



↑ The Pool House in the background adjoining the pavilion in the foreground — Designed and executed by IORA STUDIO

Shelter, space and place

The Pool House, Ahmedabad.

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Images and drawings: IORA STUDIO

Extensions and interventions are often ancillary to architecture. But seldom does it transpire that architecture follows the footsteps of an intervention. While the retrofitted often borrows or adds to the language of existing built-form, the Pool House by IORA STUDIO emerges from an antecedent pavilion. The Pavilion at the time of its conception itself was an extension to a prevailing shelter. However the succeeding Pool House establishes a strong independent identity as it moves away from the pavilion's physical proximity and devises an architectural language when comprehended individually. The narrative of a shelter, space and place that commenced with the Pavilion resumes and regenerates with the Pool House.



↑ The Pool House when comprehended adjacent to the pavilion separated by the transition space of the Almond Court.



- LEGEND**
- 1. ACCESS WAY
 - 2. MAIN RESIDENCE
 - 3. LAWNS AND GARDENS
 - 4. ALMOND COURT
 - 5. SWIMMING POOL
 - 6. PAVILION
 - 7. GUEST HOUSE

↑ Pool House: Site plan.

The Pool House precinct in its undeveloped form was host to gatherings and outings. The open plot housed a shelter-space that doubled as out-house. To enable get-togethers for a family that enjoyed the outdoors, IORA STUDIO fathomed the prerequisite of a shaded canopy or shelter that would provide respite from the hot and arid climate of Ahmedabad. The secondary intent was perhaps to draw the family amidst the landscape, away from the existing shelter. A swimming pool and pavilion was executed in 2013. The subsequent agenda entailed densely landscaping the plot to create 'open woods', as a landscape typology to reduce daily landscape water demand and create a microclimate. As landscaping and afforesting plan were underway, IORA STUDIO was commissioned to construct a house adjoining the pool pavilion in 2014. The Pool House is an extension of pavilion as a place to view the open areas. The language of the built-form responds to the former pavilion and achieves a cohesive whole.

The Pavilion is a semi-open linear structure with an overhanging flat roof supported by steel columns. It is devoid of walls. Horizontal wooden louvers fixed below the slab intersect the columns and reduce the pavilion's lofty height to endow it a human scale.

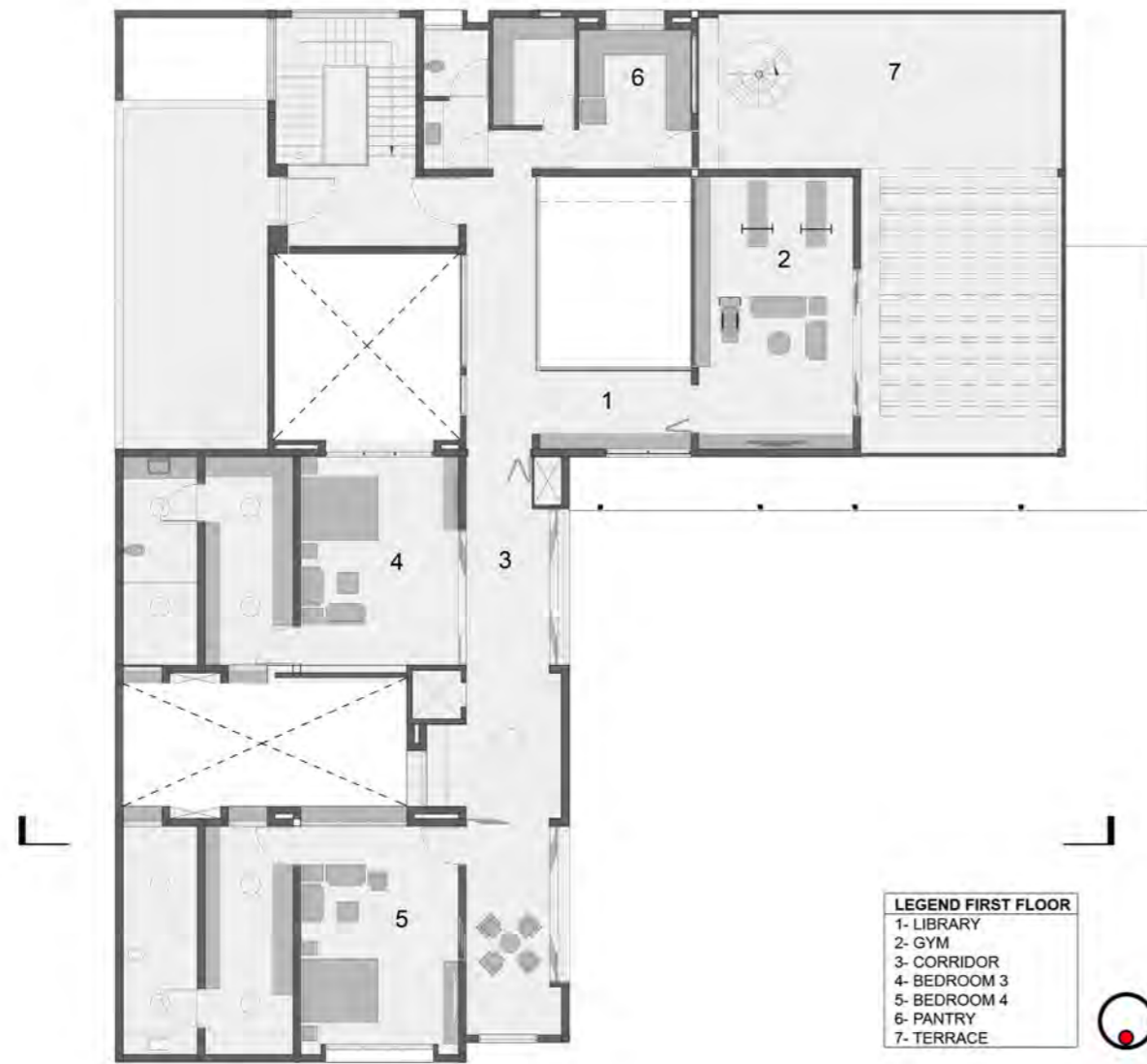
The climatic considerations and control on scale resulted in a seemingly simple, orderly and a see-through structure of the pavilion that perfectly framed the lush plot. The newly designed house is a backdrop to the pavilion and follows a similar semantic of steel columns and horizontal louvers that envelope semi-open pockets. These pockets are offsets that emerge from the pool deck and lead to the house. A resultant courtyard is formed by the pockets. Existing almond trees in this space christened the courtyard - the 'Almond Court'. It establishes a core for the entire built form in the shape of Almond Court.

