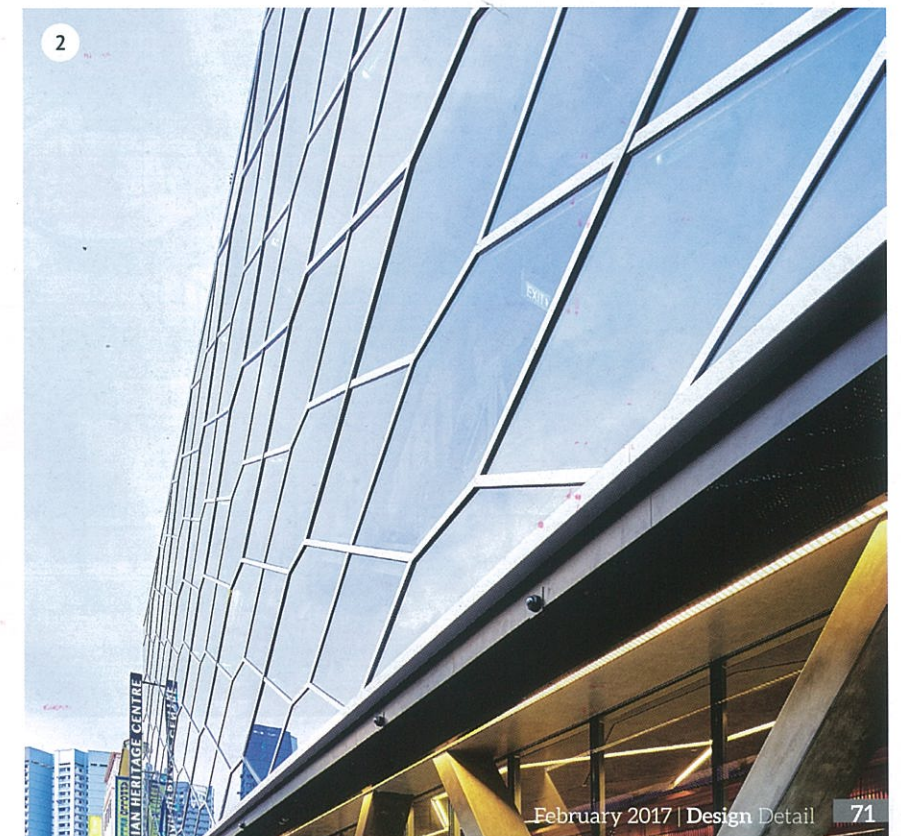




REINVENTING THE INDIAN ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Text: *Team Design Detail* | Photos: *Aaron Pocock*

The Little India district in Singapore has now got something novel to offer to the admirers of architecture. The Indian Heritage Centre (IHC), a cultural centre and museum, that showcases the cultural heritage and history of Indian Singaporeans, is on the verge of becoming a design icon in the heart of Singapore's Little India district. Situated at 5 Campbell Lane, the centre serves as a platform for visitors to explore Little India, as well as the sights, sounds and scents from the historical past.



1) Indian Heritage Centre converting itself into a glowing lantern

2) A close view of the double skin facade during daytime



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3) Indian Heritage Centre towering as a design icon in Singapore's Little India district

