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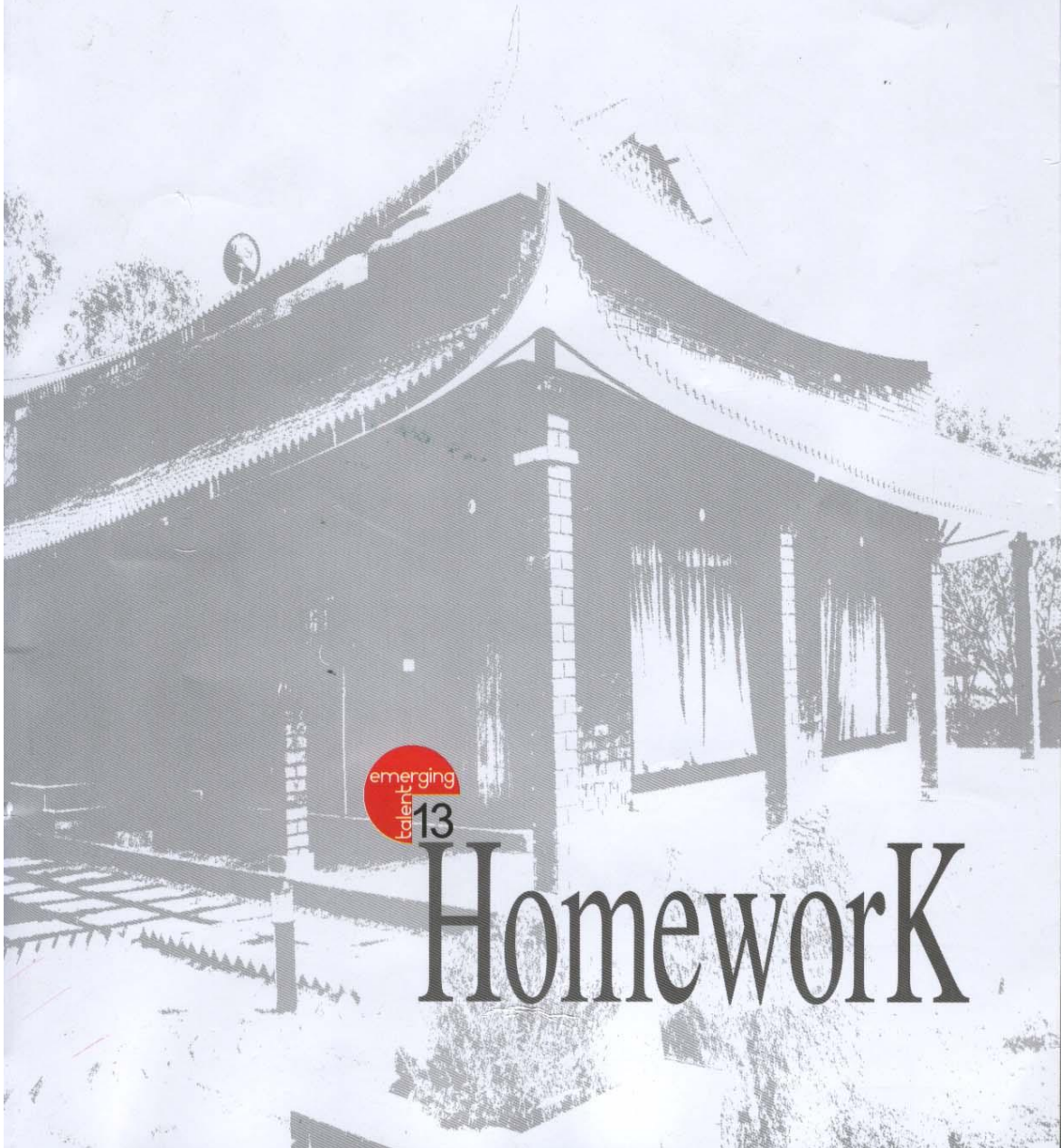
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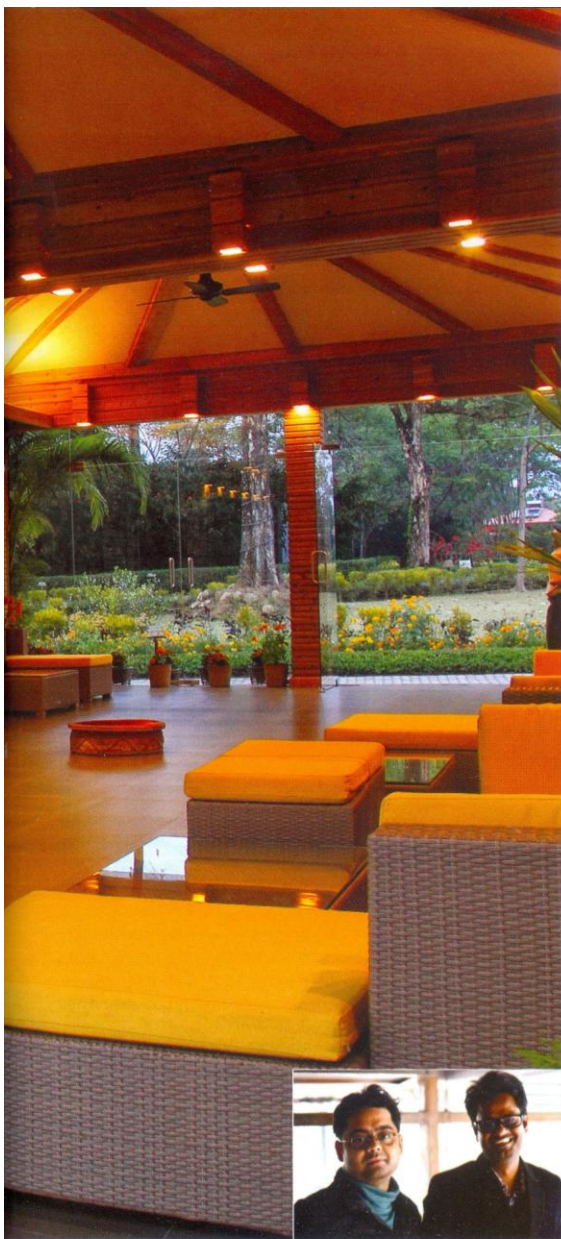


