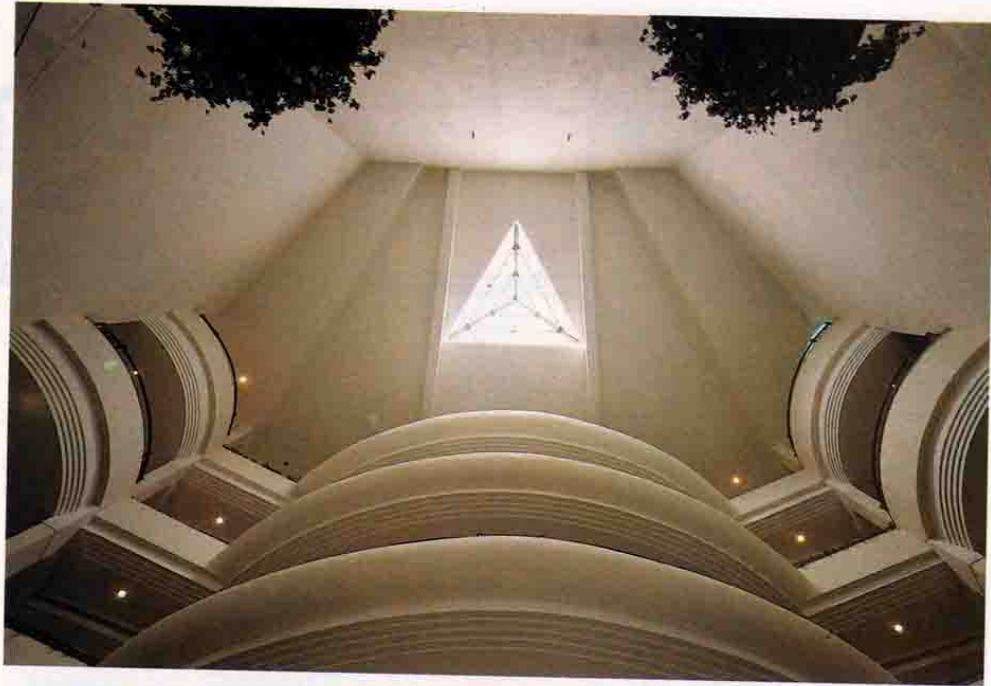
Beyond the atrium are the staff and executive dining halls and kitchen. The kitchen, being centrally located, has artificial ventilation and lighting. Fresh air is circulated through the ducting with the help of large fans. A suction process from hoods and a chimney at the terrace level constitutes the exhaust system.

Being a progressive organization, BPCL did not object to the dramatic change in office planning to that of an open one. Today, the stress is on straight clean lines and simplicity. Cabins are for very senior executives only. The fourth floor houses the Director, Chairman and the General Managers.

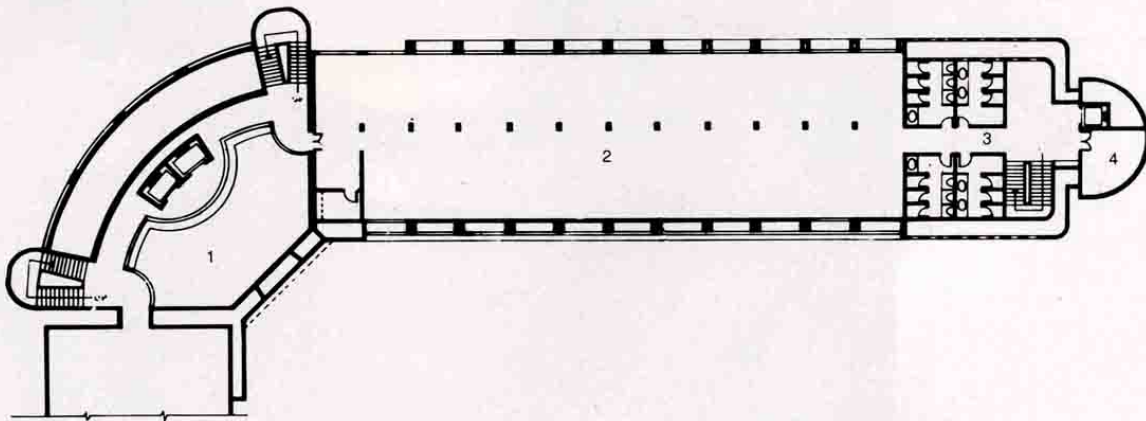
Photographs by Noshir Gobhai



*The skylight, the only source of natural light to the atrium which is a visual link between all floors.*

