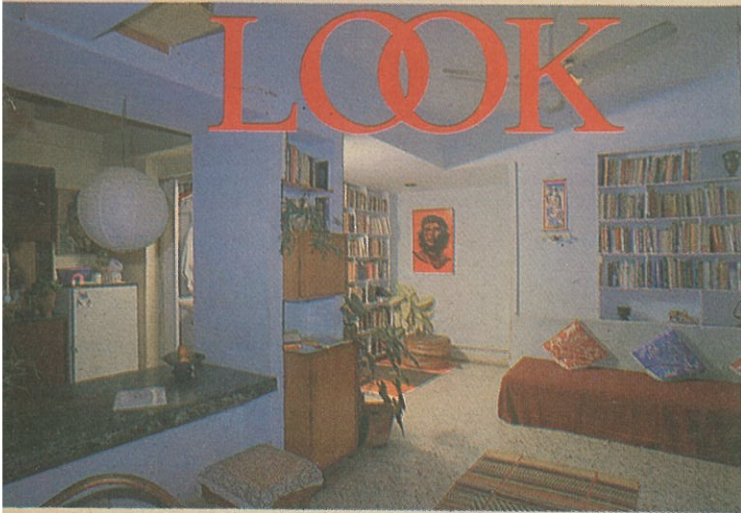
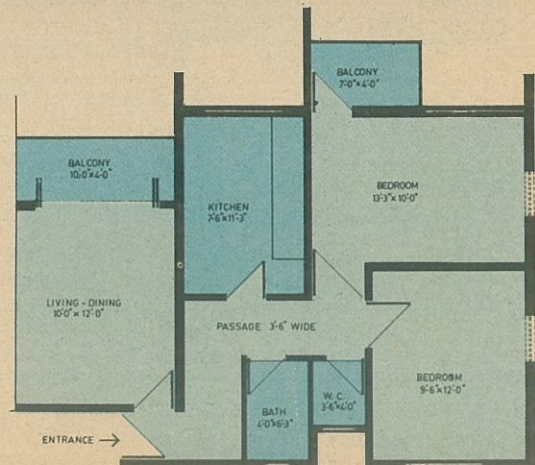
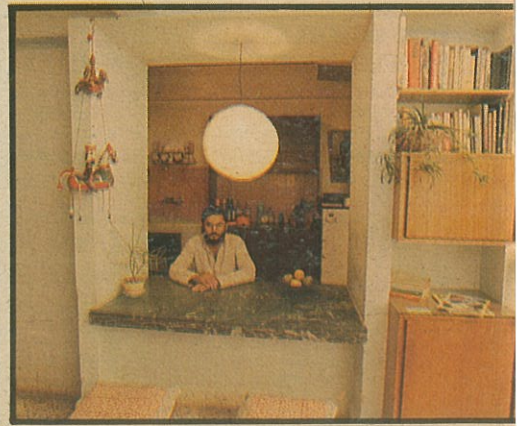
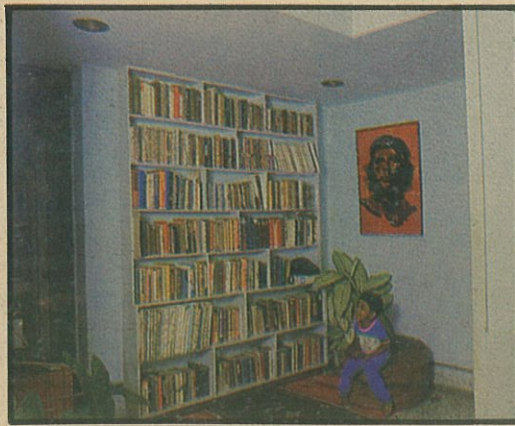


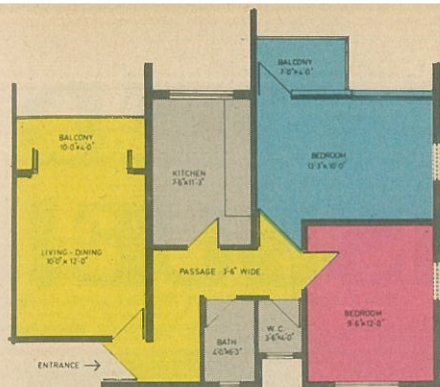
OLD HOUSE NEW LOOK



"Don't let the standard 'Floor Plan' and the standard ideas of what a 'space' is for, push you around." Words of wisdom, in the day and age of rabbit-hutches passing for flats, that come off the conveyor belts of the Rahejas, the Lokhandwallas the Rizvis and their tribe. Millions of 1/2 bedroom - hall-kitchen flats for the millions. Turn these mass-produced houses into homes. It is not difficult at all—if only you know **how**. Mr P K DAS, an architect and interior designer lets us into this million-dollar secret which certainly does not cost as much. With a wave of his architect's pen and a few strokes here and there, he moulds a standard flat to meet **YOUR** needs, suit **YOUR** lifestyle. A few subtractions, a few additions and lo and behold you have a new designer flat instead of the rabbit-hutch!



