

A photograph of a modern, two-story industrial or food processing facility at dusk. The building has a light-colored facade with large glass windows and doors on the upper level. A set of stairs leads up to the entrance. The sky is a gradient of pink and purple. In the foreground, there's a paved area with a metal fence and some greenery. The overall atmosphere is professional and clean.

fab
foods



renowned local bakery, fab commissioned the construction of a brand new facility in ratmalana to house its main kitchen and admin complex. convenience and ease-of-use were the two main requirements followed in its design

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One of the largest urban kitchens in the town was sunken into a man-made green earth berm, leaving the front court for future expansion

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ab is renowned for signature cakes and gateaux. This trademark can be traced back to 1979, when Chandra Madanayake launched her confectionary store in her front garden beside Galle Road. The outlet remains to this day, still teeming with ever-eager customers. In just over five years, subsequent to the demand that was generated, Fab was able to restructure and change its course, and specialize in the pastry business as well. Fab caters to their customers' desires, going above and beyond to earn their trust in bringing them the choicest products and services. With their many strategically placed outlets in and around Colombo for ease of access, Fab remains the pioneering pastry shop franchise in Sri Lanka. The designing of their main kitchen and admin block with facilities like ancillary buildings was the assignment given to RDC Architects.

A tidy, operational space for a 24-hour busy kitchen with state-of-the-art exclusive office environment was a challenging assignment. Initially, the client demarcated a huge square within the large flat landscape, and first had an on-site meeting. The water level is very high in Ratmalana, therefore, no basement was possible to hide the kitchen. The architect's attempt was to hide the kitchen in a separate layer, coping up optimum sunlight and natural ventilation within the fairly large 2 acres of land, making links with the rest of the facilities by creating an earth berm within a lush green-turfed front court. Two functional 900 sq.m horizontal blocks in two levels, totaling around 3,700 sq. m, longitudinally span along the East-West axis, ensuring optimum sunlight to create a central breathing courtyard with a vertically tiered lower kitchen and an upper admin block of mezzanine linked to the conference and training facilities, was worked out to facilitate the client's initial brief.

"Really Blue Efficient" concepts adopted here, as opposed to the market-driven virtual green concept, was the initial idea to establish a sustainable venture. This complex ultimately ended up with one of the largest urban kitchens in the town sunken into a man-made green earth berm, leaving the front court for future expansion, and the dead corner of the site accommodating the functional segregation of office and admin functions to deliver bakery foods and cakes to the real operational kitchen, which was accommodating the inclined retaining wall underneath the earth berm to place a long, linear, active working niche along the building. The upper level training, seminar and office facilities, together with financial and the reception/front office, floated just above the green earth berm to do justice in hiding the operational areas from public areas, which was achieved through a state-of-the-art fusion of industrial and official segregation. The ground floor of the main front block includes main stores, receiving stores and the

The vertically tiered earth berm hides the service areas from view, while the administrative areas are visible.

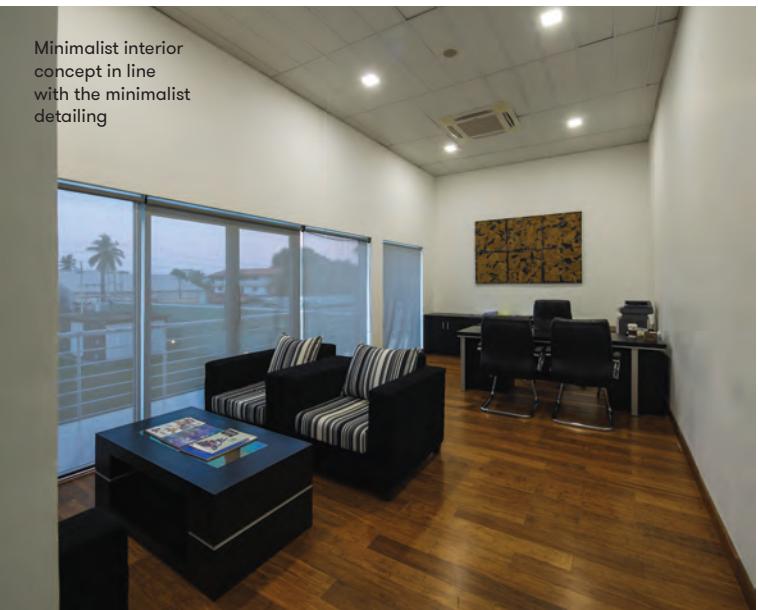


Access is given through a series of links and steps finished in the earthy tones to complement the surroundings



1. Goods Entrance
2. Receiving Stores
3. Main Store
4. Store
5. Open to Sky Court Yard
6. Main Kitchen
7. Manager's Room
8. Manager's Room
9. Pastry & Curry Kitchen
10. Butchery
11. Oven Area
12. MSB Room
13. Cheff Office
14. Lab & Test Kitchen
15. Toilets
16. Service Access
17. Road
18. Lawn Area