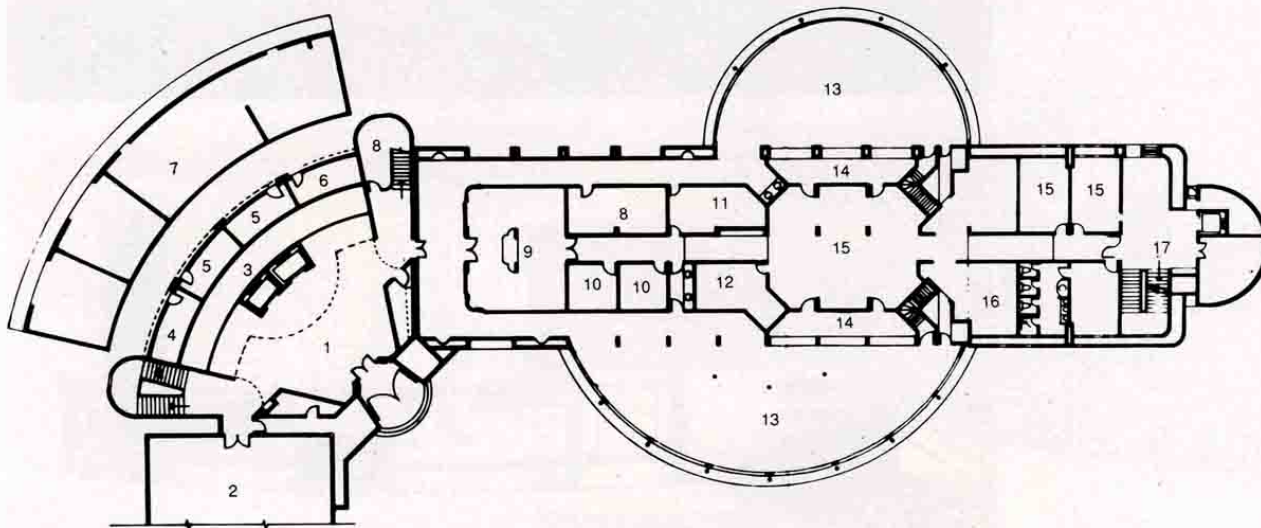


*Facing page* Linking the old and new building are the sweeping curves of circulation areas in the atrium.



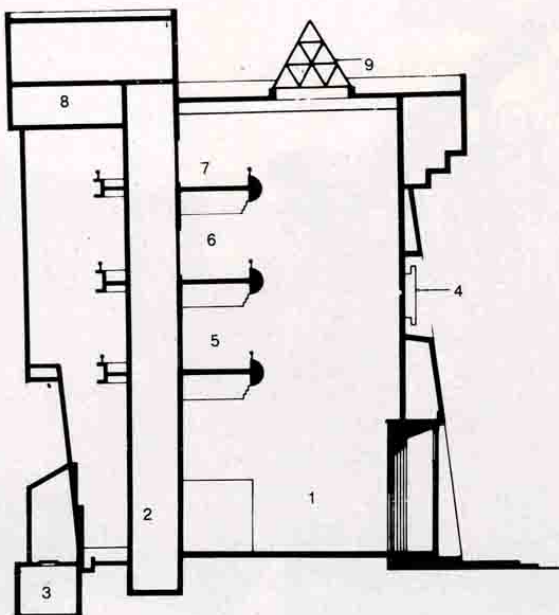
- 1 ATRIUM
- 2 OFFICE
- 3 TOILET
- 4 AHU

TYPICAL FLOOR



- 1 ATRIUM
- 2 EXISTING BUILDING
- 3 WATER TROUGH
- 4 PUMP ROOM
- 5 STORE
- 6 PANEL ROOM
- 7 ELECTRIC SUB-STATION
- 8 AHU
- 9 EXECUTIVE DINING
- 10 PANTRY
- 11 OFFICE
- 12 BAKERY
- 13 DINING
- 14 SERVICE
- 15 KITCHEN
- 16 WASH
- 17 SERVICE ENTRY

