

# The Cube House



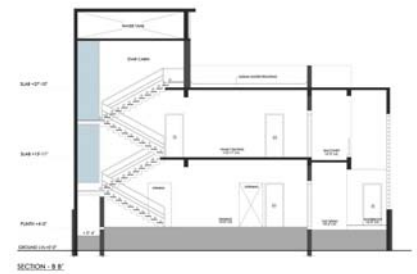
Text: Shalini Pereira Photo: Tejas Shah

In today's day and age, being 'different' is a way of expressing one's creativity in any field. To stand out among the rest is a way of thought in the present day world of architecture. When a client approaches an architect expressing his desire to build a home that stands out among the rest, it is the duty of the firm to take an approach that not only does justice to the clients' requirement for being 'different,' but also to ensure that all the necessary amenities are not compromised. The 'Cube House,' designed by Dipen Gada Associates in Baroda is one such example. The modern aesthetic of the house employs a combination of exposed RCC and white plastered exterior walls in such a way that they look like cubes fitting into one another creating masses and voids resulting in a structure that is simultaneously massive and intimate. The exposed RCC walls seen on the outside continues on the inside to create focal elements in a few of the interior spaces.

This 4000sqft home embraces modernism with clean lines and an open floor plan, while keeping in mind the regions climatic conditions and Indian ideals. Environmental transparencies at the ground level, created through courtyards and large openings help in passively cooling the internal spaces.

A raised entry threshold signifies the entry into the house. The flooring here is of tiles of multi-colored river polished kota stone leading to the entry. At the entry, one first sees a

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custom made grill that has been cast out of aluminum. The entry vestibule opens out into the living room area. There is a small courtyard adjacent to this vestibule. This is visible from the living and dining area, but has been screened from the vestibule area by a custom made screen of lacquered M.S. sheet. This courtyard acts as a light well drawing diffused light into the house.

Neutral colour palette has been used throughout the house. Materials have been applied with great restraint, and care to detail, such that the house appears somewhat austere. However strategically placed art pieces tastefully elevate the houses level of sophistication. In the interior the flooring of the lower ground floor level is of highly mirror polished kota stone that lends a contemporary and

elegant look. This material compliments the exposed RCC, which has been used in the slab in the living and dining areas.

The immediate entry to the house has been demarcated from the living room visually by a change in the flooring material, and physically by a low height storage unit. The focal point in the living room is the black tinted IPS wall which holds a painting of Shreenathji.

The dining room, which is part of the open planned ground floor, overlooks a small courtyard which adjoins the entry vestibule. It also overlooks a huge double height semi-covered courtyard having a water body. Pergolas in the double height slab, coupled





with a screen of aluminum fins, create changing patterns of light and shadow that has a dramatic impact. This courtyard has an introspective, intimate feel, perfect for quiet contemplation and provides the perfect setting for the Pooja area.

The staircase, a combination of exposed RCC, wood and metal, is one of the most dramatic elements of the house. The backdrop of the staircase is an exposed RCC wall that has a motif of a tree cast into it. Light flows in from slits on either side of the stairwell to flood this area with diffused light.

#### FACT FILE

BUILT UP AREA	4000 SQFT
PRINCIPAL DESIGNER	DIPEN GADA
DESIGN TEAM	HARDIKK TAMBOLI, ADITI DAVE, SHALINI PEREIRA, DOLLY SHAH
SITE COORDINATOR	RAJESH PATEL

At the first floor level the staircase opens into a central space, which is used as a T.V room. This space also doubles as a dance hall for the client's daughter, who is a classical dancer. More privacy has been given to the first and second floors of the house and this is demarcated visually with the use of wooden flooring. The warmth of the dark richly toned wood adds a sense of intimacy to the space.

The first floor level also houses the master bedroom suite. The master bedroom is dominated by a black stained IPS wall having S.S patas inlaid in horizontal and vertical lines. This IPS wall forms the backdrop for a custom designed poster bed that frames an abstract artwork. The



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



**4** Care has been taken to make this house more environment friendly. Openings have been given to maximize the inflow of breeze, while reducing direct sunlight



bedroom is radically simple yet elegant with its veneered furniture, wooden flooring and white walls.

Bedrooms of both the daughters are in this floor. Clean lines and starkly minimal forms here are remarkable. The totally white rooms contrast beautifully with the highly polished kota stone flooring. In the elder daughter's room the aqua marine bisazza tiles in the bed back interrupt this starkness. Multi-coloured furnishings add colour to the younger daughter's room. Black and white photographs of the daughter performing create a feature wall in the bed back.

A small room has been carved out from the terrace area. This doubles-up as a second T.V room as well as a gym. This room opens out onto a terrace, which has a small landscaped garden and a gazebo. The playfulness seen in this room, with its painted exposed brick, IPS walls, as well as the use of colourful furnishings is a departure from the rest of the house which is rather austere. This has been deliberately done, as this is an informal area that is quite removed from the rest of the house.

Care has been taken to make this house more environment friendly. Openings have been given to maximize the inflow of breeze, while reducing direct sunlight. Compact fluorescent lamps have been used in most of the spaces to reduce energy consumption and green rated air-



conditioning systems have been used. Efforts has been taken to use natural materials that are easily available.

Something Dipen feels strongly about is that the success of any project is a team effort, and the role of a site coordinator is very important in the overall scheme of things. In this project the whole team worked closely with the coordinator to ensure that the best was drawn of the labour agencies without whose skill and hard work the level of finishing seen in this project could never have been achieved. **46**

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DR B. SHASHI BHOSHAN

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 Entrance  
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 Design Studio

