

The image features a series of vertical color bars in shades of orange, yellow, green, and red, arranged in a stepped fashion. A dark, solid-colored rectangular block at the bottom serves as a background for the title and subtitle. The title 'COLOUR IN ARCHITECTURE' is written in a large, white, serif font, spanning across the dark block and partially overlapping the color bars. The subtitle is in a smaller, italicized serif font, located below the title.

# COLOUR IN ARCHITECTURE

*Research into the use of colour and its psychological impact,  
carried out by The Architects' Journal with ICI Dulux Trade*

# PARK HOTEL

Right Red lights 'paint'  
the atrium at night

Abandoned for 20 years before finally being completed, the recently opened Park Hotel in Navi Mumbai, a planned city near Mumbai, is now a chic urban retreat boasting a wealth of traditional Indian patterns, textures and colours, combined fluently with the clean lines redolent of early Modernism.

In October 2005, client Park Hotels, part of the Apeejay Surrendra Group, asked London-based Project Orange to come up with an architectural and interior strategy to complete the building and to create a series of gardens and design a poolside area.

'We went back to original Modernist intentions of the building and sought to tidy up the exterior and to render the whole building white,' says Project Orange's Michael Veal. 'This may seem impractical, yet white-washing is a tradition in this area and is typically redone each year after the monsoon.'

Project Orange installed a double-glazed window system and designed a roof to enclose and protect the atrium, into which the guest rooms all open.

The orange-plastered bar 'breaks out to address the terrace', says Veal, while the reception zone is plastered white, in traditional hand-worked jali (perforated stone screens), contrasting in colour and texture with a green silk-upholstered seating booth.

A pool-side terrace has a huge abstract glass mosaic in blues, greys and oranges, which creates a graphic backdrop for the dramatic black elliptical pool, and a white garden at the rear of the building is set out in a grid mirroring the adjacent elevation – and contains only white flowers.

By night, the building's exterior is illuminated by amber and blue LED lights.

Large bedrooms with high ceilings are decorated in 'a classic neutral palate lifted by flashes of bright colour'. Project Orange designed all the furniture and most of the fabrics for the hotel. Bathrooms have long teak vanity counters and are clad in pristine white tiles.

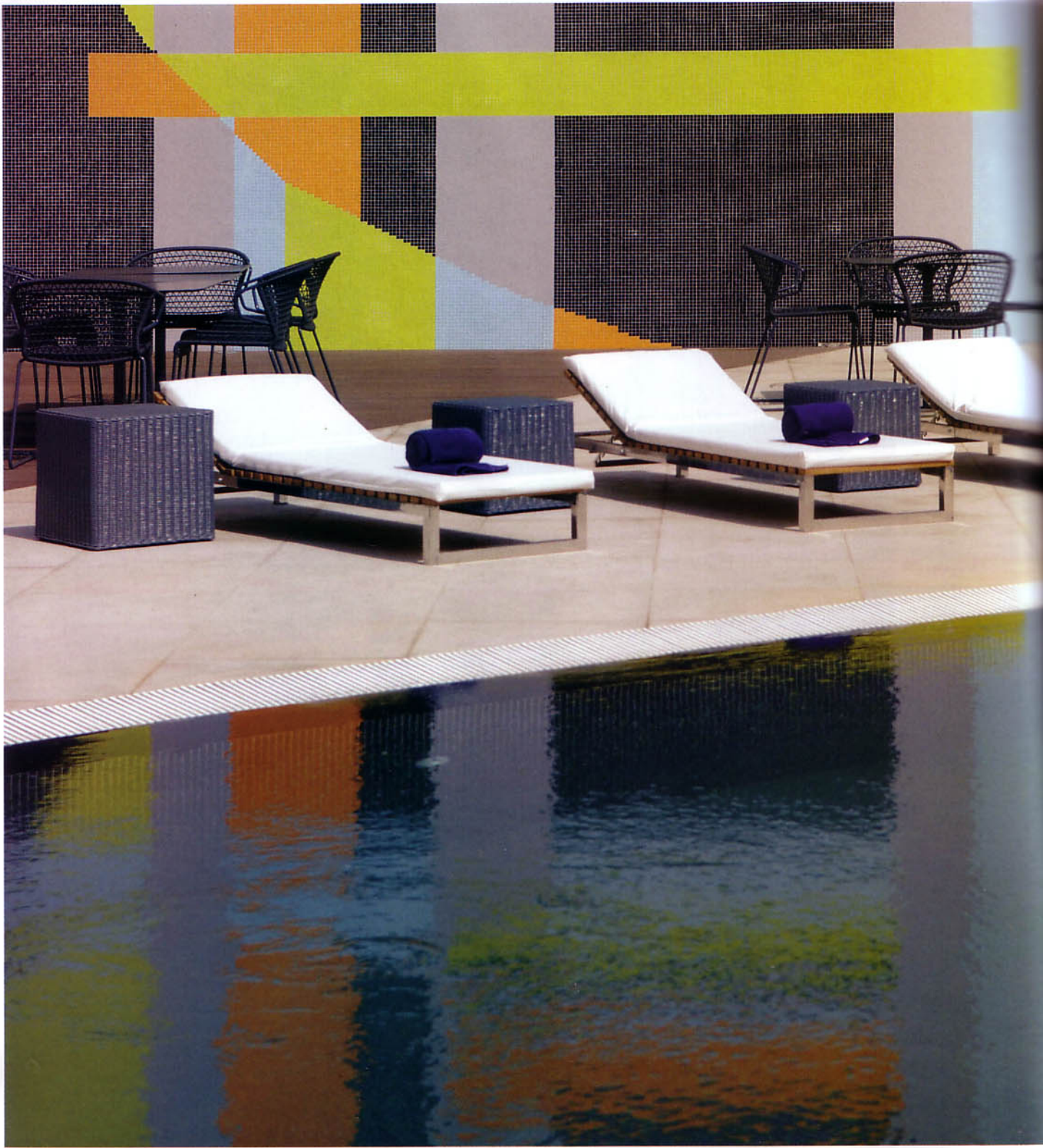
Veal describes the bar, with its walls lined with teak slats and mirrors as 'a mature moody space'. Bespoke brass wall lights 'exude candle-like points of light', and the furniture is a combination of formal leather sofas and an eclectic mix of armchairs, all sitting on traditional Indian rugs. The restaurant floor and table-tops are white marble, in stark contrast to columns clad in horizontal strips of oak, and pale-green upholstery.

