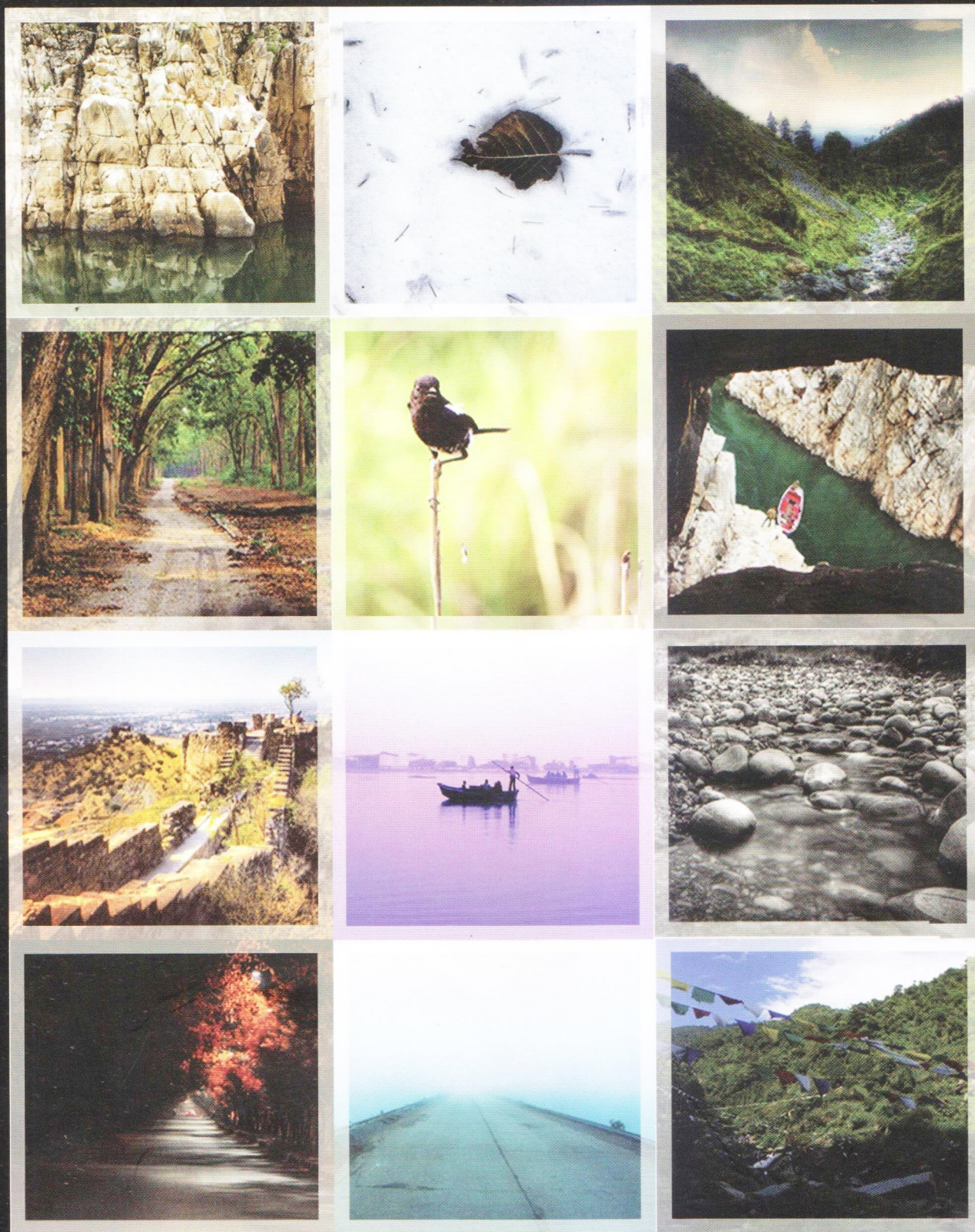




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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Landscape Design for L&T Elante Multi Use Development, Chandigarh

"In order for a public space to be meaningful, it has to be memorable."



Nupur Prothi Khanna

Nupur Prothi Khanna is Founder and Director of the firm Beyond Built Pvt. Ltd., Delhi. With nearly two decades of work experience, she has contributed as local landscape consultant on the DIAL Terminal 3 project (2008-10) for GMR; completed the Landscape for ELANTE MUD, Chandigarh for Larsen & Toubro; associated with CRCI as Historic landscape architect on Pinjore Gardens. Nupur is a Physical Planner & Landscape Architect from SPA Delhi and a graduate in historic conservation from University of York on an INTACH UK Trust-Charles Wallace Scholarship. She has been associated as visiting faculty with the departments of Planning, Architecture and Landscape Architecture at SPA, Delhi for over a decade. She is an EC Member, ISOLA (Indian Society of Landscape Architects) Delhi Chapter; International Member, Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes, ICOMOS (International Council of Monuments and Sites); Member, International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISoCaRP).

