

Inside Outside

The Indian Design Magazine

A Tranquil Space

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A Tranquil Space

Text: Ruchi Sawhney Photographs: Manoj Parameshwaran, courtesy the architect

The architecture of Thrissur, in Kerala inspires architect Vinod Kumar M M of dd architects, to design an inward looking house for Meera and Dinesh Nair. The house explores the intricate relationship between nature, structure and its occupants. These relationships, which are critical in our traditional buildings, find a contemporary milieu in this home.



Architect Vinod Kumar M M explores the symbiotic relationship between nature and a dwelling by incorporating traditional design features that always kept us connected with the elements. Looking at the house from the outside, one notices a courtyard, verandah, and small water spouts, inspired from temples nearby. There is an inherent simplicity and a 'back to the roots' feel about the house which is carried forward in the interiors as well.

The fine details are what set the design apart; it's something one realises as one steps into the cool and spacious home. Beyond the four-leafed entrance door is a living-cum-dining room which has a 'rain wall'. It brings in rain through intelligent detailing made out of polycarbonate and it gives the Nairs, an interesting space with changing moods and hues. Architect Vinod Kumar celebrates the monsoon by bringing the residents closer to it with the 'rain wall'. One can hear the soft tinkle of water falling on the pebbles in the small courtyard and feel soothed and energised in such an ambience.

Light reflects off the black oxide flooring and the rich hues of the terracotta bricks in the living room. The highlight of the house is the mix of natural materials that have been used such as terracotta hollow blocks, rough granite, and oxide flooring and off-white oxide work on the walls. Also, intricate wooden detailing was achieved by local carpenters who were encouraged to do their best.

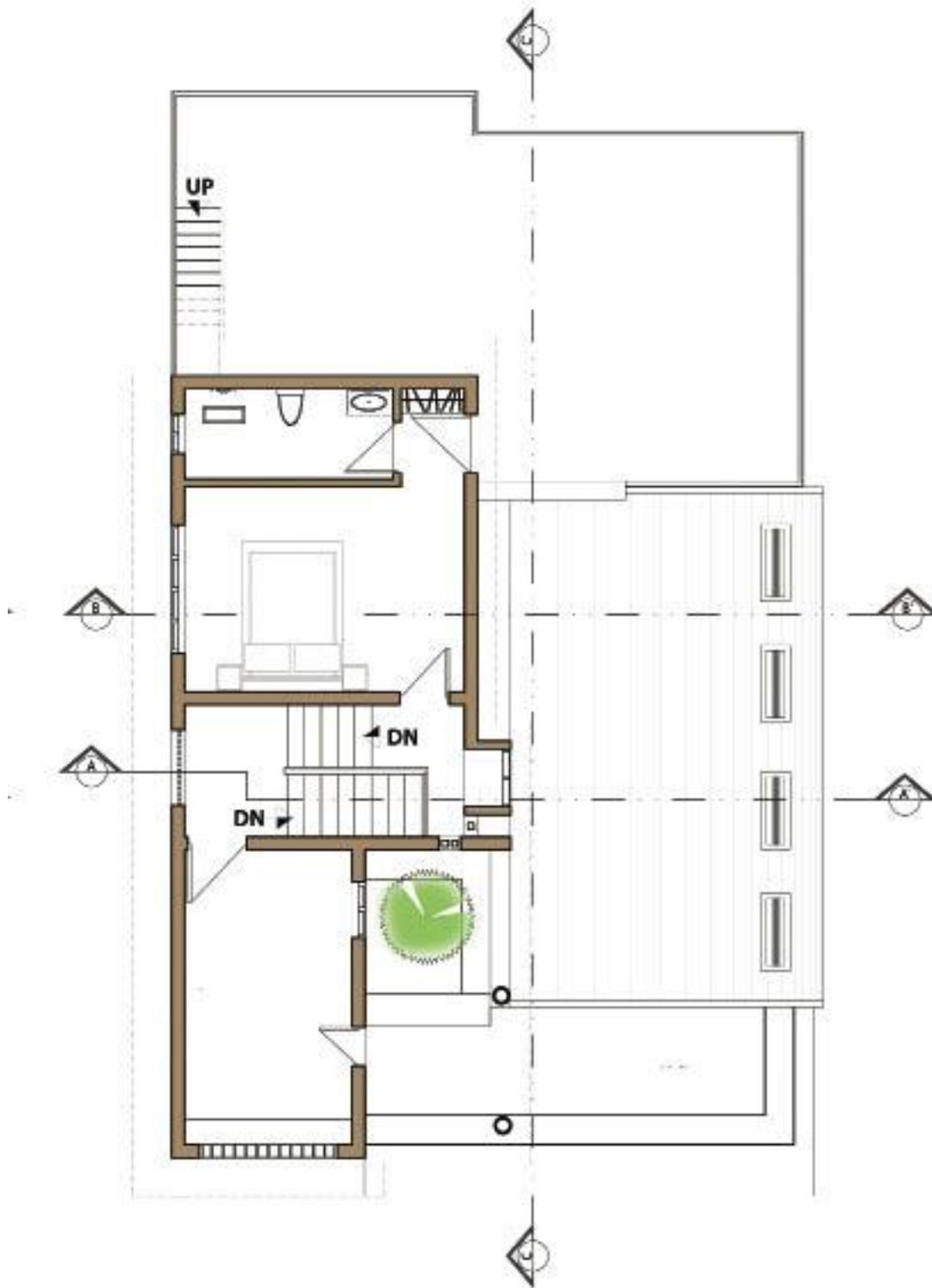
Similarly, openings are placed strategically to bring cool breeze into the house and hot air trapped within it is made to escape through openings at the highest point of the house. Thus, the 'vertical air shaft' in the stair area helps the house to remain pleasant through the year. The gap in the terracotta blocks, ceiling tiles, white reflective paint over the roof and openings designed to bring in breeze are features which make this house eco-sensitive.

