

Rajaswa Bhawan - National Tax Headquarters



CSA Partners Ltd.
Architects & Urban Designers



Top: Exterior View from SE

Context: The Lutyen's Bungalow Zone is considered a heritage precinct. The site for Rajaswa Bhawan is within the central hexagon, on an axis (called Kasturba Gandhi Marg) connecting India Gate with Connaught Place. This area was originally envisaged as a development for less important princely states in the pre-independent era of British rule in India, but apart from a few notable exceptions, none of the princely palaces were built. The existing site has numerous two-storey bar-rack-like masonry buildings in the process of being demolished, interspersed within a context of old growth trees far predating the surrounding structures. By default, the low-rise structures were built in deference to the trees, creating a compelling context and establishing a design precedent for new architects working in this region of the city to follow. Following the rise of the British, the architecture of Delhi evolved into a new style characterized by the fusion of Eastern and Western influences: an Indo-Saracenic architecture that historically relied on stone as its primary building material. Subsequent post-independence designs for new architecture have drawn heavily from this style in an attempt to complement the existing fabric. Consequently, the immovability and opacity of the Government apparatus has been metaphorically ingrained into the stone façades of nearly all civic architecture erected post-independence.

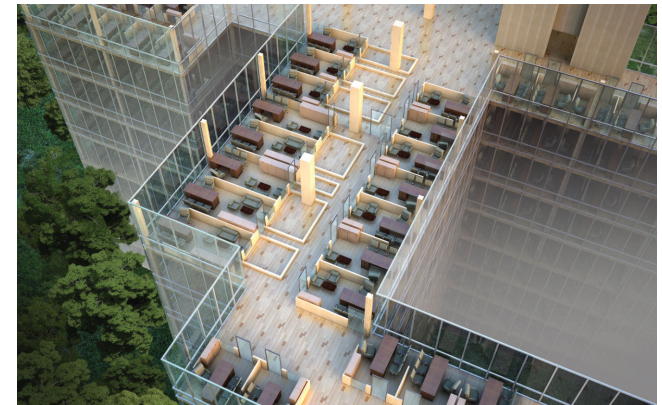
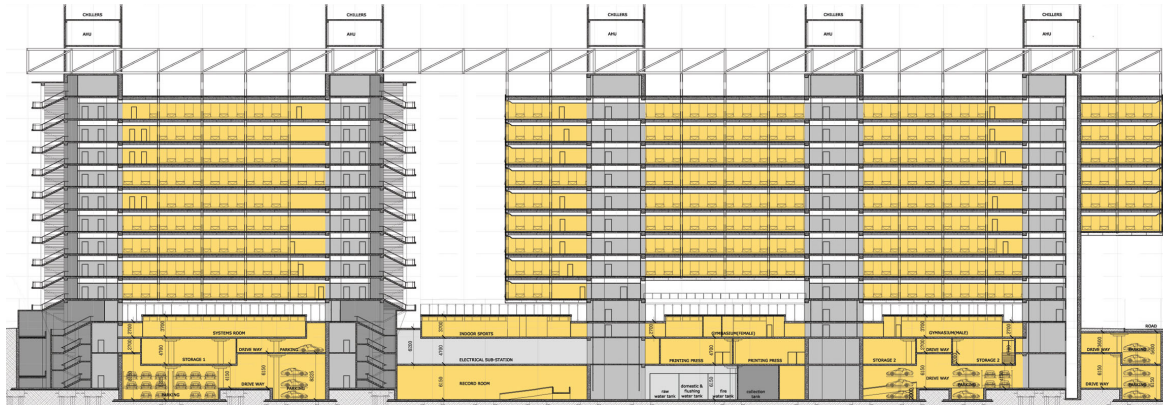
Media Link:

<https://www.csa-partners.com/publications/RBcombine.pdf>

Project Data:

