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Riyaz and Simeen Quraishi replace the traditional courtyard with a swimming pool in Hyderabad

Sanjay Puri creates a sculptural office building in Jaipur

COVER STORY: Dominic Dubé designs a spectacular all-white house in Hyderabad

ALSO FEATURING: SAK Designs, Ahmedabad. Dipen Gada, Vadodara. KNS Architects, Mumbai. 6th Degree Design Associates, Surat.

PEEP HOUSE

An 8,700 sq ft bungalow on a sprawling 40,000 sq ft plot in Vadodara is designed by Dipen Gada, employing a minimal aesthetic. Using natural materials and implementing vastu, the home is contemporary as well as Indian in its sensibilities, Dipen tells Devyani Jayakar.

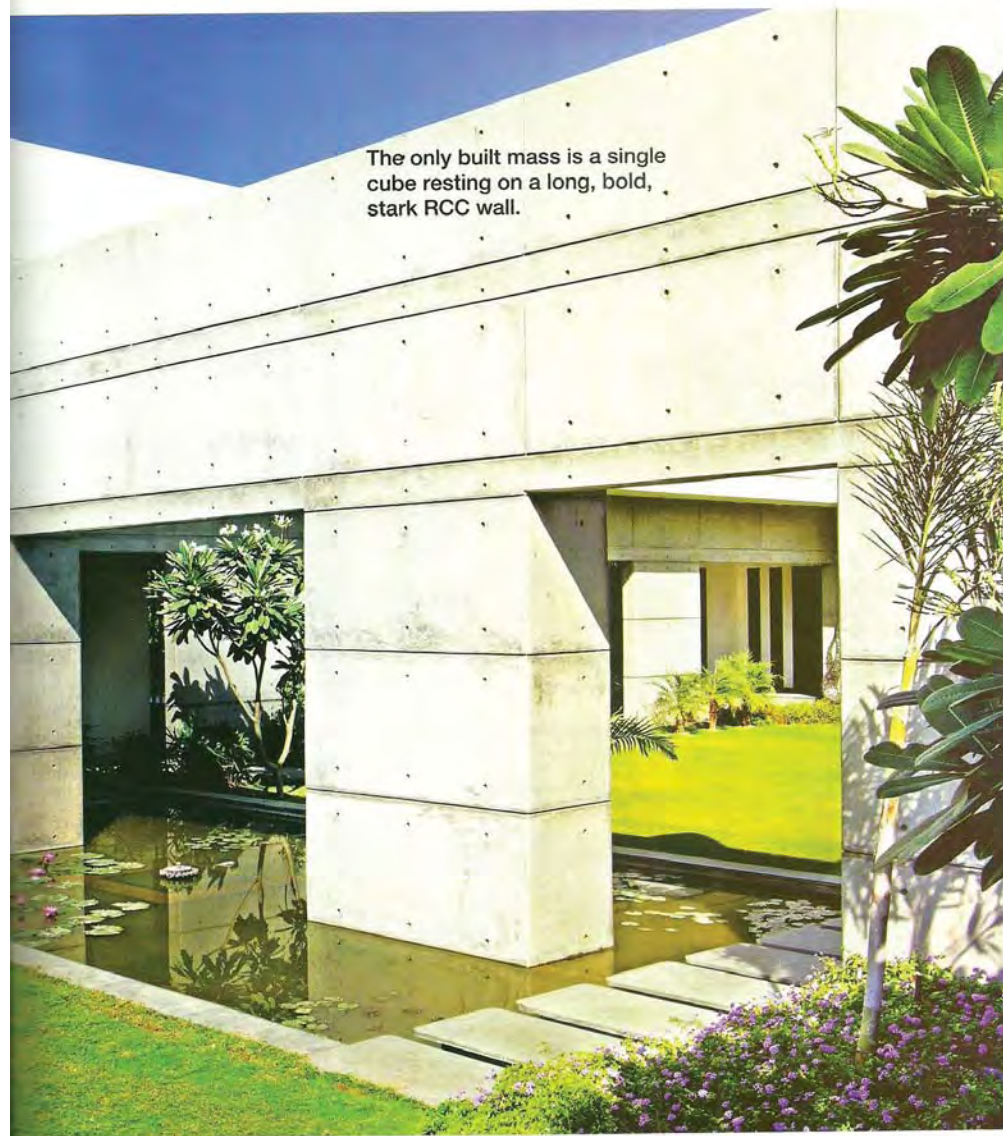


PHOTOGRAPHS: TEJAS SHAH,
COURTESY THE ARCHITECT



bungalow

The only built mass is a single cube resting on a long, bold, stark RCC wall.



