

A photograph of a modern building interior, likely a museum or gallery. The space is characterized by a high, white, curved ceiling and a series of tall, slender, light-colored columns. A white Volkswagen Beetle with a black convertible top is parked on a polished, reflective floor. To the right, a long, dark, ribbed structure extends along the wall, and a glass railing provides a view of the outdoors. The overall atmosphere is clean, minimalist, and architectural.

PROJECTS





Diesel & Motor Engineering **MERCEDES BENZ CENTRE**

A multifunctional building that reveals itself along a gradient, elevates the immediate vicinity from its mundane industrial character in adopting an iconic brand. Situated at the very outskirts of the city the structure earns potential as a gateway to the city while conveying comfort, high functionality and economic efficiency.

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Photos Mahesh Bandara and Damith Wickramasinghe



The premise for the Mercedes Benz Centre for its agents DIMO came into being in manipulating the ramping up of the access road. This feature posed the opportunity to segregate the dual functions of the centre. Two entrances were accommodated with the service entry at the lower level and the formal entrance to the showroom at the higher level. The gradient also allows the building to be exposed at a soft scale and the designers avoided expressing an overpowering façade to preserve the horizontality of a low scale road.

From the formal entry at the upper level, the showroom extends as a long element running parallel to the road to affect a pleasing visual that poises above the road level.

Beyond the scaled down road view and line of sight, the building gains in volume; a design approach dictated by the pursuit to highlight vehicles on display in the most efficient way. Along the southern boundary is a three level car park that gives access off ramps to the main building including the topmost level.

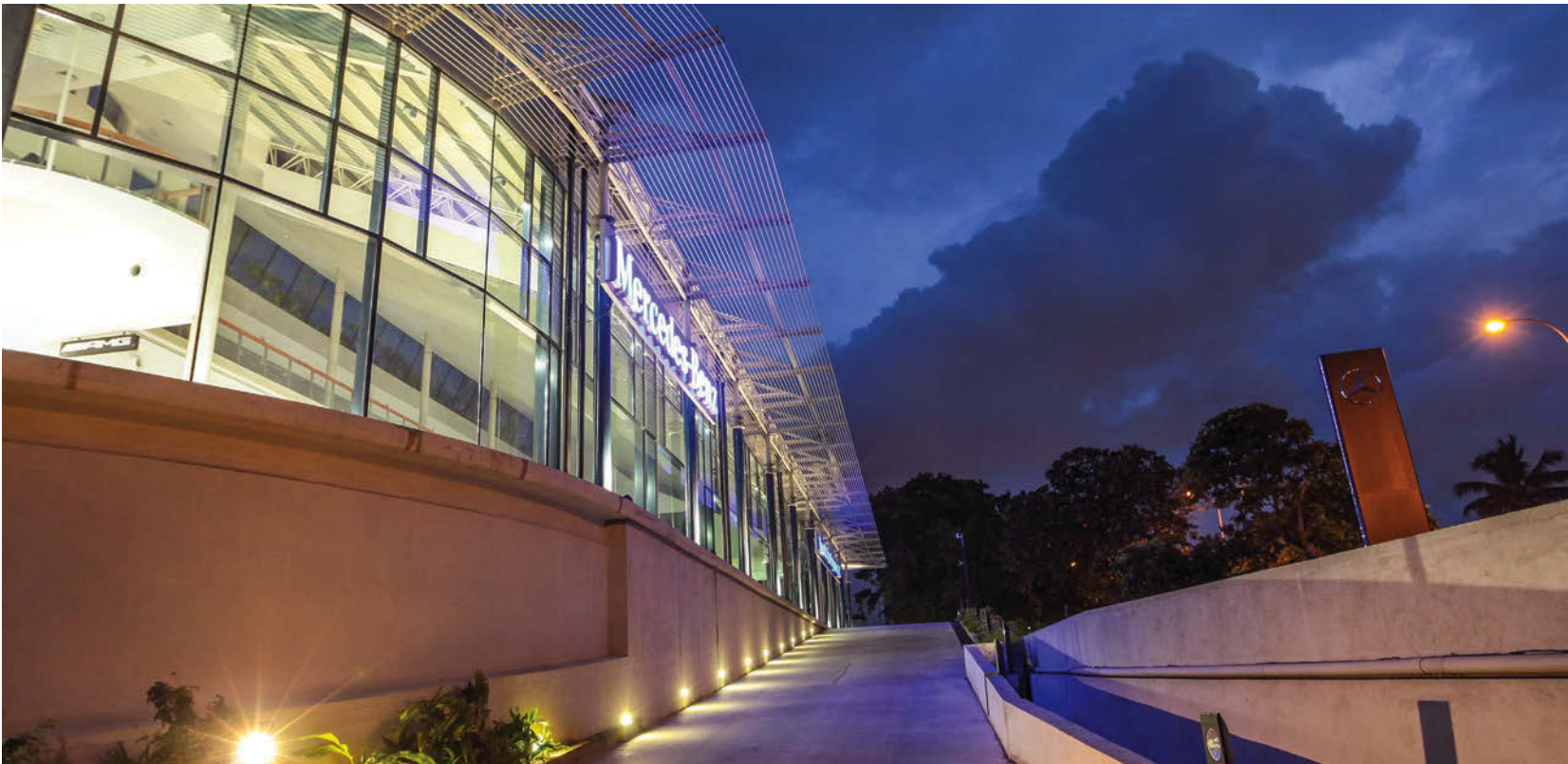
This allows for vehicles to be brought directly into building spaces such as the 'show car area' and auditorium where functions and launches are held. A notable aspect in the realization of the design is that the architects took on the role of project managers to facilitate the buildability of the design within budget and timeline. To this end design redundancies were conscientiously circumvented to serve the functional capacities of the centre that in turn resulted in a cost-effective structure.

