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From the Editor's Desk

Heritage Week enlivens our city!

November is that time of the year that sees the heritage week being celebrated with great fervor across the country. It is an opportunity for citizens to be part of various events that showcase and highlight the important heritage of our country. Being a people's initiative, it offers an opportunity to individuals as well as heritage organizations to share their unique efforts and be part of the heritage movement.

It is rightly said that India is a young country with many an ancient civilization. Every corner of our land has something unique to offer that adds to the mosaic of our diverse country. Heritage rightly epitomizes our unity in diversity. From beautiful natural heritage to the magnificent structures and from the intricate arts and crafts to the little-known traditions, there is always something in heritage that evokes a sense of wonder and nostalgia in all of us.

Heritage Trust planned varied events that made 2019 a happening time and memorable week. With two unique exhibitions, heritage walks in Bharuch and Kothi area, two food walks in the old city, Maratha Culinary program and finally ending on a vibrant note with our Virasat lecture, there was something in it for everyone. That these events were not only well attended but oversubscribed speaks volumes of the immense popularity and the demand from Barodians. This issue is specially dedicated to relive those enjoyable events held during the week.

With success comes increase in expectations! Heritage Trust will be organizing more programs in 2020. We have already announced a special program to understand the Christmas spirit on January 3rd, which entails visiting Churches in the Fatehganj area. So, we hope to see many of you partake of this unique initiative.

As this issue reaches you, 2019 draws to a close, and New year resolutions form part of the new year spirit. It would be a fitting resolution for us as heritage enthusiasts to share the message of appreciating and conserving different aspects of our heritage amongst our fellow citizens. Team Heritage Trust wishes all its member a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2020.

Avi Sabavala

India through European Eyes

A collection of original prints from the 18th and 19th Centuries

One of the most famous and first British landscape artists to visit India, William Hodges described India in the 18th century as “the theatre of scenes highly important” to Britain. By the second half of the 18th century the Indian subcontinent occupied an important role in the British political and economic life. But this connection between the two countries, prolonged as it was, was not only political or economic; it was a powerfully visual one too.

The images that India had to offer were vast, extending the range of European landscape and portraiture. Apart from the scenery, the landscape artists painted Indian architecture, forts, temples, village scenes with human figures, very often, becoming incidental as providers of scale or as indicators of the exotic. The European travellers, were commentators who depicted India with their own preconceptions and prejudices, creating works based on their artistic training and popular notions of taste while keeping the prevailing political sentiments in Europe in mind. Documenting the extensive country, the artists’ work offered a parallel to other activities like cartography, comparative linguistics and topographical surveying.

The works of pioneer landscape artists like William Hodges, Thomas and William Daniell, Charles D’Oyly, William Simpson and James Baillie Fraser were much in demand and were often multiplied in the form of engravings or lithography prints for sale in the European markets.

This year Heritage Trust organized an exhibition highlighting this very connection. Curated by HT member Ms. Arati Desai with prints from HT member Rakesh Manocha’s personal collection, the exhibition was very well received. It would not be out of place to say that the exhibition was of a kind, rarely seen by the general public, in Vadodara.

Rakesh Manocha



Top to bottom: Glimpses into the exhibition- opening to end. Source: Heritage Trust

Madhav Bagh Maratha Heritage Lunch

Food is not just eaten, first the fragrance is relished, then you enjoy looking at it, waiting for it and finally you savor it! Every corner of India boasts of an amazing variety of mouthwatering delicacies that beckon the foodies.

During the Heritage Week 2019 we celebrated one such exciting portion of this colorful palette of Indian Cuisine, namely: the 'Maratha Cuisine'. Hosted at the Madhav Bagh Heritage Homestay, the meal had a royal twist to it. Madhav Bagh is the ancestral mansion of our hosts, Shivraj Singh and Indrayani Rajee Gaekwad, part of the royal Gaekwad family of Baroda. Built in the 1890s, the mansion with its old-world charm provided a perfect ambience for relishing the exotic dishes prepared by our hostess, Indrayani Rajee.

The guests were given a brief introduction to the mansion and cuisine, followed by a tour of the property and finally what everybody was waiting for- the food. The palette had a little something for everyone. For the non-veg lovers there was the infamously spicy '*Pandhra rassa*' (mutton cooked in white coconut gravy), the '*Parsandhi*' - a baked chicken dish topped with eggs and '*Sunti*' - meatballs tied with banana strings (one is supposed to remove the strings before eating and there is a simple technique to it!). For the vegetarians, there was '*Pithla-Bhakri*' - a dry side dish made from gram flour eaten with '*bhakri*' (a kind of roti made from jowar), '*Bharli Vangi*' - little brinjals stuffed with delicious filling, and the '*Masoor in Tambda Rassa*' - a dish known for its zesty red gravy. As we all know, no Indian meal is complete without the sides of chutneys and pickles, which included garlic coconut chutney, tomato chutney, and '*Batata cha Loncha*' (a dry pickle prepared from fried potatoes and dry coconut).

