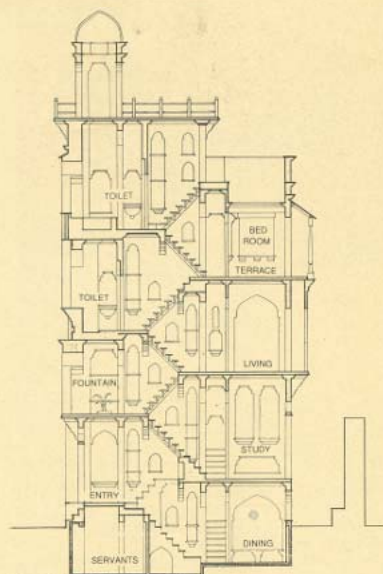


NALIN'S HOUSE

New Delhi



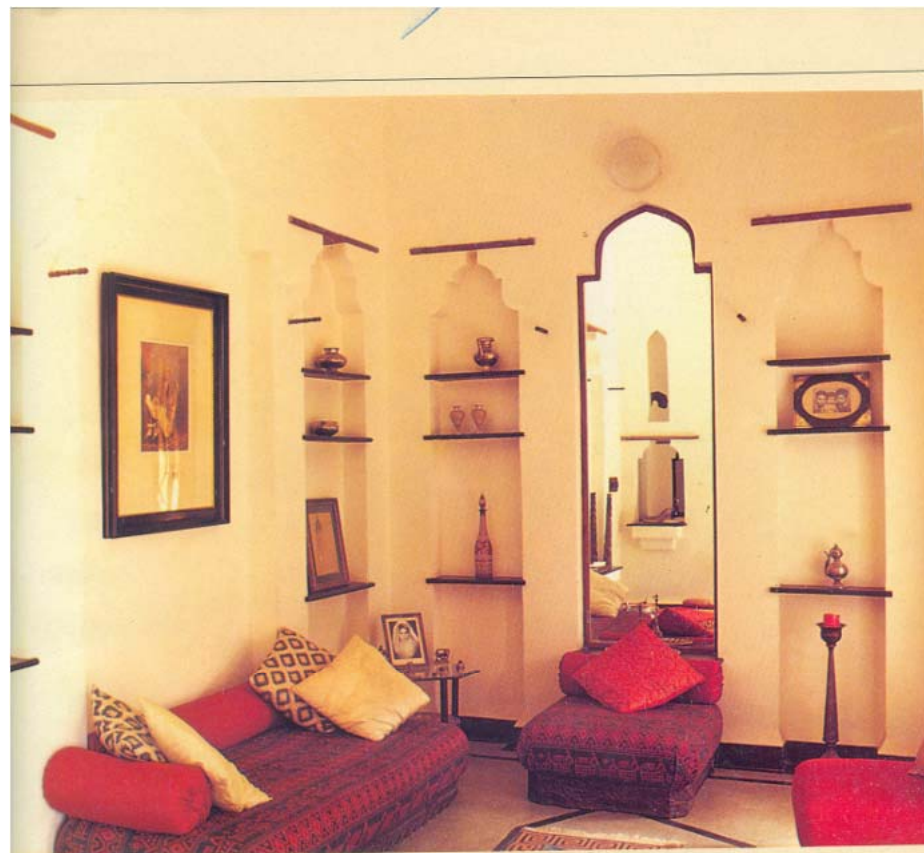
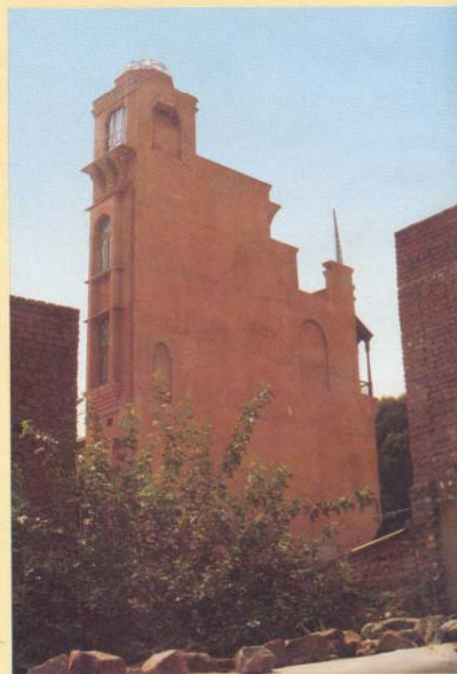
SECTION