For instance, instead of tiling, the flooring in majority of the spaces is of polished cement for greater compressive strength cut to varying degrees depending on the purpose of the space. Greater aesthetic impact is derived for the internal spaces cut to 16 fold whereas the outdoor terraces are cut twice. As a result of this design approach the cost of the building was rounded up to USD 50 per sqft. Drainage required much focus as the four and a half acre site sits in an area below sea level and thus requires removal of storm water.

In addition to designing a detailed plumbing system planters installed at various stretches of open air spaces have been designed with gutters to further assist drainage and add a humane element as well. Moreover floors have been adequately sloped to ensure drainage of water. For its showroom spaces the idea that 'vehicle is king' is impressed with emphasis on lighting and maintaining neutral colour themes that highlight the brand. Large areas of sky-lit spaces have been accommodated to gain natural light from both the north and the east and an elaborate state-of-the-art lighting system is in place. To establish a personable showroom environment a coffee lounge with timber floorings add warmth to draw visitors to spend adequate time within the premises. In the vicinity is a Mercedes Benz storyboard that details the history of the legendary brand to add character to the space.

Energy efficiency is given due consideration with low energy coefficient laminated glass for reduced heat gain and sun paths and solar





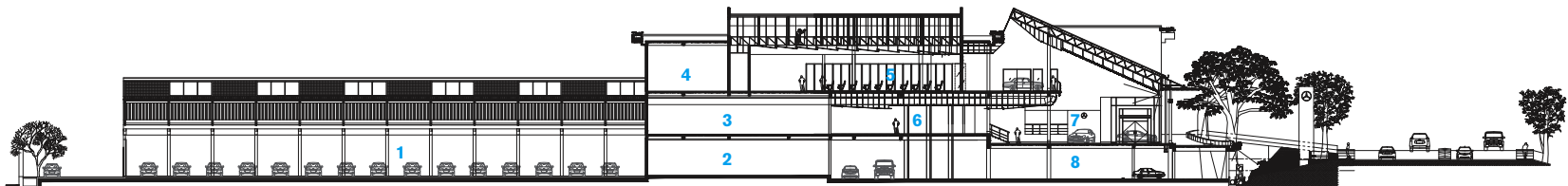
Opening page: vintage car museum area of the second floor. The polished concrete floor with terracotta effect and aluminium louvre roof system that slopes over the showroom below are

some of the elements that contribute to an economical building while remaining complementary to the brand's design leanings. Pages 22-23: the most prominent structure of the showroom level