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BACKGROUND

ELANTE(<http://www.intrealty.com/elante-office-space.aspx>) is a multi-use development launched in Chandigarh in early 2013 by Larsen & Toubro (L&T Realty). Located on a site of approximately

20 acres, the Mall and Office complex measure approximately 3 million sq.ft., with about 15% devoted to the landscape component. Sited within an industrial sector, this serves as an iconic development for the larger region of Punjab and Haryana.

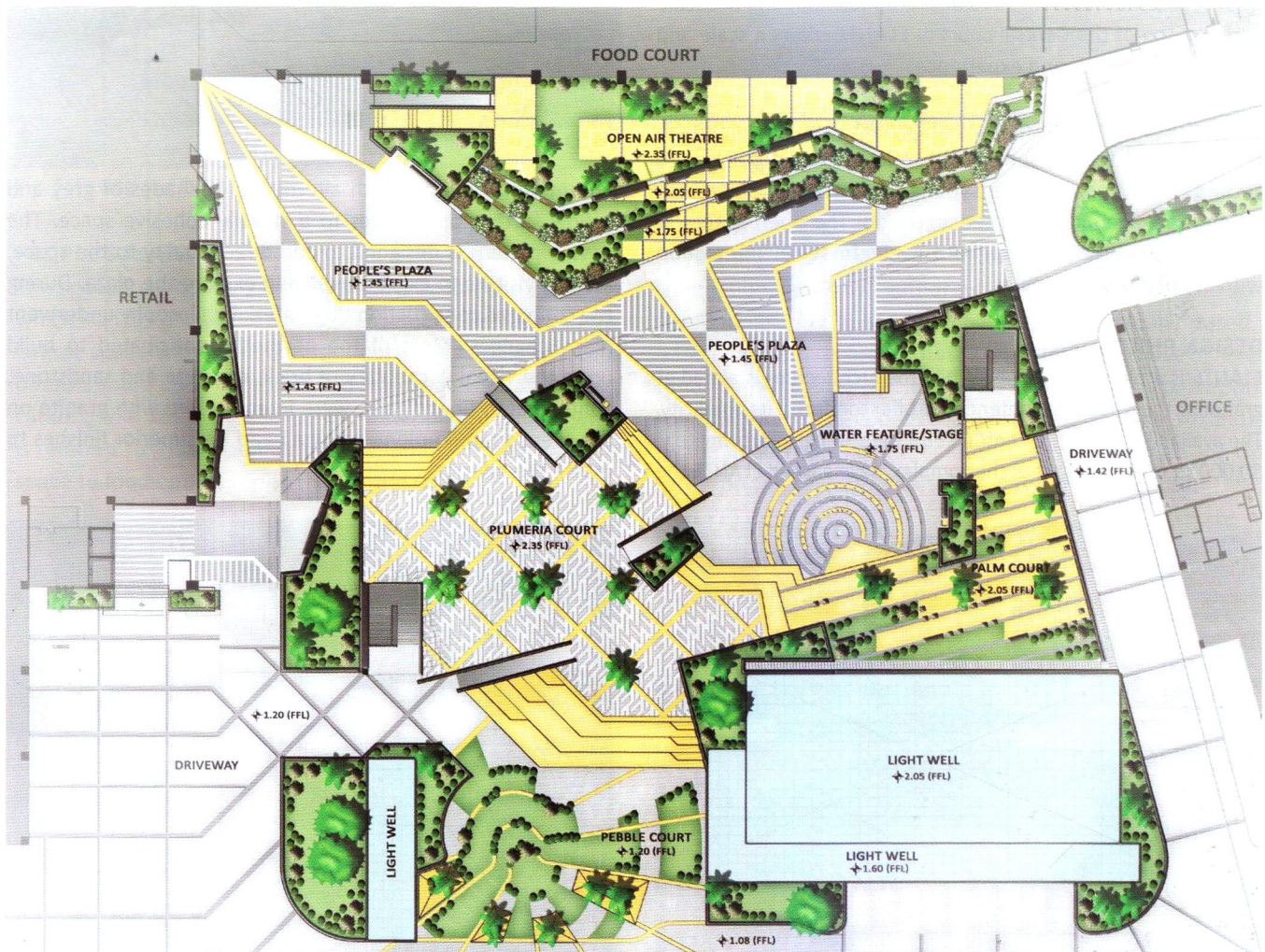


Fig. 1: Part Master Plan

Working on ELANTE was a unique experience where the client, design engineers and contractors all represented distinct sections under the umbrella of L&T. The brief was to design a space that evoked openness with a cosmopolitan feel akin to the spirit of Le Corbusier's vision.

