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## The Future of Workspace Design

In the new normal, many organisations have redesigned their offices to meet new social distancing requirements and respond to the health and wellness concerns of their workforce. We talk to Ricardo Bofill and Manit Rastogi—two architects whose firms have undertaken the development of our campuses—to gain insights into how organisations can ensure a safe return of employees to the workplace.

We are always redefining the workplace and creating places that are experiential destinations for our partners, tenants and employees. Moreover, we continue to explore ideas and thoughts on how design can play an important role in making the workplace not just a workplace but a larger built environment.

In the new normal, we have been forced to rethink the way we work. So, what does the future of workplace design look like? How can organisations ensure a safe work experience for their employees at work? Ricardo Bofill and Manit Rastogi, two leading architects whose firms are busy developing some of our campuses across India, give us their views.



Ricardo Bofill

### Q & A WITH RICARDO BOFILL, PRINCIPAL CHIEF ARCHITECT, RICARDO BOFILL TALLER DE ARQUITECTURA:

Excerpts from the interview:

**FOR EMPLOYERS, IT IS A CHALLENGE TO REDESIGN THEIR WORKPLACES AS PER THE NEW NORMAL. WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON IT?** It is definitely a big challenge. Designing offices more like the outdoors with filtered air and good ventilation will be a priority

post the pandemic. In offices that are dependent on clean air-conditioning systems running on full-blast, the full blast can still make the particles travel for longer distances.

As architects, one of the issues we grapple with is creating workspaces that not only depend on central air conditioning systems but also use natural cross ventilation. But believe it or not, we are building an office tower for Brookfield Properties, which, instead



of having a core in the centre like many other buildings, has a courtyard for ample cross ventilation.

Also, when it comes to a building with large floor plates, it is particularly challenging to develop a natural ventilation solution for the office. But at our development projects in Candor TechSpace, Sector 135, Noida, we have done a large floor plate with Multi-Level Car Parking (MLCP) completely cross-ventilated. Combined with the MLCP, for easy access from the vehicle to the working places, we decided to build on top a unique office space, with a courtyard in the centre of the floor plate, which is a new concept for office spaces, and it is designed to be perfectly cross-ventilated.

**HOW ARE YOU HELPING BROOKFIELD PROPERTIES GET READY FOR THE NEW NORMAL VIA ITS UPCOMING PROJECTS?**

Tower 11A is a landmark office building with a prime location at the end of the

central axis at Candor TechSpace, Sector 135, Noida. It has on one side a beautiful reflecting water feature that we call 'black mirror' because it reflects the building, creating a feeling that we all love about the iconic water features and gardens like those of the Taj Mahal. So the building naturally has a lot of cross ventilation by capturing the prevailing winds in Noida, and funnelling them through windows every 10 metres (of a 1-metre square area) that allow air to naturally and quickly flow, supported with state-of-the-art mechanical systems that clean air with special filters and also propels the air across the spaces to further push for natural cross ventilation.

Multiple vertical transportation systems and stairs, well-separated from each other, allow the people in the building to practise social distancing. The stair cores are always on the edge of the façades and naturally ventilated, as well as protected from the outside

with a *jali*, a ventilated wall that allows for such cross ventilation. The ceremonial lobby is a grand, white marble space that welcomes the visitors with that kind of clean, elegant and minimalistic look that talks about cleanliness and less-is-more elegance.

Orientation through the building is always straightforward with no dark corners, no notches and no wasted corridors. On the campus side, on the ground floor of Tower 11A, an imposing arcade shaped like a smooth crescent, functions as a spectacular food and beverage space overlooking the black mirror lake. This creates a freshly-ventilated interior space with an exterior alfresco expansive terrace with a perspective towards the campus, providing a place-making experience rarely seen before in an office building.

**WHAT ARE THE NEW DESIGN UPGRADES AND ARCHITECTURAL CHANGES THAT YOU ARE WORKING ON AT BROOKFIELD PROPERTIES?**

The whole design strategy for the new buildings in Candor TechSpace, Sector 135, Noida, revolves around climate and cross ventilation. For example, in a normal passenger plane, the air is renewed 30 times per minute. This means that the number of COVID-19 cases detected in planes has been close to zero. This is the idea for the new buildings.

Much like Tower 11 A and Tower 11 B, done systematically as part of the design and build methodology, with mechanical and natural systems that allow for airflow, as much as possible, ideally at least one time per minute. We are also working with biological nano filters (with herbal and curative properties) to potentially improve the air quality.

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