The 24-hour coffee shop, a feature of Indian hotels, has an arresting backdrop of traditionally patterned tiling in red and orange.













**Far left** A gigantic mural provides a backdrop to the pool  
**Left** Amber and blue leds illuminate the exterior

'India is extremely colourful,' says Project Orange director James Soane, 'and one of the issues for us was not to be overwhelmed by the choices'. The client was keen that Project Orange 'explored the use of colour in our way – allowing a different sensibility to filter through', Soane explains. The courtyard mosaic, he adds, was both a 'big gesture' and 'a throwback to Indian Modernism and personal memories of visiting Chandigarh'.

Soane believes that architects get very defensive about their use of colour: 'We certainly do not use any scientific methodology to choose colours. Perhaps it goes back more to the concept of an exploration of an Eastern thematic.'

He describes the way Project Orange uses the idea of a neutral background and natural materials to become a setting for strong colour – 'thus the paper-white painted bedroom with its bamboo floor has fabric accents in red, pink, yellow and black. The exterior of the building is painted white with a teak decking and sandstone terrace – but with this strong coloured wall.'

It would be fair to say, Soane adds, that Project Orange 'approaches colour in a graphic way'.

But what about climatic considerations and the relationship between colour and function?

'Clearly in a hot climate colour does affect mood,' he admits. 'Our approach to the atrium of the hotel is an example of a space which is only partially cooled (it takes the cool air from the rooms and exhausts it from the roof). We painted the space white in order to maximise the sense of space, light and cool. However, by night the red lamps over each bedroom paint the corridors while the atrium is lit with blue at the base, suggesting a pool, and amber at the top, suggesting sunrise/sunset.'

Project Orange's work responds to context, Soane adds, 'but this is not necessarily only geographical – it also ties in to our narrative'. He describes a more recent project in England, where strips of yellow and red glass in the windows of an apartment reflect the history of the building as a showroom that has, for the past 30 years, sold decorative glass.

'Overall, I suppose, we embrace the notion of decoration and colour to enhance the environment. We believe that architects have lost confidence in using colour, finding it subject to taste and fashion and therefore, implicitly, criticism. Our view is that a strong statement, either architectural or interior, that embraces a broad palate of materials, textures and colours, makes for a richer and more inhabited environment.'