Overlooking the *madarsa* at the Hauz Khas monument, Nalin's house stands tucked away down a narrow street away from the hubbub of the village complex. A dealer specializing in the restoration of old fabrics and jewellery, Nalin Tomar, a bachelor, was concerned more about the ambience of the environment than the usual dictates of the urban home. Architect Revathi Kamath designed the house in

continuum with the monuments and as a backdrop to complement the exquisite textiles that Nalin deals in.

The brief asked for the impossible — drawing, dining, study, 2 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, a kitchen, store and servants room and toilet, all on a narrow 40 sq m, L-shaped plot. The larger arm of the L has a frontage of about

The house rises vertically from the end of a narrow street.



8m along the monument wall, while the narrow 2m wide arm provides access. The only way to build was to have fun. That is what the architect did, and the resulting home reflects this in the fluidity of spaces and a lightness that belies the constraints of available land area.

The narrow street leads right up to the exquisitely carved imposing main door. Stepping over the threshold one is confronted with the staircase around which are staggered the various rooms in

an unconventional plan that is completely modern. The rooms seem to have been carved out of air — a bedroom here, a toilet there. The interior, however, is predominantly traditional, tapestries and furnishings reflecting the owners' penchant for fine weaves. The stark white lime-washed walls are a perfect foil for Nalin's collection.

The sitting room with its low comfortable seating transports one to an era bygone, an illusion emphasized by the intimate

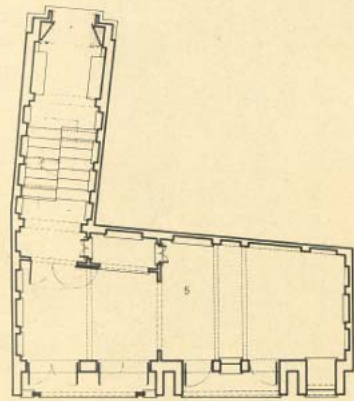
proximity of the adjacent monument. At ground level the view is cut off by the massive stone boundary wall of the monument. The study, thus, is a functional introspective space comfortably furnished with over-stuffed armchairs. Going lower into the basement one reaches the dining room and the kitchen. Both are emphatically contemporary spaces, a factor underlined by the outrageously modern dining table in metal and glass designed by Revathi.

The architect's love for detail is evident everywhere; in the staircase proportioned so as not to overwhelm the foyer; in the niches that dot the walls, some backed with mirrors to enhance the play of space; in the pale terrazzo flooring patterned with a bold geometry that echoes the metal grills which are a variation of the basic tree motif; the dome above the water tank and even the randomly applied Badarpur plaster.

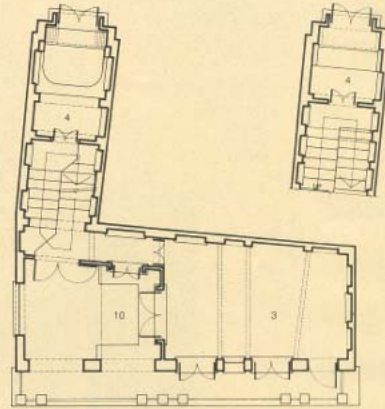
Photographs by Shailan Parker



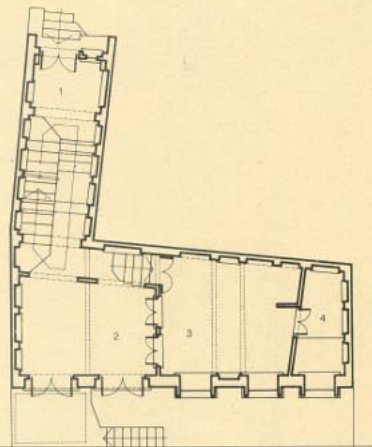
This and previous page. The long narrow living area is arranged around objects that are offset by the almost stark simplicity of the decor. The mirrors that exaggerate the length of room are congruent with the use of repetitive elements throughout the house — arches, niches, the flooring pattern. Here the arches form an effective visual link with monument just outside.



