

# Seminar on Conservation of Heritage Buildings/Precincts in Chennai Metropolitan Area



8<sup>th</sup> October, 2010

## Proceedings and Recommendations



**Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority**

Thalamuthu– Natarajan Building,

1, Gandhi-Irwin Road,

Egmore, Chennai-600 008

Tel: 2841 4855, Fax: 2854 8416, e mail: [mscmda@vsnl.com](mailto:mscmda@vsnl.com)

# **Seminar on Conservation of Heritage Buildings/Precincts in Chennai Metropolitan Area**

8<sup>th</sup> October, 2010

**Proceedings and Recommendations**



**Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority**

Thalamuthu– Natarajan Building,

1, Gandhi-Irwin Road,

Egmore, Chennai-600 008

Tel: 2841 4855, Fax: 2854 8416, e mail: [mscmda@vsnl.com](mailto:mscmda@vsnl.com)

## Editorial Committee

- (i) Thiru C. Palanivelu,  
Member and Chief Planner, CMDA  
Chairman, Heritage Conservation Committee
- (ii) Tmt. S. Chithra,  
Senior Planner, CMDA  
Member-Convener, Heritage Conservation Committee
- (iii) Thiru N. Kanagasabapathy,  
Deputy Planner, CMDA
- (iv) Tmt. V. Sharmilee,  
Assistant Planner, CMDA
- (v) Thiru G.S. Panneerselvam,  
Planning Assistant Gr.I (GIS), CMDA

### Supported by

Selvi K.Gowri, Planning Assistant Gr.II  
Tmt. N.B. Vani, Planning Assistant Gr.II  
Tmt. G.Gouri, Steno Typist  
Thiru S.Sridhar, Steno Typist

# Seminar on Conservation of Heritage Buildings/Precincts in the Chennai Metropolitan Area

held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2010 at Chennai

## Proceedings and Recommendations

Heritage conservation is an endeavor that seeks to preserve, conserve and protect buildings, objects, landscapes or other artifacts of historical significance and it may include urban conservation areas, landscape conservation areas, and heritage buildings.

2. *Heritage* generally refers to something which is inherited from ancestors; it is used to relate to cultural heritage, natural heritage, virtual heritage, heritage canals, heritage routes, etc.; under-water heritage and movable heritage are others seriously considered in the recent years. UNESCO in its convention held in 1972 has noted that cultural heritage and natural heritage are increasingly threatened with destruction not only by the traditional causes of decay, but also by the changing social and economic conditions which aggravate the situation with even more formidable phenomena of damage or destruction. The cultural or natural heritage are of outstanding interest, and therefore need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole. In view of the magnitude and gravity of the new dangers threatening them, it is incumbent on the international community to participate in the protection of the heritage of outstanding value. It is essential to establish an effective system of collective protection of cultural and natural heritage, organized on a permanent basis and in accordance with modern scientific methods.

3. UNESCO has defined “*cultural heritage*” as monuments; architectural works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science; groups of buildings; groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science; sites; works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view. The “*natural heritage*” has been defined, as natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of outstanding universal value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view; geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation; natural sites or precisely delineated natural areas of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty.

4. Even though the definition of the heritage and its coverage have enlarged over years from archeological monuments / sites to intangible cultural heritage, the actions which need to be taken on priority at the metropolitan level by the planning and development authorities may be on the conservation of historical and cultural heritage.

5. Government of India's Ancient Monuments and Archeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 provides for the preservation of ancient and historical and architectural sites and remains of national importance. According to it, any structure, erection or monument or any tumulus or place of interment, etc. which is of historical, archeological or artistic interest which has been in existence for not less than 100 years can be notified under the Act as Ancient monuments. Tamil Nadu Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archeological Sites and Remains Act, 1966 contain similar provisions for conservation.

6. Settlements in and around Chennai have a long history. The legendary Tamil Poet Thiruvallvar is believed to have lived in Mylapore in the first century B.C. Saint Thomas is said to have spent his last days here. Pallavas and Cholas had ruled this area before Vijayanagara Naicks had brought it under their control during the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Portuguese lived in Santhome in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In 1639 the English trader Francis Day received a grant of land which was later developed as the Fort St. George. In the 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> centuries this region was under the control of the Raja Chandragiri, Sultan of Golkonda, Mughal Emperor Aurangazeb followed by the Nawab of Arcot; some parts were occupied by the English and the French then. After the death of Tippu Sultan in 1799 (fighting the British near Mysore), in the absence of frequent attacks, the Madras began to develop outside the fort walls. From the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Madras started to grow under the control of the British. After 1947 the growth was rapid and it has developed as a major metropolis.