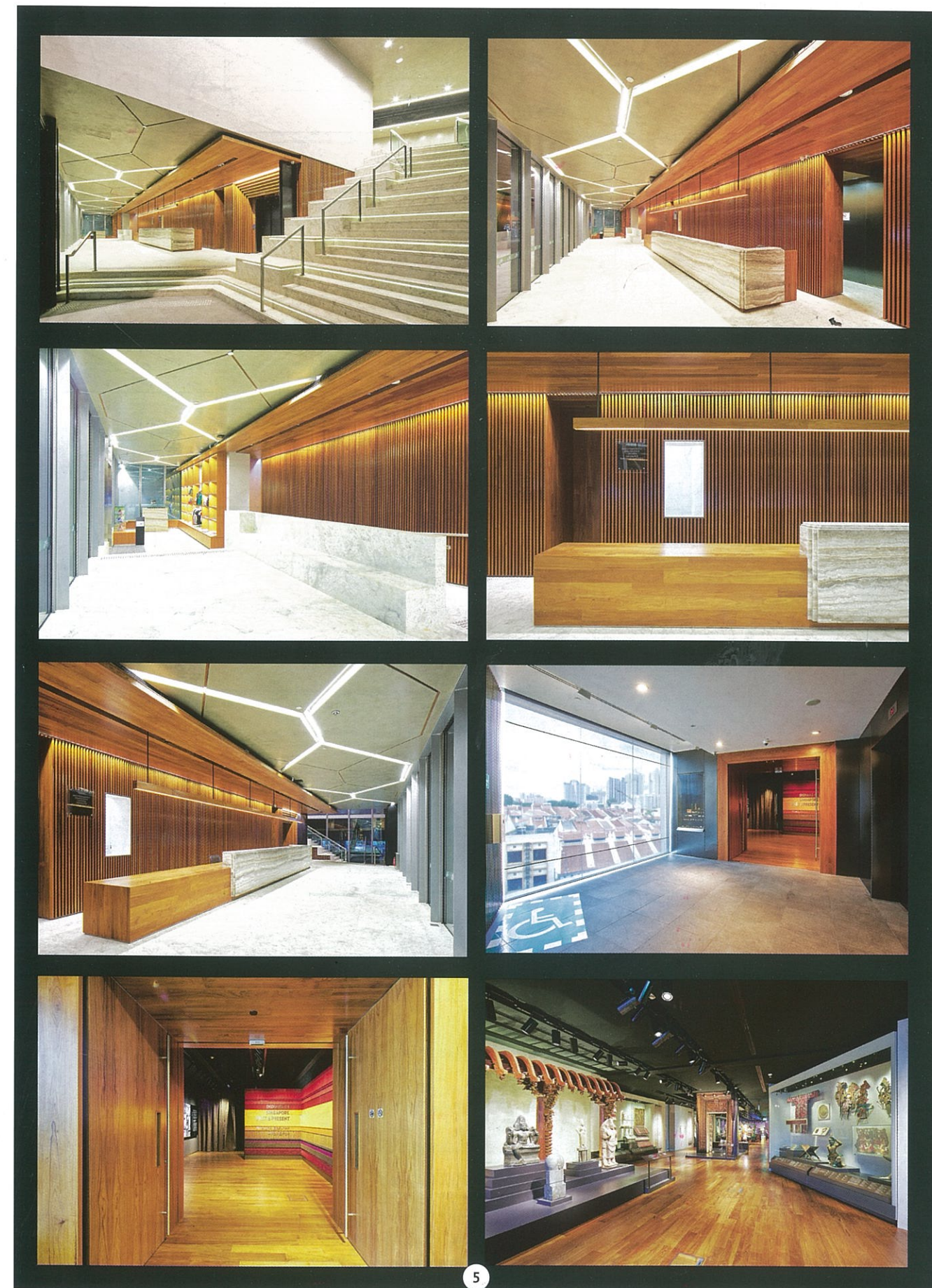
4) Facades displaying the art gallery at night