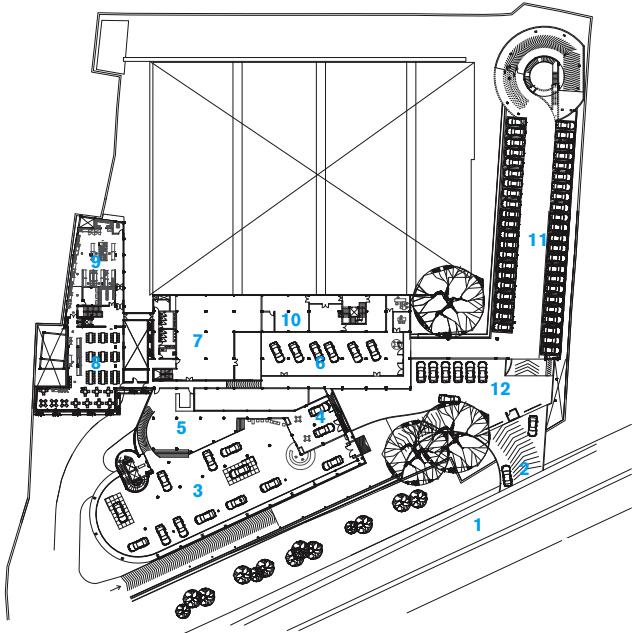
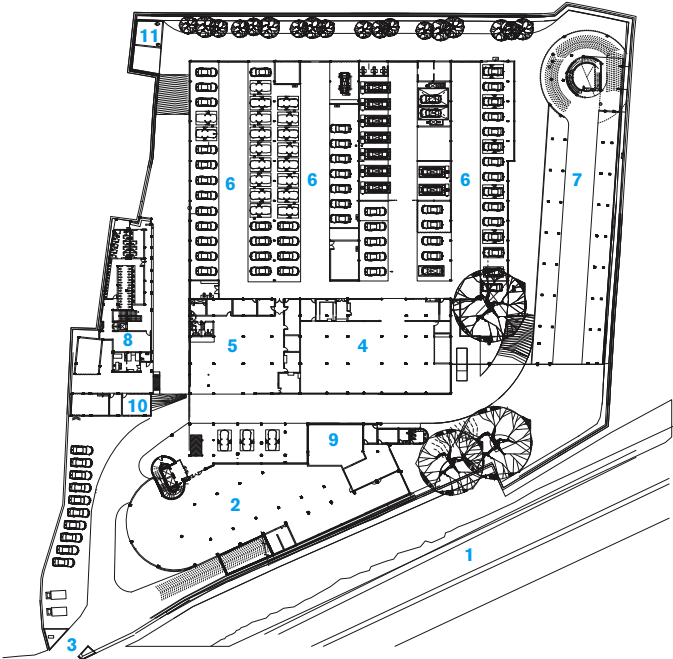
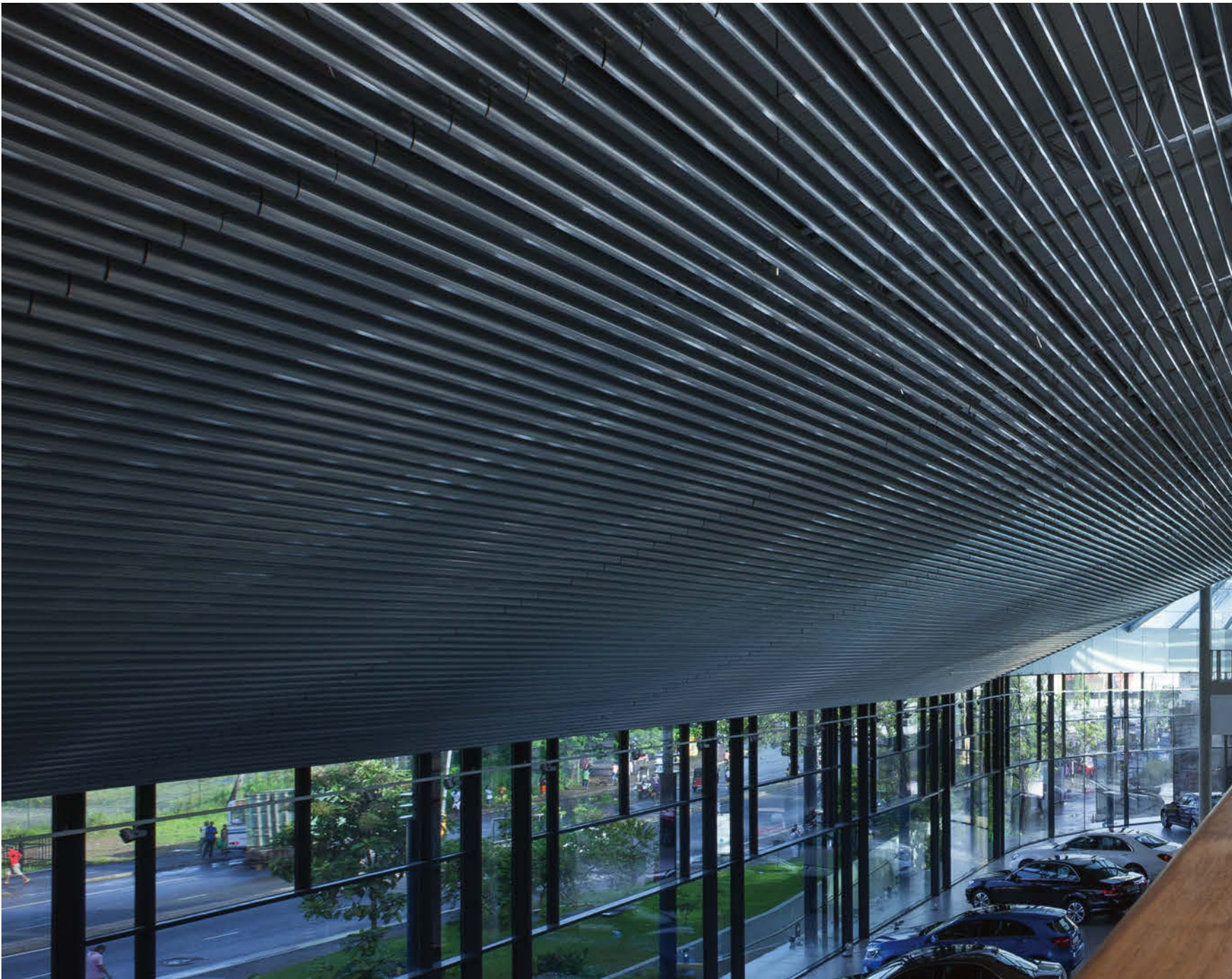
of the building revealing the material primarily used – glass, concrete and aluminium. Opposite page, top: the showroom at the upper level of the elevation. This page, top: the soft ramping on the

