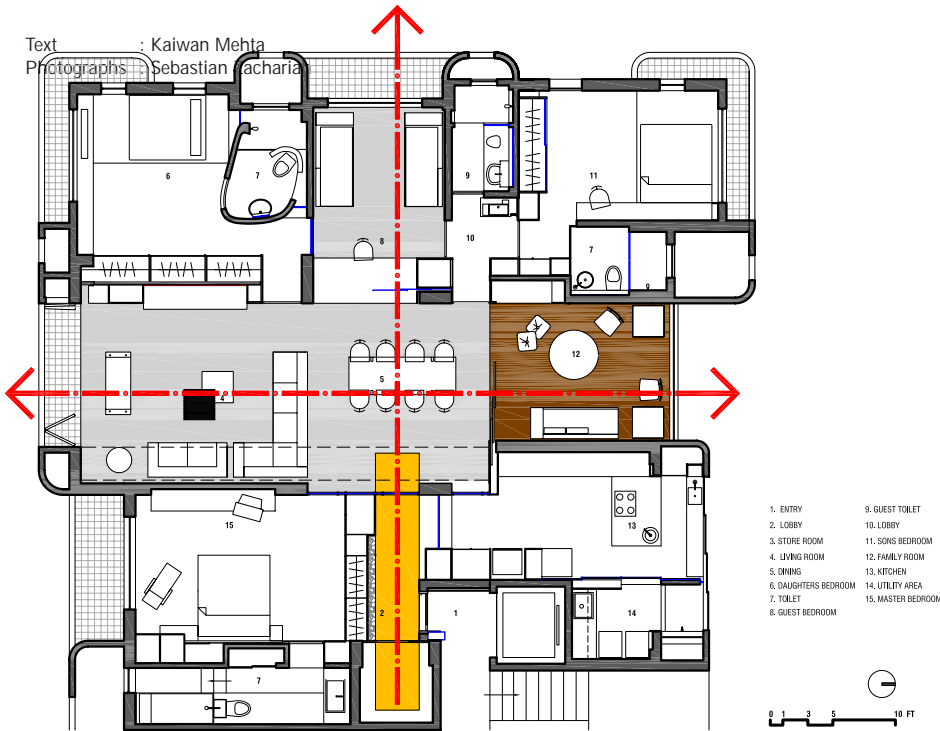


WEAVING A HOUSE

Designing a house is as much about the relationships in a family, as much as it is about space and materials!

Text : Kaiwan Mehta
 Photographs : by Sebastian Zachariah



PLAN OF THE HOUSE





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Shilpa says she often feels like a psychologist while designing a house! That is a hint to the intense process she follows while working on any project of this nature. She believes it is important and essential to involve the client in the design process. As a young firm S+PS architects believe in a design process that is intense, critical and one that engages the site and the aspirations of their client.

For the Bougain 'Villa' project, they had very engaging sessions with the family of four, especially the daughter of the house, who herself is a fashion designer. Understanding the family as a whole and its individual members maybe a slow and long process, but it is very crucial to making the house that the family can call their own. Shilpa who was closely involved with the project, is confident of her process, and goes on to say, that often her first sketch design, produced after the series of interactions with the family, goes through because of her previous ground work.

The flat, about 2200 sq. ft., located on the fifth floor had a typical nine square grid plan. Of the four corners, the three main bedrooms occupied three, and the kitchen occupied the fourth one. The residual cruciform space was given over to the common zones, i.e., the entry, living, dining, family room and guest room. The guest room placed opposite the entry was designed in such a way that it could open out and participate in the activities of the centrally placed living-dining-family room zone. The very positioning of these rooms allowed the four corner rooms to be treated individually to suit the occupant's personas. Conscious that the central square living space, may have a problem in drawing natural light, the guest room, which would not be occupied always, was designed to open up and allow light to flow in.

