

## SPOTLIGHT

# Restoring abodes and memories

Big or small, renovations and refurbishments can sometimes strip away from what we feel makes a house a 'home.' For the Jamil family that was the case when they chose to turn two buildings into one.

When architect Kazi Fida was roped in by his partner Md Abdul Awyal onto the project that they aptly came to name 'Jamil Residence,' they realised they were tasked with turning two starkly contrasted buildings into one single unit — one was old, made from bricks and had more than enough infrastructural issues. The neighbouring area was a polar opposite — modern, contemporary and constructed using steels and columns as are most buildings nowadays.

"Aesthetically speaking both buildings were worlds apart in terms of form and visuals. There was no architectural connection between the two places that were residing beside one another," said Fida.

amenities the clients required. From a four-bedroom house, we now had more than twice the space to play with," Fida added.

The project took roughly two years to finish and the end result of the refurbishment project turned out to be more than just amazement. River & Rain not only managed to turn two spaces into one, but truly in their signature style turned 8,110 square feet of space into a modern but cosy home.

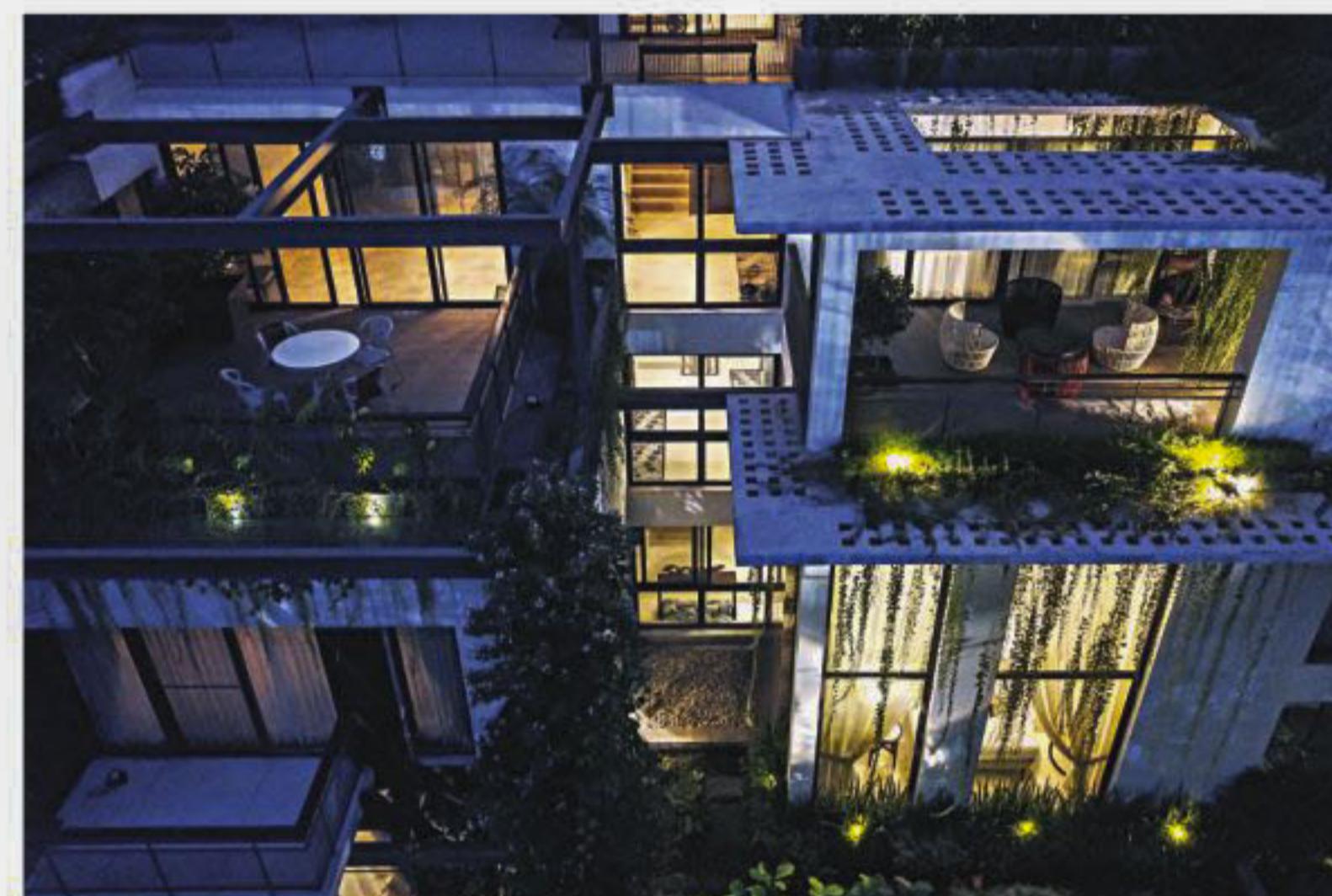
The little tricks and turns start right from the very front of the house contributing to the whole rustic, homely, chic vibe of the structure.