upper part of the access way reveals the showroom floor above the road elevation. Centre: timber floors and story board are intended to inspire a leisurely atmosphere for the coffee shop

- 1 Workshop
- 2 Workshop reception
- 3 Sales/admin office area
- 4 Training room
- 5 Auditorium
- 6 Coffee shop
- 7 Showroom
- 8 Office area



0 10M CROSS SECTION



- Ground floor plan**
- 1 Road
 - 2 Office area
 - 3 Exit
 - 4 Parts store
 - 5 Workshop reception
 - 6 Workshop area
 - 7 Parking
 - 8 Staff locker room/ generator room/toilet
 - 9 AHU/chiller room
 - 10 24 hr staff waiting
 - 11 Treatment plant
 - 12 Bedroom

- First floor plan**
- 1 Road
 - 2 Entrance
 - 3 Mercedes showroom
 - 4 Customer delivery
 - 5 Coffee shop
 - 6 Used cars area
 - 7 Sales admin office area
 - 8 Staff canteen
 - 9 Kitchen
 - 10 AHU room/services
 - 11 Parking
 - 12 Entry podium



GROUND FLOOR

FIRST FLOOR



These pages, above:
a view of the first floor
showroom and second
floor. Light enters
the spaces from the
showroom facade,
sunpath at the far end

**and through the panes
bordering the terrace
aligned with greenery.
This page, right: the
coffee shop sits at a
raised level in continuity
with the showroom space**

panels further contribute to the building's economy. To impart a homogenous effect from the exterior to the interior, the ceiling comprises of an aluminium louvre system that extends out as sun louvres and continues within as the interior ceiling.

The service, administrative spaces, and a sizeable staff canteen among other utility spaces extend to the rear of the site. Vehicles to the service and repair centre arrive through the lower level entrance where functions get underway entirely independently from the showroom environment. This vast space accommodates 90 bays demanding a comfortable working environment. Cement grills bring in airflow into the 55,000 sqft space and exhaust extraction system remove fumes expelled through filters to facilitate an

amenable and healthy working environment. To contrast with heavily technical nature of the building each podium and car park are fringed with planters and these green ornamentations are fed through a harvested water system that collects recycled waste water from the service areas.

A zonal cooling system controls cooling of specific zones at various temperatures operated through the building management system, which further controls, security and lighting. Solar generated power, and rainwater harvesting further contribute towards a sustainable building. Although a highly technical building to meet functional demands the designers have maintained a design-based product that is compatible with the brand. @



This page: green paths, planters and foliage to ease the austerity of the building at various locations of the complex; above: the passageway leading to used cars area; left: the topmost point of the building with the Mercedes Benz logo; below: the first floor areas towards the rear of the building aligned with green paths. At the centre an old tree salvaged from the original site. Opposite page: the workshop's service and repair bays. Waste water drainage is located amidst the clinker tiled flooring and ventilation is accommodated with concret grills