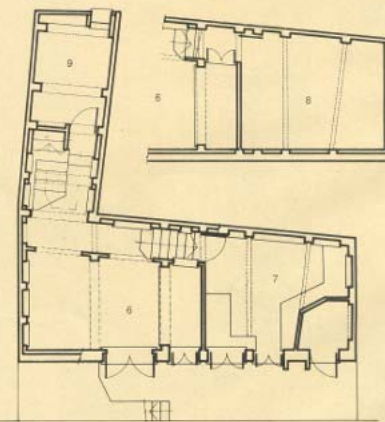
FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

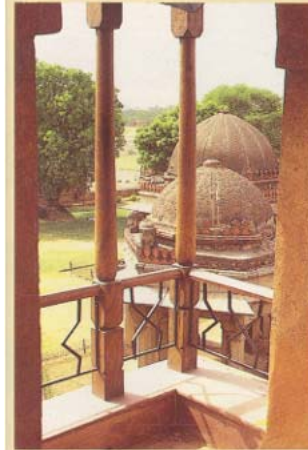


GROUND FLOOR



BASEMENT

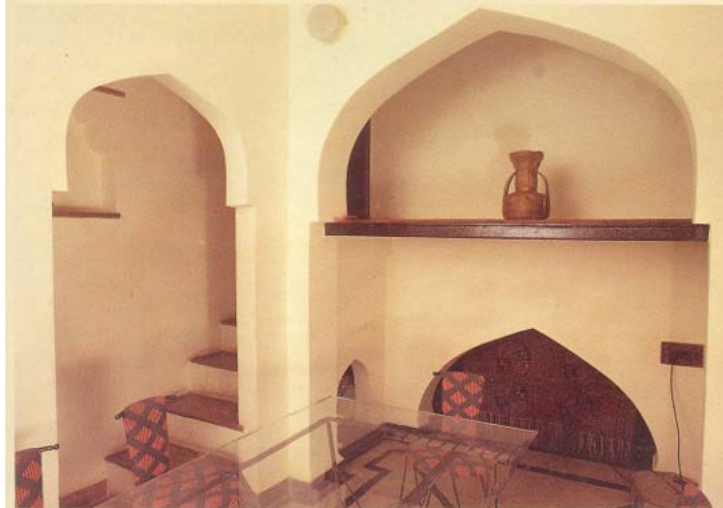
- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| 1 ENTRY | 6 DINING |
| 2 OFFICE | 7 KITCHEN |
| 3 BEDROOM | 8 STORE |
| 4 TOILET | 9 SERVANT |
| 5 LIVING | 10 TERRACE |



The Badarpur plastered walls of the terrace echo the mood of the adjacent monument.



The windows of the master bedroom overlook a quiet corner in the study.



The dining room in the basement. The steps on the left lead up to the kitchen, below which is situated the storage space entered from the lower arch in the photograph. The shelf-like projection above is actually a walkway leading to the back lane.

Design team Kazan Singh, Nalin Tomar, Ravinder Singh
Built up area 168 sq m
Cost Rs 8,10,000 per sq ft (approx)
Date of Completion 1991

ARCHITECTURE + IDEAS

A DESIRE TO KNOW

JOURNAL FOR THE INDIAN ARCHITECT VOL X NO 4 JULY-AUG 1993 Rs 95

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ABILITY TO VIEW CRITICALLY

CAN ARCHITECTURE BE TAUGHT?