7. Chennai Metropolitan Area (CMA) is located on the east coast along the Bay of Bengal and extends over 1189 sq.kms. and is spread over the revenue districts of Chennai, Thiruvallur and Kancheepuram in Tamil Nadu. Population of the metropolis is estimated to be about 86 lakhs now in the year 2010. Chennai has become progressively cosmopolitan in the last 50 years. Chennai has a very heterogeneous mix of architectural style ranging from ancient temples and colonial era buildings to the latest modern buildings. Most of the buildings constructed during the colonial era are of Indo Saracenic style.

8. CMA has a number of heritage buildings / precincts. A few of them which are of national importance have been categorized and notified under the Central Act. Among the buildings and structures listed and notified under the State Act, presently only one structure lies within CMA. In order to conserve the heritage buildings / precincts in the CMA which are not covered by the notifications under the above said Central and State Acts, detailed provisions were made in the *Development Regulations under the Second Master Plan for CMA* for listing of heritage buildings / precincts and their conservation through a regulatory process. It also provides for accessing a repair fund and TDR for heritage buildings /

precincts by private owners other than Government or a quasi-Government agencies or religious institutions or trusts or societies or charitable institutions. No development or re-development, addition or alteration or repair, demolition of the whole or a part of a listed heritage building / precinct shall be carried out without clear written permission of Member Secretary, CMDA. The Member Secretary, CMDA shall act in consultation with the Heritage Conservation Committee appointed by the Government. The Heritage Conservation Committee has taken up the task of making an inventory and documentation which is a pre-requisite for statutory notification of the list of buildings / precincts within the CMA.

9. A seminar on Conservation of Heritage Buildings / Precincts in the Chennai Metropolitan Area was organized by the CMDA in Chennai on 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 to get the experience in other cities shared to create awareness among the stake holders, and to identify the action to be pursued in future. The seminar was structured with two technical sessions on broad topics viz., (i) Heritage and its conservation, and (ii) Heritage conservation of buildings / precincts in CMA, apart from the inaugural session and the valedictory session.

10. Thiru Dayanand Kataria, IAS, Member Secretary, CMDA in his welcome address in the inaugural session stated that the historical buildings and monuments are increasingly being seen as national assets and are therefore assuming more and more importance. The monuments such as temples, churches, mosques, palaces, museums, and buildings of historical, cultural and architectural importance are conserved and preserved for the future generations. The Chennai Metropolitan Area has a number of Heritage buildings and precincts. Heritage preservation and conservation is an important element of Urban Planning. The CMDA has taken initiatives to conserve the Heritage Buildings and precincts in CMA as a follow up action on the Second Master Plan.

11. Tmt. Susan Mathew, IAS., Additional Chief Secretary and Vice Chairperson, CMDA in her presidential address, tracing the long history of Madras (Chennai) stated that right from the early days, the Madras was rich in its architectural expressions evidenced by the number of temples constructed in the original Dravidian style architecture dotting the landscape, and the number of monuments constructed in Indo-Saracenic architecture style. The Chennai is the treasure house of architectural heritage and culture. At the international level, UNESCO has notified monuments, buildings and places of outstanding universal values from historic, aesthetic, ecological or anthropological points of view, and promotes preservation/ conservation. At the national level, we have the Ancient Monuments and Archeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 that provides for preservation of ancient monuments, sites and remains of national importance that have been in existence for over 100 years. Tamil Nadu Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1966 provides for preservation of Ancient and historical monuments, sites and remains not covered by the Central Act. At the metropolitan level, CMDA has initiated

action for identification and conservation of heritage buildings and precincts which were not covered by the international or nation level listings and legislations.

