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Create your own niche

By Sangeetha G. Nov 17 2010
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Large, empty walls in a room can be monotonous. A dash of a bright colour or space sometimes can add pizzazz. Sometimes people transform one of the walls in a room into a feature wall by using texture paint or displaying a large painting. Creating niches or recesses to enhance the aesthetics of a wall is an emerging concept. You might have seen them in hotels or art galleries, but it is fast becoming popular in residences too.

A niche, also referred to as an alcove, is at least a 4.5 inch deep cutout in a wall that is around nine inches thick. Niche can have different sizes and shapes, but mostly they are rectangle or square. Often their length and breadth of the niche is left to the choice of the house owner. "Niches are mostly made in houses as nine-inch thick walls are more commonly found in houses than apartments. A niche by itself gives relief to the monotony of a wall," said **Dameem Ansari, principal architect, Ansari Associates Architects and Interior Designers.**

However, people try to make the space more interesting by using a contrasting texture paint or even emulsion paint, cladding the space

with marble, wall paper, glass or wood.

"Mostly there's concealed lighting inside a niche. It can be left as such with just the lighting or can be used to place a flower vase, a decorative article, a small internal plant or a painting inside. Multi-colour LED lights are also used inside so as to change the mood of the room when desired," he said.

A niche is generally created in the living room or dining space where the guests are received. However, it can be made in any room depending upon the thickness of the wall. There can be niches for keeping idols in the pooja room and the entire pooja room itself can be set in a niche.

In apartments with thinner walls, a shallow recess is made in the wall and a protruding wooden frame is fixed on it to give depth. "A false wall can also be made out of gypsum board and fixed on the existing one. A niche can be created on this wall. Fixing a gypsum wall of four inches thick can cost around Rs 200 per sq ft," he said.

According to Ansari, niche is a traditional concept. In ancient times when there was no electricity available, niches were made in each wall of the house to place the lamp. If it had a utilitarian purpose in those times, now it is mainly used for decorative purposes.

A niche can be made during the construction stage after the plastering is done. Provision for concealed lighting can be made at this point. However, even after the construction is over one can plan a niche but the lighting arrangement needs to be taken care of.

Niches can be made in offices too where they hold books, awards or citations.

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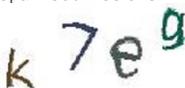
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