Architect Vinod Kumar has used his expertise in conservation work by incorporating traditional elements and by using the skill of local artisans. 'It's not easy to find people who do oxide flooring,' says Vinod. He has used a local person who has traditional knowledge regarding how to maintain the air flow in the house and the Nairs are very happy that the house stays cool during summer months. So the design is an amalgamation of local architectural elements and local expertise – it's a good example of integrating the past with the present.

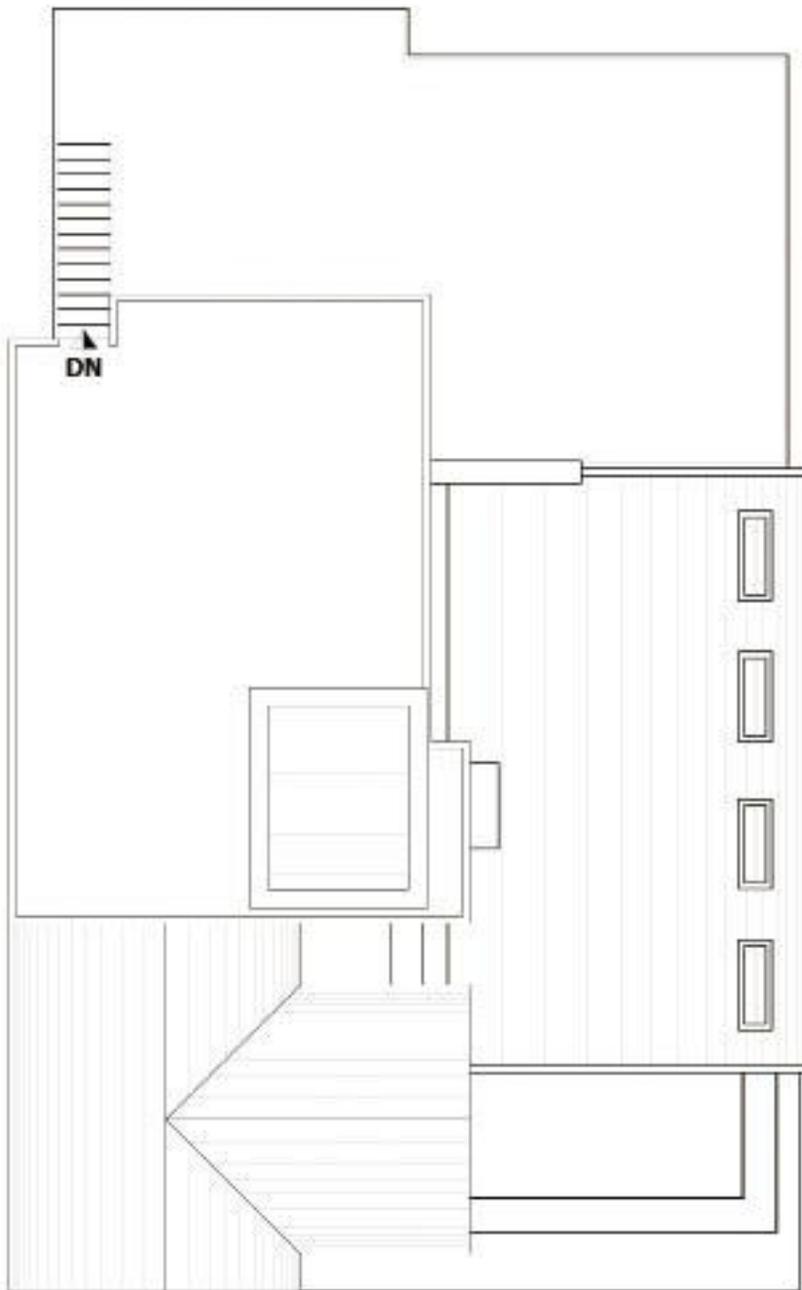




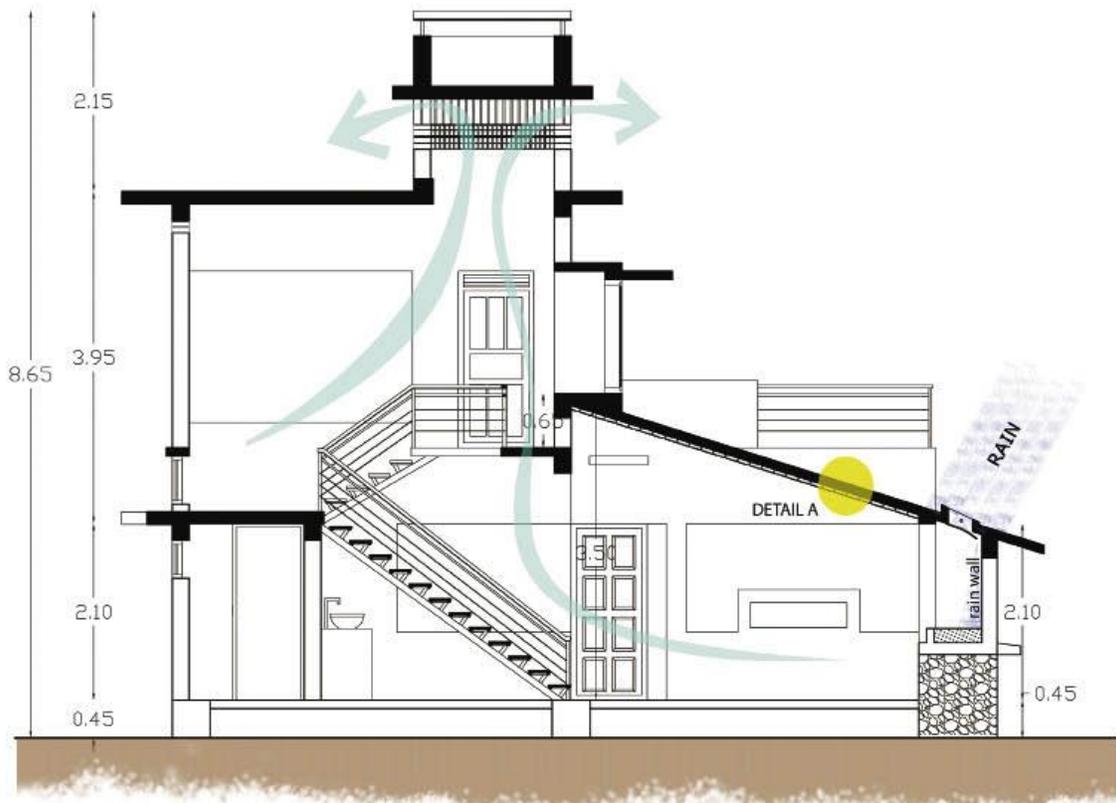
GROUND FLOOR PLAN



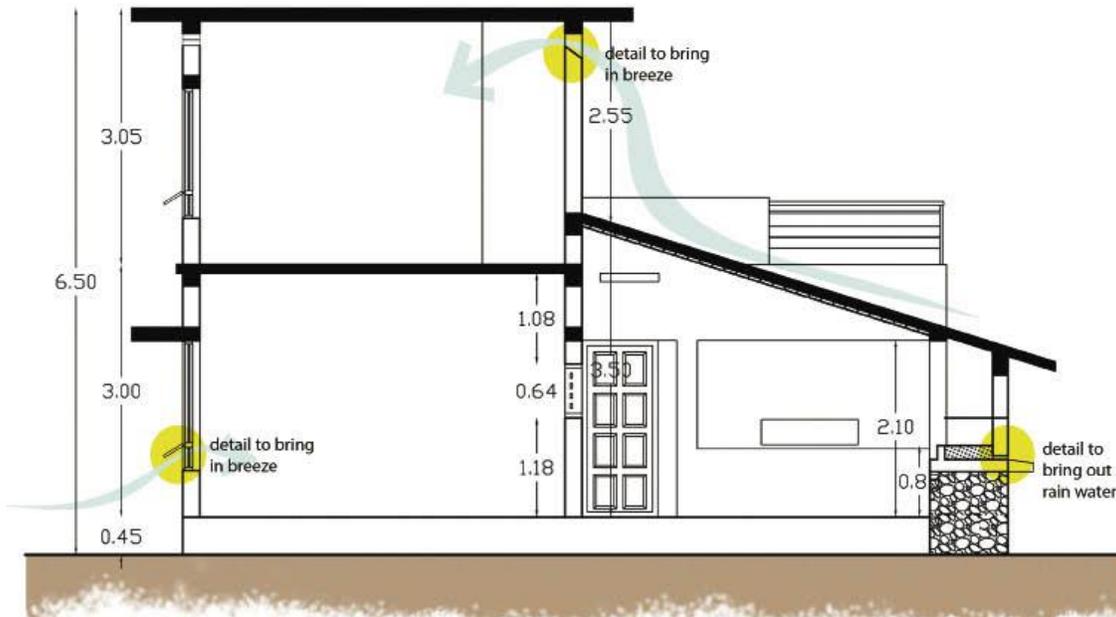
FIRST FLOOR PLAN



TERRACE FLOOR PLAN



SECTION-AA'

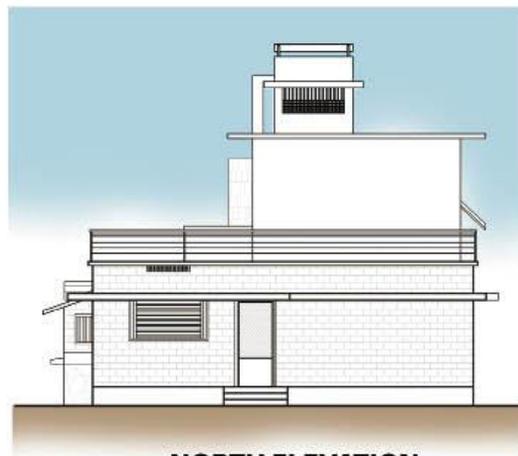


SECTION-BB'

SCALE:1:50
ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN CMS



SOUTH ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION

SCALE:1:100

The 'rain wall' made out of polycarbonate adds interest to the living room



Light reflects off the black oxide flooring and the rich hues of the terracotta bricks in the living room