A PERSPECTIVE

With the genre of malls taking over the urban recreation scene, it is easy to address these spaces simply as aesthetically convenient places to enhance the retail experience. Yet, this may not be a true representation of the wide range of possibilities and experiences that malls can offer. They may be conceived as urban pockets that are safe, clean and comfortable places for people of all ages. They may be perceived as social spaces to engage with friends offering an array of possibilities for recreation by way of cultural programs, exhibitions and interpretation spaces, organized children's activities, along with the usual options of movies, multi cuisine food courts & cafes, game areas and various shopping options.

This project offers an opportunity to design outdoor spaces to redefine the generic 'retail experience'. The aim is to seamlessly integrate the mall experience with cultural engagements. As opposed to simply serving as a backdrop to shopping, the scale and location of the Central court at ELANTE offers a scale and range of interaction and experience.

Contemporary malls have evolved beyond outlets for clothing, jewellery and food assuming the role of public plazas and social gathering spaces where young children play, adults catch up and teenagers do what teenagers do. The open spaces at ELANTE are seen as encouraging meaningful social interaction with cultural underpinnings.

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

ELANTE is a play of contrasts. While the architecture is aimed at grandeur, the landscape is intended to offer comfort in its simplicity. The availability of a large Central Court measuring, approximately, 80,000 sq.ft. in the heart of the complex have earned ELANTE the

reputation of a prominent recreational, shopping and cultural hub within the regional setting of Chandigarh.

The Central Court, as a result of its scale and location, serves as the social nucleus of the mall. Designed as a largely uninterrupted space, the narrative is built around the experience of openness, while keeping the materials and design of individual elements focused on human proportions. The requirements of fire tender and vehicular access, utilities such as drain channels are integrated so that the larger space is read and used as one consolidated whole. The idea is carried through in the integration of other building essentials, such as mummies, leaving them without hoods to perceive the space as a larger unified whole.



Fig. 3: Social Nucleus

The material palette with alternating of shades of grey and yellow further contributes to a visually cohesive space. The paving pattern is designed to add directionality to the space, inviting visitors to exit the mall and explore the plaza. During the course of construction the material philosophy underwent many changes. Most of the aesthetics anticipated to build upon the visual vocabulary of brick, concrete and sandstone, contextual to Chandigarh, were interchanged with granite on the client's requirement, citing a need for superior finishes to match the interior.



Fig. 2: Democratic Landscape



Fig. 4: Pattern, Colour and Texture

To organize a symphony of simultaneous activities and offering independence to the various age groups, a series of smaller courts are built into the main plaza using play of levels and materials. These intimate spaces are woven around differential slab level, stairwell and light well cut outs as unavoidable realities of construction.

The Central Court therefore encompasses a series of experiences within smaller more intimate spaces. People's Plaza and open air theatre is designed to facilitate cultural performances and large gatherings; Plumeria Court & Palm Court for passive recreation and Pebble Court conceived for children to play or for hosting of intimate events.



Fig. 5: Paving and Orientation

PEOPLE'S PLAZA

This space is conceived of as an attractive aesthetic experience which also fosters robust public engagement. Designed as the largest space within the Central Court, the People's Plaza offers a multi-use space that is dynamic as well as flexible, catering to a wide range of uses. The stepped seating or what is referred to as an open air theatre, offers outdoor catering space to food outlets facing the Central Court.



Fig. 6: Integrated Seating

The stepped grass and stone edged terraces also serve as seating for performances in the People's Plaza. A small raised area is set up at the south-east end of the plaza which serves the dual purpose of being a stage, as well as a contained area for a pop up/ vanishing water feature, a unique interactive experience for children.

These grassed terraces, along with the Pebble Court, offer the main softscaped usable spaces. The design of large planted areas attempt to create an experience of mini gardens within a large open plaza built on top of the basement slab and integrated with seating, lighting etc.