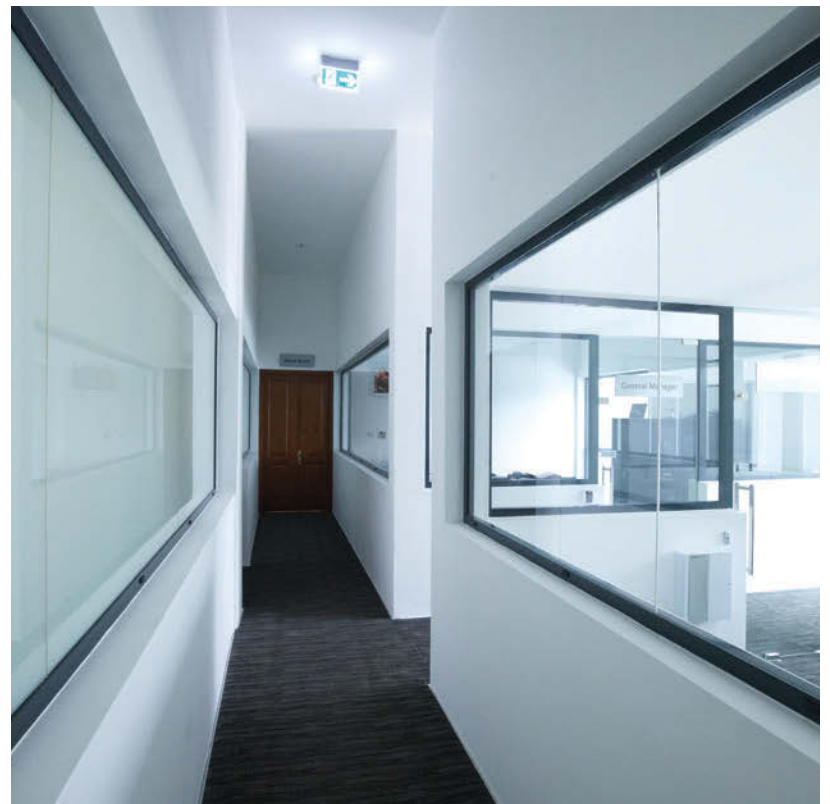
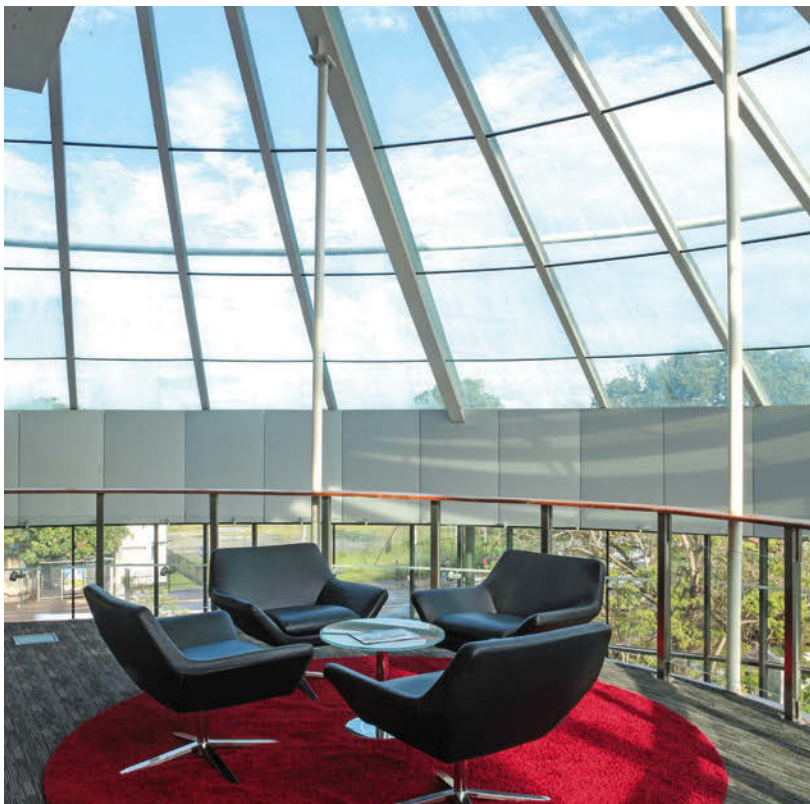






Above: the terrace show car area with visual and physical access to the auditorium floor. This allows for vehicles to be brought right into the auditorium. Bottom, left: sunpath above the sitting

area at the second floor are among several lounge areas accommodated for visitors; right: sales and admin offices located to the rear of the building. The corridor leads to the boardroom





Above: a view of the coffee shop from a rear end revealing its elevation and entrance to the showroom Below: the auditorium continues the general mute tones of the building while the

foldable fabric panel doors highlight the brand's colour theme. Panelled doors can be folded back to merge with the floor's show car area and expand the space

Design
Principal Architect, BGJF Consultancy Services:
Archt Bernard Gomez

Design Team

Archt Bernard Gomez

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Rajeeva Weeraratne

S T Hemasiri

Civil Contractor

Maga Engineering

Project Management and Site Supervision

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Structural Engineers

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Principal Engineer

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Electrical Engineer

Eng Kosala Kamburudeniya

Water Supply Drainage, and Waste water disposal

Eng Nimal Perera

HVAC: Eng Chandana Dalugoda

Client

Diesel and Motor Engineering

Site Area: **15,856 m²**

Built Area: **20,800 m²**

Number of parking slots: **200 bays**

