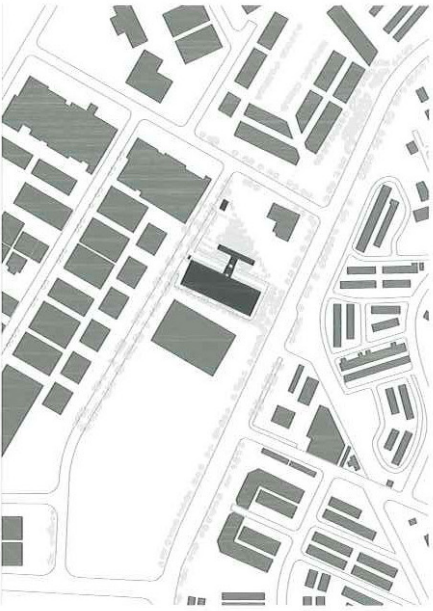
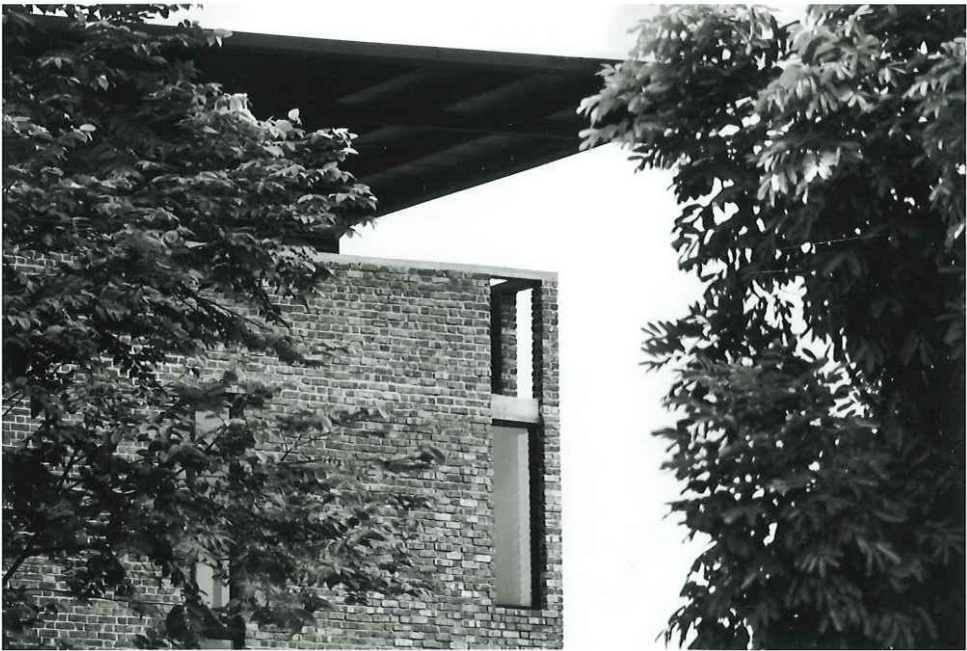
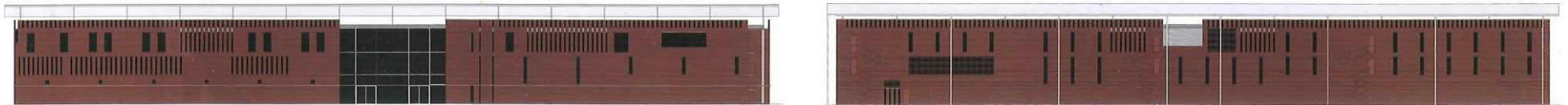


British India Corporate Office & Warehouse

1 Jalan Teknologi 3/1, Kota Damansara, Daerah Petaling, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Petaling Jaya  
Petaling Jaya - Selangor, Malaysia

Architects	Smallprojects / Kevin Low Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Clients	BTC Clothier Sdn Bhd Petaling Jaya - Selangor, Malaysia
Commission	2004
Design	2004 - 2005
Construction	2006 - 2007
Occupancy	2007
Site	15,109 m²
Ground floor	4,065 m²
Total floor	9,148 m²
Costs	4,161,857 USD

**Programme** This warehouse also accommodates the design, marketing and business functions of its upmarket clothing company client. The architect was keen to address the accepted norms for corporate and warehouse architecture - on the one hand luxurious, on the other cleanly efficient - and chose brick as the principle material. It is affordable, locally available and gives the building rich texture, emphasised by the random slot windows that animate the interior. Construction flaws are retained and the structure and services expressed as a counterpoint to the excesses of the rag trade. Daylighting and natural ventilation are prioritised and a ‘safari roof’ provides cooling to support the sustainable intentions of the building.