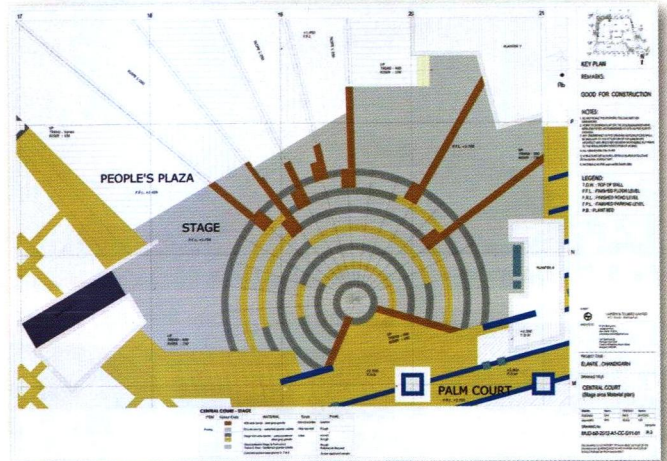


Fig. 7: Plan of Stage With Vanishing Water Feature

PALM COURT

Flanking the stage is the Palm Court, acquiring its name from a row of Foxtail Palms, meant to be an area of relaxation, recreation, and small gatherings. A large cut out of the light well, measuring approximately 6300 sq.ft, initially posed a challenge with regards to its size and treatment. Use of levels and a finish of aqua coloured glass have lent this a perception of a large reflection pool set amidst the landscape. An actual water feature using the Elante logo was designed for this area, on the client's request but was left unexecuted.

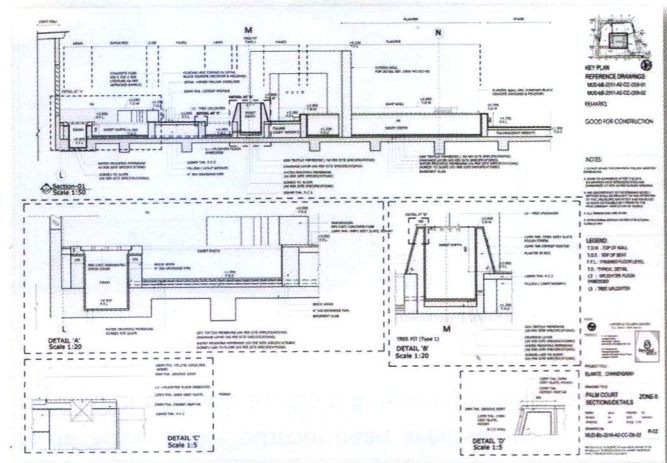


Fig. 8: Palm Court Details

PLUMERIA COURT

This space is the highest court at site facing the mall entry into the Central Court. This is designed to enable daytime activities in shaded areas incorporating informal seating and display areas. This space is also intended to be used for mid-sized functions.



Fig. 9: Pop-Up Water Feature at People's Plaza



Fig. 10: Accessibility Ramps

With accessibility becoming a central concern in outdoor recreation, ramps have been incorporated leading up to various courts (FIG. 10). The outer edges of all the plazas

are treated such that they form backdrops or alternate as seating or planters, thereby scaling down the large central plaza into usable and interactive segments without creating visual boundaries. The retaining walls for the large planted areas are designed with niches for seating using unembellished cuboid forms to contribute to the simplicity of the landscape.

PEBBLE COURT

The south-west corner of the site is reserved for children's activities. Located at the lowest level on the central slab and visible from the hotel, the space for children is designed in a distinctly circular form with a gently rolling mound fringed with tall palm trees in radial planters meant to be visible from the Mall entry. Painting competitions, various children's activities, small scale events and informal seating are possible functions that define this space.

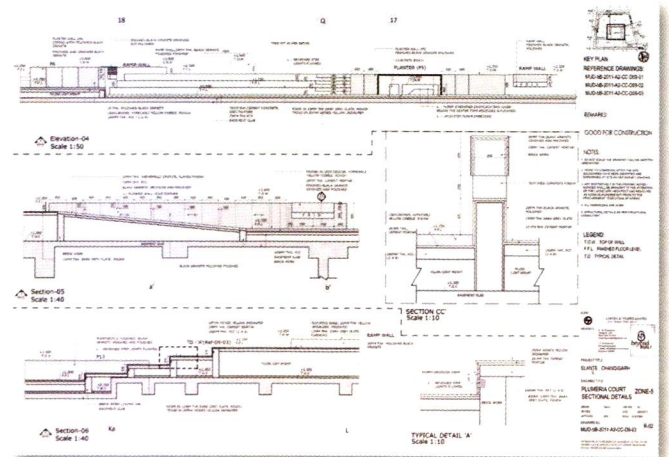


Fig. 11: Plumeria Court Details

NORTH-WEST ENTRANCE PLAZA

The client's brief required a pedestrian entry on the North West corner of the site, at the junction of two main roads of this industrial sector. This entrance is designed as a



