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Harsh Jagwani

Managing Director,
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Sky Mansion, New Delhi

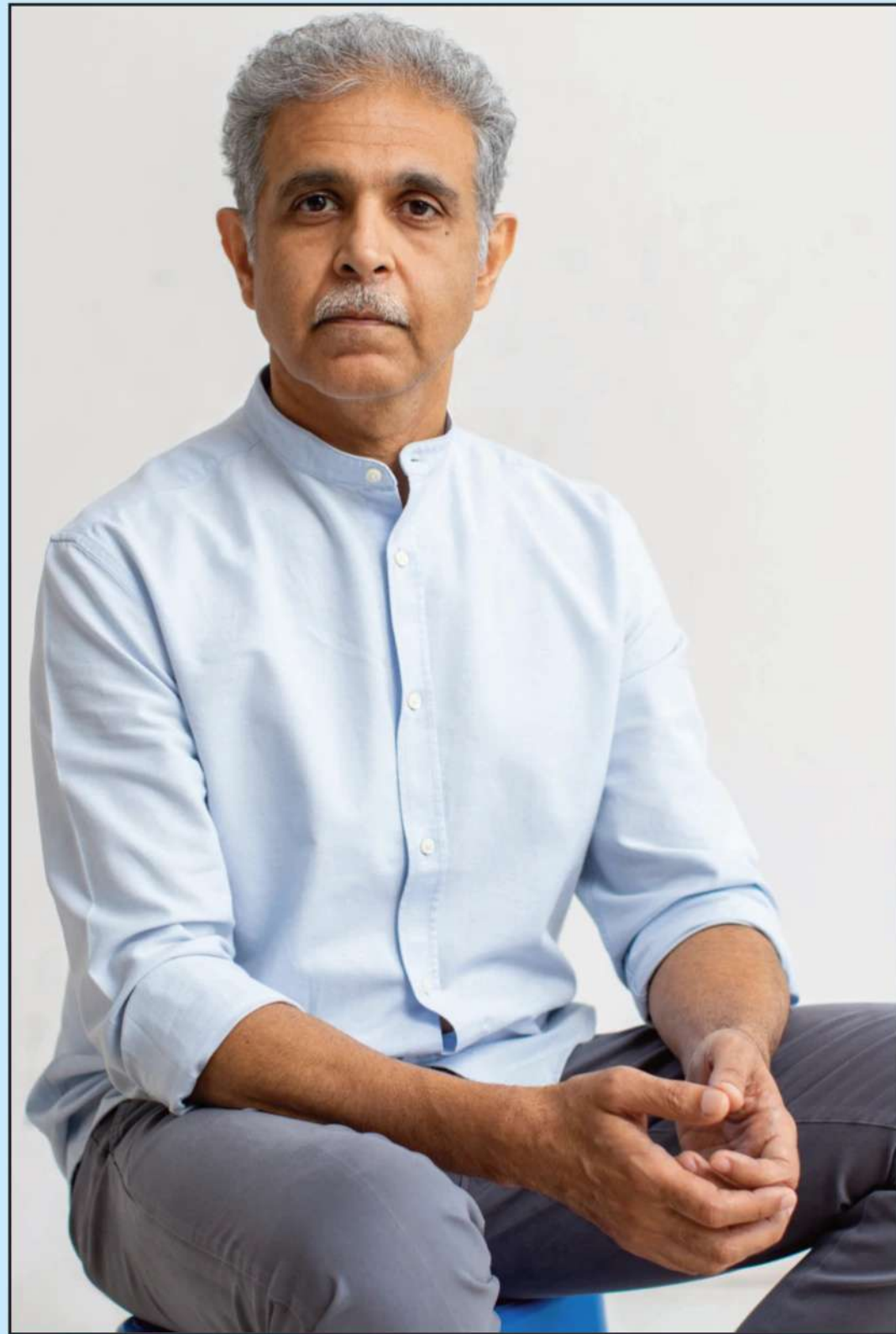
Reframing High-Density Housing Through Layered Living

Located within the fragmented residential fabric of South Delhi, SkyMansion is a high-density residential development conceived as a community-oriented vertical housing project within a sharply contrasting urban context. One edge is defined by a primary school, another by a mosque, while a nursery sits adjacent to low-rise residential pockets and farmhouse developments. This layered and uneven context, where institutional, residential, and semi-rural conditions coexist, forms the backdrop against which a high-density residential development is introduced. Within such a setting, the project is conceived as an attempt to negotiate density not as an isolated object but as a structure that must respond to and sit within an already complex urban fabric.

SkyMansion comprises two residential towers organised around a shared landscaped podium. The primary tower accommodates 160 residences, while a second tower houses 128 EWS units. From the outset, the site planning separates pedestrian and vehicular movement, with parking and services absorbed into the lower levels. This shifts the ground and podium away from purely transitional infrastructure, enabling them to function as an active community layer that mediates between the building and its surrounding context.

