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LOBBYING FOR SUCCESS

When it comes to luxury projects trying to make an impression, the fun now starts right at the entrance

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There's nothing like a great first impression. India's real-estate developers know this only too well. This explains why lobbies in the city's plush upcoming projects are getting ever grander.

A lobby or an entrance area (often a hall or atrium) is the first thing a visitor or prospective buyer encounters when visiting a building. So developers know they have one shot at making sure your jaw drop, and are going to considerable lengths to make the areas as impressive as possible.

From crystal-studded ceilings and vertical water installations to world-class interiors and air-conditioned insides that take up nearly four floors, lobbies in some luxury projects are now more than just waiting areas. For developers the idea is to create larger-than-life spaces to draw prospective buyers and make an impression on their guests and visitors for years to come.

Ramesh Nair, chief operating officer, business, and international director at realty consultancy, JLL India, says that a lobby offers a "pull factor" or a big draw for those entering.

"Even more so in the premium and luxury segments," he adds. "Home buyers want a welcoming atmosphere right from the word 'go'. Lobbies are obviously the first port of call."

FIRST LOOK

Nishant Agarwal, managing director of Avighna Group says that a majestic lobby not only gives a preview of what is to come, but also leaves a memorable impact on the visitor.

He would know. The lobby of the 61-storey twin towers at One Avighna Park in Parel has an illuminated ceiling laden with 54,450 crystals sourced from Egypt. The installation stretches across 1.7km, weighs 5.5 tonnes and was created by DHA Design Services, a London company that also helped redesign the entrance for that city's iconic Victoria & Albert Museum.

"The idea was to give residents and visitors a 'wow' feeling the moment they stepped in," says Agarwal. It took nearly four months to complete.

In Worli, The Ahuja Towers, a 53-storey project, has a lobby lounge that features a 28-foot-high water installation that goes from ceiling to floor. It is designed by New York-based Wilson Associates (who also worked on the Atlantis Hotel lobby in the UAE) and not only looks striking, but also reduces



(Top) The lobby of One Avighna Park in Parel has an illuminated ceiling laden with 54,450 crystals sourced from Egypt. (Above) Lodha's World Towers in Lower Parel has white-gold-finish detailing.

the temperature of the lobby, saving energy.

The lobby also doubles as a lounge. "There are comfy chairs, sofas and television screens so guests have plenty to do while waiting for residents," says a spokesperson of Ahuja.

OPULENT, UNIQUE

Another factor that has led to the increased grandeur of entrance lobbies is the allowance given by the Municipal Corporation's development control rules. "The lobby is free up to a height of 7.2 metres and is not included in the FSI of a project," says Mumbai-based architect Carl Bhesania. He says that developers are making the

temperature of the lobby, saving energy.

most of this allowance to give an impressive first-look to projects.

So when homes cost upwards of Rs 4 crore, how can a lobby reflect that luxury? With amenities that match the opulence.

The 48-storey Indiabulls Sky has a 48-foot quadruple-height lobby with local and international art works and installations. There's also a gourmet restaurant and deli for residents and visitors.

walls and a luxury-on-call concierge service.

In Bandra-Kurla Complex, Rustomjee Oriana's lobby offers premium concierge services. The lobby staff can make restaurant reservations and travel plans, manage spa appointments and at-home services. Oriana's 3,500-square-foot gallery-like lobby has been designed by Singapore interior designer David Tay. It also houses a lounge, a recording studio and a coffee shop.

"When residents of luxury projects expect the best, our challenge is to exceed their expectations through exclusivity," says Percy Chowdhry,

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JLL India

director, Rustomjee Group. He adds that Oriana's services influence the decision-making process for buyers.

The newfound focus on creating imposing lobbies serves a twin purpose. It impresses buyers as well as serves as a vibrant socialising zone for residents. "Developers are borrowing the concept from 5-star hotels, where a lavish lobby represent the luxury that the hotel stands for," says Pankaj Kapoor, managing director of realty research firm Liases Foras. A good lobby can become an ideal space for get-togethers among eventual residents.

