

# EARTHY STROKES

The red-bricked staircase in this Mumbai office combined with a dramatic meandering light fixture forms the ideal backdrop for a smooth flow of spaces

**The team at Abraham John Architects,** Mumbai faced a design conundrum when owners of S2 Realty & Developers Private Ltd wanted an unconventional office space in the heart of Mumbai city. To convert an old crumbling structure into a modern usable office posed a few design challenges. Also, the property, owing to its location was devoid of any landscape.

The team countered this with a vertical hydroponics wall to bring in the green element and redesigned the existing staircase making it the focal point of the office.

"The building covers an area of 9000 sq ft spread across four floors. The ground floor functions as a

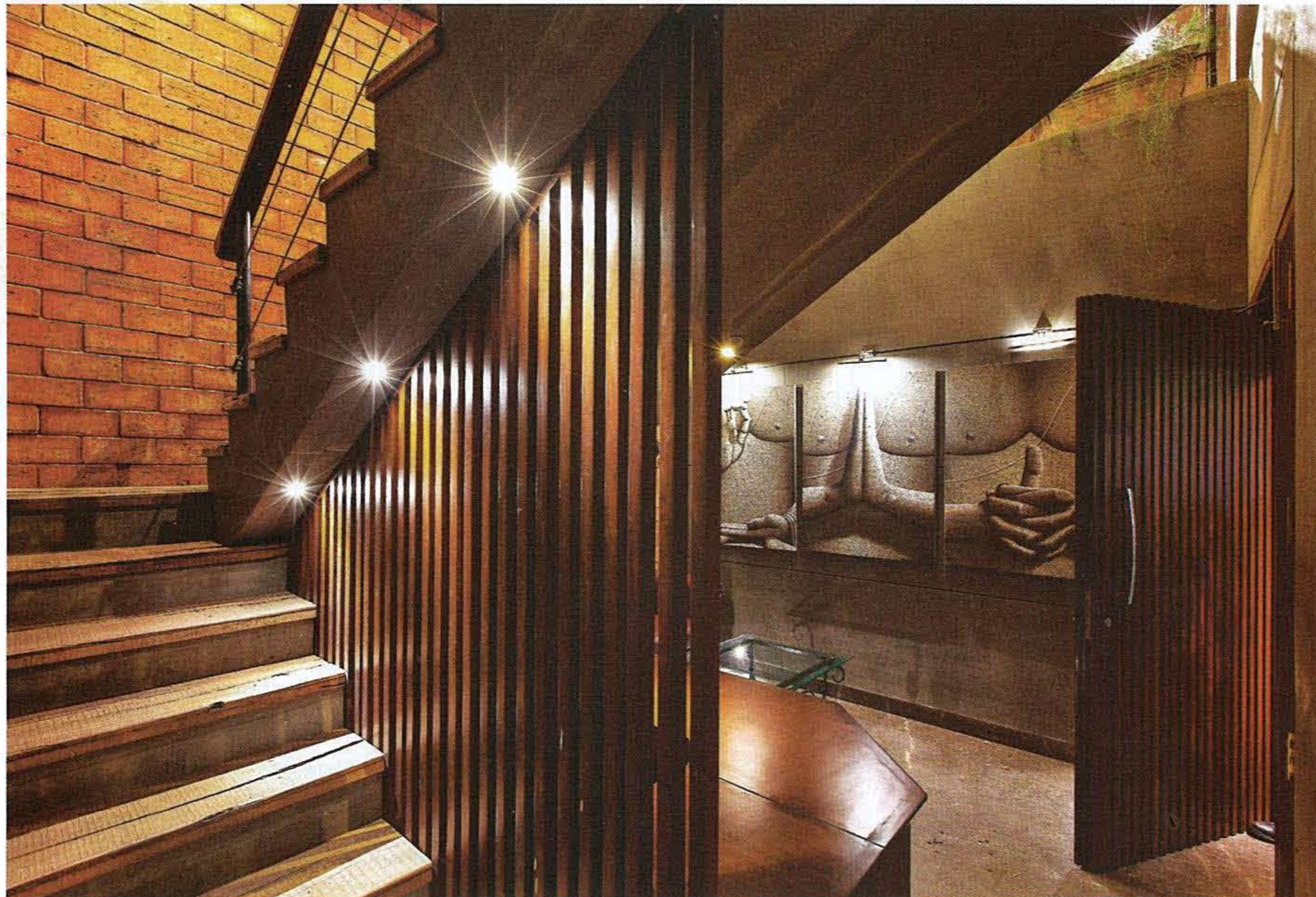
common lobby area while the first and the second floor houses a furniture lifestyle store. The office space for S2 Realty is situated on the topmost floor," says Alan Abraham, principal architect.

