

**Getting the City Back to the People**  
**Municipal Initiative in Heritage Conservation - The Case of Ahmedabad**

*Thiru Debashish Nayak,*  
*Advisor, Heritage Programme, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation*  
*State Project Coordinator, Gujarat*  
*National Mission on Monuments & Antiquities, Archaeological Survey of India*

**Introduction:**

Communities live and work in towns and cities; society changes so does urban form, responding to accommodate and change and growth. In today's pace of economic development, such historic resources are often perceived as inefficient unproductive and even inconvenient. They are often replaced with buildings that appear contemporary and more efficient. This neglect has led to decay, depressed economic conditions and dilapidation leading to migration of the population to newer areas.

Familiarity breeds contempt. The citizens get accustomed with their environment and gradually become less aware of it. The city becomes a habit. Here in lies the need to make the citizens aware of the importance of their built environment and to help them develop a harmonious and contemporary relationship with it. In a sense, urban renewal does not just rebuild the city, it rebuilds people's relationship with the city. There lies a need that the old buildings and older areas of the city should be looked upon as assets rather than as liabilities because they represent the history of communities, embodying their tradition, heritage and culture through architecture and the urban form.

This paper explains the importance of an alternative way of connecting conservation and community participation for a sustainable process of revival for Historic cities in India.

**Role of Municipal Corporations in Heritage Conservation:**

The local government plays a very important role in the whole implementation process and the achievement of the ultimate goal of an integrated heritage conservation effort.

**THE AHMEDABAD INITIATIVE**

**Background**

The birth of the Old City settlement dates back to a 10<sup>th</sup> century AD town known as Ashaval. In the later part of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, another city grew adjacent to Ashaval, known as Karnavati. The present Walled City was created during the Ahmed Shahi period in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. A new palace and fort were built near Bhadra, which covered a rectangular area of around 500 \* 800 meters. During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the city expanded outwards. Fortifications were strengthened. The 18<sup>th</sup> century saw the decline of the city and many suburbs

and even parts of the inner city were abandoned and ruined. During the British rule due to political stability and later the introduction of textile mills resulted in economic growth and prosperity. Military and administrative centers, cantonment and railways churches, administrative and residential buildings were also established during the period. Wholesale Markets at Kalupur, mechanized industries and worker's quarters on eastern suburbs, Ellis Bridge, Residential buildings and educational institutions were established. For walls were mostly pulled down in mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. The absence of any decentralization policy with regard to economic activities resulted in congestion and decay of Walled city.

## **Urban Character**

### ***Streets and Neighborhoods:***

The nucleus of activities at Bhadra and Manek Chowk and the twelve gates on the wall, created a radial pattern of streets. Puras were connected with wider streets and entered through gates. Each micro neighborhood around residential streets became typical and is called "pol" which consists of a street and houses on its both sides. It would have at the most two gates that bat entry at night.

The city of Ahmedabad has been able to display examples worth replicating in the field of heritage conservation. AMC and Ford Foundation, New Delhi prepared a report on "Urban Conservation of Walled City Ahmedabad". The study concentrated on the essential elements required in the city's conservation with a focus on the historical areas. The historical importance of the city, city form, wall, gates, pols, house patterns and the problems related to old fabric were analyzed. A list of heritage buildings and precincts was prepared. A conservation and a demonstration project were also proposed.

### **Sharing the Concerns:**

In the initial phase of intervention an attempt was made to identify the various factors making conservation of heritage difficult in the Walled City area. Some of these issues are listed below:

### **Problems in regulations and policies:**

#### ***Road Line:***

During the British rule a proposal was mooted for widening the roads in the Walled City. Proposed road boundaries, known as 'Road Lines' were demarcated. All new construction was to be done beyond this line. This created a negative attitude among the community members with the result that the front portion of the building, coming under road line has been neglected. This has resulted in the decay of many a valuable building facades.

#### ***Floor Space Index (FSI):***

The permissible FSI in the Walled City, except for the 'City Centre' area was 3.0. The traditional neighbourhoods normally consume much less. This additional FSI is actually being used for constructing multi-storied buildings by amalgamating three or four plots. This used to

destroy the character of the area. Now it has been reduced to 2.0, so the only development possible is restoration and upgrading the existing property.

#### ***Tax Structure:***

Certain aspects of the Tax structure do not favour heritage conservation. For example, Chabutaras (bird feeder) are considered as commercial buildings and are taxed on such rates. Similarly, vacant properties are taxed less, leading to buildings of heritage value being locked up and left to ruin.

#### **Changes in the Economy**

##### ***Closure of Textile mills:***

A large part of the residential population in the Walled City consisted tenants working in textile mills. With the mills closing down, they were rendered jobless and stopped maintaining the old buildings that they occupied. This led to a variety of heritage properties getting ruined.

##### ***Growth of gold and silver units:***

The gold and silver industry in the Walled City grew and attracted many skilled persons into the fabric. This influx of people from outside has disturbed the homogeneity of the social fabric in *pols*. This is also suspected to have increased the crime rate in the Walled City.

***Commercial ingress*** in the old fabric, especially after the addition of Relief Road, created a lot of undesirable changes in the landuse. Warehouses coming up inside the *pols* greatly disturbed the residential character.

##### ***Social problems leading to migration:***

Successive riots and communal problems have forced people to migrate thus weakening the upkeep of the fabric.

#### **Lack of information**

Awareness among the people about conservation is very poor. Also the unavailability of proper building materials for repair works caused decay. Proper maps and drawings of the Walled City were not available. This reduces the access of the police, fire force, ambulances, etc. into the deeper portions of the city.

#### **Strategic Partnerships**

The success of any intervention depends on the building of strategic and in stimulating widespread participation of a variety of stakeholders.

#### **Community Participation**

A series of activities were organized to elicit community participation. Some of these are described below:

### ***A meeting at Khadia:***

A meeting was held in the Old City 'Khadia' area to discuss the possibilities and strategies of conservation and development of Walled City of Ahmadabad. This was organized by AMC and attended by many citizen groups, renowned personalities and AMC officials.

### ***World Heritage Week Celebration at Desai-ni-Pol:***

The first public programme entitled 'Preservation of the Past and Glimpses of History' was launched at Desai-ni-Pol in Khadia area on 19<sup>th</sup> November 1996 on the occasion of World Heritage Week celebration. This was a unique programme where "Heritage" was the main issue and organized jointly by citizens groups and municipal authorities.

*Desai-ni-Pol* has a place in history because of its rebellious past during the British rule. The residents of the *pol* released a booklet to mark the Heritage Day, listing the historical houses, personalities who lived there, and a chronicle of important events.

### ***Krantidarshafi Padyatra (Freedom Walk):***

On 14 August 1997 a Freedom Walk was organized where several houses, connected with the history of Indian freedom struggle came to light. Twenty-eight important houses were identified and the citizens under the leadership of elected and government officials visited the same.' Based on this on 2 October 1997, many *pol* groups celebrated Gandhiji's birthday and buildings associated were visited.

### ***Netaji's birthday celebrated in Bengal Home:***

A celebration similar to that in Desai-ni-Pol marked the birthday of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose on 23 January 1998. Bengal Home in Dhobi-ni-Pol, established in 1905 was the center of actions. This is where revolutionaries from Bengal stayed and trained local people in revolutionary activities during the freedom struggle. During a public meeting on this occasion, the need for preserving cultural heritage was, stressed.

### ***Kavi Sammelan (Poets' meet):***

A Kavi Sammelan was organized on Kavi Dalpatram's death anniversary on March 1998, in the *pol* where he used to live. Organizations like Gujarat Sahitya Parishad also worked to make it a success.

### ***Revival of Traditional Local Governance System - Panch:***

A street play called '*Pot - Etale molun dahin ne upar katke gor*' was developed with an intention to create awareness at a larger scale amongst people, which was used as a tool to initiate a dialogue with the *pol* people. The play was organized by the collaborative efforts of CRUTA foundation (Advisor — Heritage Programme, AMC), Theatre Media Centre (TMC) and Ahmedabad Community Foundation (ACF).

The play described the life and culture of the people of the *pols*. It tried to discourage the breaking down of the traditional *pol* house with the *otla*, *chowk*, *tanka*, wooden carved facades etc., to be replaced by concrete and brick structures. Thus the play was an effort to encourage people in the *pols* to revive their effective system of local governance. It was an effort to evoke the residents to create their '*panch*' and set strong local governance.

### ***Heritage Walk:***

A Heritage Walk was initiated through the old neighborhoods by AMC and the programme was well publicized through brochures and posters. The community itself came forward with whatever help they could do. The residents in the route make efforts to keep the route clean and restored.

### ***Volunteer involvement:***

Volunteer involvement is very crucial for long-term sustenance of any movement. Official recognition of citizen efforts is also vital. AMC has recognized this role and a proper certification process are also established.