A luxury home that is impressive, has world-class amenities and is a great place to chill with the neighbours – now that's exclusivity.

PROPERTY RATES IN MUMBAI

SOUTH MUMBAI		CENTRAL SUBURBS	
Location	Rate (per sq ft ²)	Location	Rate (per sq ft ²)
Colaba ²	33,500 to 51,500	Byculla	24,000 to 25,100
Cuffe Parade	54,300 to 79,600	Wadala	17,200 to 26,800
Nariman Point	60,000 to 1.2L	Dadar	27,400 to 28,100
Churchgate ²	48,400 to 65,500	Kings Circle	19,500 to 31,400
Marine Drive ²	46,500 to 69,000	Sion	17,100 to 18,500
Malabar Hills	58,700 to 82,500	Warden Road	41,000 to 79,500
Walkeshwar	45,000 to 81,500	Altamount Road	54,600 to 79,500
Nepeansea Road	66,100 to 68,000	Bombay Central	25,400 to 53,600
Peddar Road	38,500 to 58,700	Mahalaxmi	29,200 to 30,800
Kemps Corner	42,300 to 65,500	Worli	38,200 to 39,700
Ward Road	41,000 to 79,500	Lower Parel	28,100 to 30,400
Altamount Road	54,600 to 79,500	Prabhadevi	33,100 to 34,100
Bombay Central	25,400 to 53,600	Shivaji Park	25,500 to 41,500
Mahalaxmi	29,200 to 30,800	WESTERN SUBURBS	
Worli	38,200 to 39,700	Bandra West	33,500 to 51,600
Lower Parel	28,100 to 30,400	Bandra East	25,100 to 26,300
Prabhadevi	33,100 to 34,100	Khar East	35,900 to 37,500
Shivaji Park	25,500 to 41,500	Khar West	35,900 to 37,500
WESTERN SUBURBS		Santacruz East	15,800 to 30,000
Bandra West	33,500 to 51,600	Santacruz West	46,200 to 48,200
Bandra East	25,100 to 26,300	Vile Parle East	25,000 to 42,000
Khar East	35,900 to 37,500	Vile Parle West	24,400 to 35,600
Khar West	35,900 to 37,500	Andheri West	18,000 to 19,100
Santacruz East	15,800 to 30,000	Andheri East	14,500 to 24,000
Santacruz West	46,200 to 48,200	Goregoan East	13,200 to 21,900
Vile Parle East	25,000 to 42,000	Goregoan West	13,300 to 14,300
Vile Parle West	24,400 to 35,600	Malad West	12,500 to 23,000
Andheri West	18,000 to 19,100	Malad East	12,100 to 13,000
Andheri East	14,500 to 24,000	Kandivali West	11,800 to 18,100
Goregoan East	13,200 to 21,900	Kandivali East	10,600 to 11,900
Goregoan West	13,300 to 14,300	Borivali West	12,500 to 22,500
Malad West	12,500 to 23,000	NAVI MUMBAI	
Malad East	12,100 to 13,000	Location	Rate (per sq ft ²)
Kandivali West	11,800 to 18,100	Vashi	11,800 to 12,900
Kandivali East	10,600 to 11,900	Airoli	8,200 to 9,100
Borivali West	12,500 to 22,500	Kopar Khairane	9,400 to 10,500
		Sanpada	12,000 to 13,600
		Nerul	10,100 to 11,200
		CBD Belapur	8,300 to 9,300
		Kharghar	6,900 to 7,700
		Kalamboli	4,500 to 5,600
		Panvel	5,200 to 5,300

Source: Proptiger.com
1) These are asking rates for properties on primary and secondary sale, and not transacted rates.
2) The rates may vary depending on market conditions
3) Range of values vary depending on the building, location, amenities provided, floor, view from the apartment and age of the building
** Pagn/old tenancy deals are dominant in these micro markets