The space opens up to a compact windowless lobby area with a staircase leading up to the floors above. The staircase was designed to frame an atrium with a suspended light fixture. Dropped from the sleeper wood ceiling of the top floor, the installation extends down right upto the first floor. This brings in a sense of verticality and also acts as a major light source for the lobby area.

"As S2 is a construction company, we decided to use their profession as the design inspiration.

**Below** This office designed by Alan Abraham of Abraham John Architects is 9000 sq ft and is spread across four floors. The space opens up to a compact windowless lobby area with a staircase that is lit through the atrium. Balinese artefacts adorn the space under the staircase.

**Facing page** The staircase was redesigned to create an atrium that brought in a sense of verticality. The red bricks bring an element of traditionalism.



Thus, we have used construction related materials like exposed red brick walls and wood clad stairs," says Abraham. "The exposed red brick wall runs vertically through the staircase and continues horizontally along the wall of the third floor."

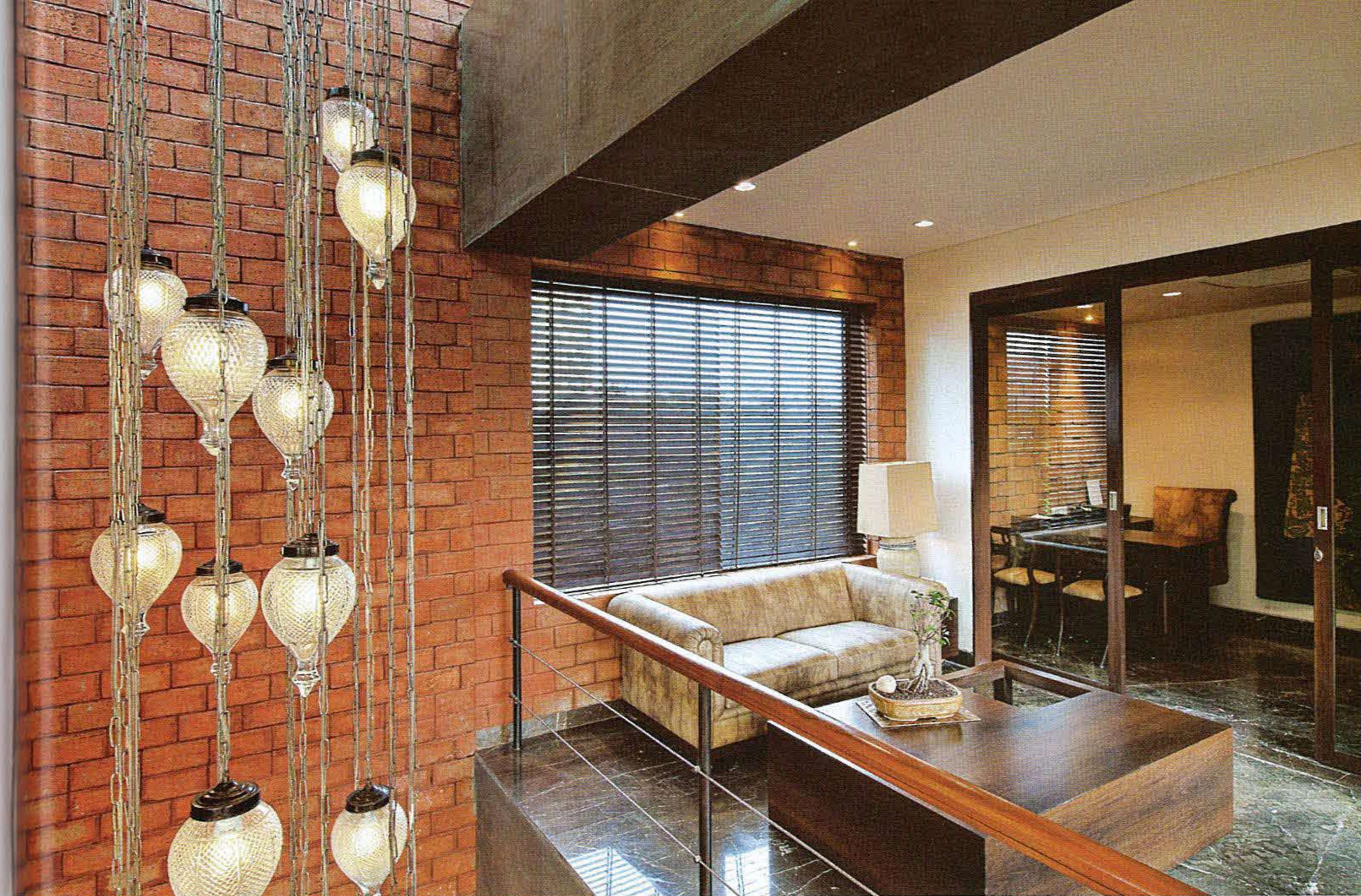
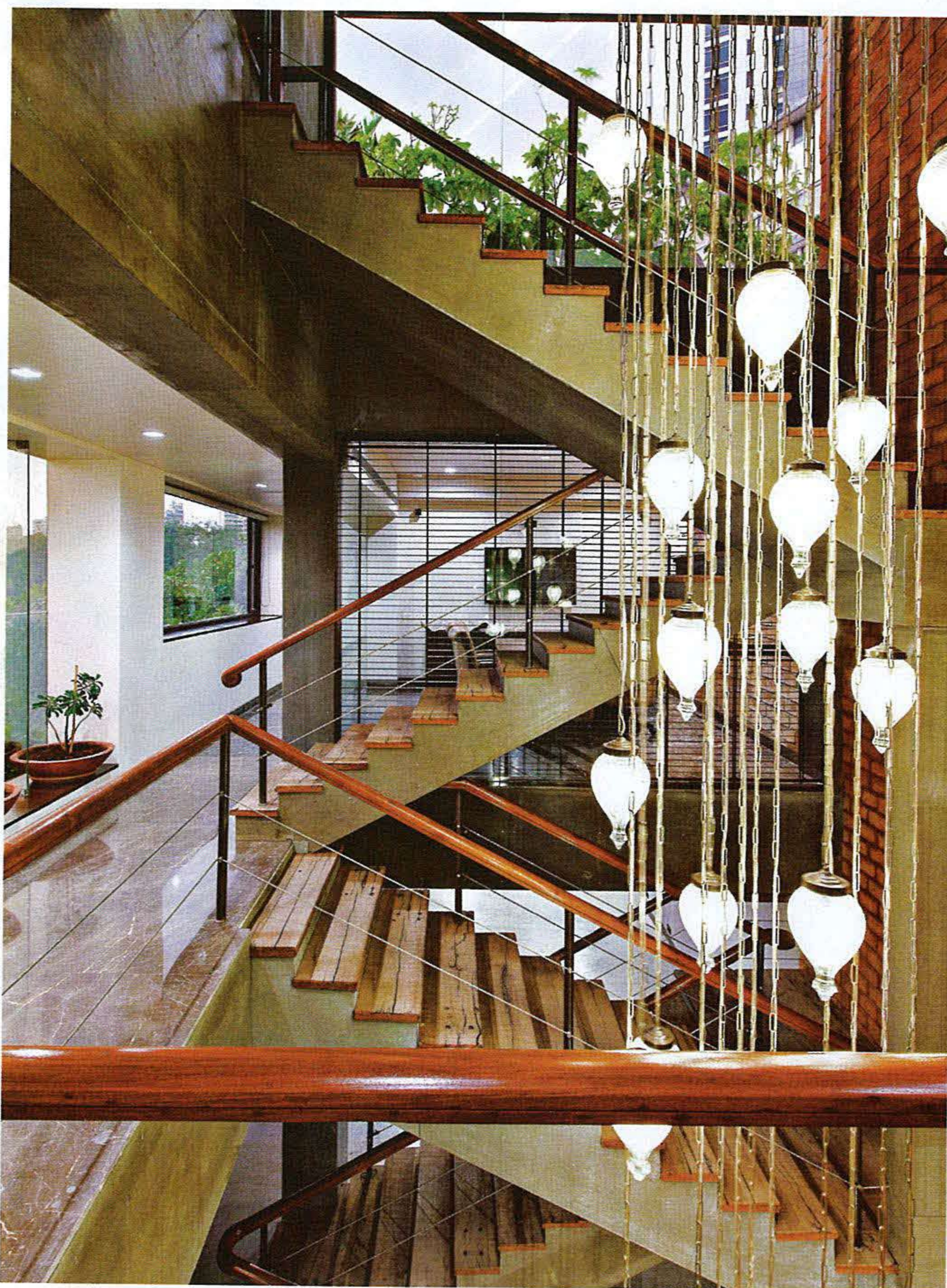
To further strengthen the old structure and add a design element, an exposed column was created to run from the lobby to the third floor ceiling. As the building is linear in shape, the staircase leads