The house is designed in an L-shaped plan which wraps itself around the Almond Court and encloses the swimming pool and pavilion. The main features of the house; the open spaces of the pool, pavilion and the courtyard are oriented to the north to maximise indirect lighting while the main entrance lobby of the house faces the east. The imagery of pavilion columns is repeated as the steel columns support the topmost slab over the external corridor on the ground floor. The terrace on the first floor manoeuvres the gym spill-out. It also encompasses steel columns that support the topmost slab.



- LEGEND GROUND FLOOR**
- 1- PORCH
 - 2- ENTRANCE
 - 3- VESTIBULE
 - 4- LIVING
 - 5- BAR
 - 6- DINING
 - 7- KITCHEN
 - 8- CORRIDOR
 - 9- BEDROOM 1
 - 10- BEDROOM 2
 - A,B,C- COURTYARDS

↑ Ground Floor Plan.



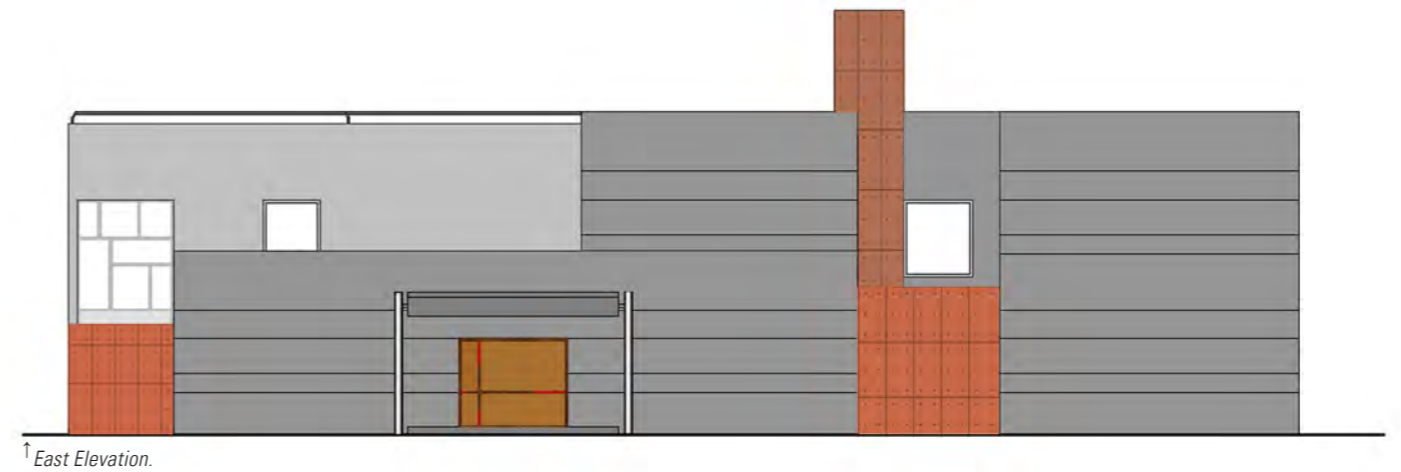
↑ First Floor Plan.

