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**A bungalow in Vadodara by Dipen Gada
delicately skirts existing trees**

17/20

Managing to conserve 17 of 20 trees on this awkwardly shaped plot in urban Vadodara, Dipen Gada has designed a three-level bungalow starring a mango tree in its courtyard. Concrete and brick come skilfully together in the facade, even as colour makes its presence felt within.

TEXT: DEVYANI JAYAKAR PHOTOGRAPHS: TEJAS SHAH

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he concrete here fulfils structural purposes,' says Dipen Gada. 'It is not used merely as a facade.' The warmth of brick is juxtaposed with the grey heft of exposed concrete, creating an unusual contrast on the facade. Sitting on an odd 'T'-shaped plot measuring

9,100 square feet formed by the combination of one narrow rectangle and two small squares, the footprint of the building had to be adjusted accordingly to make the most of the site.

It took six months just to finalise the plans, since several alternatives were explored

to save as many of the trees as possible. 'In addition to the ecological concerns, the client had an emotional connect with these trees, as he had planted them himself as a small boy,' says Dipen. 'In the end, we managed to save 17 of them, the last one to go being the one which



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The living room on the ground floor is a simply furnished space, its ceiling covered in acoustic panels and silk to take away the hollow echo of sounds and voices in the large volume. One window overlooks the garden and is protected by a grill in corten steel bearing an intricate pattern of time-honoured religious shlokas from Hinduism.

was obstructing the entry of cars.' The exercise has been so successful, that the three-level house is quite inconspicuous, almost camouflaged by the greenery surrounding it. 'Credit goes to the coordinator on the site who was very careful not to damage the roots of the trees while laying the foundation,' says Dipen.

A tall mango tree whose branches reach over the second floor of the building is the star of the courtyard. It is encircled by concentric stars in yellow jaisalmer on the kota floor surrounding it, carrying forward the metaphor. The trunk of the tree has circular stone seating around it, recalling the age-old plat-

form for daily informal social interaction in India. 'Since this courtyard is located in the north, it is pleasant to sit here even in the punishing summers of Vadodara, when the temperature can reach 44 degrees Celsius,' says Dipen. The space functions like a cool, breezy, outdoor living room for most of the year,

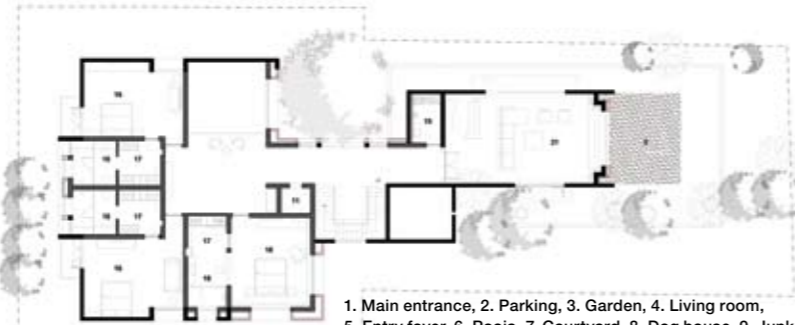
encouraging togetherness in the family. The requirements of the client were quite specific. Six bedrooms, a home theatre, staff quarters and accommodation for the family pet, a dog. The kitchen, family room, pooja room and dining area were included. Additional features were a terrace gar-



Dipen Gada

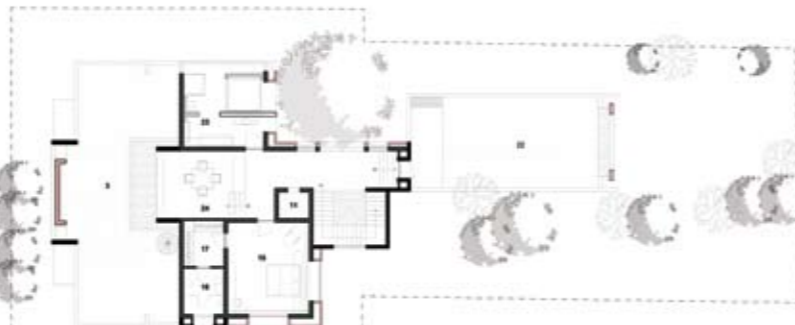


GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

1. Main entrance, 2. Parking, 3. Garden, 4. Living room,
5. Entry foyer, 6. Pooja, 7. Courtyard, 8. Dog house, 9. Junk room, 10. Dining, 11. Lift, 12. Kitchen, 13. Utility, 14. Store,
15. Power toilet, 16. Bedroom, 17. Dressing, 18. Toilet,
19. Parking, 20. Rear side entry, 21. Home theatre, 22. Zen garden, 23. Fantasy toilet, 24. Lounge.



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

LONGITUDANAL SECTION



Fact File

CLIENT

Amit Patel

PLOT AREA

9,100 sq ft

BUILT UP AREA

9,800 sq ft

DESIGN TEAM

Dipen Gada,
Mrunal Bhogayata,
Nidhi Patel,
Prakash Prajapati,
Prashant Gurjar

PROJECT COORDINATOR

Rahi Construction



In the double height dining room, there is an acoustic panel and silk-covered wall, its geometry and colours resembling the works of the artist S H Raza. The concrete wall next to it has several colour-intense works of Krsnaa Mehta in a large wooden grid resembling a jharokha.

den, a Zen garden and a 'fantasy bathroom.' To utilise the shape of the plot efficiently, the front block contained the public spaces such as the living room on the ground floor and the home theatre on the level above, with the Zen garden on the topmost floor. A narrow passage along with the stairwell connects the front block to the private block at the rear.

