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SquareWorks Converts Former Victorian Gothic Style Building Into An Art Gallery In Mumbai

India Architecture News - Oct 05, 2023 - 16:47  837 Views



Indian architecture practice SquareWorks has converted a former Victorian Gothic style building into an art gallery in Mumbai, India.

Called Tarq Gallery, the 300-square-metre building was envisioned as a contemporary art gallery to reflect its historical presence. The project is located between two significant and historical urban fabrics of Mumbai.

The new contemporary gallery is situated on the ground floor of a 120-year-old building sitting at the eastern edge of the Victorian Gothic style urban fabric, and to the west across from maidan, art deco architecture built between the 1930s to 40s reflecting the modern movement and development of Mumbai.

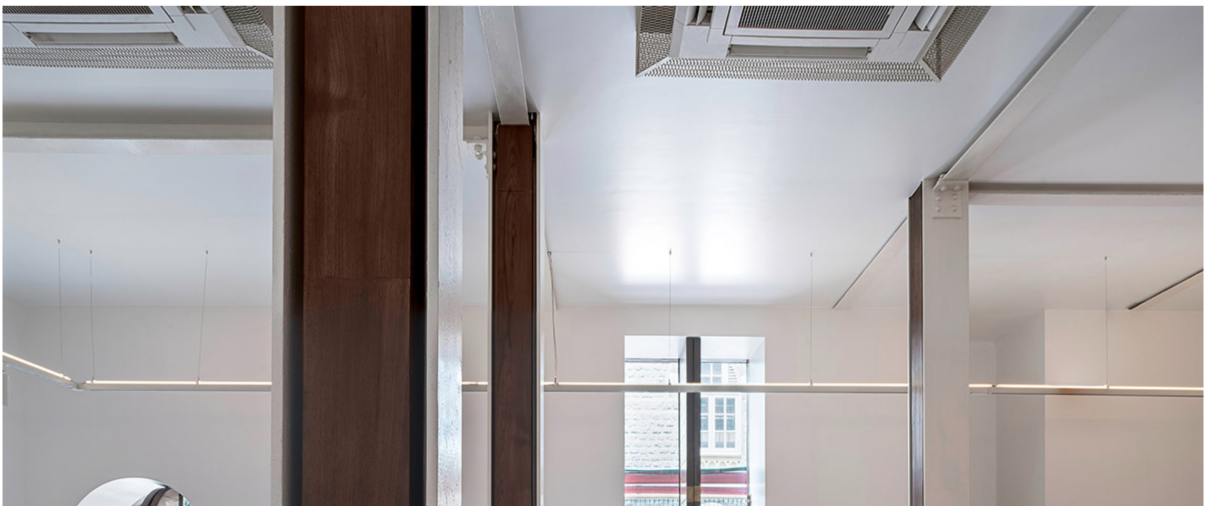
In the restoration process, SquareWorks paid attention to the historic structure of the building by turning into a contemporary art gallery space. According to the studio, the project brief "required careful consideration of its historical significance and integration with modern elements."



During the design process, the studio's main objective was to pay attention to the building's rich history, while infusing it with a fresh and contemporary aesthetic that characterizes the contemporary art gallery.

The initial consideration was to introduce abundant natural light by restoring the original openings within the thick brick masonry structure.

The underlying steel columns and beams supporting the lofty 14-foot-high (4,26-meter) ceilings of the gallery emphasize the verticality of the space. This was accomplished by highlighting the columns with wood filler, creating a visually striking manifestation of the building's structural elements.





The project demanded a significant degree of custom carpentry and fabrication, with meticulous attention to site-specific details. These details were done exclusively for the project, ensuring a cohesive design language and, simultaneously, shifting away from mass-produced products.

That focus on custom details has been an integral aspect of the design practice from its inception, facilitating the seamless integration of bespoke details that align precisely with the spatial organization of each project.





A feature that emerged during the design process was incorporating a Corten steel wall. This addition served a dual purpose, paying tribute to the building's historical heritage while incorporating the brand identity of Tarq.

The desire to infuse the windowless conference room with Tarq's signature crimson red led to exploring various options. The choice of Corten steel was driven by its ability to coexist with the original steel structure, imbuing the space with bold materiality and a textured aesthetic.



Preserving the values of the heritage building was a concern during the restoration process. The efforts in that regard included restoring the original wooden windows on the north part of the facade and employing skilled carpenters.

On the west facade, as there was no evidence of original window frames, the existing openings were retained, and new window frames and shutters with central axial hinges were installed.

This careful preservation work not only respected the building's architectural legacy, but also introduced new elements that enhanced visibility from inside and outside the gallery space.

Another design decision motivated by the original building structure was the deliberate choice to expose the steel beams rather than concealing them behind false ceilings.

