

THE HERITAGE SOJOURN HOME

Fact File:

Project Name, Location – The Heritage Sojourn Home, Bangalore

Typology and Square Footage – Corporate Guesthouse, 4BHK - 3,621 Square Feet

Completion Month and Year – February 2022

Architecture Design Firm – Studio Skapa Architects

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Studio Skapa Architects transforms a derelict Bangalore penthouse into a company guesthouse immersed in Tropical Modernism, merging rooted Indian heritage and a contemporary persona into one.

The thresholds amidst the past and present blur away with abandon, tipping its hat to the reimagined union amidst traditions and contemporary sensibilities. *The Heritage Sojourn Home* rests in a state of serenity, nestled within a gated community in Whitefield, Bangalore.

Envisioned to serve as a corporate guesthouse, the design brief shared by the client placed an emphasis upon the notion of inherent warmth that the home needed to be effortlessly synonymous with. *“With homes, our core impetus is derived from working closely with the aspirations and vision of a family or an individual. This project inverted that approach entirely; we had to conceptualise a space that could resonate across a spectrum of inhabitants as it was intrinsically a guest residence created for an organisation. A welcome challenge that truly heightened the stakes as we parallelly navigated the Pandemic,”* shares Charita.

The narrative of the space almost immediately acquaints one with its heritage-saturated persona, indulging in indigenous and earthy materiality that celebrates the spirit of the Deccan. While designing the sumptuous two-floored private penthouse’s expanse, the driving inclination was to meld familial comfort and wilful escapism that one experiences over a rejuvenating getaway! A marriage between the ideas of creating a home away from home and a retreat of sorts.

The abode explores traditional building materials that have dotted the age-old bungalows and dwellings over the decades, embellishing the history of Indian architecture. The prevalence of woven rattan furniture, bold oxide-washed surfaces, and terrazzo-clad

floors are vernacular elements that the mind associates with vignettes from ancestral homes. There is a steady state of flux of time, initiating a juxtaposition between the old and new, layered with a tangible Tropical Modern flair!

Materiality in this abode is the true-blue muse, enriching the home with its characteristic DNA and unpretentious temperament. *“Our ever-trusting clients handed over the space with complete conviction, allowing our instincts to steer the project in the desired direction. Their inputs quite honestly moulded the aura and personality of the space during its primitive stages. Likewise, the curation of materials and finishes was instinctive, reaping its inspiration from the overarching ethos of the home,”* adds the Architect.

The intensely decrepit condition of the apartment presented itself as a daunting challenge, almost coercing the studio to convince the clients to consider not renovating the home altogether! The site team began with renewing electrical, plumbing, core structural, and intra-building services to restore the home’s ability to become habitable. The design principle anchoring the project was steadfastly focused on form following function, a maxim the studio swears by. Additionally, the client’s focus on achieving a Vaastu-compliant layout had to be addressed thoroughly while keeping the end-user’s comfort at the forefront.

“Intriguingly, the clients garnered a handsome lot of furniture over their escapades of globetrotting; this enabled the studio to collage pieces old and new, lending the old finds a new lease of life,” recounts Charita. A little woodworking to upscale, reupholstering, and repolishing was sufficient to spruce up the pieces, creating a blend between antiques and newly crafted additions. Most pieces were created adhering to a binding geometry of soft and curved silhouettes, bestowing the spaces with ingrained comfort expressed through furniture, patterns, and materiality.

With the first rendezvous, the petite foyer space sets the presiding tone of the home, hinting at what the residence holds within its embrace. Entered via a bespoke antique door customised by Pondicherry-based *Aurorachana*, the vignette within the foyer exudes an old-world yet neoteric charm! The pre-possessed rattan bench was scaled up to anchor the space, flanked by a duo of amorphous form banana fibre luminaires and a focal wood frame mirror by *The Purple Turtles*.

The layout unfurls into a light-filled open floor plan living cum dining space, lending its canvas as the communal nucleus of the residence. The custom terrazzo flooring cast-in-situ by *Bharat Floorings* witnessed a meticulous and finessed approach. The brass inlay patterns were laid into position before the flooring matrix could be cast over it. The flooring pattern commences at the entrance and flows uninterrupted into the home’s public spaces, binding the areas with its cohesive visual weave. Swathed in a melange of summery soft furnishings, whites, greys, ubiquitous doses of teakwood, and indoor greens, the living space reminisces vintage allure that seeped through the crevices of time!