Realising the varying needs of each family member, the design had to balance between personal needs and the overall continuity of design. One way of handling this was the controlled and calculated use of colours. The colour palette was largely various hues of white, with strong colour inserts in specific locations. Like the central long living space, a common space for the family, employed inserts of a strong colour like fuchsia pink. This introduced a very strong colour in a very subtle manner, and at the same time allowed to hold the continuity of this long space. Another example is the daughter's bedroom, where the whole room in white, gets a flush of colour in the bathroom. The overall scheme was neutral, while the various temporary elements could accommodate strong colours. This would ensure that the design produced today, could accommodate changing moods or trends in the future. Shilpa is emphatic of the fact that they do not believe in designing for trends, and that a design has to ensure for its longevity, through moods and times!

The common zones work seamlessly, allowing for flexibility, togetherness and cross ventilation. As discussed above, to emphasize the spatial continuity of these zones, a continuous wall, clad in a pale grey veneer, with three equal size niches occupies one length of this common space. The niches are occupied with a collage of saturated fuchsia pink panels, walnut wood, ribbed steel and frosted glass. The first niche



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- 1 & 3. The long central common space.
 2. Use of sliding partitions to organise the common space.
 4. Fuchsia pink in the living space.
 5 & 6. Bougainvilla partitions
 7 & 8. Master bedroom.



9. The daughters bedroom.
10. Bathroom in the daughters bedroom.
11 & 12. Use and design of partition to manage space and light.

has a wooden bench, frosted glass light box, and the textured fuchsia panel. The central niche has sliding fuchsia and pink glass partitions that allow the guest room beyond to become part of the living area. The wooden top is used as a desk from the guest room side and as a credenza from the dining area and helps the transition between these 2 spaces. The third niche is in the family room and is occupied by a projection TV, with the fuchsia colored panel as a backdrop. A trio of sliding panels divides the family room from the rest of the living spaces and is made of pressed pink bougainvillea flowers on tussah silk fabric and sandwiched between clear glass sheets. The bougainvillea flowers on the sliding panels are picked up from the woven bougainvillea flowers on the blinds in the living room and tie back to the fuchsia pink colored panels. The rest of the furniture in the living dining area is flexible, free standing and in dark tones - wenge wood for the center table and *jhoola*, brown leather sofas, and a dining table in black terrazzo slab inlaid with chips of glass and mirror.

The three bedrooms are designed to suit the personalities of the individuals occupying them. The master bedroom is very quiet and elegantly simple with glossy white cupboards and bed frame, a frosted glass backed headboard, and a dark wenge wood desk complements the white tranquility. Above the desk is a bas-relief in white plaster of a traditional abstraction of a banana tree. The unusually long seventeen feet toilet reflects the same simplicity and maturity of the occupants in white and grey tile. The horizontally ribbed white tile accentuates the linearity of the room and the long black tub also picks up on the same. The daughter's bedroom was designed completely in various shades of white - white makrana marble floor, sparkling white agglomerated marble bench, bleached and stained white veneer for the bed/diwan, glossy white for the curved bathroom and white tissue sheers for the windows. The unusually shaped curved bathroom was clad internally with rose pink mosaic tiles to add that dash of color.

The son's bedroom has a long desk and overhead storage on one side - a dull blue stained veneer bed platform and an internally back lit blue glass box for the wardrobe. A similar color and vocabulary continue in the bathroom.

The seemingly contemporary house is infused with hints of tradition in materials, colors and motifs - much like the family that occupies it. The house reflects interestingly a collection of ideas that define this family. The design seems to be an exercise in exploring space and materials, to reflect and allow for, the lifestyle and relationships the family lives with. ■

FACT FILE

Project	: Bougain - Villa
Client	: Mr. Shishir Nevatia
Agencies	
Civil	: Kantilal Mistry
Electrical	: Sharad Nevatia, Shubh Udyog
Carpentry	: Ashok Chauhan
S.S. Fabrication	: Paawan Steel
Painting/Polishing	: Purshottam
Construction time	: 8 Months
Carpet area	: 2200 Sq. Ft
Design team	: Shilpa Gore Shah, rasija Prabhakaran