### ***Street signage programme:***

Name of an Area, particularly in historic inner city neighborhoods, is very important for the residents. They closely identify with the name. Unfortunately the street plate recognizing the identity of those areas has never been a priority. AMC took it up as an issue and has started to display name plates with municipal symbols and appropriately inaugurated them in the presence of AMC officials, local political representative and elderly persons of the neighborhood.

### ***Role of media:***

In all these activities the role of media is very important to give wide publicity and create awareness among the common people.

## **Inter departmental and public private partnerships**

### ***City gates:***

The AMC in association with ASI (Archeological Survey of India) set out on a beautification process focusing on the fort wall and city gates. ASI works on the physical restoration and AMC works on the landscape and lighting around the gates. Astodia gate is the first gate ready for first touches.

### ***Facade grant:***

AMC with the assistance of state government and Gujarat State Archeological Department is giving 50% grant for facade restoration. This type of inter departmental partnerships can include citizen groups and NGOs also.

***Kavi Dalpatram Memorial:***

AMC and the citizens of Ahmedabad proposed a memorial at the site of the house of the great poet. In absence of any proper drawings and plans of the poet's actual house, here the memories of the old residents were tapped and adjoining studied to bring authenticity into the creation of the memorial. The memorial comprises the facade of the original house, Tulsi Manch and a larger than life size 120 kg bronze statue of Dalpatram.

***Memorial of Poet Akha Bhagat:***

A project has been initiated by AMC Heritage Cell to install the statue of poet Akha Bhagat at Desai-ni-Pol, based on the painting of him by Late Ravi Sankar Rawal.

***Development of the Manek Burj:***

The Manek Burj, which stands at the southwest tower of the Old City wall, is associated to the ceremony of founding of Ahmedabad. A project was initiated for the restoration of the remains by AMC Heritage Cell. The restoration work was supported by Swaminarayan Temple Trust.

***Transformer design in old city:***

Pole-mounted transformers installed by the Ahmedabad Electricity Company (AEC) are usually eyesores in many parts of the walled city. One of these, located next to a Chabutara was redesigned by AEC in association with local Architect in such a way as to highlight the importance of Chabutara.

***Panchkuwa ward office:***

An old building near Panchkuwa Gate was identified by AMC for conservation. This building was restored and used for its ward office.

***Heritage Gate of the Collectorate:***

Inspired by the heritage initiative the Collector of Ahmedabad requested AMC to help them to design a Heritage gate for their complex and took up renovation of their buildings.

***City Museum:***

A City Museum has been established with the help of Vastushilpa Foundation.

***Involvement of elected representatives:***

This is an important factor in the success of any such activities as they have direct contact with the citizens and influence on them. Their involvement must be assured at all stages.

***Establishment of a Heritage Cell:***

A heritage cell has been established in the AMC to look after heritage activities and policies. A separate budget of Rs. 50 lakhs was allocated, as a start up fund.

### **Heritage Walk: A key tool for urban revival:**

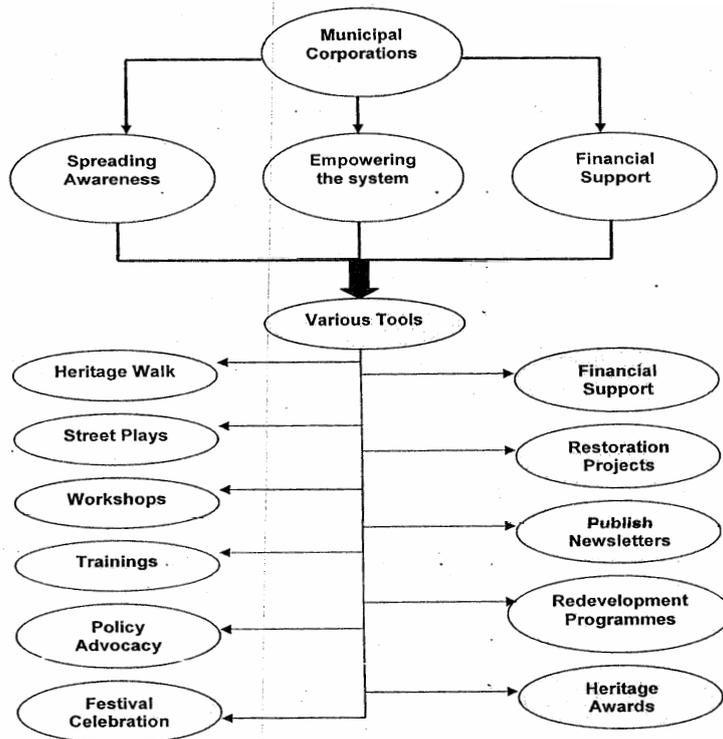
*Heritage Walk* - as the name suggests, behaves as an effective tool whereby the inner areas of the city shall be explored in terms of the architectural heritage, cultural heritage and the craft heritage. The walk shall in its due course take the people through specific routes penetrating through the inner areas and habitats of the people, exploring the beautiful temples, heritage buildings, *ha veils pols*, shops and a lot more.

The exploring and exposing of the inner areas of the Walled City requires an initiative from the Municipal Corporation of the city, which needs to provide some basic infrastructure - in terms of proper paving, cleaning up of the streets, provision of street lights, signage, public amenities. The walk carries with it another kind of advantage - the changes it can bring about in the landuse pattern of the area, by conversion of a part of the heritage building into a cafeteria or into a paying guest accommodation, whereby the tourists can get the actual feel of the cultural heritage by staying within the precincts of it. This can allow a total change in the economy of the area wherein the tourists can stay in and spend at these inner areas.

### **Preliminary Roles of the Municipal Corporations**

To summarize one can list down the following roles of municipal corporations for heritage conservation

1. *Intervene strategically.*
2. *Start with available resources.*
3. *Elicit support of local architects, professionals and NGOs.*
4. *Got support of local people.*
5. *Identify implement able projects.*
6. *Involve elected wing.*
7. *Coordinate with other government and non-government agencies.*
8. *Establish a heritage unit in the local government.*
9. *Sensitize all official agencies towards heritage work.*
10. *Recognize and cooperate with International bodies and coordinate their actions.*



## Reaching Out

These experiences and lessons should be used to prepare a comprehensive strategy in a wider level:

### *Replicating the model:*

The model of Heritage Walk and other initiatives of AMC are getting replicated. With certain additions as per local characteristics, has already replicated the idea, and among other cities like Amritsar, Pondicherry, Baroda, Jamnagar, Delhi, Bhuj, Siddhpur, Jaipur, Surat, Patiala, Jodhpur have already launched their projects.

### *Sharing experiences:*

These experiences are being shared with towns around Ahmedabad like in Dholka, Dabhoi, Nadiad and Lothal. AMC Heritage Cell officials are helping them to prepare comprehensive plans for improving physical conditions and heritage conservation. This will lead to a regional development plan and small town development initiatives. The experiences are also being utilized for the development of Vadtal village in Kheda district.

The Tera village in Bhuj has been declared as Heritage Village of Government of Gujarat and establishment of an Interpretation Centre along with Heritage Walk has been proposed for the development of the village.

### *HUDCO-AMC Collaboration:*

Finance always plays an important role for successful implementation of renewal projects. Particularly housing finance and building repair loan segment could play an important

role. On 31st January 2000, HUDCO board has approved the heritage exploration with investment in the septennial of a Heritage sector. On the 18 of April, on the occasion of World Heritage day a MOU was signed between AMC and HUDCO to detailing the financial implication in this sector.

### **International Collaborations**

#### ***AMC-French Govt. Collaboration:***

International agencies should be contacted to share the experiences of various agencies working in this field. This will give a wider perspective and awareness of the methods and approaches. On 14 of January 2000, empowered with 74<sup>th</sup> comment of our constitution, AMC signed MOU with French Government for a scientific study of the Walled City. This was initially for one year and was later extended. A French team along with AMC staff worked jointly to achieve these goals. MOU was signed between Government of France, AMC and HUDCO for the implementation of the programme for historic city conservation in Ahmedabad on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2001. On 18th of February 2003 an agreement between Government of France and Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation was signed for the establishment of the Ahmedabad Heritage Centre. Financial Agreement was signed for Historic City Conservation in Ahmedabad between Government of France and HUDCO for providing subsidy in building repair loan on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2003.

#### ***AMC-Dutch Govt. Collaboration:***

Dutch had a small presence in Ahmedabad in earlier days in connection with trade & commerce. A Dutch factory and graveyard still reminds their past presence in the city. Restoration and an interpretation booklet exploring the related history in under way.

The Dutch cemetery, on the east side of the Kankaria Lake is a historic site. On the cemetery are four types of tombs: domed tombs, pyramids, 'walled' tombs and plain gravestones. The tombs were badly damaged by the earthquake of 2001. The Archaeological Department with the support of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation restored them to original shape.