5) Interiors showcasing a blend of tradition and modernity

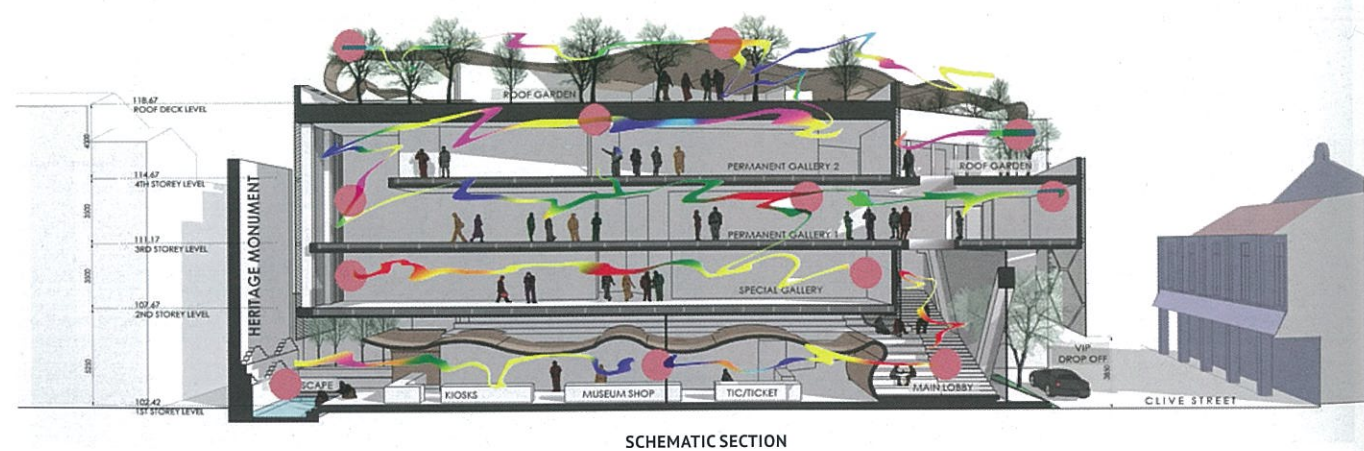
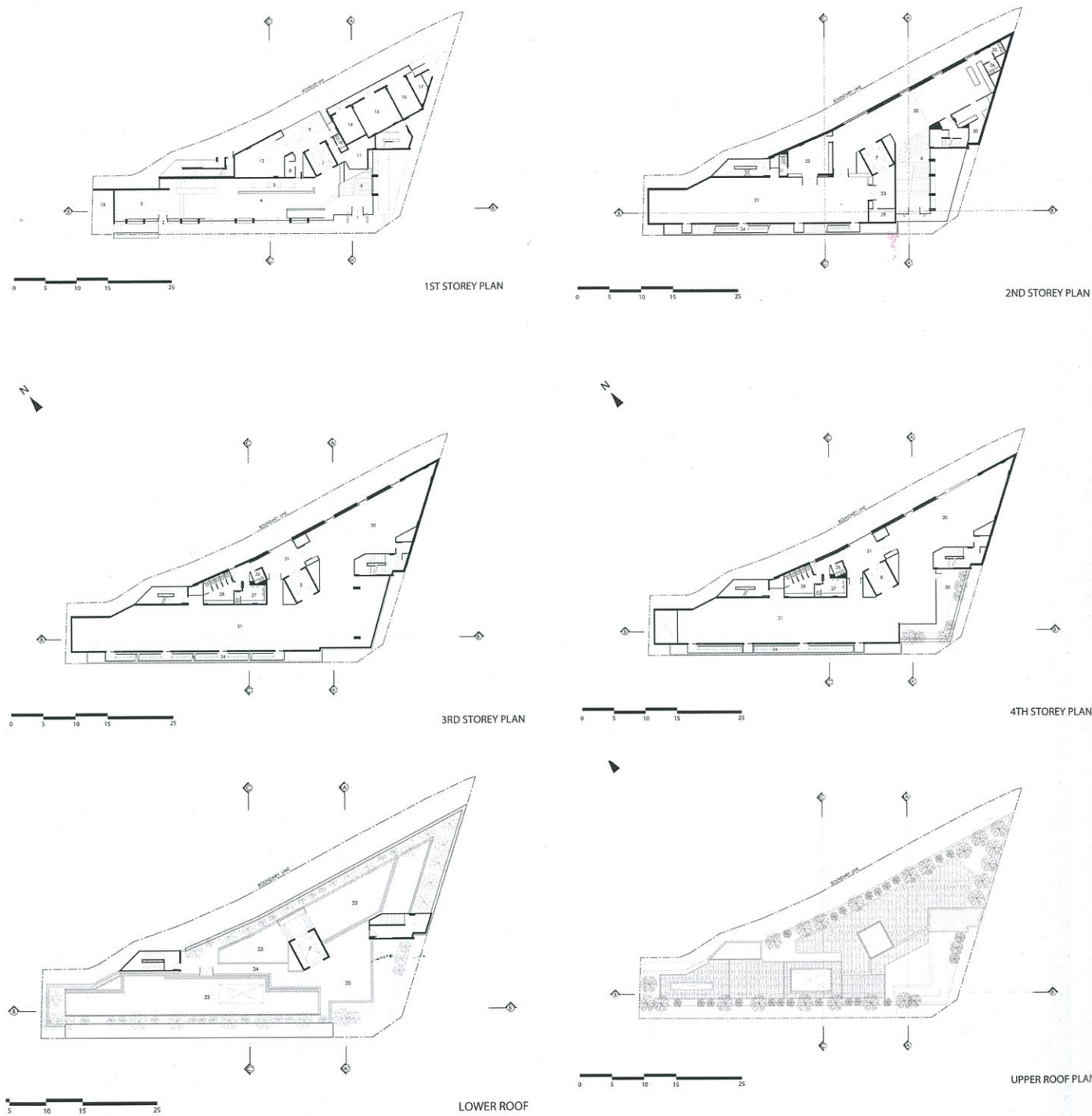
The Indian Heritage Centre, designed by Gaurang Khemka of URBNarc in collaboration with Robert Greg Shand Architects, is the first museum of its kind dedicated to the Indian community in Singapore. The centre which houses various art galleries, as well as educational and community spaces, was officially opened by the Singapore Prime Minister, Mr Lee Hsien Loong on May 8, 2015. The commission for the Centre was awarded, after URBNarc, in collaboration with Robert Greg Shand Architects, won an international design competition in 2011 organised by the Singapore Institute of Architects.