12. Thiru Paruthi Ellamvazhuthi, Hon'ble Minister for Information and Urban Development and Chairman, CMDA inaugurated the seminar and delivered the inaugural address. Tracing the history of ancient civilization in India and the Dravidian culture, he admired the vision of our forefathers in leaving priceless assets to us and the future generations by way of monuments constructed using stones which even withstood the natural hazards over thousands of years; the Big Temple at Thanjavur is a standing example. He also cited many of the public buildings constructed by the British such as Ripon Building, Victoria Public Hall, Senate House etc., as examples of admirable fine architecture during that period which are all need to be conserved. He had requested all the participants of the seminar to actively participate in the deliberations and offer valuable suggestions, including the ways and means to identify and conserve the heritage buildings and precincts in Chennai Metropolitan Area, considering also the experiences of other cities.

13. In the two technical sessions nineteen speakers had made presentation on fifteen topics. The seminar was well received by all the stakeholders and was attended by about two hundred delegates (excluding some of the officials of CMDA who have also participated). It has brought together policy makers experts in the field, researchers, officials of the Government Departments/ Quasi Government Agencies in the field of heritage conservation and also a few interested citizens of Chennai. The recommendations of the seminar were consolidated and read out by Tmt. Susan Mathew IAS, Additional Chief Secretary and Vice Chairperson, CMDA; a copy of the same was handed over to the Worshipful Mayor of Corporation of Chennai Thiru.Ma.Subramanian in the valedictory session. The recommendations of the seminar are given below:

- Chennai has a wealth of architectural and cultural heritage that need conservation.
- It is important that heritage buildings and precincts are protected from demolition or repairs beyond recognition, and strengthened wherever necessary to increase their life span and made usable. Their active use is one way of conserving them.
- Main causes of deterioration of the heritage buildings/precincts can be categorized as physical, chemical and biological or man-made. Deterioration has to be prevented.
- Under the guise of development, there is threat to heritage buildings/places. Neglect of them and allowing vegetation to grow over them adds to their decay.
- Heritage buildings/precincts need to be protected and conserved, and handed over safely and if possible in their pristine condition, to the future generations.
- When UNESCO, Government of India and Tamil Nadu Government are listing and taking action on preservation of world heritage, national heritage, and state heritage monuments, remains and places, the CMDA at the metropolitan level shall continue

its endeavour to identify, list and conserve, under the regulatory process, the heritage buildings and precincts, not covered by the UNESCO, Government of India or Tamil Nadu State lists.

- The Second Master Plan for Chennai contains provisions for heritage conservation. Similar provisions for listing and conservation of heritage buildings and precincts should form part of master plans for other cities and towns in Tamil Nadu.
- For the heritage conservation legislations or rules to be effective, the regulations shall be simple to follow and the authorities who deal with applications for development in and around such sites should dispose them of within a stipulated time. The process should also be transparent.
- Notification of the statutory list of heritage buildings and precincts is not an end itself. It should be followed by a conservation plan for these buildings/precincts, in phases covering all of them, and recommended to owners of the buildings.
- Financing the implementation of conservation plan should be explored; sources may be the Government of India's Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM) and Finance Commission grants, and State Government grants.
- It is important to assign responsibility to owners of heritage buildings to strengthen, repair, maintain, preserve and conserve them. Appropriate legal backing is essential.
- The Government of Tamil Nadu may decide early on the need for a Heritage Act to cover conservation of buildings and precincts in Tamil Nadu and constitution of Heritage Conservation Authorities at State level and District level.
- Strict enforcement of heritage rules is to be done with effective co-ordination among the agencies/departments concerned.
- Proper documentation is essentially to be done for all heritage buildings/precincts to be conserved.
- A data base on heritage buildings and precincts may be created in CMDA which can be accessed on-line by various departments/agencies such those who deal with buildings approvals, building permits, etc.
- Preparation of a directory of professionals and craftsmen as well as a manual on materials, methods, processes and techniques involved, may be attempted.
- Incentives for conservation of heritage buildings or places which may be considered may include:
  - exemption of property tax,
  - allowing change of use (e.g. residential to commercial, like restaurants, shops for adaptive use),

- Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and renewable TDR (may be renewable once in 20 or 30 years), and
- I.T. exemption to the corporate sector for investment on conservation.
- The State should consider a separate budgetary allocation for conservation of heritage buildings which can be accessed by various departments/agencies.
- Due consideration for conservation of heritage buildings/precincts should be given by all the authorities concerned including urban planning authorities, Public Works Department (PWD), Government departments/agencies who own heritage buildings, religious and charitable institutions, industries, corporate firms and private firms.
- The conservation and protection of built heritage under the statutory provisions of law alone is not adequate to address the needs of heritage protection. There is a need to involve a wide range of multi-disciplinary professionals like architects, engineers, planners, historians, archaeologists and sociologists to address conservation and protection.
- Heritage conservation is not a priority in many cities/towns. Creation of an Institutional set up for conservation is necessary; to start with a Heritage Conservation Cell in the Chennai City Corporation and CMDA may be considered.
- People should be sensitized to the imperatives of heritage conservation, and the professionals involved in physical development should be motivated to be conservation oriented.
- Professional courses, in Architecture, Civil Engineering, Town Planning or such others should include the subject as part of their curriculum.
- Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) may come up with Heritage monument specific/site specific regulations early, as in metropolitan cities the listed monuments are in the midst of built up areas.
- Best practices in other cities in India in conservation may be studied and adopted for the cities/towns in Tamil Nadu.
- Promoting awareness of heritage and sensitization of people on preservation and management through out-reach programmes may be taken up.
- Cluster of heritage buildings/precincts may be identified and infrastructure developed for heritage walks or tourism circuits.
- Due attention should be given to environmental impact and issues in the conservation of heritage buildings and precincts such as storm water drainage, water conservation, waste water disposal and effect of air pollutants.
- People's involvement and co-operation is vital in heritage conservation. In the past many monuments were found protected against demolition by people's movement.

14. The Worshipful Mayor of the Corporation of Chennai in his special address in the valedictory session stated that the CMDA has organized the seminar on Conservation of Heritage buildings/precincts in Chennai Metropolitan Area, consolidated its recommendations and given to him a copy through its Vice Chairperson. Earlier a similar seminar on Waterways in Chennai Metropolitan Area was conducted and its recommendations were given by CMDA. Based on the same, the Chennai Corporation had prepared projects at an estimated cost of Rs.1448 crores and submitted to the Government of India for its share of grant assistance to execute the projects. Chennai Corporation is taking every effort to conserve heritage buildings. Citing the renovation of heritage buildings viz. Ripon Building and Victoria Public Hall owned by them, and explaining his efforts in saving a 60 years old Chennai Corporation owned heritage building in a hospital premises from demolition, and in strengthening and putting back to the hospital use, he concluded that heritage buildings/precincts need to be conserved, and all the recommendations of the seminar will be considered by the Chennai Corporation and will be implemented.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Seminar on**  
**Conservation of Heritage Buildings / Precincts in**  
**Chennai Metropolitan Area**

at Taj Connemara Hotel, No,2 Binny Road, Chennai-600 002  
on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2010

*Programme*

<b>Inaugural Session</b>		<b>9.30 a.m. to 10.45 a.m.</b>
• Welcome Address	Thiru Dayanand Kataria, IAS., <i>Member Secretary, CMDA</i>	
• Presidential Address	Tmt. Susan Mathew, IAS., <i>Additional Chief Secretary to Government &amp; Vice Chairperson, CMDA</i>	
• Inaugural Address	Thiru Parithi Ellamvazhuthi <i>Hon'ble Minister for Information &amp; Urban Development and Chairman, CMDA.</i>	
• Vote of thanks	Thiru V. Kannuchamy, IAS <i>Chief Executive Officer, CMDA</i>	
<b>Tea Break</b>		<b>10.45 a.m. to 11.00 a.m.</b>
<b>Technical Session I</b>		<b>11.00 a.m. to 01.15 p.m.</b>
<b>Chairman</b>	Thiru S. Muthiah, <i>Historian, Journalist and writer</i>	
Master of Ceremony	Tmt. N. Usha, <i>Deputy Planner, CMDA</i>	
Rapporteur	Thiru N. Kanagasabapathy, <i>Deputy Planner, CMDA</i> Thiru. N. Ravikumar, <i>Deputy Planner, CMDA.</i>	
<b>Heritage and its Conservation</b>		
<b>Brief Introduction by the Panelists</b>		
• Archaeological Survey of India and its Heritage Conservation in CMA	Tmt.Sathyabhama Badhreenath, <i>Superintending Archeologist, ASI, Chennai</i>	
• Deterioration of Monuments and their Preservation	Dr. T.S.Sridhar, IAS, <i>Principal Secretary &amp; Commissioner, Department of Archaeology, GoTN</i> Thiru R. Narayanan, <i>Assistant Executive Engineer(M), Department of Archaeology, GoTN.</i>	
<b>Experiences of Heritage Conservation in other major cities in India</b>		
• Heritage Conservation in Delhi	Prof. K.T. Ravindran, <i>Chairman, Delhi Urban Art Commission.</i>	
• Heritage Conservation in Kolkata	Thiru Anindya Karforma, <i>Director General, Project Management Unit, Kolkata Municipal Corporation.</i>	
• Heritage Conservation in Ahmadabad	Thiru Debashish Nayak, <i>Heritage Advisor, Ahmadabad Municipal Corporation</i> Thiru P.K.Ghosh, I.A.S. (Retd.), <i>Chairman, Heritage Conservation Committee, Ahmadabad</i>	
• Heritage Conservation in Hyderabad	Thiru R. Rajamani, IAS. (Retd.) <i>Chairman, Heritage Conservation Committee, Hyderabad</i>	

