

PICTURE THIS: PERTH

SPECIALIST: PAUL MATTER

UNCOVERED: CASE DESIGN

HOME REVIEW

VOL 16 ISSUE 06 JUNE 2017 TOTAL PAGES 136

RS 100 HOME-REVIEW.COM

DRAMATIC FLOURISHES
BY DESIGN RITMO

A REFINED MAKEOVER
BY PS DESIGNS

SUBLIMITY DEFINED

PARALLAX DESIGN STUDIO CREATES A HOME THAT DEFINES ELEGANCE

KITCHEN SPECIAL INNOVATIONS AND IDEAS THAT ARE CREATING A RAGE IN THE KITCHEN



Bands of grey Kota stone elegantly complement the kiln-burnt fiery hue of the brickwork.

CONSCIOUS ARCHITECTURE

Sandwiched between a 50 ft high party wall to the left and the pivotal courtyard of a neighbour's house to the right, The Ridge House in Kailash Colony, New Delhi successfully holds its own against a context which screams 'intimidating'.

Text By Ar. Priti Kalra
Photographs Courtesy Amit Khanna
Design Associates



Screens or 'jaalis' that combine regular sized bricks with thinner ones break the monotony of the façade as well as protect the interiors from the harsh sun, thus curtailing the use of energy.



For one, the inverted outline results in the creation of a larger shared courtyard. Secondly, in the composite climate of Delhi, the quality of air and natural light that enters both houses is preserved.

Designed by Amit Khanna Design Associates (AKDA) and completed in 2016, the house derives its name from The Ridge, the northern extension of the ancient Aravalli Mountains, which it stands on. Over 1500 million years old, The Ridge comprises primarily of jagged quartzite and is infamously difficult to build on. The planning authorities have demarcated its undulating topography such that religious structures occupy the higher points and row housing lines the lower contours.

The site in question previously housed a small two-storey residence abutting a 25 ft high rocky outcrop to the rear. With the revision of government byelaws, the plot now allows for a five-storey construction to be built, with ground level and basement allotted to parking, services and storage, and the four upper floors dedicated to residential use.



From a structural perspective, aligning the columns through six unique floor plans became the second challenge of the project.

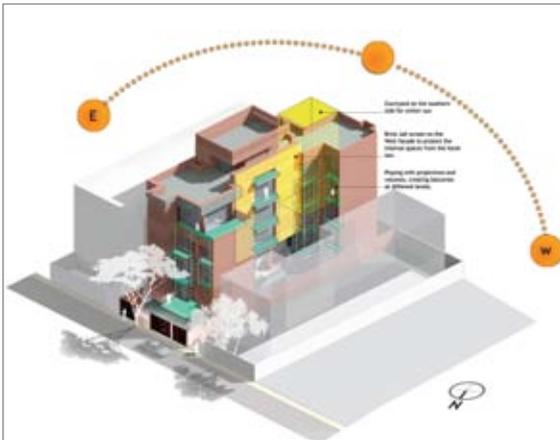
A distant bird's eye view reveals the rim of the long, narrow hilltop that the site sits on. **On zooming in closer, the site appears to be nestled within a valley of sorts, a low-lying depression created by the intersecting planes of the party wall, the rocky outcrop and the central garden carved out of the neighbour's property.** The house in question mediates, so to speak, the tension created between the three dynamically different boundary conditions.

The first response of the design studio was to mirror the building outline of the neighbour's house. The benefits of this gesture were envisioned to be three-fold. For one, the inverted outline results in the creation of a larger shared courtyard. Secondly, in the composite climate of Delhi, the quality of air and natural light that enters both houses is preserved.