Fig. 12: Entry Fountain

space to attract visitors while also offering spaces to sit and enjoy in the landscape. It has been designed with an angular geometry, framed by two large water bodies. Inspired by baolies or traditional step wells, the ponds were earlier conceived as reflecting pools with stepped seating. Fountains were subsequently introduced on the client's request. As with the central space, the paving pattern directs movement and uses a variety of textures to create visual interest. Softscape cutouts are designed to add greenery without taking away from brand visibility or the architectural façade.

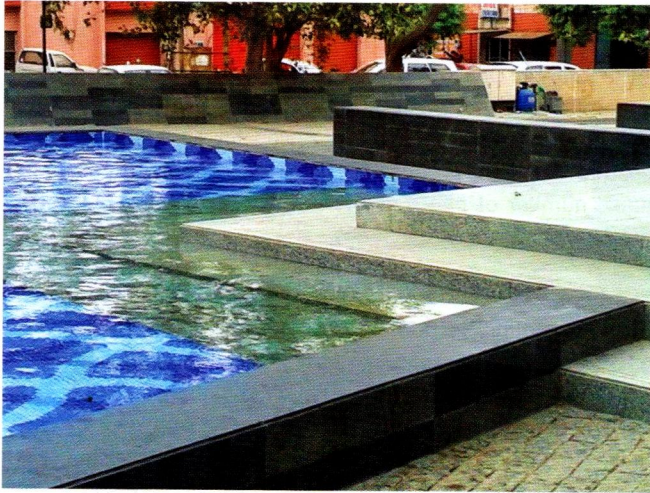


Fig. 13: North-West Entrance Plaza

PLANTING IDEOLOGY

The landscape concept focuses on reserving larger spaces for planting in the midst of what is largely a hardscape. Located wholly on a slab covering a double basement, spaces for softscape are built up with engineering measures adopted for ensuring optimal drainage and waterproofing.

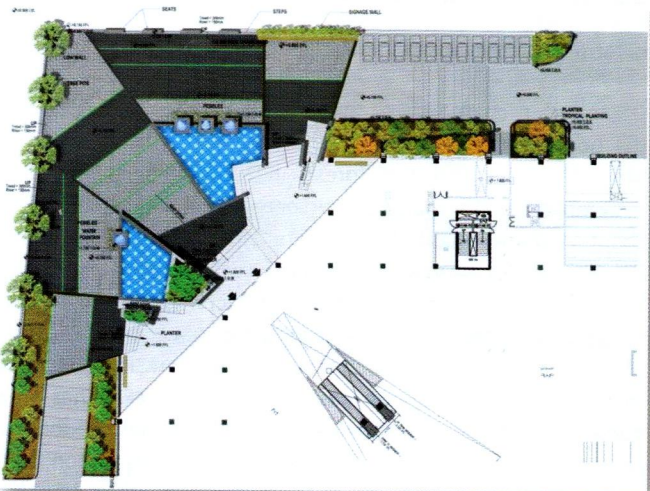


Fig. 14: North-West Entrance Plan

The planting concept is built upon seasonality and colours. Plumeria Court has a predominantly white/moon garden theme, while the palm court expresses a palm and tall grass palette. All planting elements are woven together to create a unique and stimulating landscape experience.



Fig. 15: Coherent and Blended Design

ELANTE is a unique project in our repertoire of works due to the vision of shared responsibility vital to the project. We took on an added responsibility of supervision consultants, based on our learning from the DIAL project, thereby moving beyond design in also contributing to the contractor's team, on the client's request. This effort ensured timely completion with a focus on quality and detailing, to ensure optimum utilization of resources for both the client and consultants.

Clarity on each participant's role and continuous collaboration, brainstorming and interaction led to almost error free functioning and a cohesive scheme. This experiment at ELANTE has shown us a new avenue to engage with projects, to ensure quality is delivered through shared ownership and accountability by being actively involved through the life of the project's execution.

ELANTE FACT FILE

Name of Project	: ELANTE Office and Mall
Location	: Industrial & Business Park I, Chandigarh
Client	: L&T Realty
Engineers	: EDRC
Contractors	: ECC, Grotech, TheFountainers, Harvel.
Area	: 20 Acres (approx.)
Duration	: 2010-2013