

# HOME

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# TRENDS



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# A common thread

This house has been designed such that each floor functions as an independent unit while remaining connected as a whole





**Designing a home is not easy but when** one has to create three individual homes within a single house, the challenge is greatly multiplied. Not only does the designer have to keep conflicting tastes in mind, he also has to ensure that the design has consistency and harmony throughout the project.

This mammoth task was undertaken by architect Bipratip Dhar of Epsilon Architects and his team. They were called upon to design the interiors of a house that spreads over four storeys as well as

a terrace. Located in Kolkata, the house is occupied by three brothers, each of whom has a floor to himself.

Each floor is spread over an area of 3500 sq ft, making this a significantly large project since the total area of the house amounts to approximately 17,500 sq ft.

The implication was that the designer would have to avoid the temptation of repetition since every floor occupied by each of the brothers has its own living and dining room and three bedrooms per floor. It seemed to be a daunting task so

*Above: Architect Bipratip Dhar of Epsilon Architects designed the third floor living room of this 17,500 sq ft house as the most opulent as compared to the other three floors. The curved furniture has an understated classical touch that is completed by the crystal chandelier. The drama unfolds before an onyx wall which is visible as soon as one enters this space.*





Above: The dining chairs have been kept simple to match the heavy dining table and the furniture beyond in the living room. A pair of heavy leather easy chairs occupies the space near the window. They are in keeping with the formal look of the space while simultaneously carving out a comfortable and a private spot.

Dhar chose to begin with the basics – the owners' needs.

"The owners' didn't have any preconceived ideas of how the interiors should be so we tried to find out what the family is like," says Dhar who used the owners' tastes to create an outline of the basic look of each space, into which he would fill in the details.

The first floor is a common area for the family. It is largely occupied by a banquet hall, which is equipped with a separate kitchen used during social gatherings.

There is also an office on this floor along with a guest room, utilities area and an elevator lobby which is all shared by the three families.

The second, third and fourth floors have exactly the same layout. There is a large hall, which has been divided into a living room, a dining area and three bedrooms, each of which have an attached bathroom and dressing.

"There are three different looks on three different floors but they all have the same space allocation. The owners wanted



an opulent house," says Dhar, elaborating on the running theme of the house and the common thread over each storey.

The opulence is most evident on the third floor, which negotiates the spaces above and below it.

The dark, leather finish furniture in the living area has a neo-classical style that matches the ornate light piece in the centre. The moulding on the false ceiling gives the space a touch of richness.

The living room on the fourth floor is

designed along similar lines. However, it has an entirely unique look.

This floor is occupied by a family with children so the design was restrained and muted without compromising on the luxury. The basic look of the space is a combination of pale grey and white with a slight splash of colour.

"We've added a bit of colour by using satvario marble on the floors and played around with colour only in the upholstery. The entire space is otherwise in neutral

**Legend to plans:** 1 Banquet area, 2 kitchens, 3 bathrooms, 4 office, 5 bedrooms, 6 living room, 7 dining, 8 balconies, 9 bar, 10 terrace, 11 gymnasium









*Left:* Unlike the fluid curves of the third floor living room, the living room on the fourth floor is linear. Its richness comes from the heaviness of the furniture and the large decorative light piece. However, it remains more muted. On the fourth floor, the onyx has shifted from the walls to the ceiling and the living room wall is textured instead.







shades and creates an interesting contrast of colours," says Dhar.

The second floor, unlike the floors above it, is more crisp, only embellished through accessories. The living room on this floor uses shades of beige as the primary colour tone, punctuated with grey. Here, a prayer room has also been accommodated beyond the dining area. The furniture is straight lined.

The accessories played a very significant part of the design. Most of them have been imported and they have all been

**Left:** A louvered window occupies the wall behind the bed in this bedroom on the third floor. The levers have been customised and slide open to allow natural light and air. The designers chose to give it such a look so that it does not evidently come across as a window.

**Above:** All the bathrooms have the same layout, it is only the finishes which have been changed so that each one has a unique look. Here, a Jacuzzi is nestled into the marble and a mirror panelling on the wall serves to break the monotony.





*Above and right:* Although the layout of every living room is the same, the second floor living room has been made a less formal space as the furniture is arranged in a more compact manner. The design leans towards contemporary but retains its richness through the accessories.



selected by the designers.