From the outside, the 'Jamil Residence' looks like one big house, with a beautiful front lawn complemented by a previously

by the classic combination of off-whites and browns coupled with hints of orange and blue sitting chairs and decorated with minimal but eclectic pieces; this is the perfect place for guests to retire after a meal or for friends to hang out.

Interestingly it is on this very floor that they also constructed a beautiful water garden that unless told, you would never know that the purpose of it was to establish a connection between the two units besides the stairs.

The basement holds a fully functional gym, sauna steam and shower facilities, a powder room, massage room, server room and another lounge cum indoor games area. The gaming area can also be utilised as a



In addition to that, the clients' brief also asked to respect and preserve details of the old house's architecture and translate that onto the other space with subtle accents of modern and contemporary influences flowing through both units. Preserving the original place but with modern amenities; a perfect union between the old and new, inside and out, functionally more viable and aesthetically pleasing.

"If that was not enough, we went further by creating a vision in which we wanted outsiders to feel like they were walking into one single unit and not two," said Fida.

The architects of 'River & Rain' realised that they were looking at a complete refurbishment project of both houses.

"The older house was internally designed like any traditional one. Essentially you would think that if you had a garden, the bedrooms would be facing towards it, instead in this house that view was barred by the bathroom.

"An amazing view that was blocked! Asides from plumbing, other technical aspects to ensure the views, position of bedrooms and the complete aperture of the structure had to be changed," Fida said.

By far the most challenging aspect of the project was figuring out how to utilise the space efficiently and effectively.

"The combined inside space of the two units meant that there was enough room to incorporate the many new facilities and

existing koi pond. They even managed to reuse an old rustic septic tank that was a part of the front of the old structure into a beautiful elevated garden. Some of the outer walls of the older house were stripped of their plaster and then sprayed with repellent intentionally to keep the raw form as a reminder of the old house. Creepers, shrubbery and other kinds of plants cover a major portion of the outside walls, beams and columns.

The internal space is quite breath-taking on its own!

Dominated primarily by a colour palette of browns, greens and splashes of bright but warm tones and marbled floors, the house includes three suites, one guest bedroom; a handful of lounges, with the largest one that includes a theatre kitchen, breakfast area and an amazing view of the front lawn.

The suites include large walk-in closets, bathrooms, dressing rooms and based on the children's requirements, one has a study area, and the other has a den that can later be renovated into a living room. There is a little bar, gardens and sitting area on the roof.

The ground floor is where the main kitchen, a few powder rooms, formal dining and sitting area, a card room, a swimming pool with all the necessary facilities and deck area are.

Adjacent to the swimming pool is a double-heighted lounge that is accessible from all the aforementioned spaces. Dominated

movie area too.

In order to establish homogeneity throughout the entire house, the use of wood and steel is prevalent. There are two feature walls in both houses, made from red cedar wood and steel members and columns to connect both houses, besides the other two similar feature walls; one in the formal dining room and the other on one of the upper floor gardens made from travertine.

"Every single element of the house, let that be the design of the master bathroom, a centre piece for a table to the art piece of the wall was carefully chosen and hand-picked by us," said Fida. The muted tones, and the balance between the greens and browns seen in the choice of furniture, wall pieces or even the foliage within and outside the house is almost a beautiful mirror image of the colours seen in a forest itself.

As the cliché goes, every house has a story to tell. Often it is of the inhabitants who reside in the house themselves; but in this instance, rare it is to find two plots that weave a story into the hearts of the very residents who call it 'home.'

**By Supriti Sarkar**

**Photo courtesy: Maruf Raihan**

**Project Name: Jamil Residence**

**Architectural Consultant: River & Rain Ltd.**

**Principal Architect: Kazi Fida Islam**

**Team Architects: Md Abdul Awyal,**

**Sumaiya Shameem**

**Engineer: Shah Alam**

