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ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN

GAUDI BY NATURE

INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

INDIAN ARCHITECT: BOHEMIAN BRAHMIN ?



Experimenting with Space

Vidyalankar Institute of Technology, Mumbai

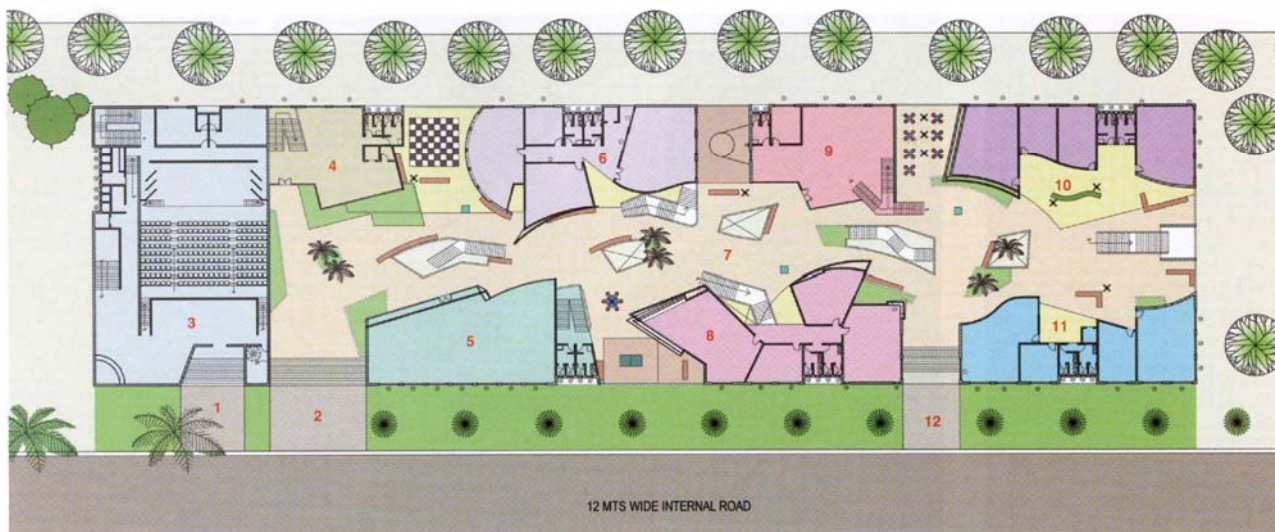
Architects: Planet 3 Studios Architecture Pvt Ltd, Mumbai



The site offered an opportunity to energise an urban area that had long been unappealing. It demanded a transformative vision of invigorating its decrepit urban presence. The site also provided a rich industrial metaphor capable of being mined for its valuables and being refreshed with new design thinking. Vidyalkar as an institution had the vision to look beyond default modernist box architecture. The proposed college building had to express the will of the institution to encourage growth in a progressive environment; to build a campus that best embodied its cherished values. It was

agreed on preeminence of architecture as one of the most important aspects of campus life not to be sacrificed to short-term economies.

This project needed ability to engage a complex design program. The challenge was in articulating the requirements of four distinct faculties within the same building and establishing network accesses to shared amenities. The idea was to have an educational village built within an industrial container. This literal minded 'village' would have various groupings of similar requirements in clearly definable structures with a main street as the central organising device as well as hospitable



SITE PLAN 

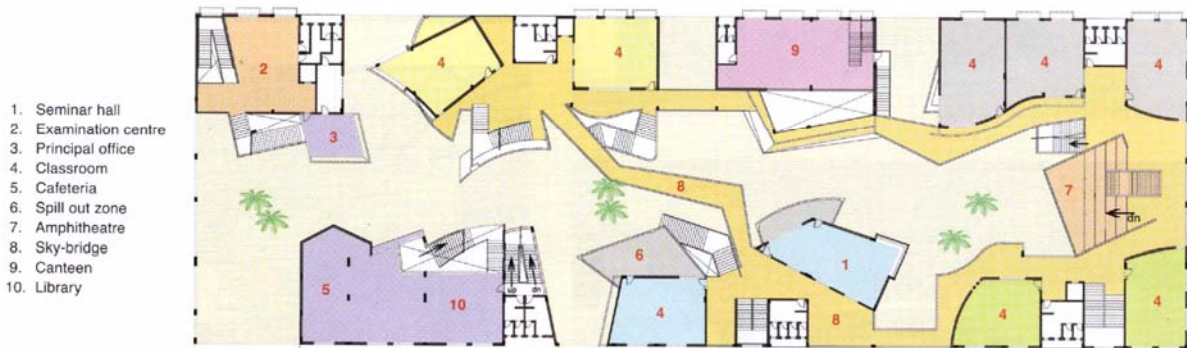
- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Entrance 1 | 7. Plaza street |
| 2. Entrance 2 | 8. Department 2 |
| 3. Auditorium | 9. Canteen |
| 4. Administration area | 10. Department 3 |
| 5. Computer centre | 11. Department 4 |
| 6. Department 1 | 12. Entrance 3 |





