

PROJECT



# NEW BREATH

WHEN ROMI KHOSLA DESIGN STUDIOS WERE CHOSEN TO BUILD A POLYCLINIC FOR THE SLUM DWELLERS OF Delhi's Lahori Gate, they revitalised the area with a contemporary building that would serve the community, providing physical and psychological relief for recovering addicts and terminally ill patients

Built in metal and glass, the polyclinic provides a contrast to the ancient buildings of old Delhi with its coloured aluminium louvres on the facade





In the heart of the old city of Delhi, on the edge of the railway line, sandwiched between a masjid and remains of a burnt slum, stands a gleaming modern polyclinic for the poor, who live on the pavements of Lahori Gate. Casual labourers, rickshaw pullers, beggars and sex workers make up the fabric of these streets, many simply cannot afford shelter. Through its simple and relevant design, the polyclinic will serve as a day care referral medical relief centre where those drug addicts, HIV and TB patients can get medical aid and live in a safer environment.

This state-of-the-art building was quite a challenge for architects Romi Khosla and Martand Khosla, completing the polyclinic in this dense and crowded locality was not easy. The site had a dilapidated building that had provided shelter for the homeless and was a hub of drug related activities. Fully aware of these problems, the architects worked closely with the local community exposing themselves, at times, to the wrath of the drug addicts. The adjacent mosque authorities too were suspicious of the intentions of the project until it was explained to them that the polyclinic was

for the very poor who lived in the area. The location of the polyclinic abuts a railway land and their goodwill too was necessary for the success of the project.

The architects got this project for their national and international reputation of building modern buildings for the poor. The studio's extensive work in breathing life into dilapidated neighbourhoods has won them several awards too. This building is four floors high. Each floor is spread across 200 sq m where laboratories, reception, consultation rooms, day time wards, doctors and nurse stations are

situated. A large area in the basement provides ample space for a modern pathological laboratory. The ground floor has the reception as well as Out Patient Department cubicles for doctors and consultants during the day.

Built in metal and glass, the new polyclinic provides a fascinating contrast to the ancient buildings of old Delhi. The fully glazed front facade provides a transparent view into the building which invites visitors in and also helps Reception staff to spot and encourage hesitant patients to enter. Once they have been registered, the patients would



proceed to the first floor for the treatment. This treatment area requires more privacy and has coloured aluminium louvers to provide a visual shield yet allow ample ventilation. A lift designed for carrying stretcher patients has also been installed for emergency treatment.

The choice of primary colours that make the yellow and blue louvered facade seem radical for this forgotten area of Delhi, announcing the presence of a contemporary treatment centre. Inside the building, glass partitioned consulting rooms and bright ventilated waiting spaces have created a unique treatment environment for the patients.

**Project Name:** Polyclinic for the destitute

**Client Name:** The Sir Sobha Singh Public Charitable Trust

**Architects:** Romi Khosla Design Studios, New Delhi

**Chief Architects:** Romi Khosla, Martand Khosla

**Design Team:** Rajnish Pant

**Area:** 1093.50 sqm

**Electrical, Structural, & Plumbing**

**Consultant:** Semac India Pvt. Ltd