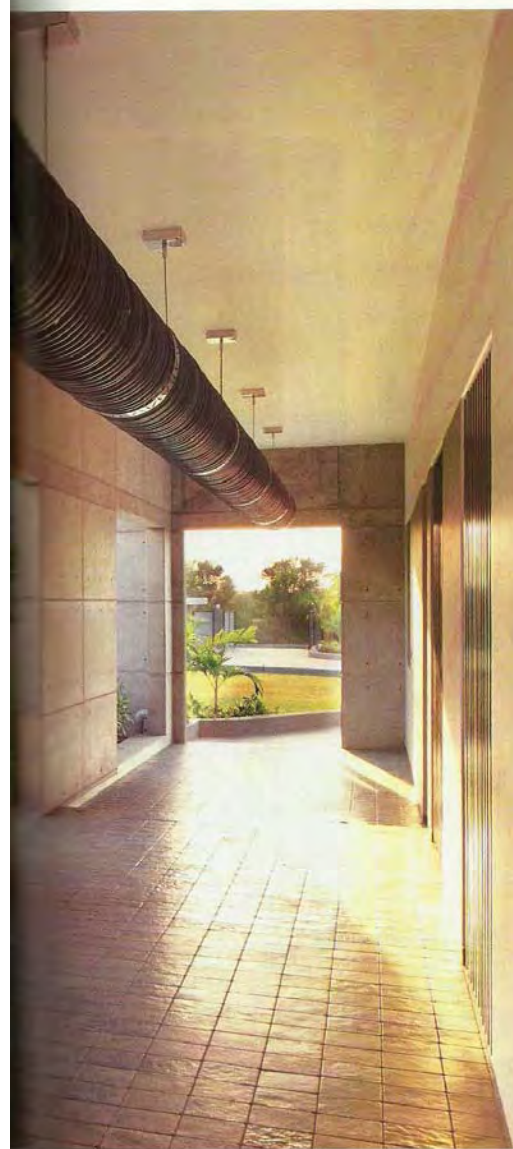


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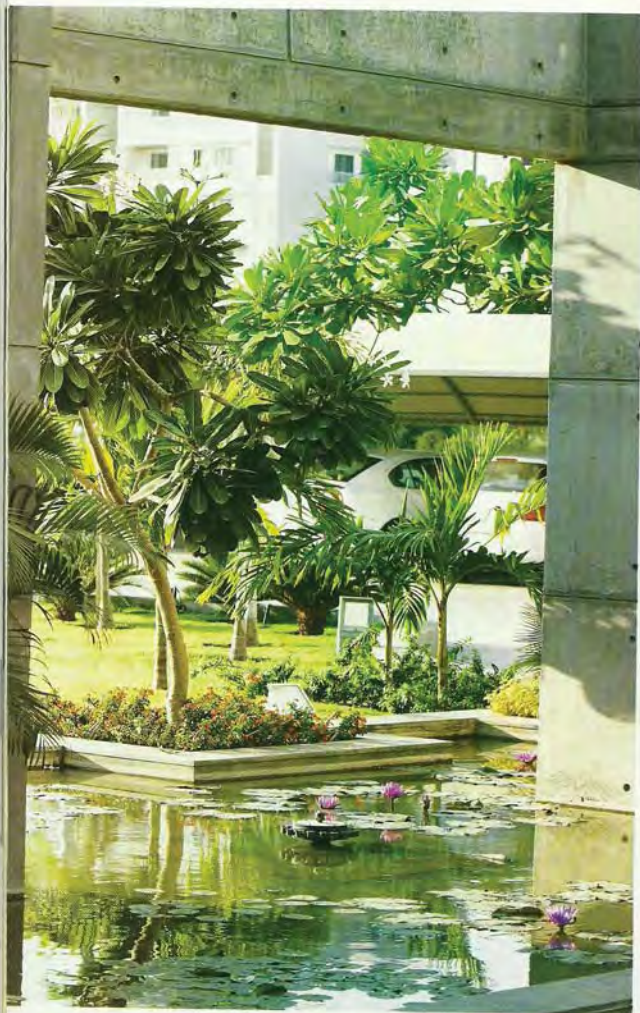