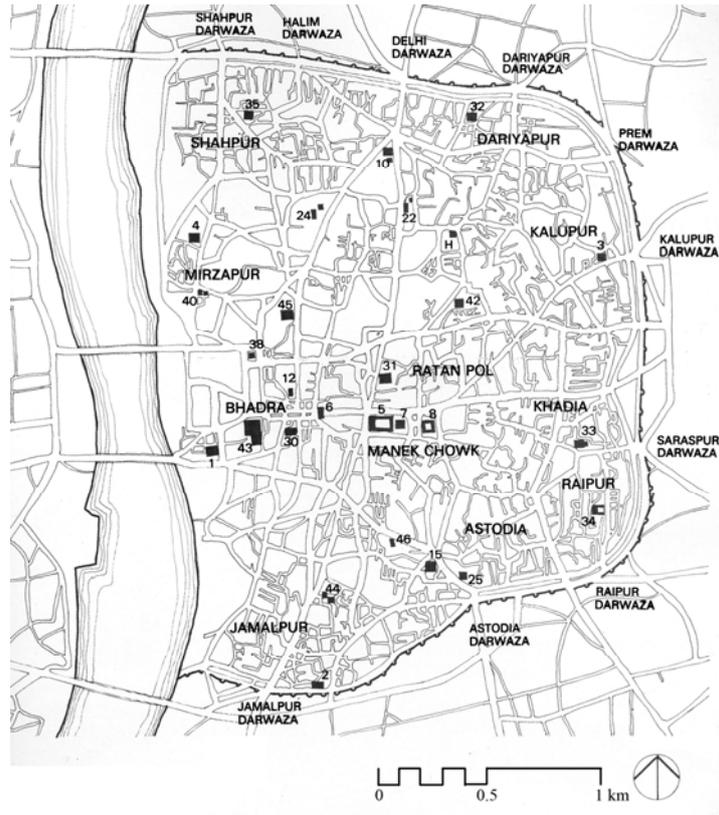
#### ***World Monument Fund listing:***

Walled City of Ahmedabad was included in the list of endangered heritage sites by the World Monument Fund during the year 1998-1999. This was used to intensify the conservation activities in Walled City and generate international attention.

The 300-year-old Dwarkadheesh Temple in Boua ni Pol, partially destroyed in the earthquake of 2001 received the attention of the World Monument Watch to be listed in its most endangered 100 sites in the World in the year 2002 and the World Monument Fund has awarded a sum of \$32000 for the renovation of Dwarkadheesh Temple through the World Monument Fund Robert Wilson Challenge Fund for restoration of the temple which is currently undergoing.



Heritage Programme,  
Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation  
In association with  
CRUTA Foundation  
**The Walled City of Ahmedabad**  
is more than six hundred  
years old. It has some  
of the finest Indian Islamic  
monuments and exquisite  
Hindu and Jain temples.



**Walled City of Ahmedabad**



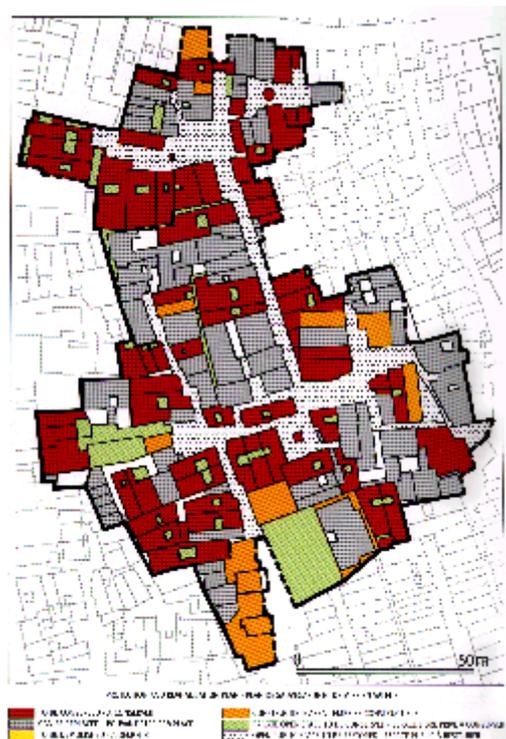
**Gates of Walled City of Ahmedabad**

## Essential Facts

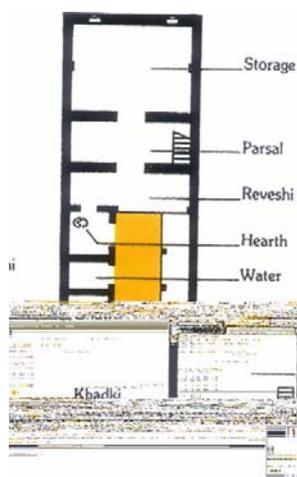
- ❖ Located on the banks of the Sabarmati river
- ❖ Population of walled city 375,000
- ❖ Population decreased from 500,000 in 1991
- ❖ Area of 5.78 sq.km
- ❖ Density:650 pp/ha



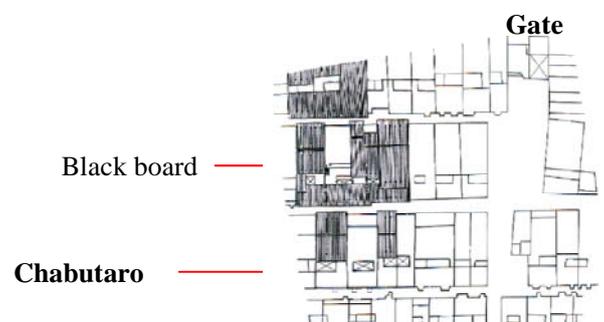
## Walled City of Ahmedabad



Plan of Pol



Typical House Plan

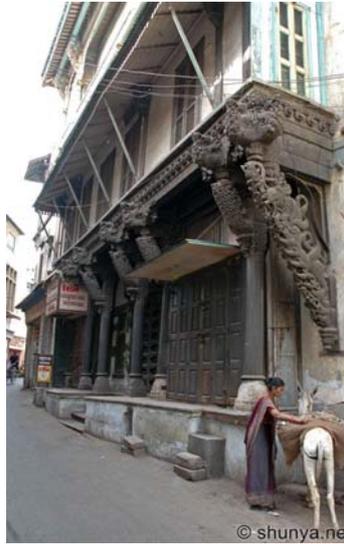


## PUBLIC SPACES...



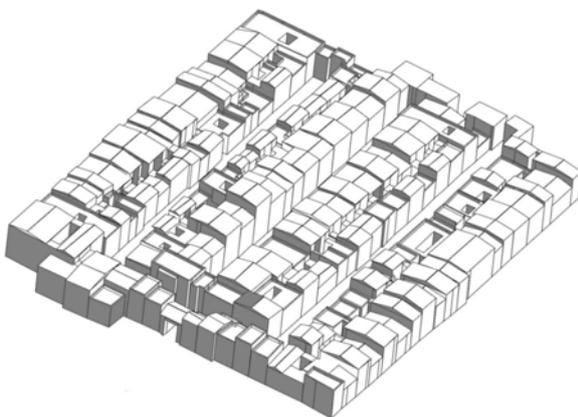
## RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOODS

- ❖ Uses in many of these 'pols' are now changing to storage/ warehouse



Traditional pols

## POL TYPES



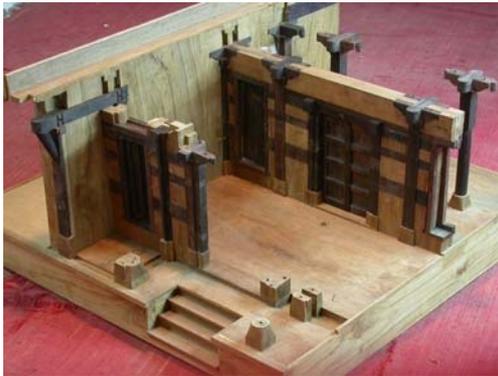
Chipa Pol (Planned)



Akasheth Kuva Pol (Organic)

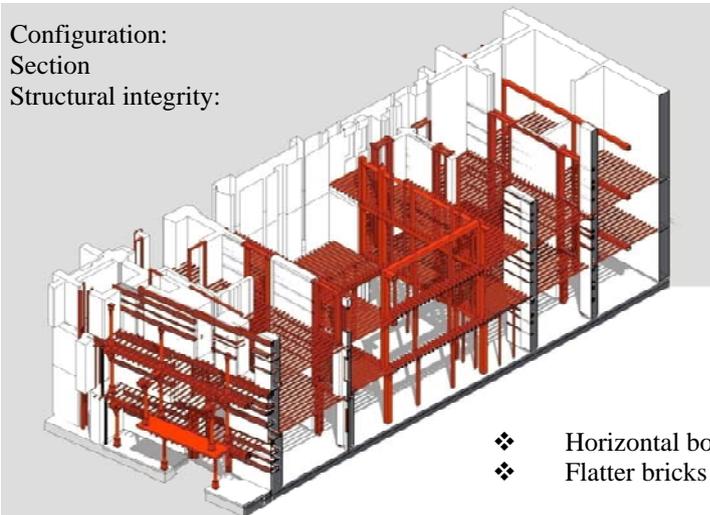


## STRUCTURE OF POL HOUSE



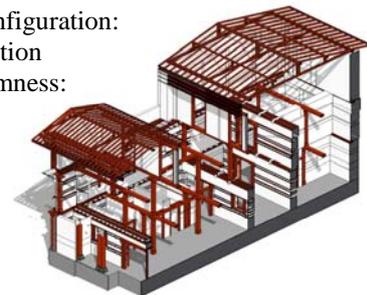
Traditional Earthquake Resistance Construction System Built within the Pol Houses of Ahmedabad

