

Architect's design description

65A is an exploration of **DENSE URBAN LIVING** in the **MONSOONAL TROPICS**: an attempt to breed a typology for the densely-built contemporary urban tropical-monsoon house that is less consumptive, sustainable, and yet joyous.

It explores the **PRINCIPLES** of:

- BUILDING DENSELY
- on the SMALLEST POSSIBLE SITE
- yet retaining HALF THE SITE AS GARDEN

STRATEGIES employed:

- TREES AND VEGETATION AS A PROTECTIVE ENVELOPE
- LIMITING THE FOOTPRINT
- STACKING SPACES VERTICALLY

It celebrates the **MONSOONAL ELEMENTS OF JOY**:

- TREE
- BREEZE
- SKY/SUNRISE/SUNSET/MOONRISE

KEY DATA

- 150 sq M site (Legal minimum)
- 7.5Mx7.5M footprint
- Floor area including deck, balconies, terrace, 275 Sq M.
- Plot cover:
 - excluding deck & balcony: 40%
 - including deck & balcony: 55%

BRIEF:

- Shared/public spaces are on the 1st floor
- The 2nd floor is a Master suite
- The 3rd Floor is a room for grown-up offspring (whenever they may turn up) plus a Roof Terrace.
- A Guest Bed-sitter and service spaces at Ground level.

Given restricted floor areas, spaces are designed for *multiple possibilities*:

- The Ground level can convert to a studio-office.
- Living extends out to the deck for gatherings large and small
- Stairs become seats for gathering around the Kitchen table
- The Roof Terrace extends into the top floor room (a Party Room!) via a sliding door/partition.

PLAN:

The critical CHALLENGE was to reduce the volume consumed by staircases within the restricted footprint. Straight flights were placed side by side, and the volumes above and below each flight were used for storage, toilets, and utility spaces.

CONSTRUCTION:

Within a framework of conventional concrete and brick, several key elements –doors, windows, glass, timber, screens- were re-used/recycled or adapted from other uses. Many of these came from un-used piles lying around the builder's and sub contractor's yards.

TYOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES include;

- small site,
- reduced brief driven by multiple-use spaces,
- low footprint,
- vertical densification,
- dense tropical landscaping to create a micro-climate,
- single-bay layout for natural ventilation, and
- re-used/recycled materials and elements.

65a embodies many elements of our DESIGN MANIFESTO:

MANIFESTO:

- build *less* - slim the program
- build *on less* - reduce the footprint, grow trees,
- build *in and out* - dissolve barriers between inside and outside
- build *slender* - reduce mass, get slim, make natural light and ventilation possible
- build *robust* - lets go to ruin gracefully, reduce the need for maintenance
- build *light* - lightweight structures, layers and skin: touch the earth lightly
- build *leftover* - adapt the existing, bring history to life
- build *ordinary* - seek out the beautiful in the everyday: regular is the new special
- build *safe, not sterile* - kill hazard, don't kill joy
- build *local* - feed off local material, local skills
- build *interim* - affordable now, grow later
- build *hope, not ambition* - architecture should offer hope to grow, not be heavy with ambition
- build *need, not greed* - necessity is cool, excess sucks
- build *joy, not ego* – the difference may be subtle

Project Details

- Project Name: 65A
- Location: Colombo 05, Sri Lanka
- Year of Completion: 2014
- Site Area: 150 Sq M.
- Building Area: 275 Sq M.
- Consultants & Contractors:
 - Architects: Madhura Prematilleke & Team Architrave
 - Structural Engineer: Deepal Wickramasinghe
 - Contractor: Galaxy Enterprises
 - Sub-Contractors: Alufab PLC
Mercantile Fortunes (Pvt) Ltd
 - Landscaping: Noel Dias

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