It's not often that a client owns a 'bank' of properties and asks the architect to choose the one he considers most appropriate to build on. But this is exactly what happened when Dipen Gada told the prospective clients that he didn't think much of the plot they first showed him. 'It was bang in the middle of the city, which I felt was not quite the right location,' he says. The client's response to this rather blunt assessment was to 'vanish' for six months, as Dipen puts it. But then they came back with a variety of options and the house we now see, is the result.

'The family wanted a bungalow with "all the elements",' says Dipen. Read between the lines to figure out that the home had to facilitate the mandatory enactment of cherished dreams. But on first presentation, this doesn't even look like a bungalow. It has no balconies or verandahs, points out Dipen, evidently opposed to the disquieting markers of Indian aspirations. Was he, in essence, asking his clients to invest in an act of faith? Gradually, however, the family approved the proposed plan thanks to the son, who was studying civil engineering...and Dipen's design remained unscathed. Even on the inside, kota stone has been used for most of the flooring, with the client's preferred white marble being restricted to only a few areas. But make no mistake...the 'dream' elements are there. A pool, courtyards, pergolas, Zen garden, lawns unfurling in front of windows et al.



An unconventional 50 ft long passage leads to the main door. This creates an interactive experience between indoor and outdoor spaces, offering a view of a front garden on one side and a pool on the other. Enhancing the sensory experience further, is the installation of a 40 ft long custom-made lamp, creating a display of light and shadows both during the day as well as the night.