Configuration:  
Section  
Structural integrity:



- ❖ Horizontal bonding
- ❖ Flatter bricks and weak mortar

Configuration:  
Section  
Firmness:

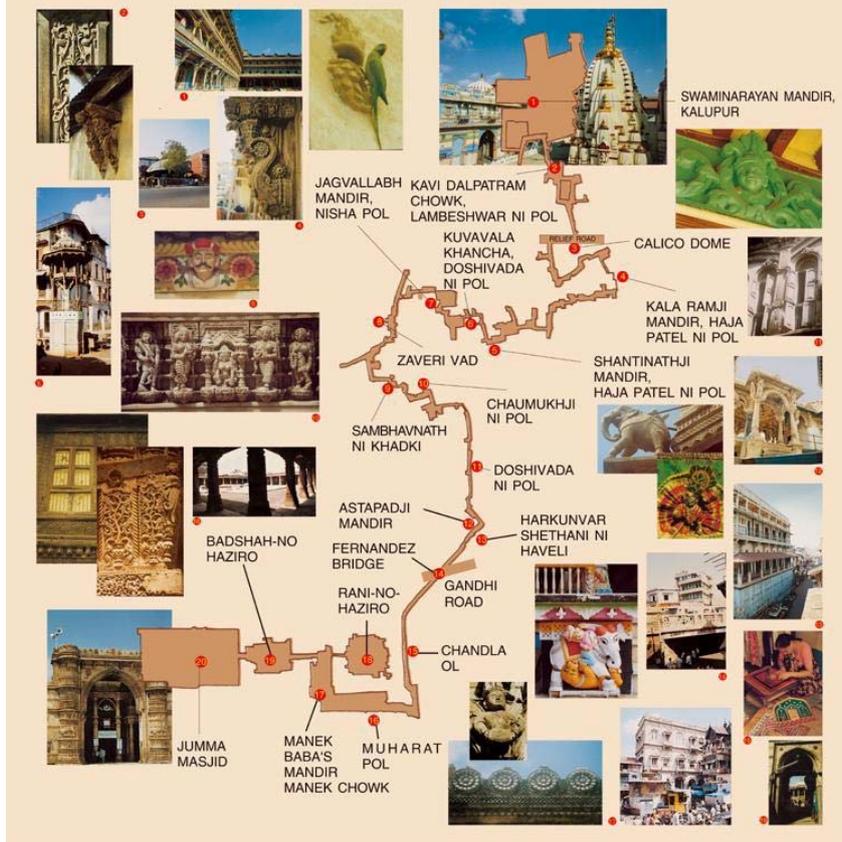


# WOODEN CARVED BUILDING ELEMENTS



## Heritage Walk of Ahmedabad

First of its kind initiated in India by Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation





### An unique indigenous "TANKA" technology

Revival of a traditional wisdom for stronging of rain water

Ahmedabadi are known for their practical wisdom. One of the best examples of their foresight is an unique indigenous technology for in-house water harvesting called Tanka.

The Tanka technique involves collecting rain water falling on the terrace or roof of a house in an underground tank through a copper pipeline. The tank made of lime or stone is generally 25' deep and 15' X 15' in length and width. It has steps to go down. The water is drawn from it in a bucket by pulling a rope tied with it as like from a well but more easily. For convenience of drawing water its upper end is raised about 2 feet high from ground level and its mouth closed with a handy wooden or iron shutter for protection. This visible part of the Tanka located in a corner of the house also has an element of beauty as it carries various designs carved on it.

It is noticeable that the age old principles of Indian Vastu Shastra and Panchang based on astronomical movements of planets were followed even in this common practice. Collecting of water in the Tanka Started during the second phase of down pour under the influence of Ashwin, Magha and Andra nakshatra.

The water stored during one season was sufficient for daily use till next rain fall for a family of five members. Prevented from sunlight, it remained bacteria free and devoid of chemicals for years. Tanka, thus, was an architectural and technical marvel locally devised by people of Ahmedabad for getting natural, pure and transparent water.

The Khadia Itihas Samiti has done a valuable research on this technique. Before 1943, there were more than 300 Tankas in the Pola of Khadia area alone.

#### Valuable Research and Guidance of "Khadia Itihas Samiti"

**ANMEDABAD**  
Harvesting rainwater is easy

**સિટી સંસ્કૃતિ**  
રામદેવાદના સાંસ્કૃતિક વારસાનું જતન એટલે 'હેરિટેજ પ્રોગ્રામ'

HERITAGE DEPARTMENT – AHMEDABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION  
Sardar Patel Bhavan, Sardar Patel Road, Danapith, Ahmedabad-380 001.



### International appreciation and collaboration

MoU With the Government of France and HUDCO for conservation of old houses

On the event of Golden Jubilee Celebration of Independence of India, the Government of France offered to provide co-operation in conservation of old heritage buildings in Ahmedabad. An MoU was signed in 2000 between the Honorable Ambassador of France in India and the Municipal Commissioner of Ahmedabad. A team of French architects have surveyed 35,000 houses in the walled city. The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, the Government of France and HUDCO under another MoU have established Ahmedabad Heritage Centre to provide technical assistance and low interest loans for repairs of houses having heritage value.



**Reconstructions of Smt. Ilaaben and Shri Arvindbhai Soni's house with co-operation of Ahmedabad Heritage Centre and SEWA Bank**

**For the First Time in India Loans Made Available for Conservation of Historical Buildings.**

It is a strange fact that till now it was impossible to avail a loan for conservation or repair of a 15 year or more old house. But now under an MoU by HUDCO Bank and the Government of Gujarat, the residents of the walled city can get a loan at a subsidised interest rate of 5% for conservation and repair of their old houses. As a result, it has been possible to restore or repair houses as old as 100-150-200 years. They are provided free architectural guidance and supervision which would otherwise cost them fees at the rate of 10 to 15 percent.

The first of its kind in India, the scheme implemented will establish a financial system for the cause of heritage. Other Cities will benefit by following it in restoration of heritage buildings within their jurisdiction.

અહમદાબાદની ઇતિહાસિક ઘરો અને ગુજરાત સરકાર દ્વારા આજે સુધી અનુભવ્ય નથી.

HERITAGE DEPARTMENT - AHMEDABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION  
Sardar Patel Bhavan, Sardar Patel Road, Danapith, Ahmedabad-380 001.



### AMC, France sign MoU on heritage conservation

By A Staff Reporter  
AHMEDABAD The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) and France on Friday signed the Indo-French protocol for co-operation to revitalise ancient sites of Ahmedabad.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) to this effect was signed by municipal commissioner K. Kalashnathan and Ambassador of France in India Claude Blanchemaison.

The understanding which is likely to breathe life into over 35,000 ancient buildings in the walled city, is the result of two conferences Sambhava-1 and Sambhava-2 held here earlier in 1998 and 1999 respectively under the aegis of French Embassy and the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage in collaboration with IIM, Ahmedabad.

Following the co-operation agreement aimed at establishing a model plan of revitalisation of the ancient centre of city, an Indo-French team has been assigned the task to undertake urban, architectural, legislative, technical and financial analysis a release issued here informed.

On the basis of the analysis, a guideline of the plan will be submitted at the end of a year.

The programme incorporates a plan of financial measures destined for the revitalisation of the old centre, in order to appeal to different international organisations to financially help the various programmes in city.

The co-operation will be followed up every three months through a meeting of the working group comprising municipal authorities and urban architects co-ordinating on the French side.

The co-operation will conclude with a seminar titled Sambhava-3, organised by original partners to arrive at a final evaluation, publish it and present this mode of working to municipalities facing similar difficulties in historical centres in India.

★ Monday, September 20, 2004

## 120-yr-old Karanj Chabutro set to regain former glory

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: The 120-year-old Karanj Chabutro at Teen Darwaza area here is set to regain its former glory. Among the 100-odd extant chabutros or traditional bird feeders found in the 'pods' of the walled city, the Chabutro is unique as it is the only one of its kind. Unlike most of the stone chabutros, this 31-feet-tall wooden structure is a "symbol of harmony" because of its beautiful Indo-Islamic architecture.

Says Debanishah Nayak of the Heritage department at the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC), "The entire process of lobbying for it started three years ago but work began just two months ago. During this period, because of the initiative being taken for this Chabutro, a number of local counsellors also



started approaching for restoring chabutros in their areas as well."