"The accessories were chosen as per the ambience. We had already kept them in mind at the design stage so we ensured that space was allocated for them. The difficult part is actually finding the object you have visualised," says Dhar.

Apart from the accessories, another connecting factor through the house is the treatment given to the walls.

The second floor living room is marked by a travertine marble wall. On the third floor, one sees the onyx grid as soon as one





enters the living room. Finally, the fourth floor has a textured wall, which acts as a backdrop to the accessories. Thus, each separate wall finish gives every space a unique look thereby creating a cool ambience throughout.

The creative treatment of the walls is not restricted only to the living rooms. The bedrooms too display this trend. Veneer panelling has been employed in the bedrooms on the third and fourth floors to add a dash of flamboyance. On the other hand, the bedrooms on the second floor

have been done up using dark veneer which is more muted and subtle.

"In all the bedrooms, we have created a contrast by having three simple walls and one which is embellished. Different materials have been used on the walls, such as onyx, veneer, wallpaper and texturing. We have given these materials an unusual treatment by using them over a large expanse so that the beauty of the material itself stands out," says Dhar.

The architect has avoided using too much inlay on the floors so that the walls

**Above:** In contrast to the other living rooms, the central light fixture in this room is simple but yet occupies centre stage. In order to balance the beige furniture and travertine wall, the designers have chosen to have a dark ceiling which further enhances the light fixture.





Above: Some of the bedrooms are designed such that there is a sharp acute angle towards one corner. The designers have capitalised on this flaw by turning the niche into a seating platform in the bedrooms on the second floor.

stand out.

"It isn't enough to use a lot of different material. It has to be put in the correct place and in the correct quantity for the best effects," says Dhar.

This design philosophy has also been extended to the bathrooms. The internal structure was adjusted and minor changes were made due to the placement of the pipes in the bathrooms. While restructuring the bathroom areas, the closets were incorporated as an intermediate space between the room and bathroom.

The closets have sliding, folding doors such that when they are opened the closet space beyond looks like it is part of the bedroom itself.

In the architectural structure, the south-western and south-eastern facing bedrooms have a sharp acute angle in the design.

As per the principles of *Vaastu*, the rooms were required to be rectangular. In the second floor bedrooms, the designers have achieved this by creating a seating platform.





How do you resolve the changing levels? Are there any exceptionally interesting?

One of the platforms is made of travertine marble and the other of dark wood. The designers have also used another method to give each room and space its own individuality.

"Rather than using different colour schemes, that also requires skill, we believe in focusing on the space allocation – where each element is placed to meet the need of the occupants. For example, in the arrangement of the seating, the storage or how the furniture and accessories are placed," says Dhar.

The kitchens on each floor have been given two points of connection to the spaces outside. One leads into the house. The other connects to the external lift lobby so that the service staff can enter and leave directly without having to go through the house.

On the whole, the house begins at the first level with the common family spaces and ends with the same at the terrace area. Thus, it remains connected as a complete whole while retaining individual spaces for every family.

**Above:** The textured wall of this second floor bathroom is made of ceramic. Usually such ceramic slabs are used only in small portions owing to the cost. Here, it has been used on the entire wall to display the complete effect of the material.





**Above:** The terrace area is equipped with a home theatre and a bar. The rest of the terrace is landscaped and the easy chairs make it an ideal place for the family to relax.

*Story by Namrata Shah*

*Photography by Mrigank Sharma- India Sutra*

**Architect/ Designer:** Bipratip Dhar, Epsilon

**Design team:** Biprajit Poddar, Neha Sureka, Moumita

Mahato, Mita Kar Nandy, Anupam Samanta

**Associations:** Council of Architecture (COA)

**Window/door:** Fenesta

**Furniture:** Customised

**Flooring:** Natural stones

**Wallcoverings:** Skipper Furnishings, Times

Furnishings, Atmosphere

**Paints:** Asian paints

**Lighting:** Fiam

**Stove:** Faber

**Ventilation:** Cata

**Bath:** Duravit

**Basin:** Kohler, Laufen

**Taps:** Grohe, Gessi

**Shower stall:** Customised

**Toilet:** Kohler, Laufen

**Bed linen:** Skipper Furnishings

**Mirrors:** Modi Float

**Other bedroom furniture and accessories:** Collins India, Hafele

**Landscaping:** Bijeta Chowdhary

**Paving:** Pavit Tiles, Black Kudappa

**Outdoor lighting:** Eglo



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