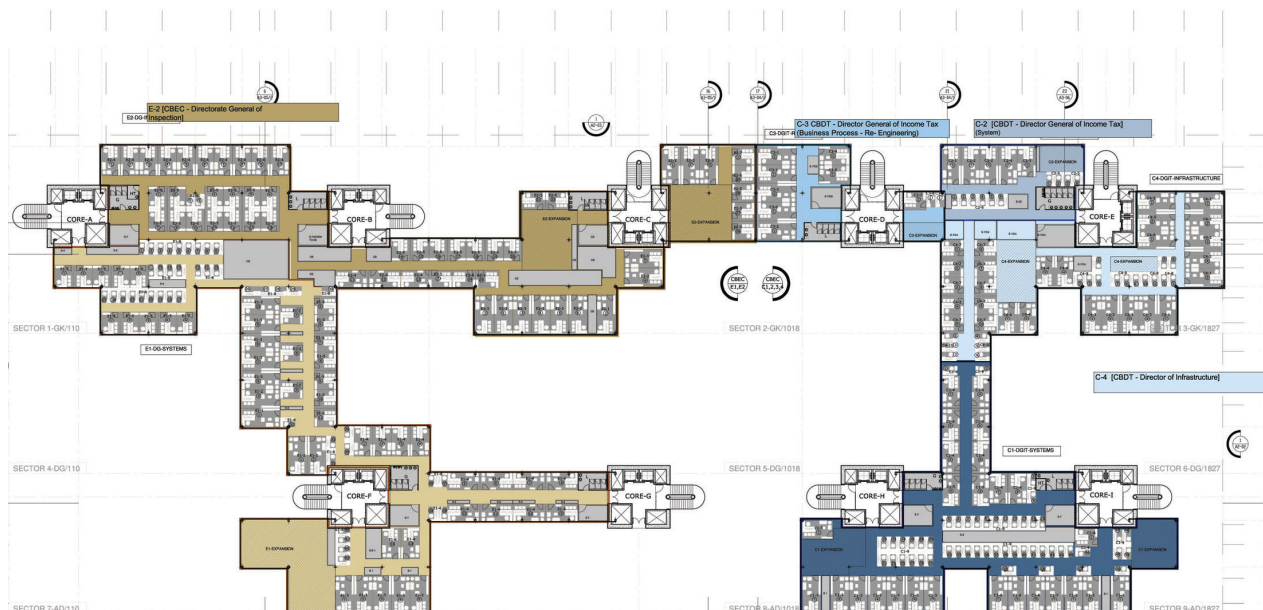
Building type
Government- National Tax Headquarters
Sustainability/LEED
GRIHA Gold Design (Indian Std. for LEED)
Location
New Delhi, India
Site Area
22,871 m²
Project Area
45742m² super-structure
22871m² sub-structure
Client
Ministry of Finance, Government of India
Completion Year
2019- Scheduled , Bid Negotiations
March 2015
Construction Cost
\$ 89.17 Million in April 2019

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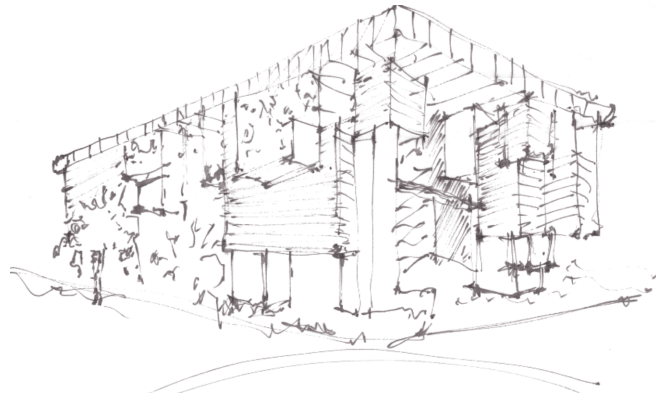


Client Brief : The building complex will house various offices for the Finance Minister, Minister of State and Department of Revenue. In addition to these offices, the Chairpersons, Directorates, Members, Staff and offices of CBDT and CBEC, along with support facilities and the G.A.R Section, are to be housed in the same complex. The programmatic requirements dictate a provision for future expansion and flexibility in space planning. Five distinguished architects and four representatives of the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance comprised the jury. The jury's expectation was for a building designed with an understanding of local climatic conditions, leading to an energy efficient building. Ease of public access, design adaptability and flexibility, and sensitivity to site and heritage, were other factors considered when judging the proposed designs.

Top: Building Section
 Right: Axonometric View of Planning
 Bottom: 7th floor plan and sketch chapel



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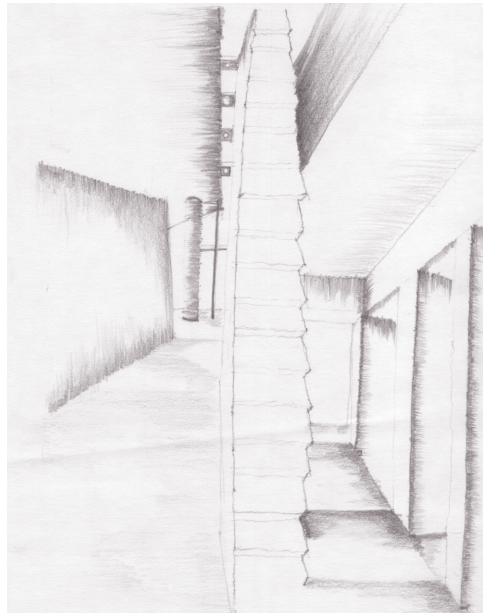


Concept : Two key ideas drive the design: First, the context of the trees on the site; and, second, the metaphor of transparency used in tandem with the structural inversion of political hierarchies. These two ideas meshed perfectly with the ideals of the prospective clients, who sought to use such metaphors in redefining popular perceptions of government.