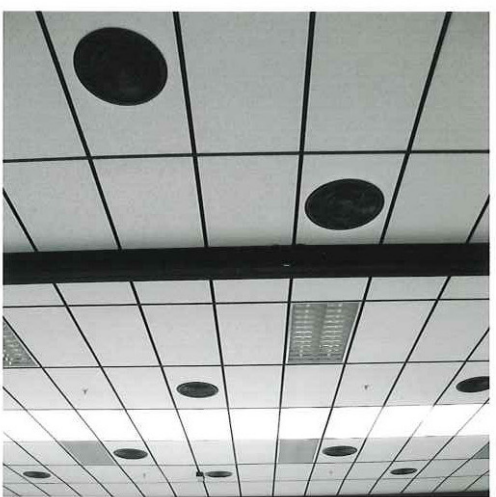
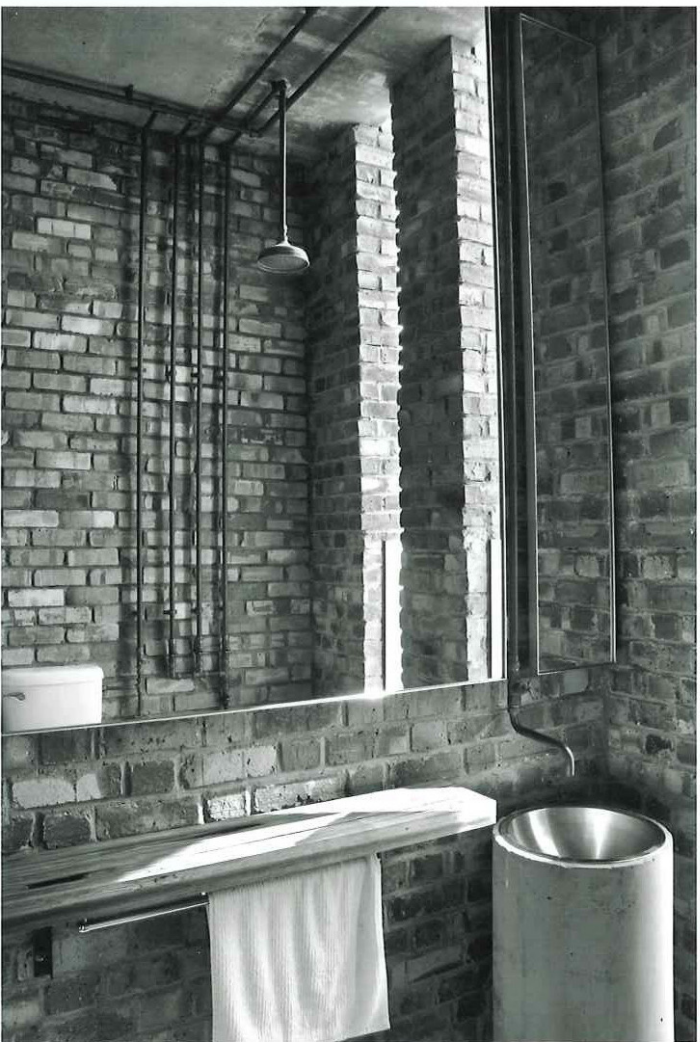


The BritishIndia Clothing Company warehouse was a commission to amalgamate the entire operational, managerial, marketing, design and warehousing departments of a Malaysian clothing manufacturer under a single roof. The project became a task of assembling those work functions and activities within a simple rectangular shell, located on a trapezoidal plot of land in a crusty industrial neighbourhood suburb.