text & photographs: courtesy, the architect

Resort ^{at} Chalsa

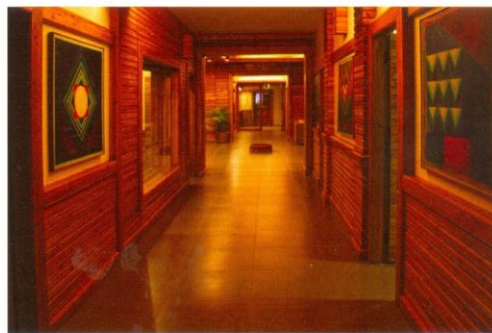


Chalsa, Jalpaiguri, West Bengal India
Square Consultancy Services



Subhrajit G. Mitra and Ranit Maiti completed their Bachelor degree in architecture (2006) and Masters degree in Urban Design (2008) from Jadavpur University. They founded an architecture consultancy firm Square Consultancy Services in September 2008. Winners of numerous awards and accolades their works focuses mainly on the reinterpretation of anachronistic design style. Ranit Maiti is a visiting faculty of the department of architecture, Jadavpur University. Subhrajit G. Mitra is currently the secretary of the Jadavpur University Alumni Association of Architecture Department (JUAAAD).

The site situated amidst 22 acre plot within a the newly built structures at **Sinclair's Doors Retreat, Chalsa, Jalpaiguri, West Bengal, India** offered a unique opportunity to the architects at **Square Consultancy Services** to come vis-a-vis with the verdant nature and explore the potential of local natural materials in constructing a built environment that mainly catered to the city fleeing tourists



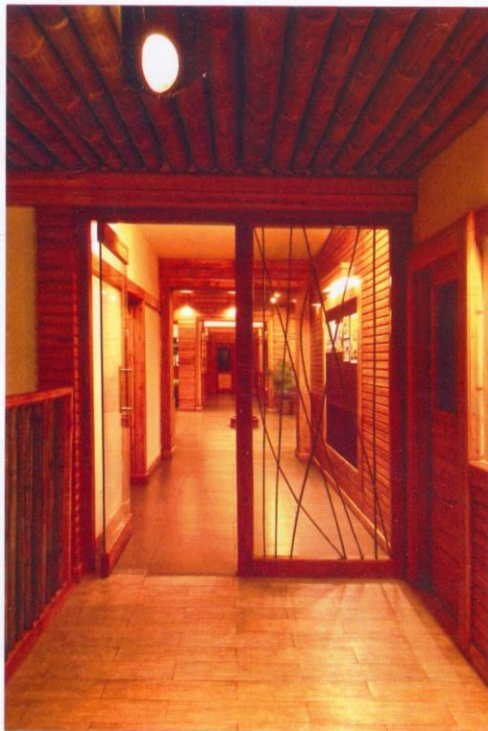
Set in the foothills of the Eastern Himalayas the location of the project 'Resort at Chalsa, Jalpaiguri, West Bengal, India' designed by **Square Consultancy Services** is flanked by the Gorumara forest sanctuary, tea plantations and torrential rivers. To meet the growing tourist attractions which consisted mainly family and large corporate groups, the client wanted the architects to develop the new structures at Sinclair's Doors Retreat as a growing health resort with a star category health club offering modern amenities. (the client held a sprawling resort within a large plot of land on the top of Chalsa hill, which lay on one of the important tourist nodes. They were very aware of the virgin greenery the resort offered and the brief was thus to integrate the health club with minimal intervention of the surrounding, to develop a structure that remains congruous with the casual greenery all around it). Design blend into the natural setting right from the stage of inception and the use of concrete and steel is avoided in the rendering of spaces while emphasizing the locally available natural materials.