The Chabutro, which was to be restored in three phases that included a detailed study of its construction and craftsmanship, careful dismantling of all parts and their reconstruction

and finally its restoration at the original site required a lot of groundwork. "It took us months to convince the local people to let us dismantle it because they were very attached to it," says Nayak.

The Chabutro, which was in a completely dilapidated condi-

tion, was supported by a local trust, the Shantaben Motilal Charitable Trust, and the Ahmedabad Heritage Centre, Heritage department, AMC, Prabhudas Mistry, the craftsman, who is heading the team working on the reconstruction of this Chabutro, says, "This

Chabutro is different from the rest because of its intricate carving and the complicated interlocking system of the wooden parts." The Indo-Islamic fusion is obvious in the animal and human figurines that ornament the Chabutro, and are a symbol of Hindu culture, and the dome at the top is an Islamic feature.

A Vijaya, architect in charge of the project, says, "A colonial style structure, this is the only Chabutro taken up by us for restoration. Although we have not interfered with the original design at all, we have used contemporary hardware in its restoration as this will increase its durability. It is almost complete and the ornate structure will be an attraction for all in a commercial area like Teen Darwaza once it is re-installed."

## Revival of Ahmedabad's Pride, Chabutro

### Restoration of the 120 years old Karanj Chabutro

#### અમદાવાદની શાન ચબુતરાનું પુનરુત્થાન

*Revival of Ahmedabad's Pride Chabutro*

અમદાવાદનું સૌથી જાણીતું સ્મારક એક ચબુતરો છે. આ ચબુતરોને 120 વર્ષ પહેલાં બાંધવામાં આવ્યું હતું. આ ચબુતરોની રચના અત્યંત જાણીતા કલાકારો દ્વારા કરવામાં આવી હતી. આ ચબુતરોની રચના અત્યંત જાણીતા કલાકારો દ્વારા કરવામાં આવી હતી. આ ચબુતરોની રચના અત્યંત જાણીતા કલાકારો દ્વારા કરવામાં આવી હતી.

**Chabutro** - a stone or wooden tower with artistic canopy over it constructed to feed birds is a salient feature of any Pol in Ahmedabad. There were more than 300 of them in the city. Most of them have been lost or are in dilapidated condition.

The architecture of a Chabutro is different from the rest because it contains intricate carvings and complicated interlocking system of wood, its restoration being one of the activities of conservation the Heritage Cell took up the challenge of reconstructing one of the oldest chabutro located at karanj near Bhadra.

This 120 year old piece of art is decorated with animal and human figurines and represents the fusion of Hindu and Muslim art and culture in architecture. The entire structure was carefully dismantled piece by piece and replaced properly after giving a finishing touch. After reinstallation, the Karanj Chabutro will gracefully stand as a symbol of compassionate nature of the people of Ahmedabad. It will also recreate the old ambience of its historically important location.

**120-yr-old Karanj Chabutro set to regain former glory**

અમદાવાદની શાન ચબુતરાનું પુનરુત્થાન શરૂ થઈ રહ્યું છે. આ ચબુતરોની રચના અત્યંત જાણીતા કલાકારો દ્વારા કરવામાં આવી હતી. આ ચબુતરોની રચના અત્યંત જાણીતા કલાકારો દ્વારા કરવામાં આવી હતી.

**નવા રંગ સજતો કરેજના ચબુતરો**

અમદાવાદની શાન ચબુતરાનું પુનરુત્થાન શરૂ થઈ રહ્યું છે. આ ચબુતરોની રચના અત્યંત જાણીતા કલાકારો દ્વારા કરવામાં આવી હતી. આ ચબુતરોની રચના અત્યંત જાણીતા કલાકારો દ્વારા કરવામાં આવી હતી.

HERITAGE DEPARTMENT - AHMEDABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION  
Sardar Patel Bhavan, Sardar Patel Road, Danapith, Ahmedabad-380 001.

## અમદાવાદની શાન ચબુતરાનું પુનરુત્થાન

### Revival of Ahmedabad's Pride Chabutro

આપણાં ઐતિહાસિક વારસારૂપ આ ૧૨૦ વર્ષ જુનો ચબુતરો હાલ ખંડેર જેવી બદલાવમાં છે, અને સમારકામ માંગે છે. અમદાવાદ હેરિટેજ સેન્ટરના પ્રયાસથી આ ચબુતરાનું સમારકામ હાથ ધરવામાં આવ્યું છે.

આ કાર્ય નીચે દર્શાવેલ તબક્કામાં કરવામાં આવશે

- નકશા અને વિગ્રોના માધ્યમ દ્વારા બોંધકામની તથા કલા કાર્યવિધીના વિગતો તથા તેની વાહની ચિત્રોનો સંગ્રહ - અભ્યાસ તથા કોટગ્રાફી દ્વારા તેની કાર્યવિધીના નક્કર પાયા.
- સાચવેલીથી ચબુતરાના બધા ભાગોને છુટા પાડી તેનું ફરી બોંધકામ.
- બોંધકામ કર્યા પછી ચબુતરાના પરિસરનું પુનરુત્થાન તથા ધાતબોની મદદથી તેમાં પશીઓ માટે દાણા પાણીની સુવ્યવસ્થા.

**THE WORK WILL BE UNDERTAKEN IN FOLLOWING PHASES**

- Detailed study of its construction and craftsmanship with drawings and photography.
- Careful dismantling of all parts and reconstruction.
- After reconstruction, restoration of Chabutro site along with improvement of surroundings and establishing a system to provide grains and water regularly for birds with the help of donors.

AMHEDABAD HERITAGE CENTRE  
SHANTABEN MUTILAL CHARITABLE TRUST

## For the First Time in India Loans Made Available for Conservation of Historical Buildings.

It is a strange fact that till now it was impossible to avail a loan for conservation or repair of a 15 year or more old house. But now under a MoU by HUDCO Bank and the Government of Gujarat, the residents of the walled city can get a loan at a subsidised interest rate of 5% for conservation and repair of their old houses. As a result, it has been possible to restore or repair houses as old as 100-150-200 years. They are provided free architectural guidance and supervision which would otherwise cost them fees at the rate of 10 to 15 percent.

The first of its kind in India, the scheme implemented will establish a financial system for the cause of heritage. Other Cities will benefit by following it in restoration of heritage buildings within their jurisdiction.

#### અમદાવાદની કલાત્મક પોળો માટે ફાન્સ સરકાર અને હુડકોની નવી આર્થિક યોજના

અમદાવાદની શાન ચબુતરાનું પુનરુત્થાન શરૂ થઈ રહ્યું છે. આ ચબુતરોની રચના અત્યંત જાણીતા કલાકારો દ્વારા કરવામાં આવી હતી. આ ચબુતરોની રચના અત્યંત જાણીતા કલાકારો દ્વારા કરવામાં આવી હતી.

#### Chalo Jaiye Ahmedabad...

let me show you my city...

## Ahmedabad

A game to explore the history and heritage of the city.

#### Moments of my Beloved Old Ahmedabad

Book for Children on Traditional Living in Old Ahmedabad

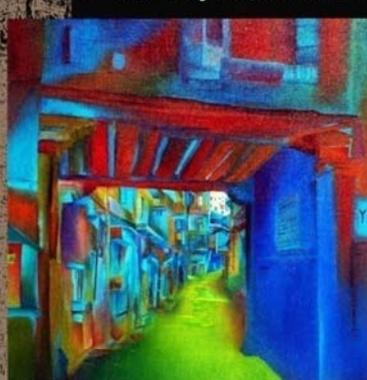
#### Preserving Heritage and Heritage to Ahmedabad

Book for Children on Traditional Living in Old Ahmedabad

# Artist's impression of old Ahmedabad

આપણું અમદાવાદ : એક વારસો  
**Aapnu Amdavad: Ek Varso**  
**Artists' impressions**

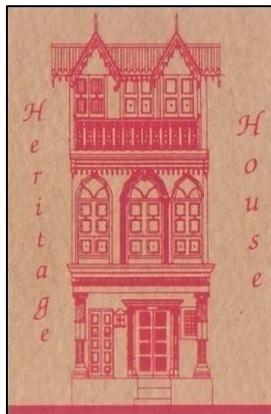
An exhibition of paintings of the Walled City of Ahmedabad held to celebrate the World Heritage Week, 19-25 November 2003



venue: "Samvaad" Heritage Conference Centre,  
 3010, Desai ni Pol, Khadia, Ahmedabad  
 from 18 - 23 November 2003, 10AM TO 6PM

*The Walled City of Ahmedabad is more than just a city; it is a living museum. The intricately carved wooden Heratis in the traditional architecture stands as a testimony to the "art of World Heritage value". These intricate Heratis are a testament to the rich cultural heritage of the city. The Ahmedabad Association with Heritage Department, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and Gujarat Heritage Trust, Ahmedabad, have jointly organized this exhibition to showcase the artists' impressions of the walled city of Ahmedabad.*