The project began its narrative as the means to reclaim lost textures in contemporary industrial building types in the use locally fired clay brick; a material with greater insulative properties in elemental form than the typically applied fibrous wool insulation in conjunction with an aluminium sided enclosure, and one with far greater ability to weather the gradual accumulation of detritus and age on its surfaces.

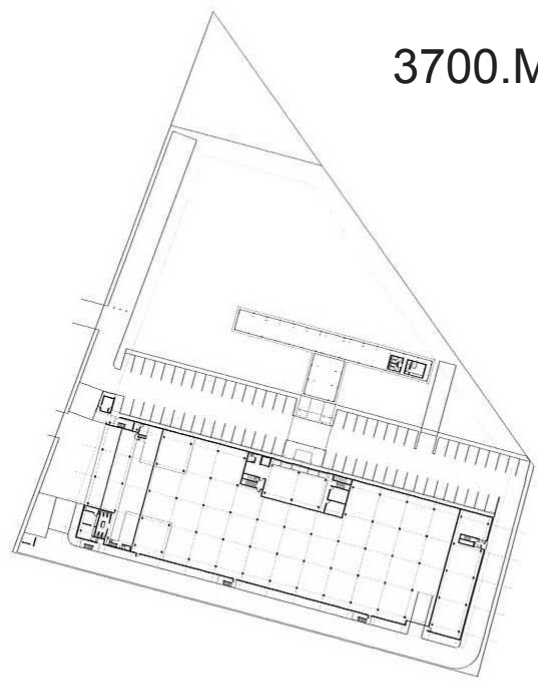
A shed in brick was the result.

Not an ordinary shed, however. The building which was imaged was to be a vast brick ark with the character of an old London train yard and detail more commonly found in midtown backstreets: the high life, sinful excesses and dealings of the rag trade cut an interesting contrast with that of unadorned brick and plywood formed concrete, tortured steel and somber meditation: the building was designed as a symbolic ark of redemption. The narrative was to inform all aspects of design, from correlating internal finctions with elevation treatment to the choices and application of finishes from lobby areas to private offices and staff restrooms.





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The original spatial concept for the building maximised efficiency by way of separating office functions from the warehouse store; a primary idea basic to the understanding of how warehousing facilities work. Once separated, the office was moulded into the shape of a U by the insertion of a tree-filled garden; a precious piece of green commodity, given its industrial setting. The clients, being unfamiliar with the rigors of bulk warehousing, voiced preference for a parti which had the office facility spread over the entire footprint of the warehouse on the top floor. After attempts to persuade them otherwise had failed, the scheme was subsequently changed to accommodate their wishes and designed to minimise the problems associated with the less efficient layout. As such, it would not be incorrect to say that the warehouse, as it was finally constructed, began its life as an intrinsically flawed design.

The design raised the vast top floor of offices to a height of thirty feet to make allowance for an unimpeded and tall volumed ground floor warehousing below. Slender narrow windows give rhythm to the elevation and allow for the romance and mystery of slot daylighting into the deep warehouse interior, permitting sufficient light to see by without compromise to excessive heat gain which larger openings would have brought. The structure, being that of a basic reinforced concrete frame, permitted its full clay brick wall enclosure the luxury of supporting its sole weight, thus allowing structural expression of its loading forces by way of greater width for the windows at the office level above.

The building is accessed through a lobby at its mid length of the warehouse - a timber floored, glass walled space with its brick walls and structure left in their freshly laid and formstruck state. Construction errors found in structural members and slabs were simply removed with the scars inadvertently leftover from demolition kept unpatched as trace of the construction biography: an attempt to seek the comfort of acceptance of an architecture as imperfect and flawed as its human occupants.

The office floor above is divided into a narrower band of administrative and managerial offices on the north long edge, and a deeper open office plan along its south length, by a tall circulation corridor running the length of the building. Octopus-like arms of the air handling ducts characterise the ceiling areas of the administrative side and circulation spine, hidden over the open office plan by an acoustic ceiling and a vast *safari roof* overhead; one to help insulate the internal volume through the use of cross ventilated air.

The washrooms have been designed as abattoir stalls and backlane walls, the wash basins as altars of cleansing with their raw copper and brass plumber assembled tapware, taking the narrative for the building down to its logical and detailed conclusion.

