

INTERIOR DESIGN

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walkthrough



what's in store

AN ATTRACTIVE EXTERIOR matters for many things—a gift box, a fashion model, and, contrary to conventional wisdom, a storage warehouse. For a facility outside New Delhi for Writer Corporation, aesthetics were paramount; the site is part of a campus that will eventually hold stately offices with landscaped courtyards. The 106,000-square-foot warehouse could not be an eyesore. To achieve this union of utility and beauty, the company turned to the husband-and-wife team of **Vrinda Khanna** and **Robert Schultz**, which designed the storage company's Bombay headquarters.

The warehouse, the fifth for Writer, provides storage for corporations and individuals. It thus had to accommodate large items, such as office furniture and voluminous business records, and personal effects, like clothing and CDs. There also needed to be a zone for temperature-sensitive items such

as audio-visual materials.

Concrete was the natural choice for the warehouse for several reasons: It insulates well, keeping interiors cool in India's hot climate; it's less expensive than steel; and it's one of the country's most prevalently used building materials. "Concrete-frame buildings are standard →

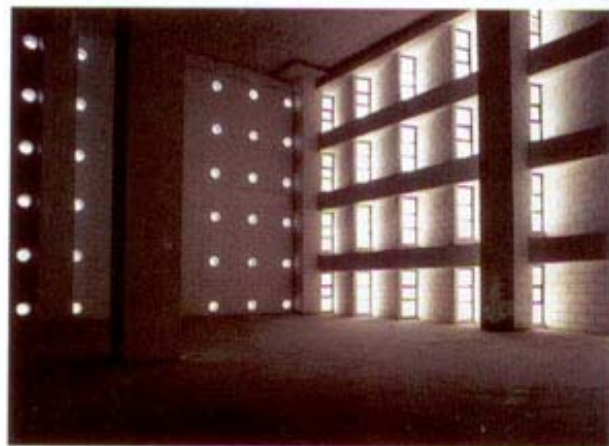
From top: The main entrance to the Writer Corporation warehouse, just outside New Delhi, is a 19-by-35-foot loading dock. The concrete building encompasses 100,000 square feet of storage space rented out to corporations and individuals.



here. Even small village houses are often built of simple concrete systems," Schultz explains. And since it's so commonly used, there's less room for error: "Here, you may get something different than what you specify, with colors and markings not as pristine as the sample," says Khanna.

The facade, painted the same ochre as the desert-like earth below, melds with its surroundings. The giant 134-by-233-by-72-foot-high rectangular box is perforated with window shapes inspired by the those in the palaces of Rajasthan. Safety glass set into 9-inch-long precast concrete tubes create porthole-like apertures on the building's shorter elevations. Portholes also perforate a third of the longer elevations; the remaining surface is a system of 2-by-6-foot vertical windows set perpendicularly into the building's facade. The windows' shapes and placement minimize the heat admitted into the warehouse during the brutal summers.

The interior is divided into three sections, two L-shapes and a core, totaling 100,000 square feet of storage. One L-shape spans the height of the entire building, a soaring, 60-foot-high volume filled with rows of yellow-painted steel storage racks and motorized moving equipment. The other L-shape is broken into two floors, roughly 30 feet in height, also devoted to general storage. The core consists of five 11-foot-high floors, one of them below ground,



From top: One L-shape portion of the interior has an approximate height of 60 feet; the floor and columns are concrete. Vrinda Khanna and Robert Schultz specified the size, shape, and placement of the windows to help control heat and light. The warehouse's rows of painted-steel storage racks.

that encompass offices, staff bathrooms, HVAC machinery, and an air-conditioned storage room. The interior is accessed via a main entrance and its 35-foot-wide loading dock, painted lipstick red.

—Sheila Kim-Jamet

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: VAKIL MEHTA SHETH ENGINEERS, GENERAL CONTRACTOR: AHUJA BUILDERS, ENGINEERS AND CONTRACTORS.