one to the centre of the office space on the top floor. The reception, administrators' cabins, open workstations and pantry are on one side while the executives' cabins and a conference room are on the other end.

To maintain a continuous visual dialogue, Abraham extensively uses glass as the major medium of partition. This brings in a sense of openness and allows for an uninterrupted view of the

**Below and facing page above** A suspended light installation framed by the atrium and staircase is the design focus of the office. The red-bricked wall forms the ideal backdrop for a dramatic play of light.

**Facing page below** To maintain a continuous visual dialogue the architect has extensively used glass as the major medium of partition. This brings in a sense of openness and allows for an uninterrupted view of the light chandelier.







**Preceding pages** The red brick wall continues along the third floor and adds to the natural earthy feel. The architect has retained the original Italian marble flooring and has used wooden venetian blinds along all the glass partitions to bring in privacy.

**These pages** The space is accessorised with artefacts that the owners have acquired over the years, giving each cabin a personal identity. Natural light is brought in with a skylight while a wall covered in creepers adds to the earthy feel.

**Legend to plan** 1 Lobby, 2 reception, 3 administrative work area, 4 pantry, 5 main work area, 6 restrooms, 7 conference room, 8 private cabins, 9 passage.

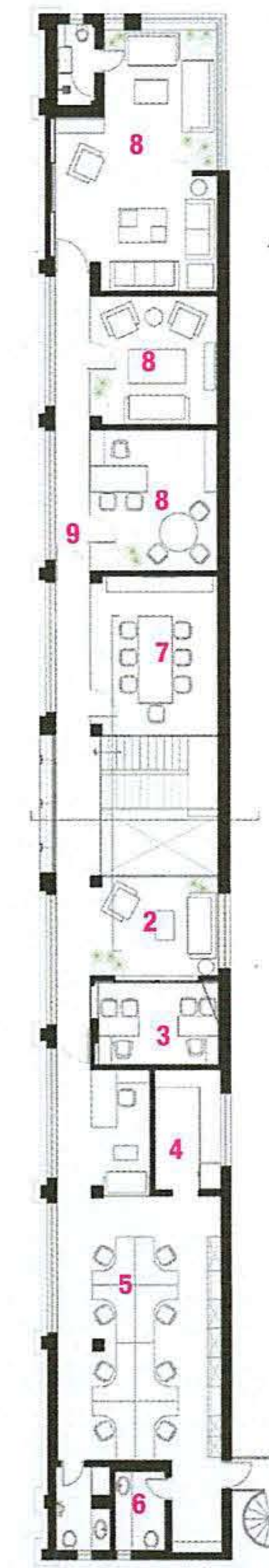
chandelier and the staircase from almost every area of the office.

According to the architect, wooden venetian blinds were used along all the glass partitions to bring in privacy for meetings and add to the natural earthy design effect.

