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Museums are no longer an elite box for scholars and enthusiasts,
but have now transformed into a community-based space.

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THE MANN SCHOOL

white flower hall girls' hostel, new delhi

envisage, gurugram

The design brief was to create an innovative, practical and safe hostel, while promoting learning and an all-round development. The architect's brief was to upscale the existing boarding facilities to cater to the increasing number of students and their requirements, while following the ethos of openness and continuity.





The new building is positioned between the executive block and senior academic wing, and houses dormitories for grades 1 to 12, a study hall, common recreational spaces, a computer room and a salon.

The brick façade remains a critical element so that the hostel blends with its neighboring buildings, while following the campus' existing color scheme of red and grey. A metal jaali installed on the façade, surrounding greenery, a garden and terraces makes the structure welcoming and uplifting.

Dormitories face the central courtyard with widened corridors, placed in an angular fashion to accommodate seating spaces. The building opens out at different angles on each floor, with staggered inward-looking terraces to create visual connections regardless of location and distance.

The residential facilities for grades 1 to 4 were planned on the ground floor, to ensure their safety. Their dormitories ensure optimum daylight and ventilation, with custom-designed bunk beds along the windows. The dining area, parents' lounge and recreational spaces are located on the ground floor as well. The first and second floors are dedicated to the older students, with four-bed and six-bed dormitories and study areas. The infirmary and salon on the first floor accommodate all regular facilities in one place, making the hostel self-sufficient.

Activity areas such as the common room, computer laboratory and the games room were situated in the basement around the central courtyard and sunken amphitheater. Designed as an extension to the common room, the amphitheater is a congregation spot for students and staff.

The warden's residence was also planned within the building; with the central courtyard visible from the living room. With an eye to security, entry and exit points are few, windows fitted with metal grilles and crisscross wires used between the handrails in the corridors and the ceiling for protection.

Creating an eco-sustainable environment saw several features incorporated into the building. The central courtyard is well ventilated, being aligned in the northwest-southeast direction, to catch the southwestern winds. The southern and western walls of the buildings are constructed using the rattrap bond method, where bricks are placed vertically rather than the conventional horizontal position. This creates a cavity and promotes thermal comfort. Mud phuska (compacted soil with hay) was used for thermal insulation to reduce heat by almost 70 per cent. Bricks used on-site were produced from local kilns to reduce the carbon footprint, and solar panels were installed on the terrace of the building. Low-maintenance and affordable materials and finishes were used for the project.

The excavated earth from the basement was used to create mounds in the garden, and the debris from the construction material was utilized for the roads and footpaths within the premises. The timber of old trees on-site was used for manufacturing doors, and rainwater harvested from the 650 sq. m. terrace. The harvested water drains into two pits in the ground, and is used for horticulture and flushing. if