A preliminary exchange of thoughts while ideating revealed the client’s penchant for terrazzo and their keen focus on wanting it as a focal material in the design scheme of the

residence. While the material eventually posed as a leitmotif in the home's communal spaces, the ambition was to use it diversely, creating a meandering and dynamic milieu across the areas it traverses. The humble and enduring grey terrazzo floor embedded with white mosaic chips was given a facelift with the inclusion of a geometric brass inlay pattern depicting an abstract four-leaf clover. Aside from being a talisman of good fortune, the pattern delicately travels the blueprint, eternising a sense of visual dynamism.

The sofa and armchairs were refurbished to their former glory, while the pentagonal-top end tables and retro-chic pivoting magazine stand were sourced from the artisanal furniture-dotted boutiques of Pondicherry. *“The central coffee table was a serendipitous find which we acquired in the form of a raw log of wood with no preconceived purpose in mind! While piecing the space together, we were inspired to adapt it as a piece of unadorned furniture, layered only with protective polish while its original hollows were left untamed,”* she elaborates.

A statement wall installation by *Bamboopecker* frames the living, created wholly in woven bamboo that celebrates the various natural tints of the material, positioned snugly amidst a pair of brass and glass wall lights. In addition, a minimalist prayer nook has been conceptualised in a quiet corner consisting of a Tanjore painting, a distressed wall embellishment, and a timeless brass lamp sourced in Pondicherry.

Abutting the living area and divided via an elevated threshold, the alfresco deck presents itself as an extension of life indoors, truly epitomising the experience of indoor-outdoor living. Rundown and dilapidated until a few months ago, the space now is an oasis of comfort, peppered with greens and nooks to lounge. A canopy composed of glass and metal rafters was erected to shelter the area while optimising the persistent presence of light from morning to dusk. The length of the balcony was sub-sectioned into various zones, hosting a sprightly, yellow-immersed lounge on one end and woven monochrome cane garden chairs and a table by *Beruru*. The flooring is a composite of amber Jaisalmer stone with printed geometric tiles in sections, mimicking embedded rugs.

A moment held still in the clasp of tradition and Indian craftsmanship; the inviting dining area remains steadfastly grounded in its identity. A live-edge wood dining table commands the space, accompanied by a set of six umber teak and beige linen-upholstered chairs. A rattan-faced credenza borders the zone, revelling in the delicate patterned weaves while a distressed engraved wood Buddha mural rests above it. A sizeable patina-doused mythical *Garuda* sculpture perches over the credenza, emphasising the omnipresence of history within the home's walls. A banana fibre wall lamp by *The Purple Turtles* stretches over the length of the nook, imbuing the latter with a nature-inspired essence.

The capacious kitchen dons a bright mien with its subtle yet impactful interplay of hues and finishes. The exposed concrete floors by *Super Surfaces* carry forth through the kitchen, only to be interjected by a whiff of colour in the form of a rustic jade hue adorning the backsplash tiles. The function of storage and circulation is further enhanced herein with a central cooking island, creating an interactive layout within. The white-hued cabinetry establishes a sense of expanse, layered with rattan-clad millwork fronts and

deep wooden tones through the open shelving systems. The matte gold hardware ushers in quiet elegance into the kitchen.

The connective spine of the residence, the staircase is a transformation that the studio felt was integral to the home's design narrative. *"The erstwhile staircase connecting the levels was visually bulky, made entirely in glossy black granite, which rendered the stairwell with a dark and stunted appearance. We gutted the same out and reimagined the staircase as an architectural feature in tandem with the overruling design sensibility and materials underscoring the guesthouse. This transformation was a game-changer,"* explains the Principal Architect.

Grey speckled terrazzo continues onto the risers while the treads are lined with deep-stained teakwood. The balustrades have been crafted in brass and the handrail in teak; a sleek array of elliptical forms create the railings, emerging in a larger scale with fluted glass infills to visually partition the stairwell and to grant the powder bathroom it houses under its volume visual privacy.

The bedrooms spread across *The Heritage Sojourn Home* have been designed with a penchant for a defining colour that grounds it while staying devoted to the palpable tapestry of design that pulses through the home!

On the ground level, the guest bedroom is a vision in ochre. Referencing historical bungalows and quaint residences characteristically earmarked by tinted oxide floors. The flooring here is a modern interpretation of the same. Micro-topped by *Super Surfaces* in a warm ochre hue, the spacious guest bedroom comprises a resting space, a study nook, and a walk-in closet created by introducing a partition wall to better utilise the layout.