This terrace wraps itself around the north-western corner culminating towards the southern side as the building takes on a solid-massed demeanour as opposed to the open and see-through character towards the pool-pavilion. The architecture is a drastic contrast as the structure transits from the open areas towards the main entrance. When viewed from the swimming pool, the house and pavilion appear one with the other. But the human-scale diminishes and makes way for lofty volumes and heights as the user transverses from the pool-pavilion to the Almond Court to the interiors of the house.

The courtyard leads the user to two wings of the house: the public areas of the living and dining, gym and a reading area and the private areas of the bedrooms. The public wing and the private are oriented perpendicular to one another resulting in the L-shaped plan. The public areas have expansive floor-plans with minimum walls obstructing the flow of space. The living room with its double height amplifies the space perception. The bedrooms are aligned along a corridor parallel to the lateral side of the pavilion. Each bedroom opens onto internal courtyards for sunlight. While the

bedrooms are tucked into private corners, the adjoining corridor is 3 meters wide. This arrangement ensures that the user has access to open spaces and green cover in the privacy of the bedroom as well as in transition spaces. Their corridors encompass big sliding-door openings with glass panels that further minimize bulk and visual weight. They offer a view of the open areas into the corridor. The corridors are to be utilized as gathering place facing the open court for the bedrooms adding another layer of interaction and additionally sheltering bedrooms from the west sun.

However the façade that hosts the main entrance and its adjoining wall has zilch opening with the exception of the main door. But as the user enters and experiences the space, he is lead from a closed space to the staircase and living room as the home unveils itself gradually. Most homes are designed and experienced from the entrance onto the open and semi-open spaces to the private areas, but the Pool house works in reverse. If experienced from the entrance, the house is almost stoic, monumental and overbearing that reveals no inkling of its affable personality. The house starts opening itself in expression as it progresses towards the almond





↑ Pool House: The main entrance and front façade.



↑ The Almond Court enveloped by the house.



↑ The built form of the Pool House mirrors the semantics of the Pavilion – The steel columns and horizontal louvers are reproduced in the balcony and open areas to create cohesion between the old and new structures.



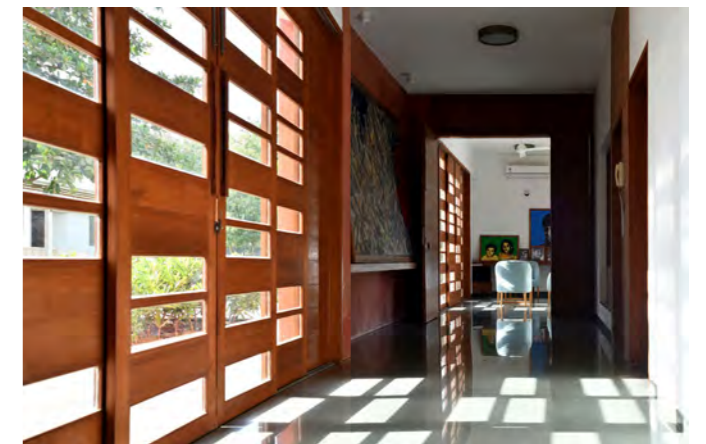
↑ Pool House and pavilion comprehended in cohesion with one another.



↑ An internal courtyard adjoining the bedroom.



↑ An internal courtyard adjoining the bedroom.



↑ The corridor adjoining the Almond Court leading to the bedrooms. The corridors are a gathering place facing the open court and add another layer of interaction.



↑ The living room.



↑ The library and gym on the upper floor.



court and pavilion assuming similar language of elements. The sole feature that replicates in the front façade and the Almond Court are red pigmented concrete shear walls that cut across horizontal sprawl of the building. The concrete walls were cast in two sections unlike the conventional process where they are cast in smaller batches over weeks. This was done to ensure that the concrete pigments evenly throughout the wall.

Even though the front and rear portions of the house bear minimal resemblance, the red concrete walls continue and interweave the narrative where the Pool House appears to end. Ironically, for the user, the house begins where the designer concluded its architecture. Perhaps this play between the culmination and conclusion is a metaphor for further events and architecture to unfold, carrying forth and creating new narratives and extensions that are stories in their own right. ■

FACT FILE:

Project	:	Pool House
Location	:	S.G.Highway, Ahmedabad
Architect	:	IORA STUDIO
Design team	:	Milind Patel, Aakash Shah, Dishin Shah, Moksha Jain
Client	:	Pranjali and Anand Shah
Project Area	:	11000 sft.
Structural Engineer	:	Amee Associates
Civil contractors	:	PSP projects
Initiation of Project	:	2014
Completion of project	:	2017
Photographer	:	Piyush Rana, Milind Patel