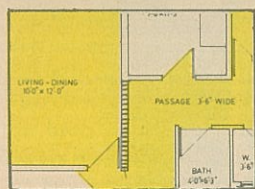




"TURN YOUR HOUSE INTO A HOME"

"This is what the old flat looked like," explained P K Das. "Just notice the box-like structure of the rooms. See how every space is confined and cut off from the other."

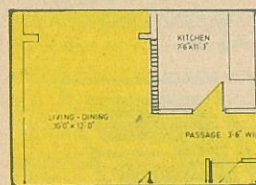
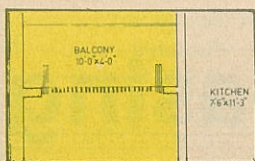
"To change it the first think I took into consideration was the lifestyle of the family members, their requirements and the relationships. (I've designed this new look for a young couple, with two small children.) They are both journalists and both do a lot of reading and writing at home. Then there are no rigid divisions of the household chores to be accomplished. Both give a hand to the house work, including the cooking etc. It isn't as if the wife is confined to the kitchen while the husband entertains in the hall. Also they have a most informal relationship with everyone who drops into their home and this means that there is no need to exclude friends from the routine activity of the household. Then there are all those books that have to be accommodated. And of course there are the children who need place to run around.



"The first thing that I did was to knock off the wall between the hall and the corridor which leads to the kitchen and the bedrooms. This immediately freed the corridor from merely being a transit place to a space in itself. So opposite the entrance door, I fitted a floor-to-ceiling book-case, which also holds the telephone. A bright rug placed in front with a couple of leather pouffes; a potted plant in the corner and a red poster on the adjoining wall—and we have a bright welcoming entrance.

"Since I had knocked down the wall the beams were exposed, and also some nooks were now formed. The beams were covered with a low ceiling fitted with concealed lamps, which gives the area a distinct identity and also prepares you for the entry into the hall, which then seems to open out before you. Into one of the nooks we fitted the music system and into another the bar with a book/magazine rack built over it.

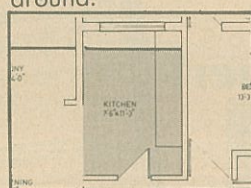
"Next we broke down the wall between the hall and the balcony and enclosed the further wall of the balcony with sliding glass panes. This immediately led to a further expansion of the hall space.



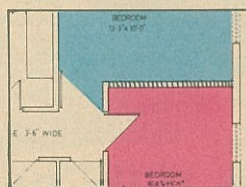
"Then the wall between the hall and the kitchen was also broken to a little below table height. A moss green marble slab made a convenient counter used for dining/writing entertaining purposes. Low stools with colourful cushions can be unobtrusively out of the way under the counter when not in use. This also gives a free access to the kitchen and allows anyone in there to simultaneously participate in the goings-on in the hall. The Chinese style globular lamp (which accentuates the Chinese prints framed on the opposite wall) gives a cosy atmosphere and also helps

define the area, giving the impression of a 'space within a space'.

The whole effect now, from the moment you enter, is of free-flowing space and the natural contours, accommodating the furniture (like book-cases music cabinet etc) which would otherwise have intruded on to the room space. Of course the other furniture like divans, cane chairs and a cane easy chair was retained, but all brightened up with colourful covers and cushions. An ordinary *chatai* in the centre of the room detracts from its bareness and is easy to put away if the children want to run riot or mess around.



"The kitchen was changed around a bit too, to harmonise with the changes outside. Previously the cooking platform was on the wall opposite the wall adjoining the hall. I got a platform built perpendicular to the existing one which fitted into a natural corner, and removed the cooking area from immediate view. The existing platform was topped with a marble slab matching the counter and some kitchen cabinets were built over it, converting that space into a pantry/chopping table etc. The corner between the two platforms was utilised for the kitchen sink. Contrasting tiles in light yellow ochre, added the final touch.



"In the bedroom there was only one change that was made. The wall between the master bedroom and the children's bedroom, was shifted further into the children's room. And a wardrobe was built in the extra space in the master bedroom which fitted snugly into the wall. The other room can still take the children's bed and their chest of drawers etc.

"Here is the final result with the changes that have been made. See how the space has been freed from rigid confines and how the whole house has now got a personality of its own—or should I say of its occupants?"