IHC Building

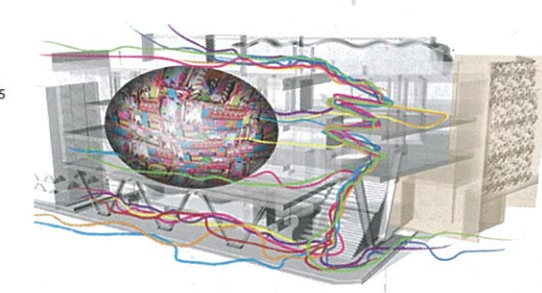
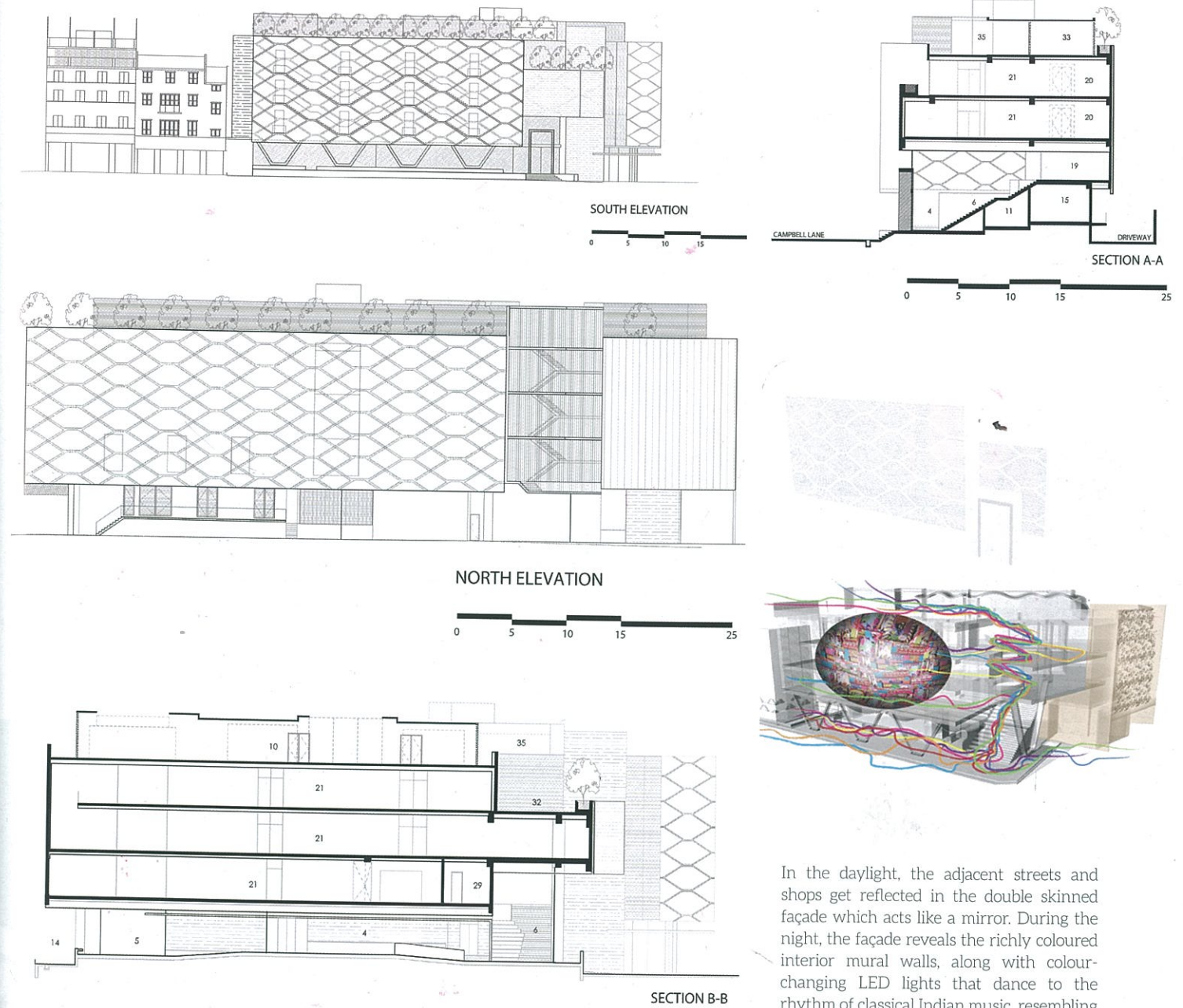
The most distinguishing feature of the building is its glazed geometric façade. It was inspired by the baoli, a traditional Indian step-well, that is a water source as well as a meeting place for village communities. It is a building typology that has fascinated the architect since his childhood.