"The owners are fond of art and had a number of artefacts that they had collected over the years. Thus, accessorising the space was a collaborative

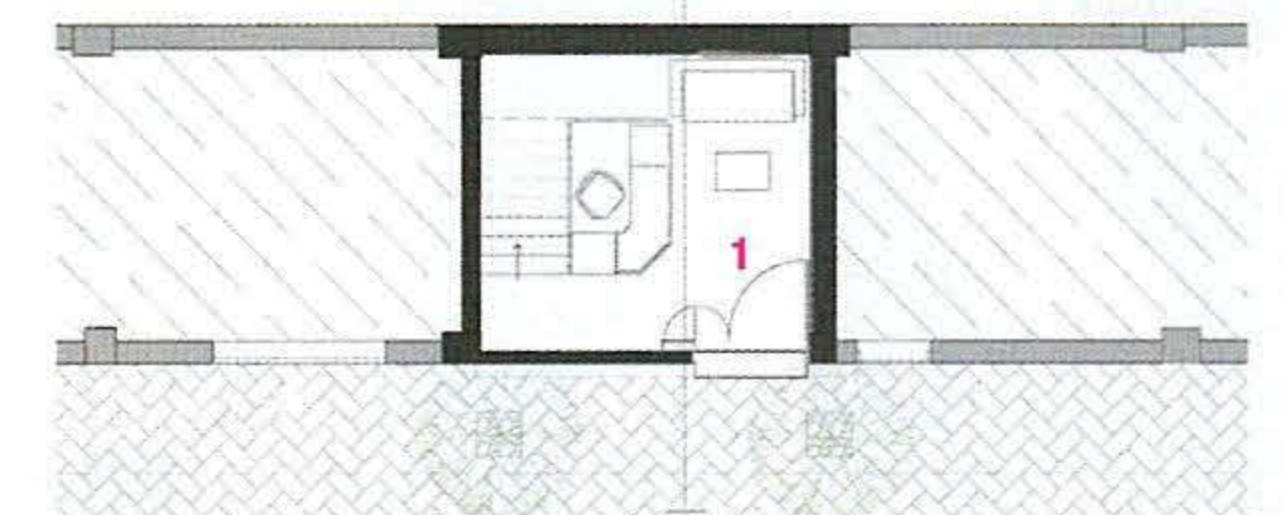
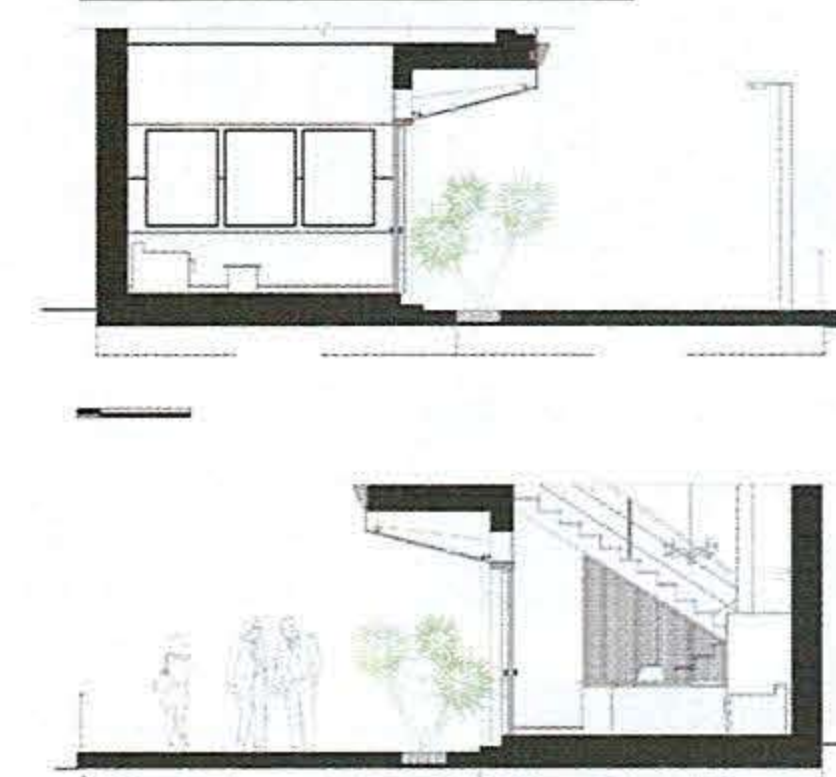
effort and this brings in a personal identity to each cabin," says Abraham.

