



ABSTRACTING AHMEDABAD POLS

THIS BUNGALOW BY MANDVIWALA QUTUB & ASSOCIATES COALESCE A CONTEMPORARY AESTHETIC WITH THE LAYERED ANTIQUITY OF TRADITIONAL POL HOUSES OF AHMEDABAD.

BY ALISHA LAD

1. The strikingly modern architectural form explores a play of volumes, materials and textures.



Architect Mandviwala of the eponymous Mandviwala Qutub & Associates has carved a niche in the design world, executing an architectural language that forges aesthetic sensibilities inherent to the site's climate and conditions. Through an approach that exemplifies simplicity and minimalism with a modern flair, he intensifies existing urban landscapes – and this bungalow in Ahmedabad is a quintessential representation of his spatial experiments.

“Inspired by the humble Pol houses of Ahmedabad, this completely Vastu-compliant bungalow, where form follows climate, pays homage to Ahmedabad's rich history,” explains architect Qutub Mandviwala. A curation of materials, colours, art and design strategies echo this complexity.

CONTEMPORARY FORM

Condensing a historical concept to a starkly modern form, a play of volumes anchors the elevations. Cantilevered expanses jut out, crafting shaded porches while an array of materials make themselves known. An interplay of natural elements creates visual interest. This is offset by a first floor clad in wooden panels which denote textural depth. Bevelled edges of the first-floor act as a frame, affording great views from the end-to-end balcony. A stunning entrance greets visitors, leading to sectioned off zones.

VETTED FOR VAASTU

The homeowner's penchant for complying with Vaastu has been considered rather carefully. While Vaastu norms dictate that entrances should be positioned on the northern or eastern side, the site provided access only from South-East. The architect thus curated a driveway from the south accessing an entrance to the east. This beautiful avenue now offers layers of privacy to the house.

LEVELLING PRIVACY

The expansive house is divided into three main zones - public, semi-private and private. The public zone consists

2. The home welcomes with an entrance framed by a massive cantilever and luxurious marble steps.

3. Architect Qutub Mandviwala, Principal Architect, Mandviwala and Associates





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of the entrance foyer, the office and a mandir while the semi-private zone hosts the living area, a centrally binding courtyard and a family lounge. All the bedrooms are in the private zone while an entertainment zone with a swimming pool find place in the basement. Lavish double-height volumes for the semi-public zone ooze vastness, exuding effortless luxury. The design is made age-friendly and fully accessible, thanks to most of of the living and private spaces being at the same level and equipped with ramps in every zone.



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7. Entertainment zones are relegated to the basement, punctuated by a lavish swimming pool in the basement.

8. A beautiful central courtyard preserves an existing tree, and provides light to the family lounge.

4. The family lounge is doused in cozy comfort and effortless luxe appeal.

5. A skylight, with jaali patterns reminiscent of the Poles, bathes expansive spaces in natural light.

6. In the living, stunning textile artwork of moonlight hues and zardosi work alludes to Jainism.



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9. Carved out of white marble, an exquisite mandir flanks the line between built and unbuilt.

10. An elevated wooden shed explores materiality while adding an element of playfulness.

EXTRAPOLATING POLS

Having lived in Pol houses previously, the homeowner wanted his abode to reflect this connect. So, the Brahmasthan or the central courtyard forms the heart of the design. This courtyard is built around a pre-existing tree and creates a visual connection between the different levels of the house. Cut-outs in the floors bring in natural light through the entire home, down till the basement, allowing light to stream in through a skylight jaali with forms reminiscent of the Pols. The interiors spotlight an interesting play of materials and light, enlivening all corners with timeless design.

GREETING NATURE

An attached deck or balcony space across all internal spaces in the house brings the lush landscape indoors. The dining area opens into a verdant space shaded with a contemporary jaali

of captivating, leafed forms. A covered canopy pushes the main windows inwards, keeping the rooms cool during harsh summers. Shaded balconies and metal mesh work at the outdoor spillage area creates a cosy and personalised experience.

MATERIAL STORIES

The materials used for construction have been locally sourced. Teak India and Ita Gold, and Indian natural stones have been largely used for external cladding. Italian marble in warm tones is used throughout the house internally, creating a beautiful play with the landscape. A temple, carved entirely out of white marble, anchors an underlying spiritual axis. Distinct walkways cutting across the court are constructed using differently sized polished pebbles and materials, creating a comfortable walkway. It also provides desirable reflexology and a lively spirit to the space.

DESIGNING ART

Stunning design and fitting artwork balance each other in this house. Large artwork inspired by Jain scriptures called 'Pattachitra' – a tradition cloth-based scroll painting - is seen from the courtyard and entrance foyer as it wraps around the upper floor. Gold-plated graphic forms of a lotus are added to create layers on the textile work.

A 30-foot-long textile artwork, inspired by moonlight and the tree of life, appropriately titled 'Moonlight', is also displayed in the living area. The textile and paint composition has highlights of 'zardosi' work on it. These pieces by Ujval Shah and Ashish Gujjar exemplify Jainism and spirituality. Artworks paying homage to the abundant history of Ahmedabad, from the mural of Ashtamangal which is displayed at the entrance, to sketches of Pol houses displayed along the staircase, can be found in the house too.

This Ahmedabad villa strikes a notable balance of traditional and modern, private and public, open and close. "The interiors blend well with the exterior and are spiced with colours and artwork all over, making the living experience lively and timeless," states the architect, encapsulating the design. **ACI**