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One man's home may be another's prison. For a house is not just a structure made of bricks, it is also a reflection of the owner's personality, priorities, dreams and aspirations. So even in one city facing one set of problems, we have various types of houses, as people build their own little palaces, however modest. Here's a look at some of the more interesting homes in the Capital

MY HOME



THE SUBARSHANS' TWO-STORY HOUSE IN YOUNA VIHAR WAS DESIGNED BY ARCHITECT K.T. RAVINDRAN. ARCHITECTURE HERE IS POSITIVE AND ECCENTRIC IN A WIDE CONTEXT, WHILE INNOVATIVE YET COST-EFFECTIVE DETAILING ADDS AN AD-HOC TOUCH



IS MY



THE SHARMA'S TWO-STORY HOUSE IN DLF WAS DESIGNED BY THE LAURIE BAKER BUILDING CENTRE, BASED ON BAKER'S PHILOSOPHY OF BUILDING FOR 'REAL' PEOPLE. THIS REPRESENTS COST-EFFECTIVE, ETHNIC ARCHITECTURE. EVERYTHING IS BARE AND MINIMAL, DOWN TO THE SPECIALLY DESIGNED EXPOSED BRICK, AND THIS IS DONE WITHOUT COMPROMISING ON BEAUTY AND GRACE

CASTLE



ARCHITECT ANURAG KHOSLA'S FLAT IN SATAPURH ENCLAVE, WAS BUILT ON A SECOND FLOOR TERRACE. THE INTERNAL SPACE DESIGN HAS ATTAINED A NEW DIMENSION BY THE INCLUSION OF SOME INSIDE WALLS. THE SPATIAL QUALITY IS ENHANCED BY THE INCREASE IN CEILING HEIGHT AND THE ABUNDANCE OF NATURAL LIGHT



In the last 50 years, Indian urban houses have come a long way from the social bondings of traditional havelis and lavish exclusiveness of colonial bungalows. But even if it looks like we have completely cut ourselves off from our tradition, today's style of architecture is not a departure. It's just a process of redefining itself in a changed milieu. Just like the people who live in it.

This would be clear if we take a look at some good houses in Delhi. But this is a wide and diversified range. It could be historically narrated or stylistically interpreted. Otherwise, one could explore the possibility of looking at houses as an individual's reaction to the city at large. It assembles the personality, aspirations and the image of the owner. It gives the owner or resident a sense of security and a sense of belonging, which in a cosmopolitan city like Delhi, full of expatriates and migrants, is a very big deal.

Ever tried house-hunting in Delhi? If you have, you know the kind of space crunch the Capital is going through. Not surprisingly, market agents are religiously trying to squeeze the maximum out of any piece of land available to them. And of course the reasoning behind by-laws has always been a big puzzle. Various plot-sizes are a mere outcome of the unresolved pattern-making exercise of the concerned authorities.

Therefore, it is interesting to study how space planning takes care of these aspects. Under this process of maximisation, certain types of private residences seem to emerge as a counterpoint to most of the mindless, pastiche and exuberant ones in the city. Instead of screaming for attention, they respond to the present identity crisis in a quiet and subtle manner.

"Architecture should stand the test of time," says A.P. Kamnide, sitting in the drawing room of his Maharani Bagh house that he has designed. Built in the late 60s on a 1,100 square yards corner plot, Kamnide's house is an expression of modern architecture at its high aesthetics. It is a restrained combination of the solidity of brick and concrete and the transparency of glass. The concept of space is uninterrupted and wholesome. Functional demands are resolved with the change in spatial experience.

The drawing-dining, kitchen and guest room on the ground floor are organised around the central atrium. Through this the open staircase climbs up and connects the study and bedrooms on the mezzanine and first floors. The central atrium principally works like a courtyard with a roof. Here, indoor and outdoor spaces merge, as one extends into the other. Every habitable space in the ground floor opens directly into the garden. Large and openable glass windows right from the floor, complement this entire structure. This small piece of architecture has been the inspiration for many houses built later but remains contemporary today, even after three decades.

Serious thought and experiments for mitigating ever-increasing costs challenges the false notion that 'low-cost' is only for the poor. Architectural vocabulary takes direct clues from the limited financial resources of the client, climatic condition, availability of local craftsmen and material.

The Sharma's two-story house was designed by the Laurie Baker Building Centre, Delhi, on a 300 sq. yds. plot in DLF Phase I. Based on Baker's philosophy of building for 'real' people, this centre propagates cost-effective, ethnic architecture. Here, everything is bare and minimum, especially designed exposed brick, load bearing walls that support the reinforced concrete slab with brick fillers, used to minimise concrete consumption. The layout is

semi-open, with the drawing room and family lounge separated by brick arches. The family lounge is a double-height space with a staircase connecting two bedrooms upstairs.

Also imbibing a similar philosophy in construction, the Sudarshans' two-storey house in Youna Vihar was designed by architect K.T. Ravindran. Architecture here is stated in a different manner — positive and eclectic in a wider context. Innovative and cost-effective detailing has an ad-hoc quality, inherent in the aesthetics of this house. Built on a 200 sq. yd. plot, the building stretches to every possible limit of the by-laws, yet succeeds in establishing



A FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH SPACES OUTDOORS.

Entry is from the drive-way, directly into the drawing room. The drawing room along with the dining space on one side, and the study on the other, form the most interactive part of the house. As a continuation of this space, the staircase rises into the zone of increasing privacy. No circulation space is exclusively left out; rather, transition from one space to another is perceptible through framed openings and left to be explored by curious eyes. Walls, from inside and

ARCHITECT PRADIP SACHDEV'S HOUSE IN MODEL TOWN WAKES FULL USE OF THE HANGING SPIRALS OF LIGHT AND SHADE

A.P. KAMNIDE'S HOUSE IS A RESTRAINED AND ARTISTIC COMBINATION OF BRICK AND CONCRETE AND THE TRANSPARENCY OF GLASS

out, are unplastered and painted white. The ceiling has an interesting texture of bamboo mats. The Y-shaped pillars, the amalgamation of an arch and a column, are the distinctive features of this house.

Of late, making houses by buying terrace-rights is becoming a common phenomenon in Delhi. Especially in the light of the recommendations made by the Malhotra Committee Report to allow an extra floor. Real estate transactions of terraces will certainly blossom in the near future. Under a similar situation, four years ago architect Anurag Chowla built his three bedroom house in Satlaj Enclave by purchasing the second floor terrace.

The entrance to the house leads to the central drawing-dining hall, which on one side flows out to an open terrace, that also connects to the master bedroom and overlooks the neighbour-

hood park. Structural systems has attained a new dimension by the judicious omission of some of the inside walls. Spatial quality is, furthermore, enhanced by the increase in ceiling height and abundance of natural light. Interestingly, from the outside the size and detail of the openings vary and give rise to a possible 'urban collage', as each floor was constructed at a different time by various owners. Although an apartment, even here, the identity of the house still remains.

The homes we discuss here are not comparable to each other. Each is a representative of a type, all built under different urban situations for different users. They are not fashionable edifices, but ideological artifacts contributing towards a better urban environment. Fashionable houses will still be built, which will eventually become outdated. However, it is the long-lasting impression that counts the most.

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