Organised by : Heritage Department, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation  
 Supported by: Heritage Initiative, NFD and CRUDA Foundation  
 Exhibition Conceived & Curated by Shri Vinodkumar Solanki & Smt. Chitra Solanki



1824 Khijda Sheri, Opposite Jain Derasar,  
 Dhal Ni Pol, Astodia Gate, Ahmedabad 380001



**arts reverie**

Chirag Kayasth  
 General Manager  
 +91(0)79-32521926  
 info@artsreverie.com  
 www.artsreverie.com



**Ujal I. Shah**  
 Chairman & M.D.

Chairman  
 Ahmedabad Kite Foundation  
 Ahmedabad Kite Flyers Society  
 World Miniature Kite Committee

Ahmedabad Kite Flyers Association  
 64, Harihar Society, Near Kumar Shalla,  
 Naroda, Ahmedabad-382330. Gujarat, India.  
 Mobile: 9624439209  
 email: info@akfakite.org www.akfakite.org



**HIMANSU S. MEHTA**  
 TEL : 91(079) 22110470  
 Mobil : 9825552205

**For Paying Guest House  
 in Ahmedabad**

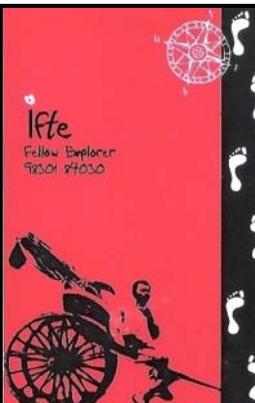
1827, Desai's pole, Khadia, Ahmedabad - 380 001



**Ahmedabad Heritism**  
 Re-creating Ethos of the City

G. M. Hiragar M.A.  
 Former Publicity & Information Officer,  
 I/c Director, Sarovar Kendra, Mezzanine, AMC

2/12, Hiramani Apartments,  
 Nr. R. C. Patel School,  
 B/H Dharmidhar Derasar, Vasna,  
 Ahmedabad - 380 007  
 Phone: 26638190  
 Mobile: 9879138381



**Ifte**  
 Fellow Explorer  
 98201 94030



**Mangaldas ni Haveli**  
 4576 • craft center  
 AHMEDABAD, GUJARAT

Shuttle service from The House of MG  
 9AM to 10.30PM

www.houseofmg.com/mangaldasnihaveli



Ashish Dave  
 Co-ordinator  
 33252 73420

**Heritage Dept**  
 Nagar Seva Sadan  
 Station Road, Nidad  
 Khadia, Gujarat, India  
 nadi@heritaghe@yahoo.com



Restoration of Jamalpur Gate (Walled City Gate of Ahmedabad)



Restoration of Fort Wall (Walled City of Ahmedabad)

### Restored house of Mr. Arvind Soni



Before



After

### Restored house of Mr. Anish Bhatt



Before



After

**Restored house of Mr.Nikhil Vyas**



Before



After

**Restored Karanj Chabutro**



Before



After

**Restored Hatkeshver Temple**



Before



After

**Restored Dwarka Dheesh Temple**



Before



After

**Upgrading Community spaces, Poet Akhabhagat Cowk**



Adaptive Reuse of Traditional Pol Houses



Proposed City Heritage Centre



Adaptive Reuse of Traditional Pol Houses



Proposed City Heritage Centre



Adaptive Reuse of Traditional Pol Houses



Mangaldas Ni Haveli Cafeteria & Craft Centre



People's Participation



## PRESERVING OUR HISTORY

**Nov 19, 1996** First public programme – Ait nu Jatan, Itihas ni Jhankhi: Preservation of the Past and Glimpses of History – launched at Desai-ni-Pol in Khadia marking World Heritage Day. It was organized by citizens' groups and municipal authorities. In 1996, AMC set up a Heritage Cell with expert advice from CRUTA Foundation, Kolkata

**Aug 14, 1997** Freedom Walk or Kranti-darshan Padyatra was organized around 28 houses connected with the Indian freedom struggle

**Nov 19, 1997** AMC and CRUTA Foundation start Heritage Walk from Shree Swaminarayan Mandir in Kalupur to Jumma Masjid at Manek Chowk

**1997-1998** Centre for Health, Education, Training and Nutrition Awareness (CHETNA) restore a heritage house at Desai-ni-Pol, Khadia. Built by Dahyabhai Jijamram Mehta in 1897, the house is a unique example of 19th century architecture in the Walled City

**1998** INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage), Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad and the French government hold a series of workshops called 'Sambhav'. AMC and French government later sign an MoU for revitalisation of the Walled City area

**Jan 14, 2000** French ambassador and AMC signed an MoU for revitalization of Old City

**Jan 26, 2001** Earthquake damages many buildings. But restoration and renovation work on old buildings speed up

**June 16, 2003** Provision for heritage building owners to get restoration loans at low interest rates

**Sept 2007** Heritage building laws in the walled city are prepared under the General Development Control Regulations for preserving and restoring heritage buildings



# TIMES AHMEDABAD FESTIVAL

17<sup>th</sup> Nov - 25<sup>th</sup> Nov '07

The city of history and FUTURE

For better knowledge partnership with premier educational institutes of excellence that the city plays host to. Through this partnership, we aim at bringing ideas and solutions from out of their campuses and putting them before you. Faculty and students of these institutes would be looking at the opportunities, possible roadblocks and work on providing solutions for the city in the days to come. We begin today with IIT Bombay



## Ode to city's heritage

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: She brought the ruins of Astodia alive. Manuela Benini, a Kathak exponent and a Brazilian national, gave a whole new perspective to the Walled City as she set the tone for the week-long Ahmedabad heritage festival on Sunday evening.

The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) in collaboration with educational institutes, art conservators and others are celebrating heritage week beginning Monday which marks World Heritage Day. Benini performed at Dhol ni Polo a packed audience. It was an altogether different experience for the readers of polo and appreciated wholeheartedly her performance. The week long festival is an initiative to bring in many of the unique efforts of individuals and organization

**HERITAGE WEEK**

who have put their effort in reviving and revitalising the heritage in Ahmedabad. Benini on her performance said, "I am practising for the last one month here in polo. The images of houses demolished recently exposed the inside to the outside world. My dance tried to capture the pain and anguish of these displaced people and at the same time it's a celebration of life here."

Later in the week a photo exhibition of T S Randhava on 'Havels of Ahmedabad', artists' walk, workshop and exhibition on paintings of Walled City of Ahmedabad, inauguration of Heritage Walk led by Manu ni Pachedi, Kalamkari artists of Ahmedabad are lined up. Also included is a compilation of posters of Heritage Walk designed as a class exercise by students of MICA at IIT and lectures on last stage conservation and a film festival.



Manuela Benini amidst the ruins of Astodia

### Celebrating World Heritage Week in Ahmedabad 2008

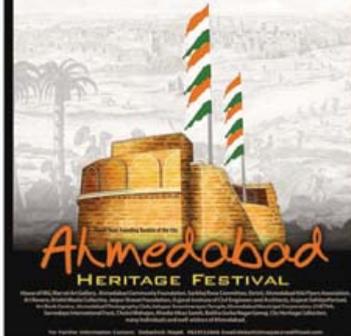
**In India, festivals are a way of life...**

People's participation essential for city's revitalisation process.

In Ahmedabad, several initiatives and activities have been organized to celebrate the World Heritage Week in the Ahmedabad Heritage Festival. Ahmedabad Heritage Festival is a celebration of the following activities:

**Special Walks • Street Theatre Festivals • Exhibition & Workshops Arts & Painting • Film Shows House Museums & Collections**

Celebrating World Heritage Week 19-25 November, 2008



**Ahmedabad HERITAGE FESTIVAL**

**Traditional food tempts all**

Some 60 housewives prepared traditional food like Chole in Bhuj, Kangri Kulin, Chole in Kutch, Kusan Vag in Rajkot, Kusan ni Ghans, Mukar so Chokla, Kusan in Khodol, Jambur ni Bhogal, which tempted one and all in the walled city area. All the delicacies were made by traditional and ancient recipes. Kanta Wadia, a participant said, "We have used all traditional ingredients, and avoided using the gas stove to maintain its original flavour and meaning." Another participant Kuntal Vohra said, "Today traditional items are being prepared, but our message is very clear and in these times of climate and health, traditional food is the best solution for a good health."

**Street play staged**

People gathered for a street play 'Manek Chowk', on Sunday night at Sansadi Street, Manek Chowk, Near the city of Ahmedabad came up with the theme of this 15-minute-long play. Well-known artist Anshu Trivedi played the character of Manek Chowk while the character of Ahmedabad was performed by Kanan Dasgupta. In the second session of the programme, a group of 22 artists, led by Aarti Dave, did an emotional reading of 'Chandola O' play.

