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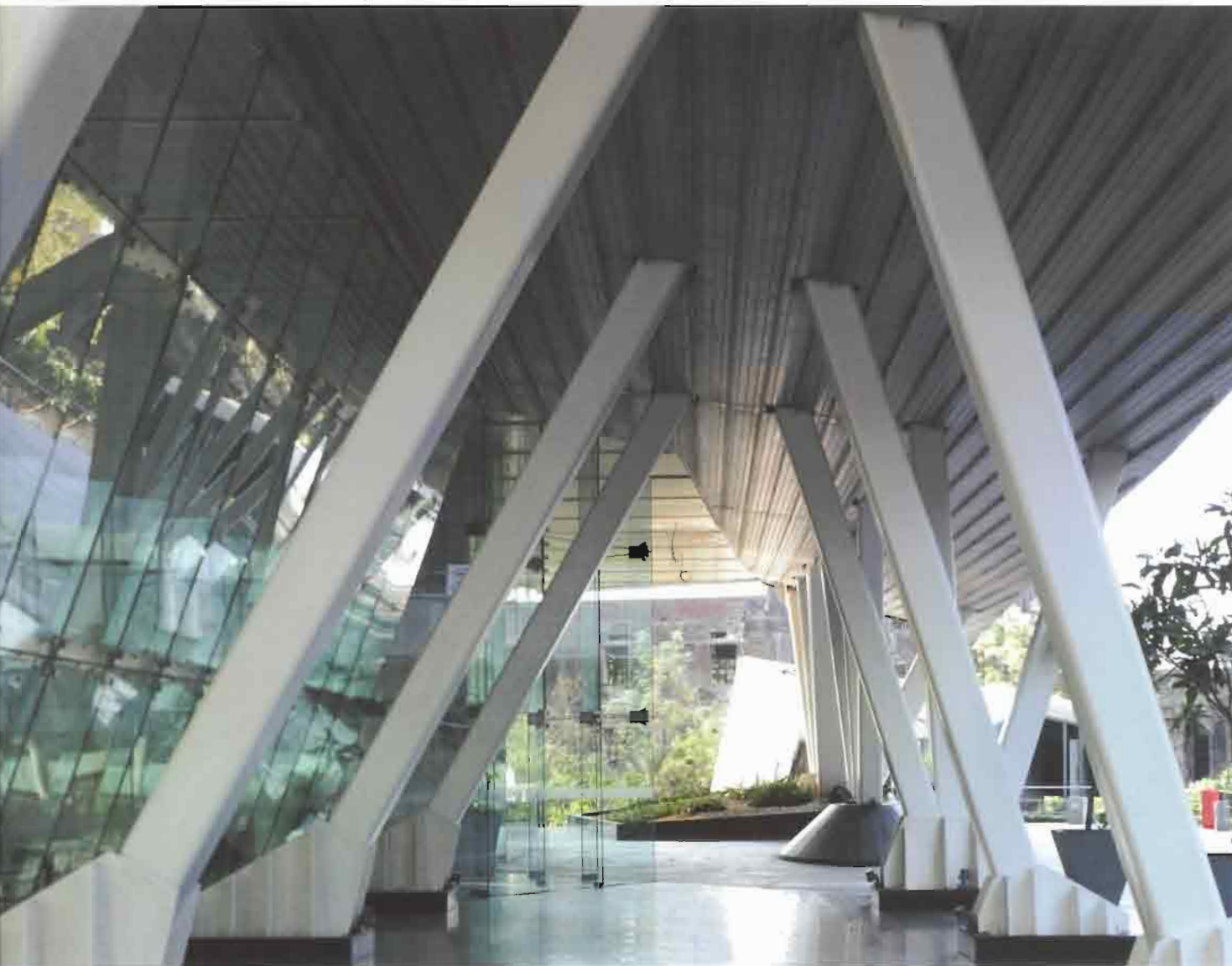
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Malik Architecture

raises street level



Text Lorna Gibson
Photos Edmund Sumner

A large commercial block, GMS Grande Palladium, has rejuvenated a dilapidated area in the north of Mumbai. Designed by Malik Architecture, the project was an attempt to create a 'framework for the future', while setting an example for a new business district developing nearby.

Planning restrictions on construction at street level encouraged the architects to raise the building's footprint 8 m above ground, thus relieving the dense urban fabric and allowing space for landscaping on the site, two benefits rarely considered in the design of new-build projects in Mumbai.

Function within the building has

been split into two main segments made clearly visible in its exterior form. The lower four levels accommodate general commercial space and communal facilities such as cafés, a gym and a lounge; the upper two floors, which house the client's offices, feel visually disconnected from the rest of the building yet retain a similar, complementary language.

The building is further articulated by aluminium planes featuring a series of arbitrary cuts and bends. Architect Kamal Malik calls them 'a subtle nod to the random agglomerations of the Dharavi slum [Asia's largest slum development], which is located only minutes away'. Flexible planning has been achieved via the steel superstructure's 16-m central spans, and its triangulated

bracing transmits cantilever loads to the exposed columns at ground level. Angled aluminium articulation around the fenestration of the west façade protects public space from the harsh sun, and the glass skin of the north face provides the building with a welcoming entrance foyer that cantilevers over a garden.

Malik's efforts to design a building that projects the area's historical value have also resulted in a bold juxtaposition to its existing structures. In the architects' words, this statement piece 'is a critical commentary on some of the antiquated notions that have plagued contemporary commercial design in the subcontinent'.

www.malikarchitecture.com