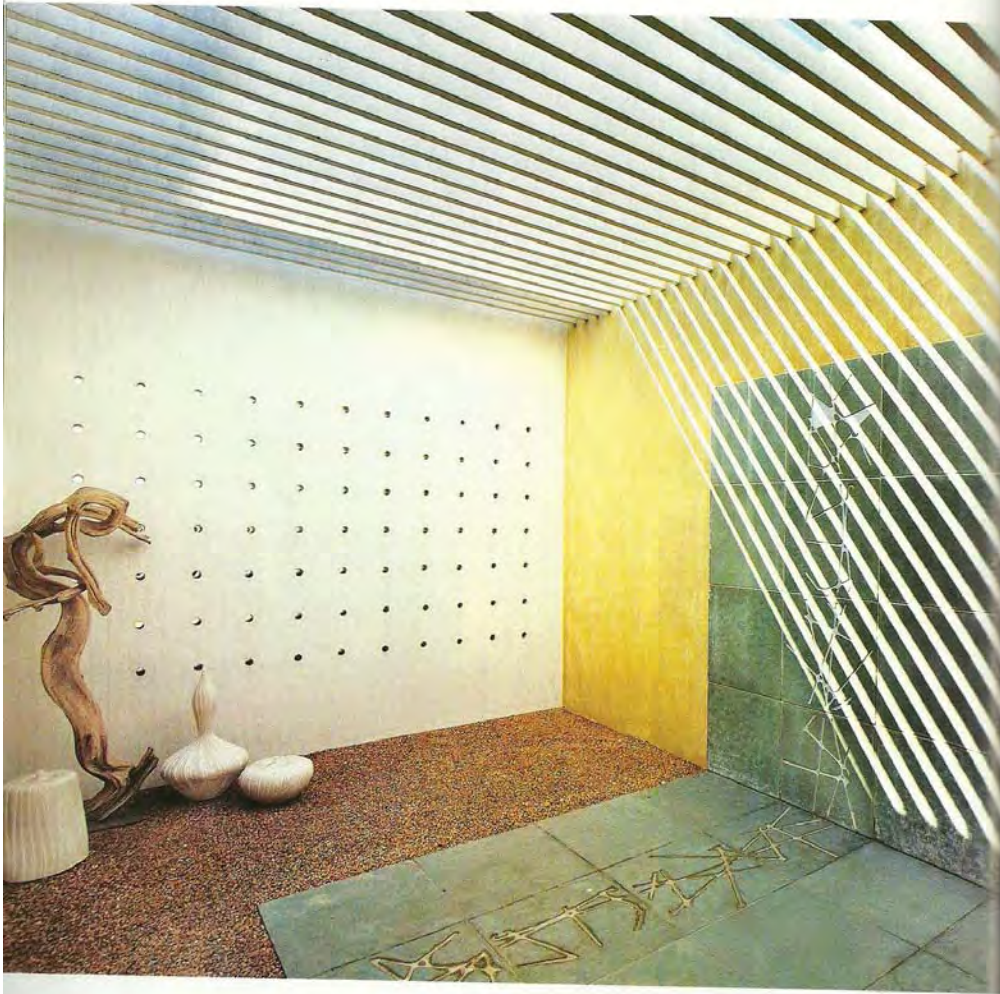


The house has a pool, courtyards, and lawns unfurling from the windows.



The home had to facilitate the enactment of cherished dreams.





The pergola above the Zen garden with pebbles, driftwood and an abstract etching on the vitrified tile.



Sparsely furnished with just the essentials in spite of its size, the language of this home is scrupulous.





The passage on the first floor acts as a serene lobby space connecting all the bedrooms. Its wall functions as a gallery space to display a large collection of family pictures, creating a walk down memory lane.



"The central idea behind the design of this house was to create a "non building". When you first enter the plot, all you see is a long, bold, stark RCC wall with the only built mass peeping out being a single cube, resting firmly on the wall," says Dipen. While the structure makes a bold statement, there aren't too many elements. And the way RCC matures with ageing can be aesthetically appealing, thinks Dipen.

This 8,700 sq ft house sits elegantly on a 40,000 sq ft plot, designed such that the house and landscape merge subtly with each other. Vastu and climatic parameters are strongly implemented in planning the various indoor, outdoor and semi-open spaces of the house, while the south-west wind and north light are utilised to their best. Christened "Peep House" by Dipen, the name exemplifies the concept, he says.

There is no formal living or dining room, but rather an open, informal space which extends into a terrace for sit-outs and entertainment. An office in a segregated area ensures that the meetings which the owners, who deal in real estate, hold with the farmers coming to meet them, don't disturb the rest of the house.

Interestingly, the residence has an unconventional 50 ft long passage that leads to the main door. This creates an interactive experience between indoor and outdoor spaces, offering a view of a front garden on one side and a pool on the other. Enhancing the sensory experience further, is the installation of a 40 ft long custom-made lamp, creating a display of light and shadows both during the day as well as the night. The original plan to make this fixture in brass and copper



The parsimonious material palette constitutes natural materials, such as brick, kota stone and wood.



There is no formal living or dining room, but rather an open, informal space which extends into an open terrace for sit-outs and entertainment.



At the foot of the bed is a large bed tray. Wide enough to straddle the bed, it has castors so that it can be rolled into position whenever required.



bungalow



'The way RCC matures with ageing can be aesthetically appealing.'

was abandoned due to the prohibitive cost. Finally executed in mild steel, it has laser cut plates for the perforations through which the light filters.

The passage on the first floor acts as a serene lobby space connecting all the bedrooms. Its wall functions as a gallery space to display a large collection of family pictures, creating a walk down memory lane. The aforementioned 'cube' houses the younger son's bedroom. At the foot of his bed, is an intriguing 'stand', its surface so high, that no one could possibly sit on it. What is it, I ask Dipen. 'A bed tray,' he explains. Wide enough to straddle the bed, it has castors so that it can be rolled into position whenever required. Rather like dining in bed!

The parsimonious material palette constitutes natural materials, such as brick, kota stone and wood. Ample natural light floods into the house which is also well ventilated, minimising the use of conventional sources of energy since the building complies with major green building norms.

Sparsely furnished with just the essentials in spite of its size, the language of this home is scrupulous. It is a space which is at ease, unself-conscious, not straining to be hip. 'Homes should be for the client first, not just show-pieces. The "statement" made can be a by-product, but the focus has to be on essentials and functionality. A house and garden which matures over time, reflecting the personality of the owners, is what I enjoy creating,' says Dipen. 