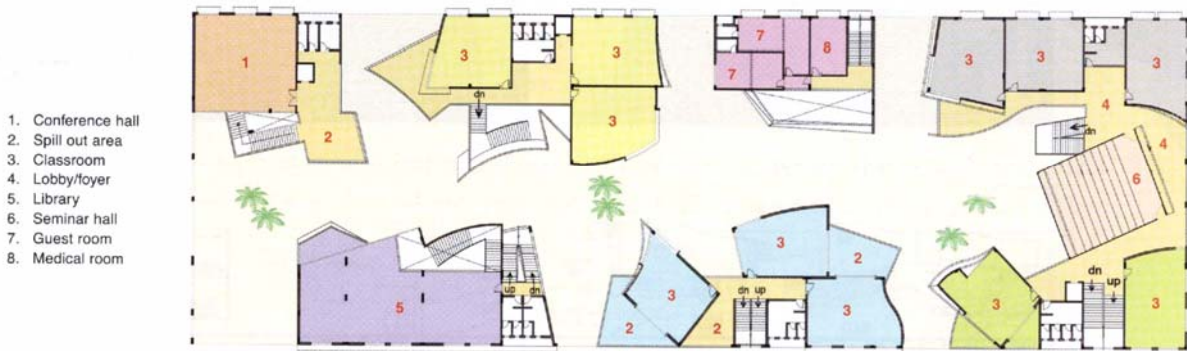
PLAZA LEVEL

- | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Auditorium | 6. Computer lab | 11. Lunch room |
| 2. Entrance 1 | 7. Staff room | 12. Wi-fi zone |
| 3. Entrance 2 | 8. HOD cabin | 13. Classroom |
| 4. Learning street | 9. Seminar hall | 14. Kitchen |
| 5. Administration area | 10. Canteen | 15. Toilet |



FIRST FLOOR LEVEL

1. Seminar hall
2. Examination centre
3. Principal office
4. Classroom
5. Cafeteria
6. Spill out zone
7. Amphitheatre
8. Sky-bridge
9. Canteen
10. Library



SECOND FLOOR LEVEL

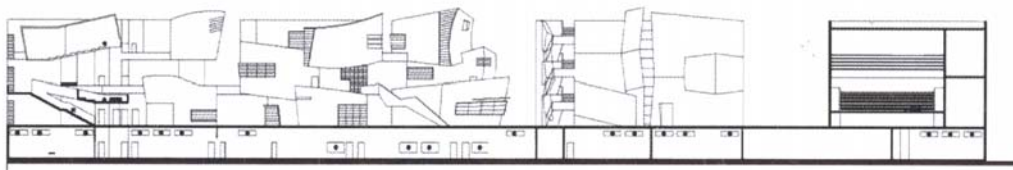
1. Conference hall
2. Spill out area
3. Classroom
4. Lobby/foyer
5. Library
6. Seminar hall
7. Guest room
8. Medical room

site for spontaneous student interactions. The complex of open public spaces, enclosed semi public spaces and private areas would have the spatial connectivity of open plan interiors encouraging egalitarian, communal learning experience. The act of appropriation of the public spaces by the students could become a source of cultural energy.

The architects designed a visually kinesthetic experience of walking through asymmetric spaces, an escape from orthogonal rigidity, polymorphically exciting rather platonically correct. Unleashed intuitive energies crafted expressionistic neo-baroque forms, voluptuous curves

and a continuum of mutating spaces, a self-guiding promenade. Spatial manoeuvring of sculpturally insistent forms, juxtaposing familiar with the unfamiliar were tools for a provocative and dynamic result. Yet, the intimacy of human scale is not compromised at the inner street.

The use of materials in raw form intensify the sense of space. A rich palate of materials, colours and textures engage and excite, and spark the senses. The building's public face is a deceptively quiet, porous polycarbonate skin evoking the metaphor of its industrial neighbourhood. This understated gift-wrapping subtly conceals the



INTERNAL ELEVATION

avant garde, playful forms inside. The skin is engineered to ease glare and yet allow the building to be naturally aerated. An oversized sunroof brings in the sky and shields the inside from inclement weather. Thermal reduction coating on multi-wall polycarbonate panels ensures abundant natural light minus the corresponding heat load. ☒

This project was submitted for the 'Institutional Architecture Awards' category for the sixth cycle of the 'a+d & Spectrum Foundation Architecture Awards 2006'.

Client *Vidyalankar Danyapeeth Trust*
Design team *Kalhan Mattoo, Santha Gour Mattoo, Jainish Jani, Sawant Kaul, Jyoti Gujran*
Consultants *S N Bhoje and Associates (Structural & PMC Consultants), Synergy (Electrical), Sunil Services (Services)*
Contractors *NCC (Civil)*
Built-up area *1,65,000sq ft*
Cost of project *Rs 12 crore*
Year of completion *2006*

Photographs courtesy: Mrigang Sharma