**Sufism wave sweeps Sarkhej Roza**

Thousands of Sufi devotees gathered at Sarkhej Roza to witness the annual Sufi festival. The festival was organized by the Sarkhej Roza Sufi Centre. The festival was a grand affair with a large gathering of devotees. The festival was a grand affair with a large gathering of devotees. The festival was a grand affair with a large gathering of devotees.



**Festival set to revitalise city**

Ahmedabad Heritage Week will celebrate various art forms to revive memories of a rich past.

Members of Niagar community singing Raitha garba as part of World Heritage Week on Thursday.

**'Baitha garba' brings back old memories**

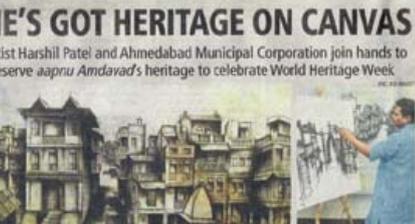
Members of Niagar community singing Raitha garba as part of World Heritage Week on Thursday.



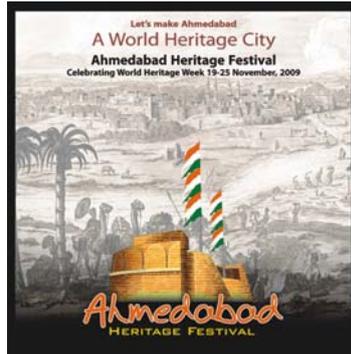
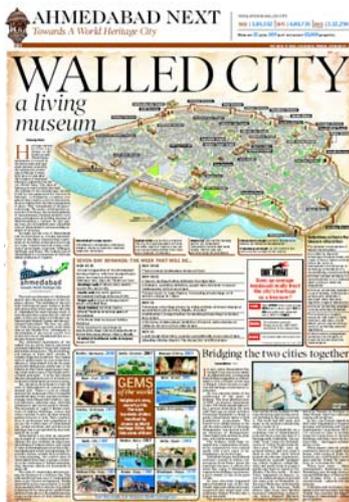
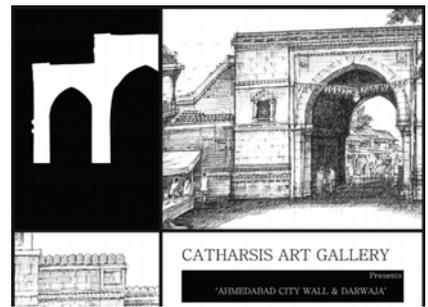
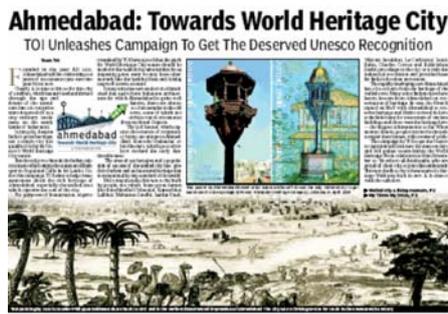
**HE'S GOT HERITAGE ON CANVAS**

Artist Harshil Patel and Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation join hands to preserve *aapni Amdavad's* heritage to celebrate World Heritage Week

Harshil (right) at work, one of his paintings



### Celebrating World Heritage Week in Ahmedabad 2009



Celebrating World Heritage Week in Ahmedabad 2010

Heritage Programme: Best practice being transferred to other cities



Bhuj, Lothal, Siddhpur, Surat and Vadodara in Gujarat, as well as Amritsa, Delhi, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kolkata, Patiala and Pondicherry have been provided guidance in the process of revival by initiating Heritage Walks



Visit of Nigerian Delegates



Visit of Princess of Thailand

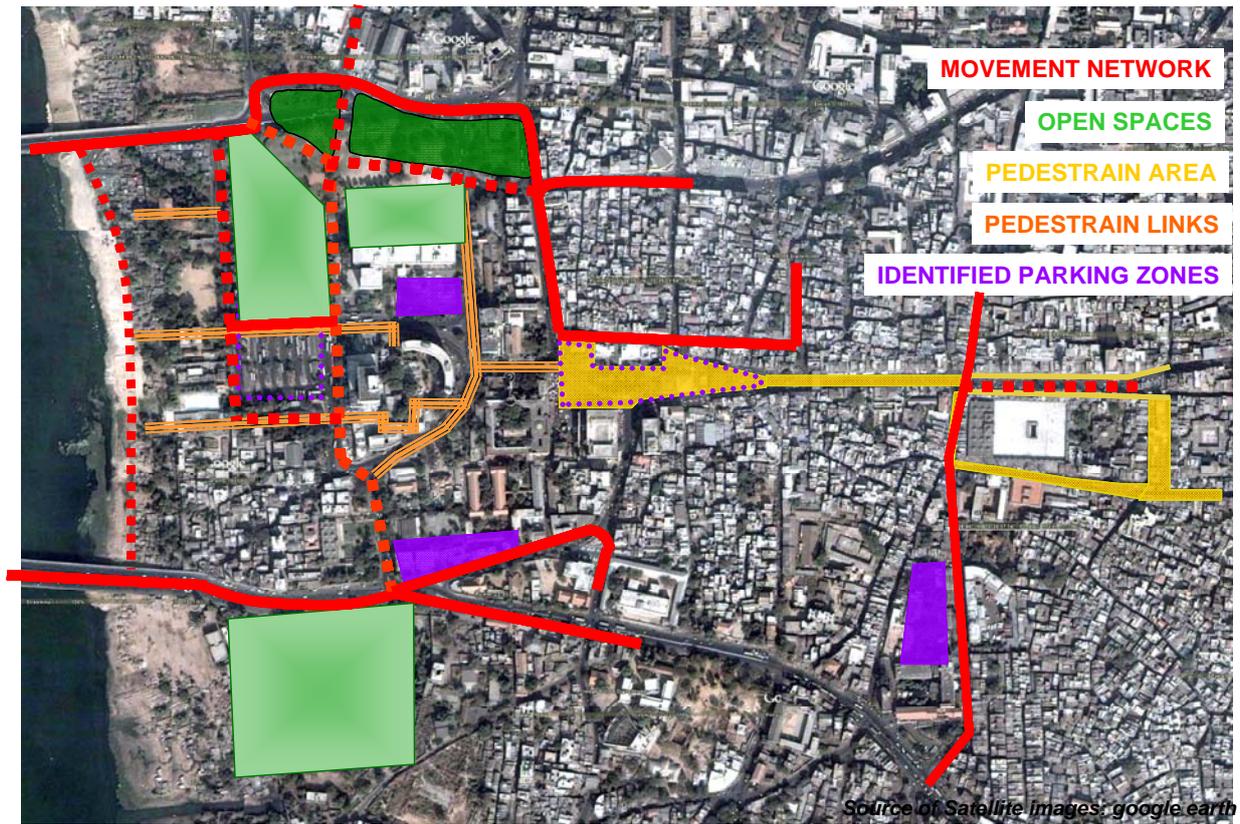


Heritage walk by International Kitists



Exhibition of Heritage walk Posters

## Pedestrian and NMT Initiatives...



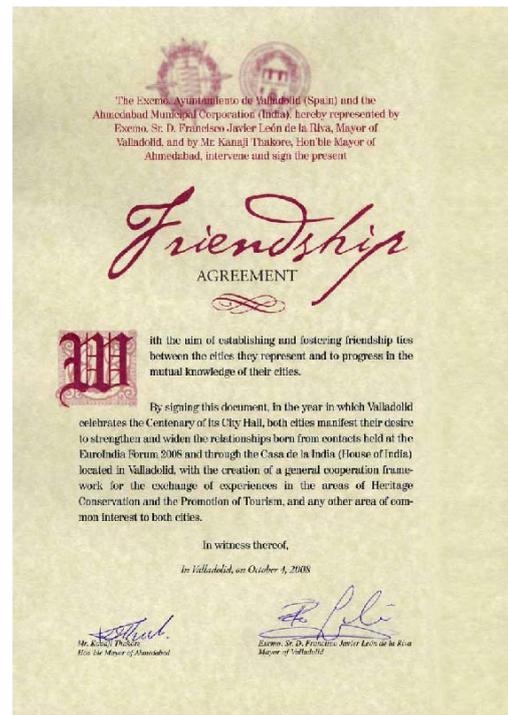
## Proposed Pedestrian Plaza at Bhadra...