The reception lobby, lounge, restaurant, common areas, and a triplet of suites are housed in cottages. The built spaces are retained, so that the





baddok babu's Suite.



the corridor.

Interiors or exteriors come as a natural corollary to the myriad of greenness that is omnipresent. The alphabets of design were dhoopi, a kind of cheap, light weight easily available wood and bamboo (*another easily available material*). Two symbolic windows of bamboo forests were created using bamboos that are naturally treated under the sun. The walls of the *corridors* were envisaged as exhibitory backgrounds for handmade paintings adding colourful vibe to the place.

The three suites draw its influences from three different local influences adding frivolity to the spaces. The natural texture of raw planks and dead tree trunks writes the travelogue of the place that was once a hunter's eden at the "Baddook Babu's Kothi" - a local dialect for the hunters lodge. "Nouvel Ville" is a contemporary eclectic style cottage, elegantly wrapped in wall paper, platform bed and furniture that is



the bamboo café.



exploring the potential of local natural materials.

urbane in their form and appearance. "Burra Sahib" suite is a reminiscent of the exotic, quaint and luxurious lifestyle of the colonial tea estate planters of North Bengal.

CONTEXTUAL REFERENCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

The resort sitting meagerly within a stretch of virgin greenery, 22 acres of trees, lawns, gardens and orchards offer an endless diversity to the visitor. Extensive design maneuvers were rendered meaningless as nature herself has taken the task of embellishment. Thus design involved punctuating the spaces into humanly perceptible chunks of areas with natural illumination. The backdrop of natural green was omnipresent. It was felt that identifying key areas of activity and rendering them according to usage is an effective design solution. Trees and hedges were used as visual screens.



DETAILING/USE OF MATERIALS

Handmade furniture & others, artifacts and other accessories in the resort are of Dhoopi wood, bamboo, sal, rattans, straw mats, glass etc and were made of local labor; all these were naturally treated at site. Indoor plants were in abundance and are an essential ingredient of the interiors.

SENSORIAL & SPATIAL EXPERIENCES

It was felt that indirect illumination should be used and for this lights were designed and are handmade so that they became a part of the paneling itself. Large glazing areas were created to bring in the natural light within the indoors.



COHESION TO CONCEPT IN DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

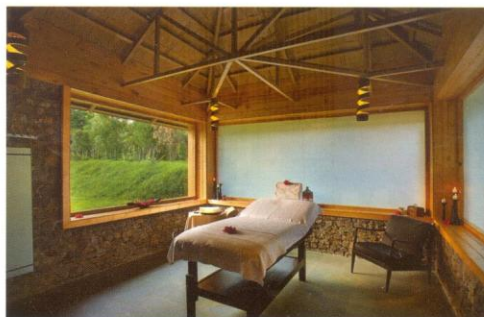
The overall design process sums up to the fact that inspite of using low-cost locally and naturally available materials, the users were provided with all the modern amenities and facilities that they enjoy and expect in resorts. In addition to this, they enjoy a rendezvous with nature overflowing with greenery, sunlight and tones of fresh air within an environment that slither smoothly with the surrounding.

fact file:

project	: Sinclairs Doors Retreat
location	: Chalsa, Jalpaiguri, West Bengal, India
architect	: Square Consultancy Services
size	: 6,000-sq.ft + 2,000-sq.ft (new construction) (built up)
dt of completion	: December 2011
cost	: ₹575/sq.ft of total built up area



noveau ville.



the massage room.



burra sahib suite.



the garden adjoining health club.