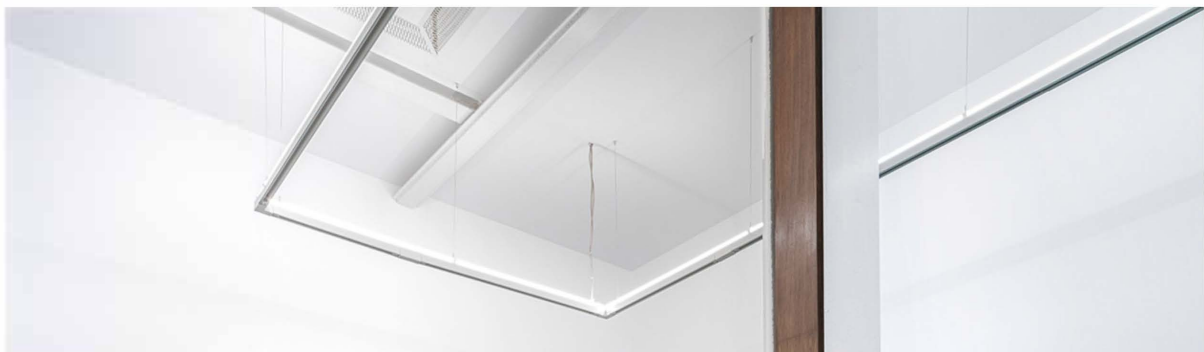
These structural elements stand independently of the gallery space to remain visible, maintaining the coexistence of different eras and systems. This design choice served as a testament to the historical significance of the building, while offering a visual representation of its integration within the overarching design narrative.

The design approach undertaken for this project exemplified a deep respect and appreciation for the heritage of the old building. By fusing modern elements, optimizing natural light, and employing custom carpentry and fabrication, the space was transformed into a contemporary art gallery that eloquently reconciles the past with the present.



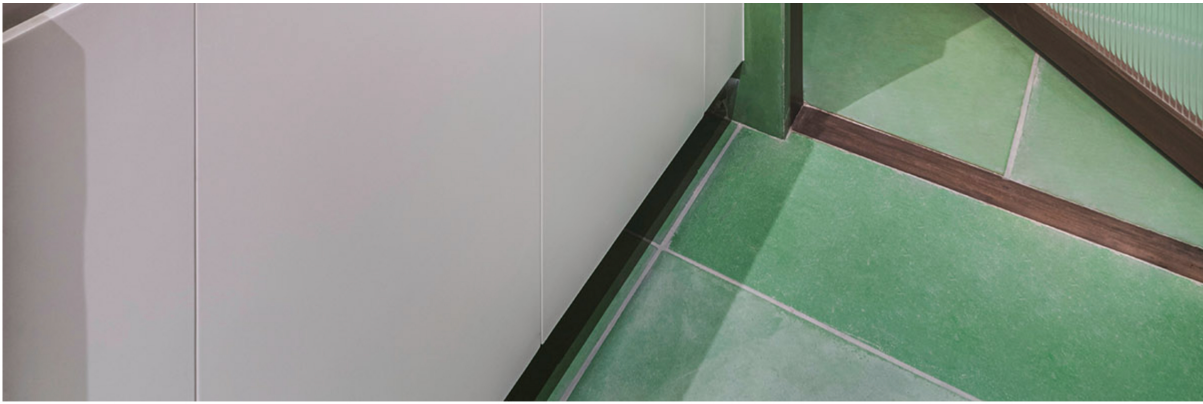
Incorporating the Corten steel tile wall not only honoured Tarq's brand identity, but also celebrated the building's historical legacy.