Respecting the surrounding trees with the intent to build around them without destroying them, the design thus defers to their venerable age. Pragmatically, the building's form—in both elevation and plan—directly responds to the size and location of the trees on the site. The structure is suspended from a roof truss system in a manner similar to that of limestone stalactites that grow downward from the roof of a cave. From this truss, the networks of inverted pods are designed to be denser toward the top of the structure, with all general staff and services being placed near the supporting truss. The order of conventional spatial organization is thus inverted by placing the greater occupational density toward the top of the structure. The structure thus de-materializes with the lower office pods hanging between the canopies of the trees.

Top: South Elevation
 Middle L&R: Interior View and conceptual sketch
 Bottom L&R: Sketch addressing suspension elements

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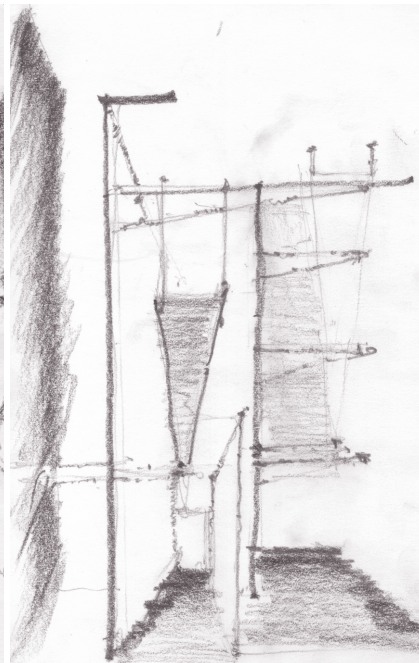
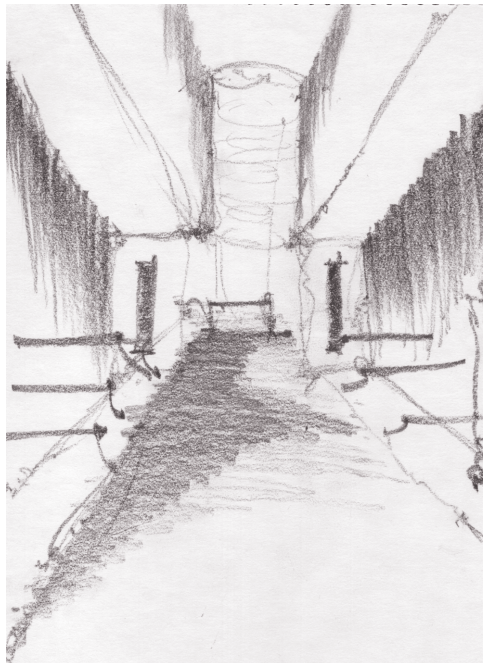
Employees and officers are housed in 7.5x7.5x4.0 meter cubes that are either contiguous at upper levels or linked via a series of connecting pathways at the lower levels, symbolic of the bonds that tie together the diverse Indian nation. The first two floors above the ground plane hold the offices defining the higher echelons of government. These floors remain visible from below, thereby visually and symbolically re-enforcing trust in government. The ground floor is then restored to the populace as a public domain, a 'tabula rasa' left free of any office functions.

The 'Rajaswa Bhawan' is envisaged as an edifice epitomizing India's changing attitudes. The use of glass fosters a belief in the public's perception of Government, as moving from a closed, opaque and stoic system to a more open and transparent one. The inversion of conventional hierarchies lays foundation to the strength that common Indian's have in their resources, and encourages their use in a manner that supports open and effective government.

With Vistaar Architects & Planners, G Singh (at concept)

Intent and Recognition: Winner national and international architecture competition
Published in Indian Architect and Builder Magazine, SSMB book on steel structures.

Left: Sketches of spaces
Right: Tectonic sketches and models



Team

Cyrus Subawalla-Principal Designer-superstructure
Siddharth Shirur-Architect of Record, Design Partner
Sangwan Seo-Associate Principal
Rahman Polk-Associate Principal
Gandhali Marathe-Architect
Consultants
Structural Design Steel
Thornton Tomassetti Inc
Structural Design Concrete
Mahendra Raj Consultants Pvt Ltd
MEP/FP Concept & Peer Review
Environmental Systems Design
MEP/FP Engineer of Record
Rumi H Bharucha Consultants