The living room on the ground floor is a simply furnished space, its ceiling covered in acoustic panels and silk to take away the hollow echo of sounds and voices

in the large volume. One window overlooks the garden and is protected by a grill in corten steel bearing an intricate pattern of time-honoured religious shlokas from Hinduism. The sunlight entering through the perforations casts a complex play of light and shadow in the room. A pedestal lamp in one corner has banana leaf shades, offset by a pendant light on the opposite side.

In the double height dining room, there is an acoustic panel and silk-covered wall, its geometry and colours resembling the works of the



The staircase is cantilevered, with a large bust rendered in a tribal aesthetic by Chirayu Kumar Sinha holding centre stage at its base. The concentric star pattern on the flooring recalls the stars around the mango tree in the courtyard.



Dipen has created an arresting cameo in a transition space on the first floor.

artist S H Raza. The concrete wall next to it has several colour intense works of Krsnaa Mehta in a large wooden grid resembling a jharokha. In the adjacent area, the warm golden tone of the jaisalmer on the floor of the dining room, is matched by the 'galeecha' tiles from Rajkot which simulate a carpet in their repetitive pattern. Here, a traditional swing, ubiquitous to Gujarat, is the dominant piece of furniture, with the backdrop of a grand clock on the wall behind.

A narrow corridor leads to two bedrooms at the rear of the building. The mother's bedroom has concrete walls, a jhoola and pattachitra (traditional, cloth-based scroll painting, from the eastern Indian state of Odisha. In the

Sanskrit language, 'Patta' means cloth and 'Chitra' means picture. Most of these paintings depict stories of Hindu deities) on the walls.

The puja room has a long, narrow slit with stained glass in jewel tones through which light percolates, topped by a cluster of old world crystal pendant lamps in different sizes and shapes, which draws the eye upwards towards its appealing composition.

The staircase is cantilevered, with a large bust rendered in a tribal aesthetic, by Chirayu Kumar Sinha, holding centre stage at its base. The concentric star pattern on the flooring recalls the stars around the mango tree in the courtyard. Light streams in from a window, injecting light



into the grey-walled space. A large pendant light resembling a closed umbrella has multiple zigzag perforations in its star-shaped folds, creating a dramatic play of light and shadow after sunset.

Dipen has created an arresting cameo in a transition space on the first floor. Adjacent to the staircase, it overlooks the dining area. Two armchairs in red upholstery flank a low coffee table, the details inviting closer inspection. The armrests are covered with a patterned fabric in black and white, while a bold flower adorns the backrest. In the background, a bespoke chandelier has a multitude of small glass flowers, with the collage of Krsnaa Mehta paintings on the rear wall as well as the Raza-inspired wall next to it.

The home theatre which sits exactly above the living room has the same jaali in corten steel with the shloka pattern.



The coffee table is an intriguing piece, with a 'well' in its surface, concentric 'steps' dipping downwards.



The home theatre which sits exactly above the living room has the same jaali in corten steel with the shloka pattern. The coffee table is an intriguing piece, with a 'well' in its surface, concentric 'steps' dipping downwards. The bar has been fabricated on site. The lounge between the three bedrooms has received much attention, with the galeecha tiles being repeated on the floor and art from Omnah in Vadodara, a carefully curated collection by Bindu Patel. Like the transition space near the staircase, this lounge tempts passers-by to linger and savour the distinctive art on display, particularly the brass



The mother's bedroom has concrete walls, a jhoola and pattachitra on the walls.



The master bedroom has a back-lit wall in onyx, while a mythological painting on cloth adds a touch of deep red to the wall. The fluid folds of the pendant lamp in the corner are made of banana leaf paper.



The son's bedroom is on the top floor, with a large window in a brick wall behind the bed. The headboard is perforated with small circles in different sizes, through which light filters in from the window against which the bed is set.



The 'fantasy bath' is located on the top floor and is meant for the use of everyone in the family. With facilities resembling a spa, it is a luxurious space in which there are Jacuzzi and steam facilities and a massage area has even been delineated.



bungalow




Ganesh with the wall piece behind it which create an intriguing tableau.

The master bedroom has a back-lit wall in onyx, while a mythological painting on cloth adds a touch of deep red to the wall. The fluid folds of the pendant lamp in the corner are made of banana leaf paper. The son's bedroom is on the top floor, with a large window in a brick wall behind the bed. The headboard is perforated with small circles in different sizes, through which light filters in from the window against which the bed is set. The lounge and the Zen garden are also located on this floor.

What Dipen terms the 'fantasy bath' is located on the top floor and is meant for the use of everyone in the family. With facilities resembling a spa, it is a luxurious space in which there are Jacuzzi and steam facilities and even a massage area has been delineated. 'Usually, it is only the master bath which gets the most attention in terms of design, but only two people use it. I like to be able to offer this level of luxury to everyone in the family, by creating a space which can be used by any of them,' says Dipen. With IPS flooring in blue, the colour palette is clearly a departure from the rest of the home. A marble jaali is

used as a backdrop for the mirror above the washbasin and also as a device to segregate different areas in the room. On one wall, vividly coloured paintings with a mythological Indian theme, are set in the panels of an old wooden door, adding charm to the space.

Walking through this home is like a voyage of discovery, with treasures to pause over and absorb. The detailing is well deliberated, functioning as art and installation. With architecture which maximises air and light, the carefully curated collectibles and furniture in the interior make for a multifaceted sensorial experience. 

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