Given the site's narrow proportions, the design approach moves away from concentrating all shared spaces at the base. Instead, open space is treated as a continuous vertical condition distributed across the building. The podium anchors landscaped courts, recreational areas, seating zones, and club functions, while a network of terraces, balconies, and upper-level decks extends these spaces upward into the residential towers. Open space is therefore not confined to a singular level but becomes a recurring spatial experience woven into the everyday movement and life of the building.

This layered spatial strategy is complemented by a



Sanjay Bhardwaj is a Partner at team3, an award-winning, multi-disciplinary architectural practice that aspires to create human-centric and contextual architectural expressions. The work of the practice draws on contemporary influences while responding to local climatic, historical and social settings. Founded in 2012 in New Delhi by the three partners Sanjay Bhardwaj, Shubhra Dahiya, and Vijay Dahiya, team3 specialises in creating holistic projects across diverse scales.

With over 30 years of prior experience in the field, Sanjay brings expertise in delivering complex projects at the scale of urban planning, mixed-use developments, hospitality and housing. His forte lies in balancing sustainability and financial viability to create context-responsive designs.



Sky Mansion (Photo: Rutwik Rath)

With a growing portfolio in hospitality design, Sanjay has also led the conceptualisation and execution of boutique hotels, luxury resorts, and wellness retreats across diverse geographies. His approach focuses on crafting immersive guest experiences rooted in local context, culture, and climate, balancing aesthetics with operational efficiency and sustainability. Some of the ongoing projects, like the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in New Delhi, The Park Golf Villa Resort in Siliguri, and the Sepoydhura Boutique Resort in Darjeeling, reflect his ethos of seamlessly integrating luxury with regional identity, ecological sensitivity, and thoughtful spatial planning.

His work has been the recipient of numerous reputed awards, including an accolade from the Indian Institute of Architects for Excellence in Architecture, commendations from the Indian Institute of Interior Design, two CNBC Real Estate Awards, an Archi Design Award, and a Real Estate Conclave Award from the Economic Times, among many others. He has also been part of international design juries like the INDE Awards and Outlook Traveller Hospitality Awards.

Team3's work has also been featured in several leading publications and journals such as Architecture+Design, Architect and Interiors India, TOI, ET Hospitality, Hotelier India, Perspective Global, Hindustan Times and more.

A graduate from the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi, Sanjay is also a certified GRIHA trainer and evaluator. As Director at Morphogenesis, New Delhi, Sanjay worked on and guided several award-winning projects of various scales to completion before founding team3.

Sanjay is also actively involved in the academic community, teaching at various colleges throughout India.

network of shared social infrastructure organised at the podium level. Rather than replicating enclosed, underutilised rooms within individual apartments, the project consolidates communal functions into shared amenities including informal co-working areas, lounges, club facilities, and event spaces. By bringing these everyday and occasional functions together within a common community layer, the design creates opportunities for chance encounters and informal interactions among residents.

The landscape framework extends into areas typically left inactive in comparable developments. Regulatory setback zones, usually reserved only for fire access, are reinterpreted as active edges with walking tracks, play areas, and informal activity zones. These remain fully compliant with emergency access requirements while being reprogrammed to support everyday use,



Sky Mansion (Photo: Rutwik Rathi)

effectively expanding the usable ground condition without altering its regulatory function.

The residential planning is guided by the site's north-south orientation and the surrounding views. Bedrooms are positioned to receive controlled winter sunlight from the south, while living spaces open towards northern views of Mehrauli and the Qutub Minar precinct. This spatial logic is reinforced through a linear apartment configuration that ensures cross-ventilation, consistent daylight penetration, and uninterrupted visual continuity across all units.

Each floor accommodates only two apartments, enabling larger dwelling units with dual-sided exposure and extended access to open-to-sky spaces. Balconies and terraces are treated as

integral extensions of the interior rather than peripheral additions. In several units, double-height terraces and continuous balcony systems extend everyday domestic life outward, significantly increasing usable open area compared to conventional high-density housing typologies.

The building envelope is informed by climatic response and site orientation. With primary glazing oriented toward the north and south, the design reduces reliance on external shading devices while allowing more controlled daylight ingress. Continuous balconies function as passive environmental buffers, moderating heat gain and extending the usable edge of each residence. This performance is further reinforced through double

glazing and targeted thermal break detailing, which help minimise heat transfer at structural junctions and improve the overall efficiency of the envelope.

SkyMansion approaches high-density housing as a condition structured through layering rather than compression. Instead of treating density as a constraint to be resolved, the project uses it to organise relationships between light, air, movement, and collective life. Through contextual negotiation, vertical distribution of open space, and climatic responsiveness, the architecture constructs a residential environment where shared and private domains are continuously interwoven into the spatial experience of everyday living.

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