

BOTTOMS UP!

BETWEENLINES



THE PROBLEM

What is the quintessential image of a suburban – mid income group – houses in an exponentially expanding city like Bangalore?

Rows and Rows 30'/40' wide urban plots with houses built from edge to edge, challenging all the methodically constructed and revised By(e)-Laws. In what is left of the front set back, there sits the perilous staircase taking one up to the seemingly never ending floors above. These are the residences of the hopeful immigrant crowd who end up practically giving an arm and a leg to stay in the urban areas, and the house owners perhaps plan their retirement or their children's future out of this rental income. This To-be-rented housing typology is fast becoming the metamorphic identity of the city and can one help it? or rather should one help it?

We would have all disdained this scenario in our peak, I-AM-A-DESIGNER, moment. But we would have soon realized that trying to save this situation, is akin to wanting to save the rainforests of amazon, from the touted harm doers, with no real understanding of the situation and with very little authority. Once the rage to Ctrl+Alt+Delete subsides, one sees new possibilities of working with the scenario. Who is an Architect if not an Optimist?

So we too assimilated our ideas to see the current city in new light. We sure couldn't start in a clean slate. But we saw that this city is ever so inclusive, that when given a deeper look, it shows you the complex layers hidden beneath.

Reveals, the umpteen additions it can take in and grow evermore organically.

OUR TAKE

Our thoughts of design interventions kept brewing till we found our "Aha" moment came in 2009 when a friend asked for a 300sqft personal pod to be built a top the existing three floor building, that his parents built for renting. Interestingly enough, the requirement of a personal pod came after seeing another similar project - LEGO House , where the pod was always an integral part of an entirely designed residential unit. From the client's perspective, he was asking for a personal cozy space designed in the terrace of an existing building for he could not acquire a piece of land for this secondary retreat space.

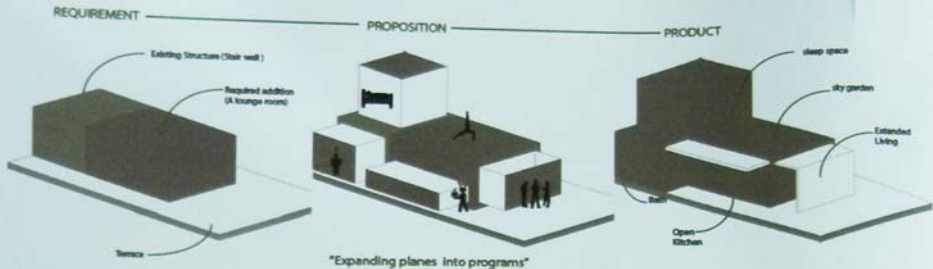
From the designer's perspective however, this was a game changer since it was an opportunity to treat the terrace, of this otherwise forgettable building, as a new **Urban Datum**

The elevation of the new datum steered us clear of the ungainly constraints that comes with a regular plot, and gave us complete-uninterrupted access to light, view, ventilation, and privacy. The size of the program helped us tuck it in deftly, with only inklings of its presence showing through. Additionally we were aesthetically liberated, free to experiment with materials that would work within the given low budget. We were deliberately indifferent to the aesthetic and material palate of the host house, since in theory our ground line shifted to the top edge of this built form and the best way to fit into an already motley background is to stand out.

Thus came Bottle house, the first in a series of projects where we have consciously attempted to negotiate an urban issue through **Architecture or built form**

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THE PROJECT

A casual remark about reusing bottles as the primary building material caught the imagination of our client and everything followed suit. (Did I mention that the discussion happened over couple of beers and viola there the material was!)

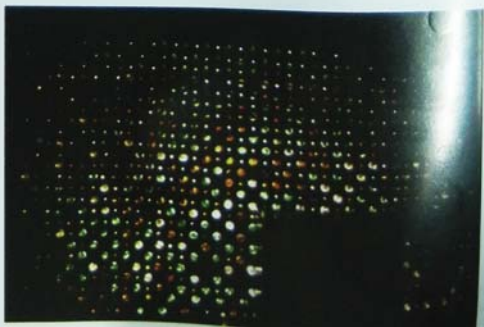
We conceived a jewel box like space, where each plane of the box when pulled out reveals a new function. This way the space can expand and shrink depending on the no. of users and activities that takes place in the house. While researching on the material options for such a space, we grew obsessed with the idea of extended material life.

Thousands of beer bottles, along with posts of eucalyptus trees (usually used for scaffolding) and a retired telephone booth were revived in this project.

The Bottles were stacked with mud mortar, similar to masonry construction in most places. It is also been placed in pre fabricated paper crede blocks in others.

The ability of the space to expand freely is counter characterized by the innumerable openings created by the bottles. The Filigreed walls draw one closer to the space while the sliding panels blur the familiar notion of inside Vs. outside.

Bottle House is an important work in the context of our Practice, since it let us test a urban idea in one instance and also allowed us to experiment at material – spatial design level. As for the people who know this project, it has opened up avenues to think about the neglected spaces, its unexplored dimension and possibility of living life a little differently. This reach, we count as a success as Architects and Urban Designers.





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BETWEENLINES is a small space design studio based out of Bangalore. Its founders Mr. Guru Prasanna and Deepa Suriyaprakash are partners in life and work. Their practice is largely based on the grand and some times improbable ideas, growing out of genuine Architectural and Urban concerns. They work with unbound optimism, curiosity, humor and strongly believe that Architecture is not the mother of all arts. (According to them that undisputed status belongs to Cinema). However they believe that Architecture is most potent of all art forms, for it has the strongest tie to people's ambition. They are keen to collaborate, learn, unlearn, develop and build an idea, that they are assertive about. They aspire to reach out to people and their lives through their practice.

