

DESIGN DESTINATION: GDANSK

SPECIALIST: THE QUIRK WORKS

DESIGN QUEST: CRAFTTER

HOME REVIEW

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A three level home in Surat, Gujarat for two brothers has been designed by The Company of Design, to provide both ample opportunities for togetherness as well as privacy for their respective families.

SIBLING REVELRY

Combining the best of two worlds - both the traditional and the contemporary, is the mantra for many Indian families. It was no surprise, then, that Pooja and Neil Parekh of The Company of Design were given a specific brief by two siblings to create a home for them in Surat, in which they could be together without sacrificing the 'my space' aspect. Part of a residential complex, this 2750 sq ft apartment had its own parking and entry, together with a terrace covered by a lawn on the first floor outside the living room. A fountain added substantial charm to this space and together these elements imparted a distinctly bungalow like feel to the home.

Text By Devyani Jayakar
Photographs Courtesy The Fishy Project



The dominant sculptural 'branches' spread over the ceiling of the living room, appearing like an aesthetic treatment which accommodates spotlights within its design.





The shaft for the lift has been replaced with 5mm folded MS plate staircase.



The ground floor had only the parking, with the brothers occupying one level each on the first and second floor. The parents divide their time living with both their sons, so there is a room reserved for their use on each floor. "The challenge for us was to cater to different aesthetics yet create a cohesive space," says Neil.

In all, there are eight bedrooms, two living rooms and two kitchens. "We left the baths the way the builder had provided them, as well as the marble flooring. It is on the second floor that the layout has been reconfigured, to accommodate the requirement of several rooms - including a large bath and a steam room."

The shaft for the lift was provided by the builder, but the family wanted a staircase to connect the floors internally. "So we tore down the shaft to accommodate it. A folded MS plate, 5mm in thickness, has been fitted in the wall, ensuring that there is no wobble. The staircase is a pivotal element in the house which connects both the floors cohesively," says Neil.

A 'tree' in the foyer of the first floor (painted with automobile paint) is actually a structural metal column, its branches masking some awkwardly located beams. Its sculptural presence looks like a giant installation, dominating the space with its angular outward reach.

On the floor above, these 'branches' spread over the ceiling of the living room, appearing like an aesthetic treatment which accommodates spotlight within its design," says Neil.

The family was clear that they didn't want a picture perfect home to which nothing could be added. **They wanted to make the home their own, over time, by adding personal collectibles in addition to their existing collection of chairs, brass vessels and hand crafted wall hangings.** "With this view in mind, the furniture has not been designed to match perfectly - so that the home can evolve and have a collected feel, rather than a designed one," says Pooja.





Since each brother has two children, their requirement was four bedrooms on each floor. "The children were too small to voice any preferences. However, one bedroom belonged to an adult sister," says Neil. Wood and natural stone dominate the material palette, with some exposed brick. Colour comes from the soft furnishings, while top hung sliding doors with the hardware exposed, make a design statement.

"The elder brother wanted a traditional space, with Indian seating at the dining table, so we've given him a low height table at which his family can sit with folded legs," says Pooja. Since natural light was restricted in the dining area, a large pendant light hangs over the dining table. The living area has wooden rafters, while a veneer canopy demarcates the transition space leading to the terrace outside. The artwork on the wall represents the five elements of earth, while a comfortable recliner is the preferred seat for the patriarch of the household.