Minimalist interior concept in line with the minimalist detailing



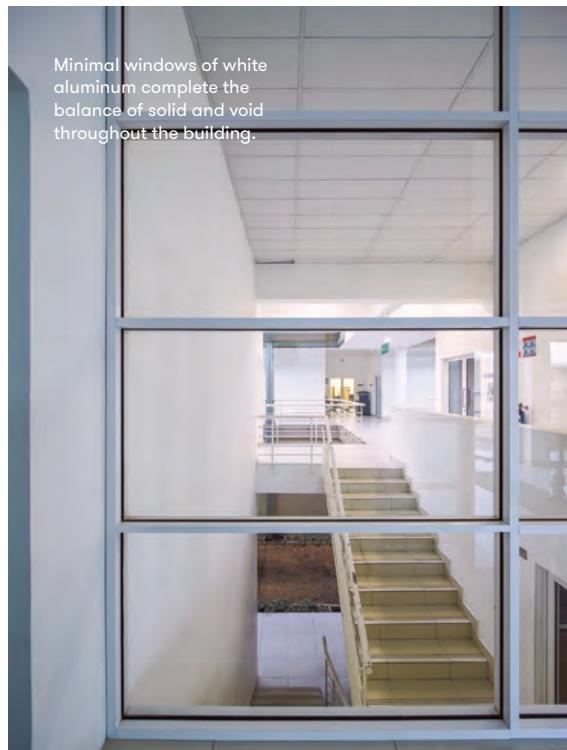
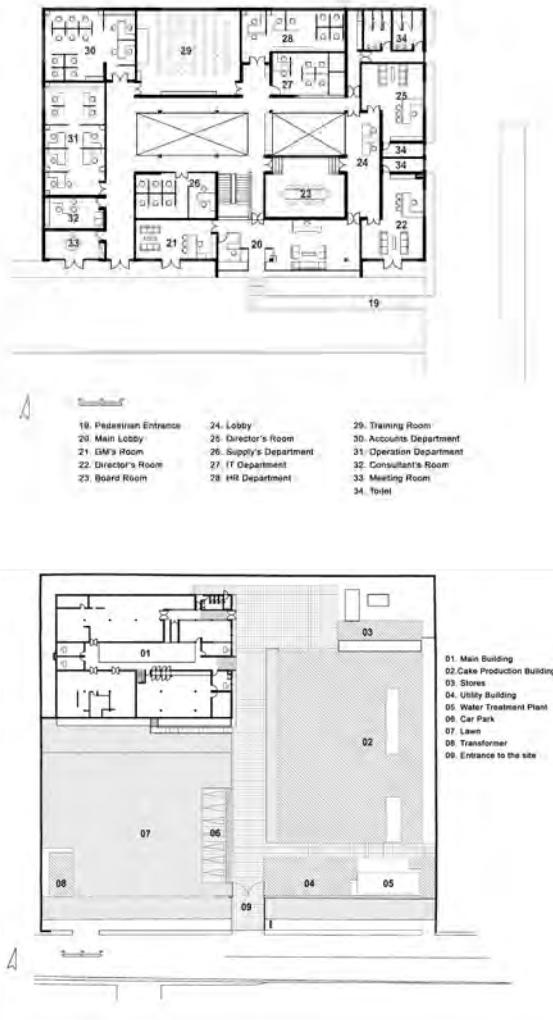
The minimal block stands atop the lush green tiered earth berm giving the impression of touching the earth lightly



The designing of their main kitchen and admin block with facilities like ancillary buildings was the assignment given to RDC Architects.

Mechanically operated forced natural air flow mitigates the kitchen temperature by 3 degree Celsius, with cross ventilation of cleaner and cooler air inlets from upper shaded levels





The ground floor of the main front block includes main stores, receiving stores and the main kitchen. The rear main block consists of the pastry and curry kitchen, lab, test kitchen, QA Department and the butchery.

main kitchen. The rear main block consists of the pastry and curry kitchen, lab, test kitchen, QA Department and the butchery. The extreme two ends connecting the blocks accommodate storage for FIFO receiving stores and supervisory and managerial offices where maximum virtual control and visibility ensure proper quality controlling, and efficient and multi-disciplinary clean production lines. Flexibility for changing production lines with different goods in different shifts was most critical to overcome with the functional sequence. A 1:4 scaled, large-format machine layout with cardboard physical scaled several model machines was yet another chess game for the architect and his team, with the management of FAB Foods (PVT) LTD, during the design, apart from cardboard complex models.

The upper level rear block consists of a training room, accounts department, IT department and HR department with auspiciously located staff toilets. The upper front block comprises an operation department, supplies department, consultants' room and a meeting room with exclusive receptive lobby with tunneled "ceremonial visitor access" to the complex along with rationally located directors' rooms and boardrooms at mezzanine levels. The simple, sober, cubical floated form with a hidden roof alone consisted of a total area of 3,500 sq.m, together with another 4,600 sq.m of facilities buildings within the complex accommodated photo voltaic solar panels and hot water full time for cleaning oily surfaces. Rain water harvesting for toilets and gardening, solar electricity with glass policy and LED fittings ensured high-quality working standards and illumination levels required for production.

PROJECT DETAILS

CLIENT:
M/s Fab Foods (Pvt) Ltd

PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT:
Archt. Russell Dandeniya FIA(SL), RIBA, AIA

OTHER ARCHITECT/S:
Archt. Suranshika Ratnayake AIA(SL)
Archt. Gihan Mutugala AIA(SL)
Archt. Gayani Hewage AIA(SL)
Archt. Mohan Kulathilake AIA(SL)

SITE AREA:
2.0 acres

TOTAL FLOOR AREA:
3,500 sq.m

DESIGN PHASE:
6 months

CONSTRUCTION PHASE:
2 years, completed in 2015

A mechanically operated forced natural air flow mitigates the kitchen's temperature by 3 degree Celsius, with cross ventilation for cleaner and cooler air inlets from upper shaded levels and essential areas with an energy-saving VRV air conditioning system. With natural light and ventilation for common areas and lobbies together with rationally selected finishing palette to ease off the cleaning and maintenance costs, the office and operational areas achieved an excellent level of satisfaction for the client. Inventing architecture into an exclusive food business is a great opportunity given to RDC Architects. To undertake and complete within the agreed cost, quality and time yet another difficult architectural marvel for dynamic changing production lines was a hard exercise but enjoyable process. Absorbing the changing aspirations of the client throughout the design and construction process was a really interesting challenge for the whole team, which culminated in a satisfactory result for all parties involved.▲