And if you thought that this was all, the cake with the icing and cherry on top of it, was the dessert. For the desserts', the hosts served the traditional '*Sheera*' (*suji halwa*) and the '*Ukdi che Modak*' - rice dumplings stuffed with sweet coconut filling served with a plentiful drizzle of cream and '*desi ghee*'. The lunch ended with people taking home a piece of edible heritage on a sweet note and bellies full of content!

Shivani Pikle



Glimpses of the Madhav Bagh Maratha Cuisine Lunch events held on the 17th and 24th of November 2019. Source: Heritage Trust



The Food Walks by Adil Marawala

The legacy of Vadodara lives on in the time tested and tasted restaurants, which have been serving aficionados of Baroda for eons.

Glimpses of the era of yore is relished by visiting food joints operated by family's generations' over 50 to 100 years. As a celebration of food this heritage week, Heritage Trust, Vadodara organized two Food Walks, sauntering down the lanes of old city. Merchants in Dandiya bazaar relished the *Dal Baati* prepared by Maharashtra Lodge. Understanding the way fruits, vegetables and granaries came to the city, walkers passed through *Khanderao* Market smelling, tasting and seeing the colors and experiencing the taste of fresh produce. Everyone enjoyed refreshing coconuts and sampled the fresh *Naturals'* ice cream made of rose petals, tender coconut, figs, ginger, honey and dry fruits. Capping off the evening was the simmering *Ragda Patties* at Dayal Patties near Sursagar lake. Everyone had anecdotes, remembering their first visit to these places. The citizens relish these epic food points and the evergreen old city area of Baroda. The best combo is a meal of memories and lip-smacking eateries.

The next week, walker's strolled down the Foodie Triangle at *Chowkhandi*, *Moghulwada* and *Mandvi* lanes. Walking past architectural monuments, the walkers had a tour through a working National Bakery and witnessed the making of bread, biscuits, cream rolls and donuts. It was then time to sink our teeth into tender *tandoori*, *biryani*, *samosas* and *kebabs* at Shalimar restaurant. Walking through the maze of *Moghulwada*, everyone sampled *Ajmeri Faloodah* before coming out to the main road at Mandvi square. The final point had a sampling of winter specials like *Saalampaak* and *methi paak* from roadside vendors.

Glimpses of the evening food walks held on the 16th and 23rd November 2019. Source: various Heritage trust members

Visiting Nepal – a Photo Journey

The small Himalayan country of Nepal is neatly tucked away on our Northern border and is a tourist paradise drawing international tourists from around the world. For Indian heritage lovers it has much to offer with its unique landscape and old monuments. Taking us on a photo journey through this exotic land is our very own award-winning photographer, Rahul Gajjar, through this exhibition. It showcased some of the most beautiful monuments that Nepal held, and an appropriate choice of events for the Heritage Week and under the auspices of the Heritage Trust.

The earthquake of 2015 brought catastrophic consequence to Nepal with devastating consequences to many of these monuments. However, Rahul's 4 ½ week journey to different regions of Nepal highlighted how proactive conservation and restoration measures can work miracles in bringing monuments back to their former glory. His visits to Baktapur, Patan, Kathmandu resulted in some outstanding photographs that were a treat to the eyes of all of us.

Rahul shared his feelings by stating that this was a “once in a lifetime experience to see the ancient monuments come back to life by using the same methodology of construction used in earlier times.” Perhaps some lessons here for how we can modify our approach towards restoration and conservation of our own heritage structures.

Compiled by धरोहर Editorial Team



Glimpses from the exhibition opening on the 17th of November 2019.

Source: Various Heritage Trust members.



Old heritage, new times – Intangible heritage in Contemporary Age

The numerous and varied events of the Heritage week closed with an interesting Viraasat Lecture delivered by Ms. Laila Tyabji, craft activist and founder of *Dastakar* on the 24th November 2019.

At the start of the program, Ms. Sandhya Gajjar gave a presentation about possible options for the use of Nyay Mandir and ways to enable this iconic structure to be preserved for posterity. This building has fallen vacant following the shifting of the District Court to its new premises. There is an urgent need to see that this structure does not fall into disuse or dis-repair and instead be used to enhance the vibrancy of the area where it is located.

In an eye-opening talk, Laila Tyabji spoke about the value and necessity of promoting crafts as it is the fabric of society which transcends religion, region and gender. Today, a common problem faced by a craftsman is the lack of knowledge of changing market preferences and demand and they have to contend with competition from the industrial sector.