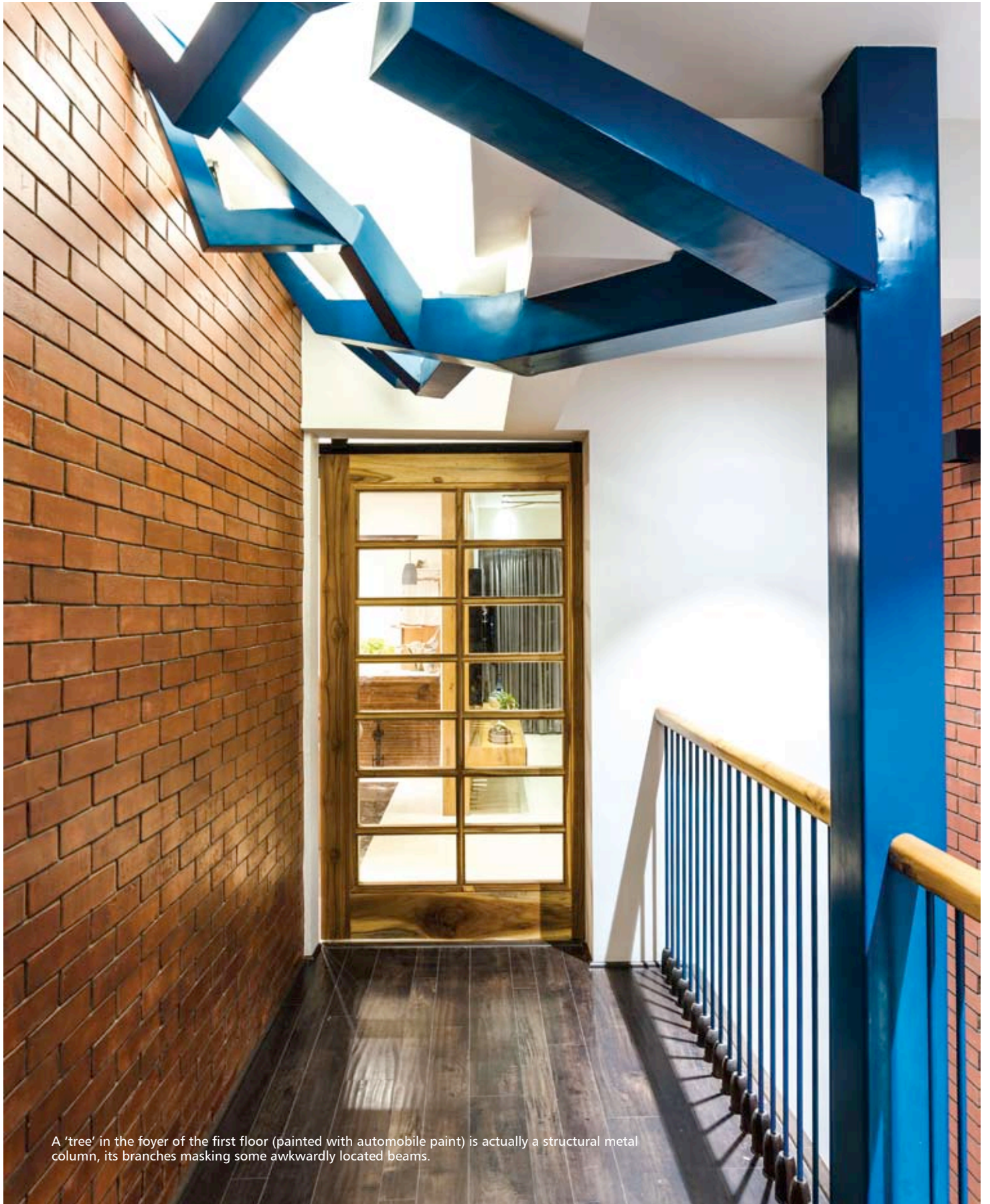
"We also had to consider everyone's needs. The sister wanted low height furniture and a window ledge. We've also given her crafted wardrobe shutters painted by an artist, with wooden handles carved into a sparrow." The room for the parents has white walls and minimal accessories. Storage has been provided behind the bed, to compensate for the small space.

The younger brother - well-travelled - wanted a clean, sleek, open space. In contrast to the bright upholstery on the furniture with delicate MS legs on the first floor, the second floor has dark upholstery on the cushy, bulky sofas. The black glass backdrop behind the television ensures that any future change in size of the screen can be easily accommodated.

"Our design exercise attempts to keep the look and feel of both the floors such that their variations complement each other, while keeping the totality of the house alive," says Pooja.

The younger brother wanted a clean open space and sleek yet brightly upholstered furniture.

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