• Heritage Conservation in Mysore	Tmt. Neela Manjunath, KAS, <i>Commissioner, Archaeology, Museums &amp; Heritage Department, Mysore.</i>
<b>Discussion</b>	
<b>Lunch Break</b>	<b>1.15p.m. to 2.00 p.m</b>
<b>Technical Session II</b>	<b>2.00 p.m. to 4.15 p.m</b>
<b>Chairman</b>	Dr. T.S. Sridhar, IAS <i>Principal Secretary &amp; Commissioner, Department of Archaeology, GoTN</i>
Rapporteur	Tmt. D. Esther, <i>Deputy Planner, CMDA.</i> Tmt. R.Meena, <i>Asst. Planner, CMDA.</i>
<b>Heritage Conservation of Buildings and Precincts in CMA</b>	
<b>Brief Introduction by the Panelists</b>	
• Heritage of Chennai through the Ages	Tmt. Sujatha Shankar, <i>Conservation Architect &amp; Member Heritage Conservation Committee, Chennai</i>
• Indo Saracenic Architecture in Chennai	Prof. George J. Jeyaraj, <i>Hindustan University, Chennai</i>
• History of Historical Monuments in and around Chennai	Dr. G. Venkataraman, <i>Professor &amp; HoD of Indian History, University of Madras, Chennai.</i> Prof. Anne Shanthi, <i>Professor of History, Loyola College, Chennai.</i>
• Conservation of Natural Heritage – Environmental Perspectives	Dr. A. Navaneetha Gopalakrishnan, <i>Director, Centre for Environmental Studies, Anna University Chennai</i>
• Heritage Conservation - Need for people's involvement	Dr. S.Suresh, <i>TN State Convener &amp; Convener, Chennai Chapter INTACH</i>
• Strengthening and Restoration of Heritage Buildings	Thiru K.P. Mohandas, <i>Assistant Superintending Archeologist &amp; Engineer, ASI</i>
• Public Participation in Heritage Conservation	Thiru R.S. Bharathi, <i>Member, Heritage Conservation Committee ,Chennai</i>
• Development Regulation provisions for Heritage Conservation in CMA	Tmt. S. Chithra, <i>Senior Planner, and Member-Convener, Heritage Conservation Committee, Chennai</i> Tmt. V. Sharmilee, <i>Assistant Planner, CMDA.</i>
<b>Discussion</b>	
<b>Tea Break</b>	<b>4.15 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.</b>
<b>Valedictory Session</b>	<b>4.30 p.m. to 5.15 p.m.</b>
• Recommendations of the Seminar	Tmt. Susan Mathew, <i>Additional Chief Secretary to Government &amp; Vice Chairperson, CMDA</i>
• Special Address	Thiru Ma. Subramanian <i>Worshipful Mayor, Corporation of Chennai.</i>
• Vote of thanks	Thiru B.S. Ravindran, <i>Chief Planner, CMDA.</i>