## Proposed Pedestrian Plaza at Bhadra...



**Visit of Euro-India Forum Delegation**

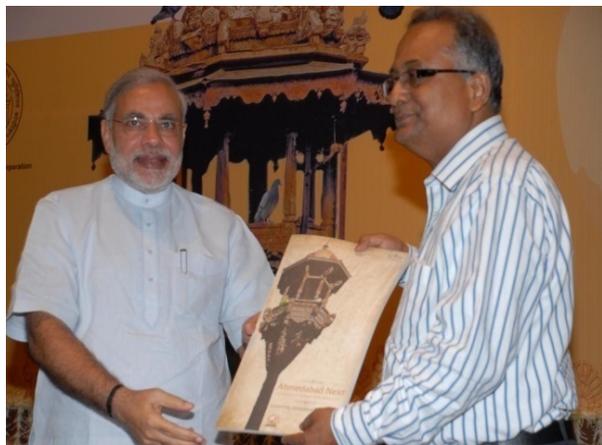
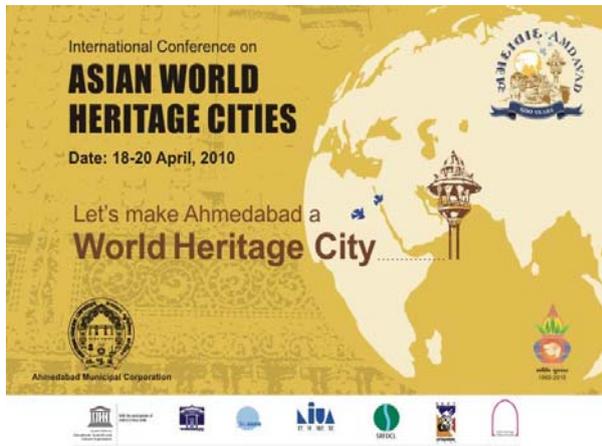
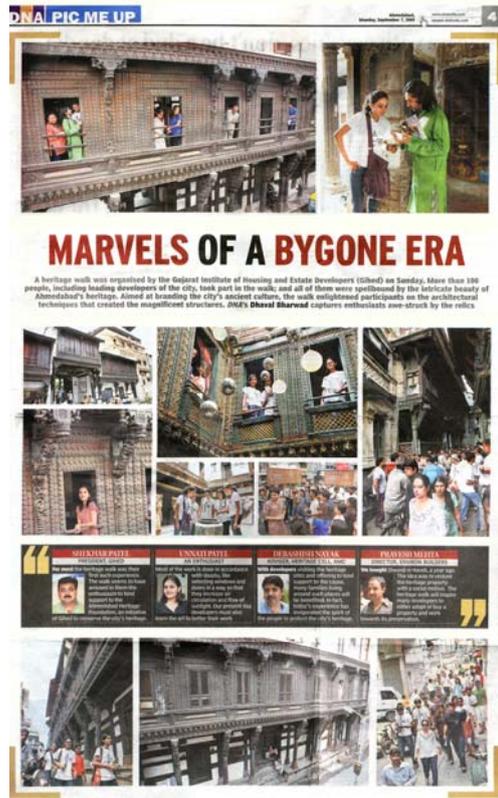




Replica of Haveli at Casa De La India, Spain



Ahmedabad Exhibition At Casa De La India





**AHMEDABAD IS STILL ONE OF THE MOST WELL PRESERVED  
WALLED CITIES OF INDIA**



*Revitalization goes on.....*

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Heritage Conservation in Ahmedabad**

*Thiru. P.K.Ghosh, I.A.S., (Retd),  
Chairman, Heritage Conservation Committee, Ahmedabad.*

Mr. Nayak spoke about the success story on the implementation and institutionalization of heritage conservation. While implementing, in the Heritage Conservation Committee we find lot of problems relating to the legal backup for the entire thing.

As it was happened elsewhere, as Mr. Ravindran has mentioned the list which was prepared by the A.M.C. officials and the bench experts did not have legal sanction and in the sense they did not go to legal process of heritage, whether it is standing committee and going to the Board. A case was filed in the High Court of Gujarat, where as the High Court has asked, whether we had the list and the list was presented to the High Court and since that time we are working as if the list is final but it does not have legal sanctity and the Government is not keen to publish it in the Gazette and invite the objection etc. and therefore there is absolutely amorphous in character of the list, to share it to the public. The legal factor is very very important. There are 2 factors here. First point we find is, how to get the legality for the list and since 1984 we succeeded in keeping quite a number of heritage buildings. Now we have to have for guidelines provision.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> point is the Act, while working, I happened to be the Chairman for rising the public reaction for the Heritage Policy formulated by the Government of Gujarat. There are 7 different authorities under Home, whom these various heritage structures lie - Municipality, Municipal Corporation, Panchayat, Home Department, Forest department, now it is various SEZ, and also railways. It is difficult to go through the coordinated approach. Therefore, it is extremely necessary to have an Act which will be cutting across all these separate areas and there should be par abound Act about the heritage but every body is fighting shy acting for having an Act and let us not aim at the Act, because, the Act will be difficult to get passed in the Assembly. This is the reality. Off late, we find the funds. Now the Municipal Corporation is allotting some funds it is oddly adequate to really conserve, you see the number 13-14 thousand buildings. So we suggested the TDR, and even if the building does not have any FSI/FAR left, they consume the entire thing and the building should be granted adhoc FAR out of which a portion should be given to him which he can sell in the market. A portion should go to a D mat account of FSI /FAR, which can be auctioned by the authorities and out of that funds the maintenance of the heritage buildings and the heritage structures will be done. This idea has

got to be finalized. It is at the nasal stage, there is one point about the so called allegation that entire heritage movement is the elitist movement, Mr.Nayak is trying best to make it as peoples movement. In Ahmedabad to some extent, it has become people's movement. We had 18 meetings in 18 different districts; in the districts it is not perculating.

A beautiful heritage building in Baruch city ,where Shajahan reported to have did his Namas on a Friday and another beautiful building owned by Parsi gentleman . Both of them very angrily told us that the heritage is for their grand children and not for your aesthetic benefit. What you are going to give me? You will be giving 600 rupees or 6 thousand rupees concessions for municipal tax. If I sell it, I will be getting not less than 40 to 50 lakhs. It is 50 lakhs. What pittance is these 600 rupees? I do not have any answer to be given. I think if you think in terms of TDR and also which again is highly controversial. My colleagues have not accepted it. The renewable TDR, the TDR is not once for all. If the building is maintained, every 30 years you will be giving same right who so ever is the owner at that point of time he will be getting the TDR. How and whether it is feasible or not feasible. But unless it is renewed who is going to do? He may do it for 5 years or 10 years not more than that, What is more? Something has to be thought of. The next point is lack of technical expertise. Now the expertise, which is really vested to be chunnam and surji structure or in case of Ahamedabad, it is load bearing cum wooden construction. The timber which is brought in, as Nayak mentioned have brought from far off places, to-day, and the timber is very very costly. Beyond the scope of ordinary family and no technique is available who can really do this kind of composition of structure - load bearing structure with that kind of wood. The expertise is needed to be keeping it alive and also whatever principles they have adopted it has to be articulated in modern, engineering tasks, which is being done. In fact I had been to number of Sthapathis. who are actively doing temples in different parts of Gujarat. In Gujarat temple building is a live art even today. When I asked one of the old gentleman about load bearing, how exactly they calculated, he got terribly annoyed. He told me that for 800 years these temples are standing ,if you ask me about load bearing I do not have any principle . It is a thump rule for us, which makes the structure stand. It might be true or might not be true. What are all these hidden principles which are earlier communicated from father to son which have never been recorded? In the southern part of India, you have all the Aagamas, sanctities and Vasthus, quite few of them, I find lot rituals and lay out plans .But even we go to construction part, they are highly sensitive, passed from father to son and that is likely to be get lost. In case of Ahmedabad also, it shows that we require that kind of principles to be articulated in the terms of modern civil engineering, we have proposed to Government. I expect how exactly the Engineering colleges will be reacting to it.

Finally, since all the principles of having a act or having principles and it will take a long time. In the meantime, number of buildings are being pulled down every day and I get at least 3 letters every month and Mr. Nayak is getting 4 letters every month stating that these beautiful buildings are getting demolished. We do not have any means of preventing it. Now we are hoping how to make it public or people, Government to stop it. It will take time. What is needed a kind of advocacy, now which will not only in the form of occasional meetings or occasional seminars, it got to be projected continuously, having it in the mind of individual. We are thinking of approaching the Municipal Corporations permanently giving us 10-12 hoarding sites in which the details of heritage of 1or 2 buildings will be depicted. Every quarter, the details of engineering principle involved in that, associations with that, will be depicted. We are thinking in terms of 30 or 40 buildings or maximum of 60 buildings picked up which are really explored, which has monumental value in this context, and to iconize them to the hoardings and allowing the people to use it in their official letter head or stamp, use a feature of this building as letter head. By that process making it more attractive making the people more sensitive towards it and coupled with that we have also in terms of making entire precincts as creative. The boards which have been talked about is archieve. It is an archieve of its architectural plan, layout plan, engineering plan, social history, economic history, as well as religious history- with that people will be aware and till such time it will not be effective. Boards are usually held by various beams.

When Britishers came in, other people came in for trading, in the same period Patels also came in for trading for growing cotton and living in cotton. If you go to a fort see the housing structure, it is of 400 historic years, you can see the economic development since fall of the world at that time of coming of British are getting reflected in the house layouts, type of houses and decoration of houses. We should make the community aware and with the people we should also be able to drive home the importance of these structures.

These are basic points to be discussed. We are struggling, I need your advise.