

How to balance light and shade

Home architecture is looking at ways to use illumination to enhance well-being, writes **Sowmya Putran**

Factoring light and shade, a budget-friendly way to dial up chicness at home, is an important trend in home architecture now. Growing awareness of lighting and well-being is also driving this demand.

Experts share tips on how to cleverly use this duality.

Dramatise the facade

An interesting play of light and shade works wonders in accentuating architectural details, says Aryaman Jain, CEO of Innovative Lighting Designs Limited, New Delhi. He elucidates, "At a Delhi home, we highlighted the front wings of the residence using up-lighting to enhance the verticality of the building, while the central double-height space was kept muted without any lighting, creating a dramatic contrast."

At another Delhi residence, Aryaman worked with large exposed concrete walls. To highlight them, he opted to follow the home's architecture for the lighting. "We also lit up the metal fins and louvers finished in antique brass to lend an element of excitement," he says.

Adding the right amount of shadows to create an interplay instead of blowing uniform light on the entire facade does the trick, he notes.

Take the beam indoors

Vinay Mavinakere, founder and principal architect with Sudaiva Studio, Bengaluru, worked with a ceiling slit in a double-height volume at an Uttarahalli project. He created the slit on the northwest corner of the ceiling and completed it with glass and a grill for security. "The grill doubles up to cast an enchanting pattern of light and shade throughout the day. An internal sky-lit green court opens into the space," he details.

At another Bengaluru residence, Vinay worked with a tree-like opening on a slab to cast its shadow into the pooja space. Except for the north-facing spaces, you can easily capture an interplay of light and shade in any other direction, he adds.



A living area designed for a Uttarahalli home by Sudaiva Studio, Bengaluru.



Interior design of a Gurugram home done by Essentia Environments, Haryana. When light and shade fall on the same object, you perceive two textures in one view.

Aman Aggarwal, principal architect with Charged Voids, Panchkula, worked with a similar approach. He designed a ceiling slit in a double-height space at a Panchkula residence. The beam of light that it throws in adds a playful touch to the living area by moving around like a sundial.

At a Chandigarh residence designed by Aman, the living area is filled with diffused light (from a courtyard) and there is one sky-light in the corner that allows a strong beam of light. "If you want to dram-

atise the space, you can have solid light amidst darkness or diffused light. This makes one feel the light strongly," he explains.

Key elements

Abhigyan Neogi, the principal architect with Chromed Design Studio, New Delhi, speaks about three aspects whose interplay determines the look. These are wall washers (here the light fixtures are not seen, you only see the light), spotlights (to illuminate parts of spaces), and decorative lights or chandeliers (to act as glowing objects), he lists out.

He says, "I like to place an object in a way that it captures both light and shade, so one can perceive two different textures of the same." For example, if you have a Kadapa stone, the shadow highlights the texture and the light makes the texture vanish. Opt for a nar-

Challenges

Rewiring is a challenge in the case of huge homes. When the construction spans for years, the client requirements often change, says Hardesh.

These designs require both artistic and scientific skill sets to come together.



A facade design by ILDL, New Delhi. The lighting follows the building's architecture.

row-beam light as it will give a greater shadow, he adds.

Hardesh Chawla, principal, Essentia Environments, Gurugram, demonstrated the same idea at a Gurugram home where he placed a painting partly lit by a rotatable floor lamp. "Sometimes when we don't need a window, we put a painting over it so that when the window lights up, the natural light gently spills from behind," he elucidates.

At another Gurugram home, Hardesh crafted a bath area with a chandelier on top and natural light from the side. The dramatic shadows cast by a dried curly willow branch play well with the whites around.

Depending on what the space is going to be used for, we arrive at the right lux level, he says. "For a bathroom, we use a lux level of 200 to 250. For study areas or work areas, you use a 300 lux light. We stick to 3,000-kelvin colour in

Wallet factor

Light design costs about Rs 500 per sq ft.

all our projects, he notes. Each light fixture has an area that it can illuminate," he explains.

When you work with a living area-cum-dining, let the overall dining space have dim lighting, only the places or pieces that you want to illuminate should have spotlights and the rest should be designed in shadow.

He illustrates, "We would first place one chandelier on the dining table. Only if there is significant physical segregation between the two, will we put another chandelier in the formal living. If the space is limited, you don't want to see a clash between the two."

He adds that in such a case, they would either not add a second chandelier or if a customer prefers to have one more, they would further dramatise the space by putting the second one in a corner.