5



SCHEMATIC SECTION



In the daylight, the adjacent streets and shops get reflected in the double skinned façade which acts like a mirror. During the night, the façade reveals the richly coloured interior mural walls, along with colour-changing LED lights that dance to the rhythm of classical Indian music, resembling a glowing lantern. The inside wall of the façade also serves as a canvas for artists, who have been commissioned to create mural installations using contemporary and archival images representing the local Indian community. The artworks will be changed every few years, allowing the identity of the building to continuously evolve.

The designing of the centre resembles a living museum where visitors start at Level 4, and after viewing the interior gallery, step out into this double skin volume to see the rich tapestry and urban environment of Little India, before stepping back into the galleries at Level 3. This pattern of leading the visitor inside and outside, makes this a truly urban building solution.

The architect understands the essence of place making, and the qualities that create some of the world's finest designs and combines that with his management skills to



6) Entrance to the Indian Heritage Centre acting as a transit point to a different culture

7) Double skin facade reflecting the street view during day time

8) Stairs connecting different levels resembling an art gallery

GAURANG KHEMKA



Gaurang Khemka is an architect with a specialization in Urban Design, Urban Hotels and Resort Planning. He has over 20 years experience of working in North America, Europe and Asia and has worked across a range of scales and contexts, from master planning and programming public institutions to detailed design of high end resorts and residences.

Gaurang has studied Architecture, Urban Design and Planning from the University of California, Berkeley, and has worked with reputed architects and urban design firms such as Charles Correa (Mumbai), Kerry Hill Architects (Singapore), EDAW Inc (San Francisco) and HOK Inc (Hong Kong, Singapore and Brisbane).

He started the office for HOK Inc in Singapore and was instrumental in building the Singapore and South Asia Practice for HOK after which he also built the South Asia practice for HOK Sport (now POPULOUS). He started his own firm URBNarc in 2010. He is on the Executive Committee for ULI South Asia and has also been nominated by the Ministry of National Development, Singapore, to be a Global Young Leader at World Cities Summit.



FACT FILE

PROJECT	: INDIAN HERITAGE CENTRE
LOCATION	: LITTLE INDIA DISTRICT, SINGAPORE
FIRM	: URBNarc in collaboration with ROBERT GREG SHAND ARCHITECTS
DESIGN TEAM	: GAURANG KHEMKA, GREG SHAND, LUTHER MAYNARD SIM, AVY JANDA, MAVERICK LARIOSIA
CLIENT	: NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD OF SINGAPORE
SITE AREA	: 1033.8 sq.m.
BUILT AREA	: 3089.68 sq.m.
YEAR	: 2015

deliver a product of the highest quality. He says, "The experience of the Indian Heritage Centre is a stimulating and evocative journey, referencing the richly layered and multifaceted nature of Indian culture, from the colorful murals and dancing lights on the periphery to the peaceful inner sanctum of the galleries."

Through the Heritage Centre, URBNarc has actually reinvented the ancient architectural genius of India and placed it in a foreign land. The Heritage Centre which is rapidly gaining popularity as a monument of sustainable architecture, and a world class experience showcasing Indian culture, is sure to remain a crowning jewel for Little India. 