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From Arrival To Everyday Operations: **Designing Commercial Projects In Dhanmondi**

There is something reassuring about setting up a business in a neighbourhood you know. Familiar routes, a favourite lunch spot and the convenience of meeting clients nearby become part of the working day. For businesses looking to make Dhanmondi their address, Rangs Properties offers a growing choice of commercial spaces.

The completed Avenue 27 on Road 27 anchors that presence, bringing together offices, retail and dining in a single urban experience. Developed on 20 katha, it offers commercial units of approximately 4,044, 6641 and 8,091 square feet. Its spacious lobby and open connection with the street introduce the attention to arrival and movement that runs through the architects' thinking.

Nearby, the ongoing Vantage 27 at Plot 352/B on Road 27 brings a different architectural expression. Its proposed terraced greenery and sky garden façade soften the building's exterior, while its commercial floor plates, offering units of approximately 2,257 to 4,583 square feet, are planned around functionality and efficient use of space.

The ongoing AK Square on Road 02 offers approximately 3,647–8,684 square feet per unit on a 20-katha site, providing options for organisations with larger space requirements. On Satmasjid Road, the upcoming A & F Square occupies 10 katha and offers approximately 2123 -4512 square feet per unit, with one unit per floor. That configuration gives businesses the opportunity to plan around a dedicated floor.

All four projects share the involvement of INSPACE Architects (Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/inspace.architects). Established in 2015, their practice takes a contemporary, minimalist approach, with an emphasis on context, natural light, landscape and careful use of space. Their work considers how buildings will feel and function for the people using them.

Inspace Architects has been shaped by its key figures, Wahidur Rahman, Executive Director and Principal Architect; Ayesha Shafique, Principal Architect and Wahid Ahmed, Principal Architect, who have taken the practice forward and established it as a leading architectural firm in Bangladesh.

In the following conversation with The Daily Star, Wahidur Rahman (WR) and Ayesha Shafique (AS) discuss the decisions behind the commercial developments in Dhanmondi, from welcoming first-time visitors to supporting tenants' daily operations, and designing spaces that will remain useful as businesses evolve.



Wahidur Rahman, Executive Director and Principal Architect, INSPACE Architects



Ayesha Shafique, Principal Architect, INSPACE Architects

The Daily Star: What design philosophy connects these four commercial projects?

WR and AS: We approach each building as a product, considering which functions work best on each floor. Surveys of neighbouring developments help identify unmet needs. We begin with interior spatial flow and develop the façade afterwards. Simplicity and functionality guide us: we want buildings that serve businesses, encourage return visits and retain their architectural appeal as they age. We also follow global design trends in creating experiences, drawing on the wider currents of globalization to understand which facilities work well for their users.

TDS: How does commercial design differ from residential design, particularly in serving tenants and visitors?

WR and AS: Commercial design places particular emphasis on public access and the visitor's entire experience. We consider how people arrive, move around and spend time inside. Layouts should be simple and logical, with connected lobbies, spacious lift areas and open corridors. Visitors should understand where to go immediately. We preserve shared spaces rather than squeeze in more shops at the expense of comfort. We also place strong emphasis on safety, planning escape routes, stairs and exits according to each building's occupancy.

TDS: How does Avenue 27 address its busy surroundings, and what lessons inform your upcoming projects?

AS: Avenue 27 connects to the street without boundary walls while functioning securely. Drop-offs at two levels help organise arrivals, with the lower-ground drop-off linked to the main lobby by escalators. Setbacks and separate entry and exit driveways help address congestion. We also consider parking ventilation and drivers' facilities. Experience has reinforced the importance of dedicated service lifts and lobbies, particularly for food businesses, to reduce wear on passenger lifts. Lift waiting times also receive careful consideration, so that moving through the building feels comfortable without overcrowding.

TDS: How do you respond to different plots while allowing businesses room to organise their spaces?

WR: Plot size, shape and surroundings guide each design. A location near educational institutions and hospitals calls for a response to those communities. At AK Square, a structural arrangement with two main columns on one floor creates a more open interior and increases usable space for businesses.

AS: Every plot begins with its surroundings. We study the context, the nearby landmarks, the way traffic moves around the site and what the public in that area actually needs. From there, we organise circulation, functional zones and connectivity so that people can move through the building easily. Operational facilities are planned just as early. Air conditioning and structural grids are integrated from the start, which gives businesses a better layout, clear visibility and generous column spans, and makes the most of every height and space.These fundamentals deserve attention from the beginning.

TDS: How do materials and building systems contribute to indoor comfort?

AS: We use double glazing to admit natural daylight while limiting heat gain and cooling demand. Our aim is to bring together aesthetics, environmental awareness and contemporary technology. Natural light and properly integrated air conditioning are important considerations when assessing a commercial space, alongside the quality of its common facilities.

TDS: What should tenants and visitors look for beyond a building's appearance?

AS: Look first for spaciousness, natural light and a real vista from within. Ambience matters as much as appearance, and grandeur comes from generous operational ceiling heights. Safety matters equally: fire stairs must stay unobstructed, and restaurant spaces need proper detection and sprinkler systems. A building's quality lies in how reliably it functions every day.



Rancon Avenue 27