Teakwood, brass, and rattan play protagonists here, dotting the soft-curved furniture across the space while prints and solid fabric debut across upholstery, blinds fabric by *Vaya Home* and loose furnishings. The spindled-back bed and Mid-Century Modern luggage station cum bookshelf extending as a desk unites the facets of aesthetics with versatile function. The walk-in section offers ample storage, staying true to the material palette; sheets of woven cane have been used as shutter fascia, harnessed into teakwood frames. The bathroom sincerely echoes the theme, with matte ochre wall tiles highlighted by a vibrant yellow accent tile.

Heading over to the first level, the inhabitants find themselves in the family lounge, which occupies the heart of the space, an intimate zone that leads to the bedrooms. A homogeneous image of the expanse downstairs, the family lounge engages doses of terrazzo, teak, rattan, vibrant prints, and polished brass in the form of furniture, artwork, and luminaires. The furniture here has been refurbished completely, offering the space a newfound design sentiment! The woven rattan-backed television credenza hugs the peripheral wall, creating a geometric composition of solids and voids. The rattan and fabric wall sconces and the sculptural rattan and wood tripod-base floor lamp are whimsical additions by *Olie Lighting*.

Decadent yet minimalist, the ensuite master bedroom is a space steeped in character and offers an ingenious take on raw materiality. *“The client’s brief dictated the desire to create a dark, cosy, and sanctuary-esque space. The sheer volume of the room and its lofty sloping ceilings brewed architectural drama that was untapped potential awaiting exploration! We experimented across its surfaces, the walls, floors, and ceilings in tow; manifesting as focal elements that dabble in simple materials seen in an unconventional light,”* adds Charita.

The exposed concrete finish washes over the floors and ascends onto the walls, hinting at the monolithic character of the space. The objet d’art in the bedroom is the sloping ceiling; woven rattan *Chatai* sheets have been used to sheathe the underside of the roof, layered by teak veneer-clad rafters to create further dimension, and inconspicuously conceal newly introduced electrical conduits. The layout houses furniture that exudes the warmth of teak and rattan, complemented by printed fabrics, sculptural lighting, and indoor greenery. The same materiality flows through into the walk-in wardrobe seamlessly. The ensuite bathroom is accented with self-print light grey tiles contrasted against a rustic darker grey patterned dadoing.

In a tête-à-tête with tones of green, the second guest bedroom is a coalition of quiet charm and comfort set apart with its pale green micro-topped flooring. This bedroom welcomes light into its colossal volume crowned by veneer-clad rafters along the sloped roofs. The bespoke headboard artistically conceptualises details, combining utility and art. Antique-finish pastel green tiles from a metallic tin series were collated against a teak base. This created the pièce de résistance in the form of the headboard flanked by a duo of forest green nightstands framing the resting space. The all-embracing greens contrast stimulatingly with a deep scarlet hue worn by the printed curtains. The bathroom has been finished in a subtle sage green patterned tile and raw Kota stone tiles over the walls.

Aside from its ergonomically designed study nook, luggage station, and an array of wardrobes, the space also makes room for recreation with the adjoining balcony. One can unwind while soaking in the verdant views of nature, seated in the bijou balcony, which relishes the palette of greens! A traditional tessellation pattern-inspired geometry stipples the floors in the form of tiles sourced from *Bharat Floorings*. The balcony harbours a tranquil corner with the reupholstered Ikat-print armchair, planters, and vintage pendant lights that make for an enviable spot to enjoy Bangalore’s perennially pleasant climate.

Driven by the intention of keeping its entirety light and bright, the third guest bedroom is one that witnesses the coming together of fresh green tones and white. An in-situ terrazzo flooring created by *Bharat Floorings* experiments with a white base playfully bespeckled with green glass chips. The colour further makes a cameo as a textured green stucco accent wall to draw upon the colour of the glass chips cast in the flooring. A live-edge headboard with cantilevered nightstands by *Freedom Tree* anchors the bed, above which a rattan and teak light by *Olie Lighting* has been placed. The bathroom also is dominated by the colour green, seen in the form of geometric tiles that take over the bathing chamber and select walls.

The Heritage Sojourn Home chronicles the architectural appeal of the South, fleeting between the experiences of a revitalising getaway and a familiar home that tugs at the strings of nostalgia! “I remember working in Sri Lanka in the primitive years of my career and finding myself hopelessly in awe of Tropical Modernism as a design style! Serendipitously, I feel like I have drawn inspiration from memory, conjuring a space that is evocative of my time and learnings from the island country. The learning curve with this home for us as a studio has been colossal; our gratitude stems from having such trusting clients and collaborators who have breathed new life into this special home,” concludes the Architect.