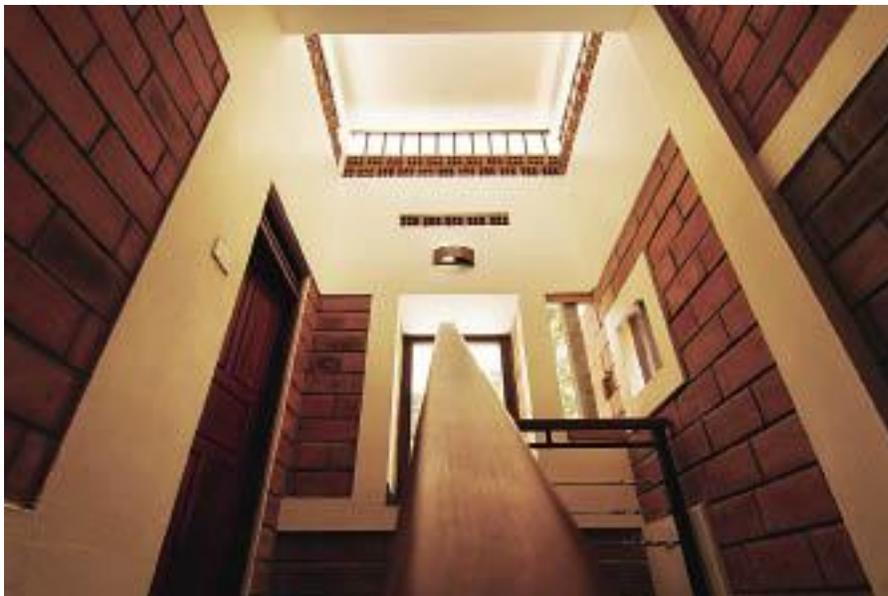
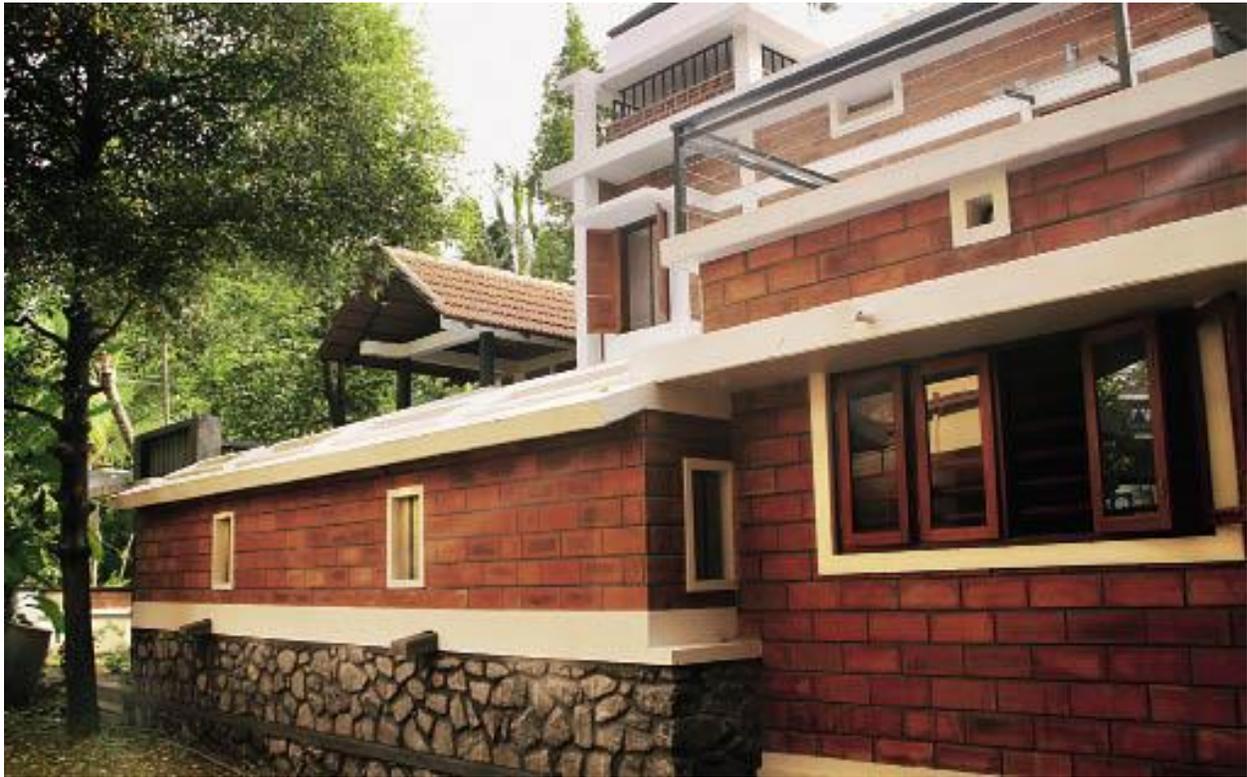
Openings are placed strategically to bring cool breeze into the house.



Intricate wooden detailing and a mix of materials such as hollow terracotta blocks, rough granite and oxide flooring lend an earthy touch.



The design is an amalgamation of local architectural elements and expertise



Traditional knowledge regarding how to maintain the air flow and keep the house cool all year round was incorporated in the design by architect Vinod