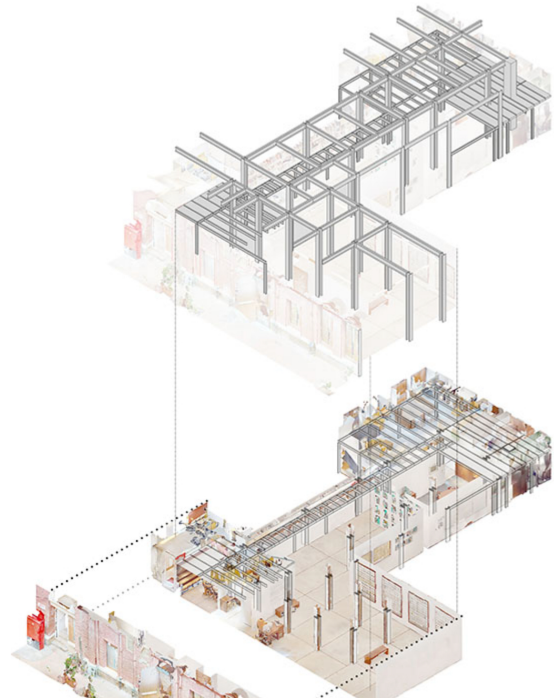
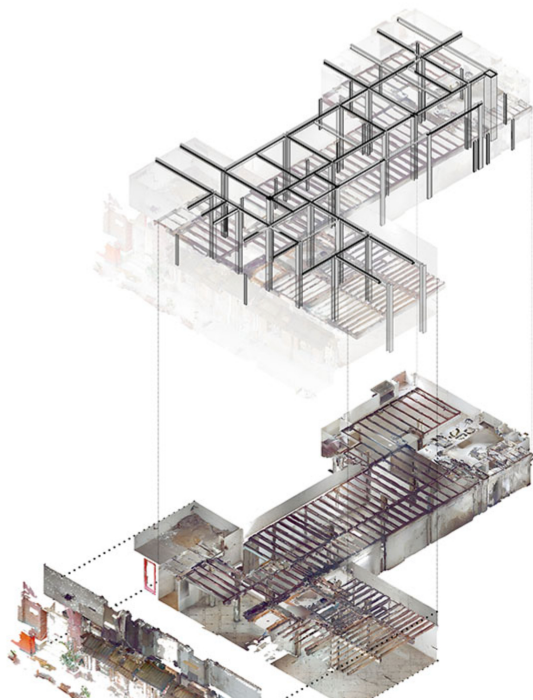
Through meticulous attention to detail and the preservation of intrinsic values, the resulting gallery space is a testament to the harmonious coexistence of history and modernity.











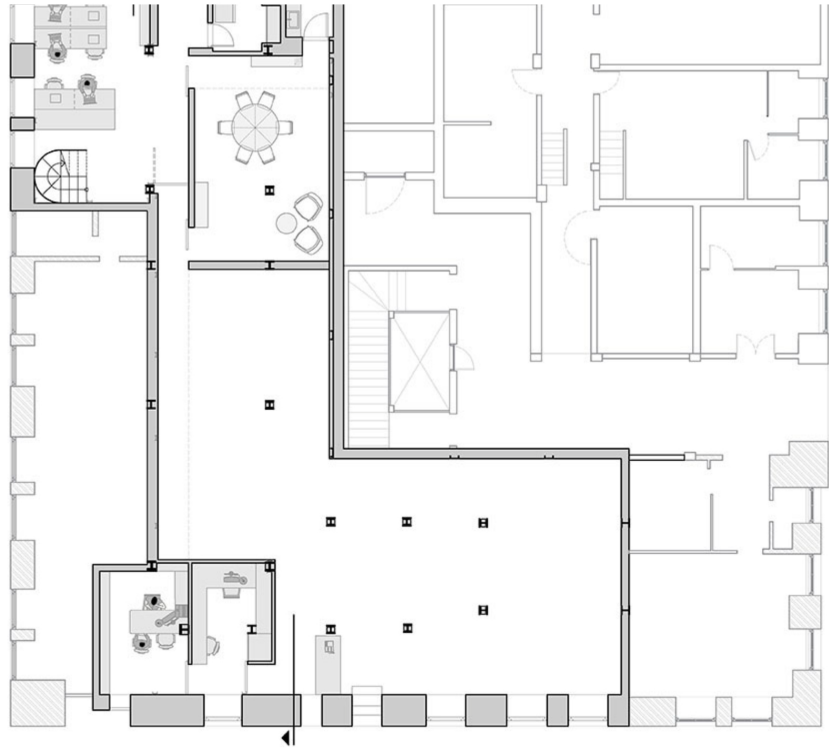


Analysis of existing structure

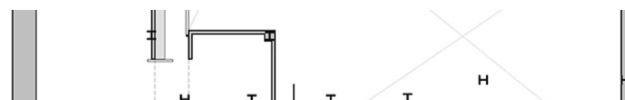


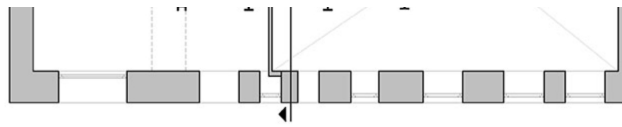
Modification of mezzanine structure

Diagram for structural analysis



Ground floor plan





Mezzanine floor plan



Section

Project facts

Official Name of the Project: Tarq Gallery

Location: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Client: Hena Kapadia (director of the gallery)

Design Development: 2022 April – 2022 August

Construction Period: 2022 September – 2023 March

Architects/ Designers: SquareWorks LLP

Design Team: Katsushi Goto, Komal Kotian

Contractors: Nirmaan (Mainak Mushruwala, Husein Khakoo)

Gross Built up Area: 300 sq.m

Structural Consultants: Rajeev Shah and Associates (Rajeev Shah)

Lighting Design: Studio Trace (Tripti Sahni)

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