GROUND FLOOR



- 1 ATRIUM
- 2 LIFT SHAFT
- 3 SUCTION TANK FOR WATERFALL
- 4 LOGO
- 5 SECOND FLOOR
- 6 THIRD FLOOR
- 7 FOURTH FLOOR
- 8 OVERHEAD TANK FOR WATERFALL
- 9 SKYLIGHT

SECTION

*The fourth floor corridor*



*Efficient space planning marks the general office areas.*







Detail of reception area on the fourth floor.

*A fine attention to detail marks the blend of modern and traditional elements used. Seen here is the entrance to the executive dining room.*

**Client** Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd, Refinery Division

**Design team** Hafeez Contractor, Rachana Amin, Sanjay Puri

**Consultants** Sterling Engineering Consultancy Services Pvt, Dimension Consultants (structural), KS Shroff (electrical)

**Contractors** BJ Mistry Pvt Ltd (civil), Pioneer Electrical (electrical), Voltas Ltd (air-conditioning)

**Built-up area** 6505.6 sq m

**Cost** Rs 5,86,00,000

**Date of completion** August 1991

## AN OPEN PLAN FOR OFFICE PRODUCTIVITY

Internationally, a revolutionary new concept — the Open Plan Office System — has changed the face of business premises.

Now brought to India by Godrej, the Open Plan Office System is completely different from the conventional office layouts we find in our country. In fact, it is more than just a layout. It is a complete space management system.

Offices with old layouts, often referred to as 'Bull Pen' offices are a legacy of the British. In such an office, the boss or 'bull' sits in a cabin while the rest of the staff sits in the 'pen' or an open area.

These offices afford little or no privacy to employees. People moving around become a source of constant disturbance. So is the noise generated by typewriters or people talking to one another. Naturally, one is not to expect a high level of efficiency from these offices.



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On the other hand, the Open Plan Office System is scientifically designed to offer solutions to all these obvious problems and many other not so obvious ones as well.

The Open Plan Office System is a configuration that allows for efficient workflow and effective space utilization.

The Godrej Open Plan Office System consists of uniform partitions, compact workstations and storage units.

Shoulder high partitions divide the entire floor area into several comfortable workstations. Once a person is seated, these partitions automatically form a visual barrier, providing the employee with the necessary privacy. The panels are also designed to be sound absorbing and therefore make each workstation a lot quieter.

Each workstation is provided with a worksurface. Unlike a bulky table, this surface is directly attached to the panels and





is free standing — without legs — to optimize space usage.

Each workstation is also provided with storage units. These provide adequate space for storage of essential papers and material within easy reach of the employee.

The complete workstation is designed to give maximum convenience enabling the employee to sit and work undisturbed.

Although the panels provide privacy they do not mean isolation. Being only upto shoulder height, interaction is easily possible. One only has to stand up and the entire office is visible from one end to another. This convenient height also allows for supervision throughout, without obviously intruding on the employee's privacy.

The entire configuration for the Open Plan Office System is scientifically planned to make the best use of all available space. Departments with interrelated work functions are placed adjacent to one another. This reduces the overall traffic within the office.

Common services such as photocopying, typing, etc., are placed at utility centres that are ideally located to provide convenient access to everybody. These areas with higher noise

levels are 'screened' from other work areas to minimize disturbance.

Even cables for power, communication or networking are provided with a separate three tier channel at the bottom of the partitions. Separate channels for fitting electrical plugs and sockets are provided below each worksurface.

Partitions for the Open Plan Office System are available in elegant Grey and Ivory shades. Godrej also provides colours in lamination and fabric, as per requirement.

The Open Plan Office System is an accepted method of efficient space management and a definite way to improve productivity.

Godrej also has an in-house architectural cell. Qualified architects from the cell pool their skills and use state-of-the-art Computer Aided Design systems to make custom made floor plans for clients.

They have successfully installed the Open Plan Office system in prestigious organizations like TATA INFOSYS LTD. GIC, ABB, AFS, CAPART, SIEMENS, BATLIBOI, IMTMA, CII among others.