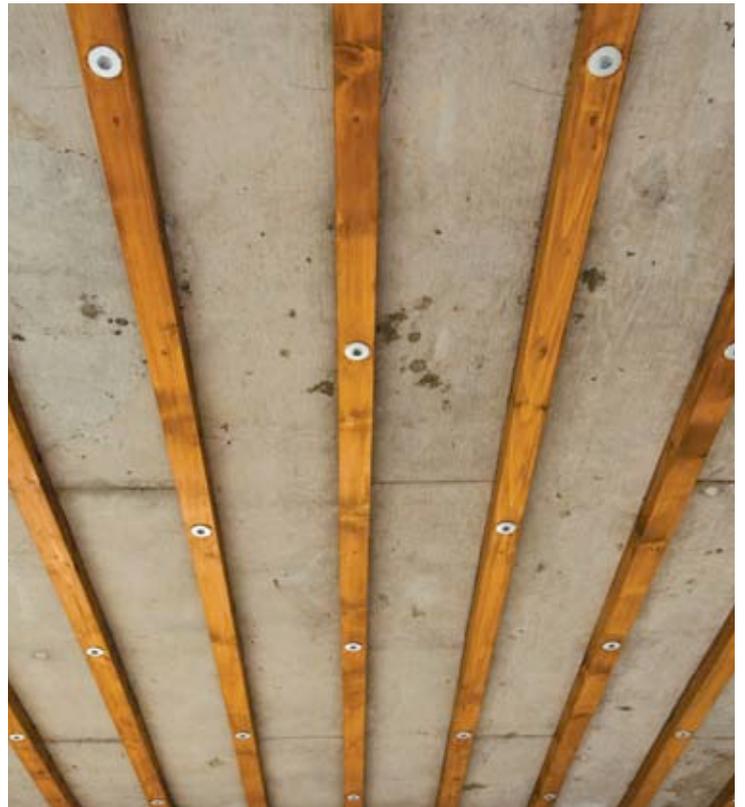
The third, and possibly most important outcome of the intervention, is the regeneration of collective living. **In a world of builders and developers, where cheek by jowl construction dominates the field of architectural practice, a mutually beneficial communal open space encourages the residents of The Ridge House to come together with their neighbours to grow and nurture their trees, as well as to relax and unwind.**

The basement of the residence is for holding religious congregations and the ground floor is occupied by stilt parking for both owners and tenants. The residential programme begins on the first floor. Here, two apartments overlooking the courtyard below boast of independent access from the parking level and are intended for use by tenants.

On the second floor, a smaller apartment for the client's grandparents allows for a luxurious open terrace to be accommodated at the rear. The third floor, again, is designed specifically for tenants, while the fourth floor is a sprawling three-bedroom penthouse for the client. The penthouse leads to a spacious terrace above, replete with extravagances such as water landscaping, a bar counter and seating area for entertaining guests, and a space to meditate and practice yoga. The total built-up area of the multi-storey residence is 18000 sq ft.



A parallel perspective of the building indicating response to composite climate conditions.



The brief of the project posed two major challenges to the architects, one due to site conditions and the other due to programmatic requirements. The first was the bed of pure impenetrable rock that the site sat on. The byelaws of the residential neighbourhood dictated that hydraulic splitters and explosives could not be used to break through the bedrock.

Thus, manual labour had to be employed to excavate the site for the foundations. On the bright side, the sheer mass of the rock eliminated the need for a retaining wall in the basement. Here, the decision to expose the stone surface and light it from above via slit skylights resulted in an interesting backdrop for the gathering space.

From a structural perspective, aligning the columns through six unique floor plans became the second challenge of the project. The basement demanded a large column-free space. The ground floor had to be governed by the number of parking spaces required. The upper residential floors with varying programmatic concerns needed comfortably spacious rooms without protruding columns hindering movement.

The elevation of the building was covered predominantly in brick, which served as a unifying element to the complex volumetric nature of the form. The inspiration to use brick came from the reddish colour of the excavated stone. Screens or 'jaalis' that combine regular sized bricks with thinner ones break the monotony of the façade as well as protect the interiors from the harsh sun, bringing down the use of energy required for artificial cooling.



The third, and possibly most important outcome of the intervention, is the regeneration of collective living.

Bands of grey Kota stone elegantly complement the kiln-burnt fiery hue of the brickwork. A large chunk of Kota stone finds its way into the flooring of the stilt level, interspersed with small bits of black granite - the leftovers from the bathroom and kitchen countertops. **The use of local stone and recycling waste material was part of the focus on the eco-friendly approach of the project.**

Sustainability forms an important aspect of the project. **Doubly glazed windows increase thermal comfort and minimise the entry of dust. A 5-star energy rated, variable refrigerant flow air conditioning system from Mitsubishi further controls ambient air quality.** LED light fixtures defeat the purpose that energy intensive decorative lights serve. In conjunction with the brick screens, a doubly insulated roof on the uppermost floor mitigates heat gain.

✉ www.akda.in