The main executive cabin located at the corner of the structure is spacious and has an attached bathroom as well. The space is accessorised with a number of artefacts and natural light is brought in through a skylight that was specially created in this space. A wall covered in creepers adds to the earthy feel.

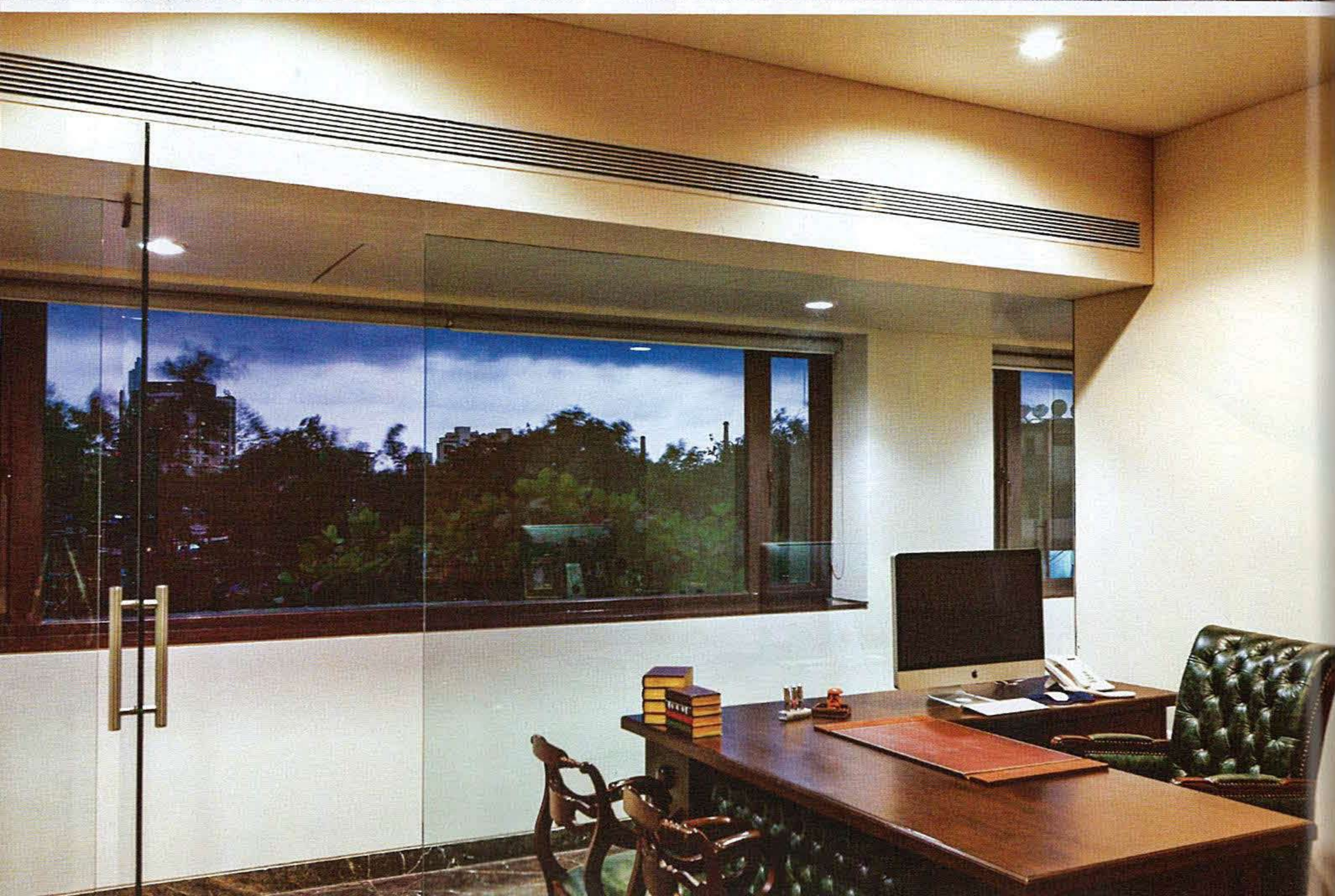
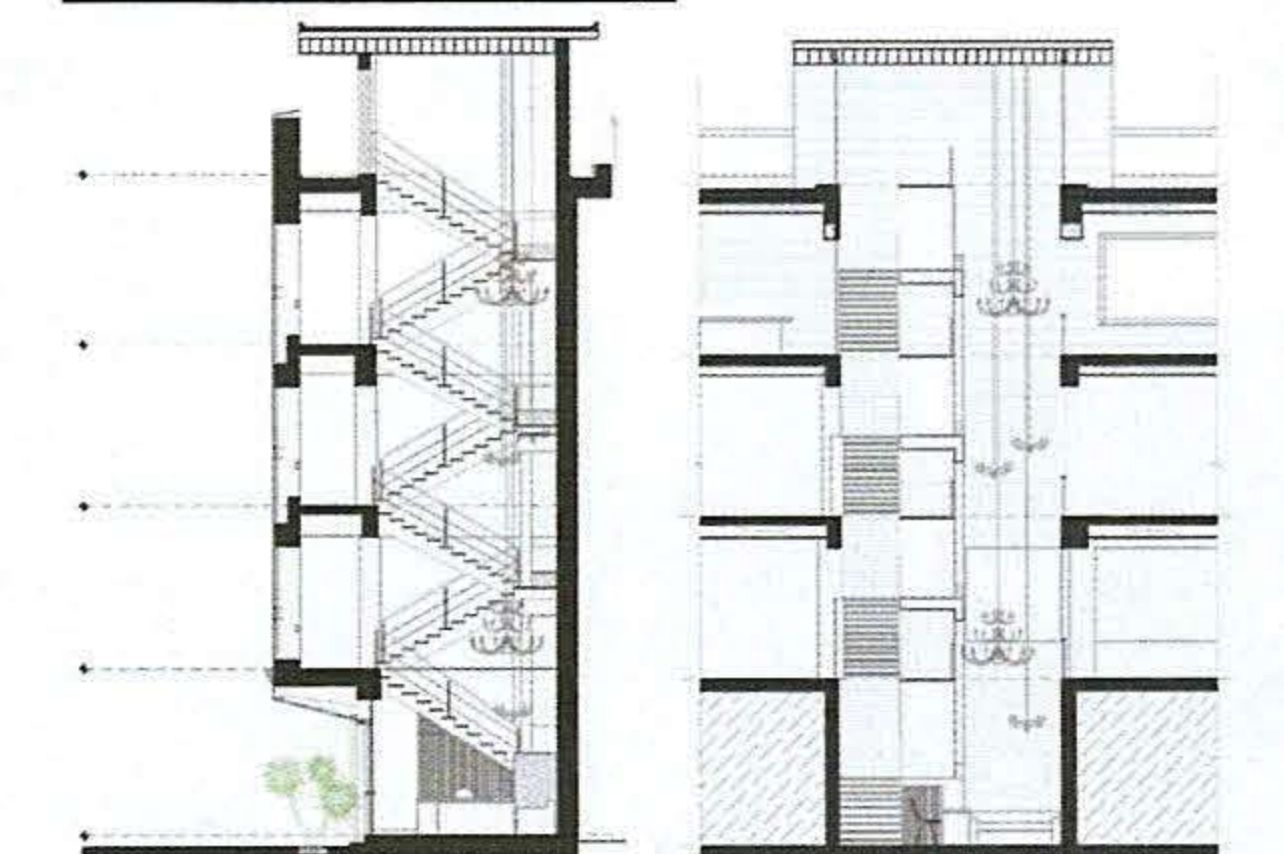


**Third floor plan**

**Ground floor sectional view**



**Sectional views of the building**



**Location** Mumbai, Maharashtra  
**Owner** Shetty family  
**Interior designer** Alan Abraham; Abraham John Architects  
**Furnishings** R HOUSE

**Story by** Amanda Peters  
**Photography by** Alan Abraham

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