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# ARCHIVES OF MODERN LIVING

*Reviving the nostalgia of old Bangalore, providing the comforts of modern design and formulating a self sufficient, energy efficient building system; **Khosla Associates** creates a library in the heart of the city – housing a family of ardent readers, a mounting collection books and a beautiful assemblage of moments of light in space.*



The Library House was born of a very well articulated client brief presented to architects Sandeep Khosla and Amaresh Anand at Khosla Associates. The family of three comprising an entrepreneur-industrialist married to a bohemian writer and a teenage daughter; desired a space that would reflect the diverse range of their lives and prove a respite from their daily stresses. They wanted a home reminiscent of the memories of growing up in "old" Bangalore, a city of sleepy colonial bungalows, all the while maintaining the clean modern lines of contemporary architecture. They fancied open spaces, covered verandahs and large gardens with an abundance of natural light and ventilation. And they aspired for all this within the city phenomenon in an urban context.

The design grew out of several conversations and deliberations with the clients - that

the house should demarcate public and private spaces cleverly, and since the family members were avid readers, it needed to accommodate their ever-growing library of books. An energy conscious family, a prominent component of the brief was to equip the building with photovoltaic solar panels that could generate enough energy to fulfill the lighting and electrical needs. All these considerations were important in establishing circulation and the essential spatial planning. From the street-front, a modest walkway flanked by majestic wooden columns negotiates a tropical courtyard replete with a fishpond, yellow ochre walls, and an ancestral swing; leading to a dramatic, light filled cathedral like foyer space. The foyer acts as a buffer from which one can move into dining, kitchen and staff areas on one side and the library on the other.

Taking the place of pride, the library is a generous double height space of 750 sq. ft. with a 25 feet high gabled roof supported on precise polished wooden trusses. An exuberant skylight running the length of the roof floods the volume with natural light. A 30 feet long bookshelf embracing the opposite wall is rendered in golden hues as the sky changes colour through the day. The library is the central focus of the house where the family congregates and carries out many of its activities. Areas carefully demarcated for specific functions such as lounging, studying, listening to music, playing the piano, and entertaining are carved out in an open plan layout. Spilling into a capacious verandah through large glass sliding doors, the margins between the inside and outside are substantially blurred. The interconnectedness of the library area and





the verandah, which further overlooks the pool deck and garden, allows for a grand and seamless living space, and an abundance of natural light. While the glass doors, complimented by sizeable clerestory windows above allow the gentle north light to percolate into the library, north-facing skylights add to the soft and even glow. Hefty overhangs ensure direct sun is kept at bay and a diffused light penetrates the depths of the space.

It was imperative for the design to facilitate plentiful natural light in the volume. Sandeep Khosla says, "I remember in this house changing the size of certain openings even during the construction process in order to admit a comfortable quality of natural light. A sharp slit of skylight bathes the lofty foyer space with drama, and skylights in the deep verandah allow even north light to come through into an otherwise completely shaded and dark space."

The transition from day to night becomes as important. After dark the library and verandah block radiates mellow warmth, like a genial light box in the landscape. Using a combination of luminaires enabled the designers to create accents and highlight selected elements. A splattering of suspension, floor and table lamps from brands such as Vitra, Foscarini, Louis Poulsen, Vibia and Kartell, which provide pools of light concentrated on desired activities, compliment this.

The Mangalore and Kerala tiled verandah roof supported on a series of distinguished timber columns is rendered in distressed white paint. As day gives way to night, the canvas inverts to offer an alternative play of accentuating the design language. A continuous band of concealed LED strips in a colour temperature of 3000K wash the ceiling surface to highlight its textured finish; while the lustrous wooden columns are uplit with 3W LED fittings, also in 3000K. The lofty concrete columns upholding the weight of the bedroom block above, guard the depths of the pool below. Showered in a tender glow of 12 watt surface mounted narrow beam LED downlights, they stand as silent sentry in open court.

The choice of material in the project is hand crafted and local, using large expanses of yellow Jaisalmer stone in the foyer, dining and library; which gives way to a delicate custom designed floral pattern created in terrazzo tiles in the verandah.

The architectural narrative is effortlessly translated into the carefully curated interior décor. The deliberate selection of furniture comprises of handpicked pieces, each telling its own story. The library is anchored by a



large L shaped seating configuration, the study table converts into a pool table and other articles act as whimsical and playful art objects floating within the space. The verandah comprises an eclectic collection of furniture that converses with one another in a cluster of seating. Pieces by renowned Italian brands like Moroso, B&B Italia and Emu sit comfortably in juxtaposition with colonial and other bespoke artifacts. The same design language that defines the architecture and interiors is transformed into a meticulous lighting scheme. Highlighting the importance of light as an integrated design tool, Sandeep says, "The architectural lighting was considered in the initial design development phase of the project soon after we completed the design phase, and then it was detailed in the construction drawing phase. The decorative light fixtures were considered along with our interior design mood-boards, about six months into the construction process." Light has been used as a medium to articulate design elements across the project, and as an instrument to create moods and ambiances as desired by the family. Sandeep elaborates how certain light fixtures not only provide warmth to

the space at night, but also add to the aesthetic sensibilities. A cluster of Frank Gehry Cloud lights anchor the main L shaped sofa arrangement in the library; the Red LZP link lamp over the dining table emanates the glow of the setting sun; and the large Planet Suspension lamp over the master bathtub creates the aura of moonlight. Khosla Associates crafts a masterpiece in the Library house, catering to the complex client brief, bringing together visual appeal with ecology and a great degree of efficiency. Harvesting excess rainwater in a large underground sump, and equipping the building with photovoltaic solar panels on the southern gabled roof, the house generates most of its own energy. Refraining from automated lighting systems, the approach has been to provide a variety of different types of lighting which may be switched on an off to get the desired mood. While sometimes the verandah can be lit using only the cove and column lights, adding to the ambience with candles and lanterns; at other times, floor and pendant lamps may be switched on for additional brightness.

Sandeep summarizes the Library House as, "a house that juxtaposes different

moods within its plan, modulating scale and creating an element of surprise as you enter, and a process of discovery as you move along. Spaces are layered and a continuing bricolage of old and new, global and Indian extends through all the spaces." [www.khoslaassociates.com](http://www.khoslaassociates.com)

#### PROJECT DETAILS

**Library House, Bangalore**  
 Clients: Nikhil Kumar and Lavanya Sankaran  
 Architecture and Interior Design: Khosla Associates; Principals Sandeep Khosla and Amaresh Anand  
 Design team: Sandeep Khosla, Amaresh Anand, Priyanka Sams  
 Landscape Design: Dewa Kusuma, Bali.

#### LIGHTING SPECIFIED

Vitra: Cloud suspension lamps, designed by Frank Gehry  
 Bungalow 8: Vintage Floor Lamp  
 Foscarini: Tress Grande suspension lamp  
 Foscarini: Planet suspension lamp  
 Foscarini: Giga Lite Floor lamps  
 Louis Poulsen: Doo Wop (Gold) suspension lamps  
 LZP: Red Link Suspension lamp  
 Vibia: Wind Pendant light  
 Kartell: Bloom suspension lamp, designed by Ferruccio Laviani  
 Cona Lighting Solutions: downlights and LED strips  
 All lighting in the house is powered by 5 kva generated via solar panels on the sloping roof of the Library.