Crafts are the 2nd largest sector for employment in the country. The speaker dwelt upon the need for craftsman's to continuously change and improve if it is to survive as a sustainable means of providing livelihood for the craftsman as well as provide opportunities for the next generation of craftspeople to continue their art. Citing several examples, Laila emphasized that despite Indian crafts being consistently unique, of good quality and competitively priced, compared to factory made artifacts, their market is being challenged by factory made artifacts. Due credit to the crafts people needs to be given and we need to consider them as cultural artists. If we wish to preserve and encourage our unique culture, it is our responsibility as enlightened citizens to encourage and promote local traditions as this will support the crafts people of our country to survive and become 21st century professionals and continue to comfortably maintain and promote their traditional occupation.

Arati Desai



Left- Padmashri Laila Tyabji delivering the lecture, Right: a captivated audience all years for knowledge on crafts and its challenges and opportunities. Source: Heritage Trust



A heritage walk in Bharuch on Sunday. *Bhupendra Rana*

Residents revisit Bharuch through heritage walks

AISHWARYA MOHANTY
BHARUCH, NOVEMBER 17

AROUND 15 people across all age group and walks of life took a tour of Bharuch as part of a heritage walk organised by the Heritage Trust of Vadodara on Sunday.

The walk was part of the 10-day-long People's Heritage Festival being celebrated by the trust to celebrate the 508th anniversary of Vadodara.

Considered a major port city almost 2,000 years ago, Bharuch boasts of major Parsi, Dutch and Mughal architectural monuments which were revived only a year ago after the district administration formed the District Tourism Development Society in October 2018 that initiated weekly heritage walks thereafter.

"We have been organising such walks and this year we chose Bharuch which has been an important port and has its own historical importance. Besides, it is also close to Vadodara. We are developing these walks to help the residents connect with the history of the cities. If more people were to be exposed to such walks, it will be

conservation in itself," said Jaideep Verma, secretary, Heritage Trust Vadodara, who was also a part of the walk.

The four-hour walk which began at 7:30 am traversed through narrow lanes and alleys lined with traditional houses - some abandoned, some dilapidated, some up for sale, some more than centuries old and most of them still inhabited by the third or fourth generation, bearing exquisite wooden architectural features.

The walk started at the Dashwashamedh Ghat and covered around 20 heritage spots in the city, including Nathu Thobhan Dharmshala, Jumma Masjid, Parsi Agiyari, Sardar Manzil, Victoria Tower, Gandhi Sevashram, Kanhaiya Lal Munshi kadki, Dutch Cemetery, Bhrgu Rishi Temple, Library, amongst others.

"Every Sunday a batch of almost 20 people of all age groups participate in the heritage walk. It is free of cost," Gyaneshwar Patil, a retired army personnel, who has been working as a guide with the district tourism development society for the last one year, said.

On Sunday, one of the new additions to the list of heritage sites was one of the participants, Helly Shah's 110-year-old house.

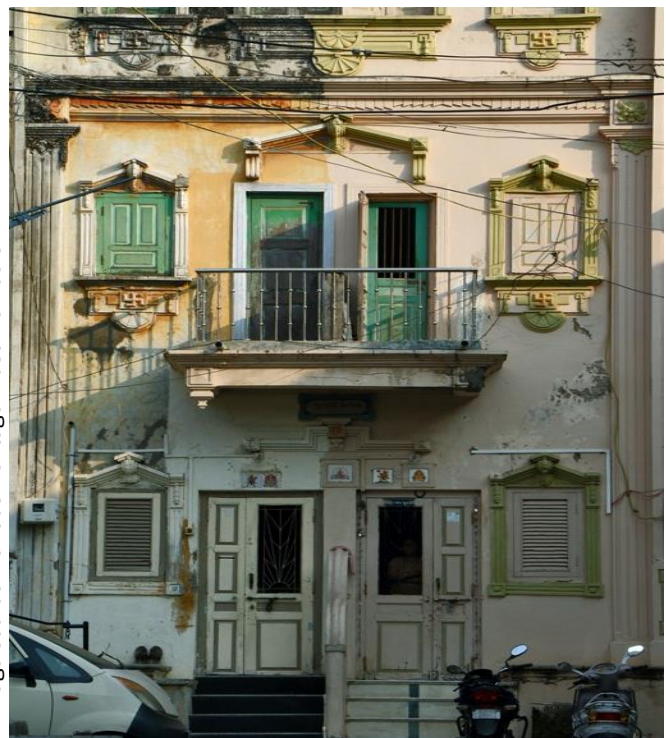


Image source: Various Heritage Trust members

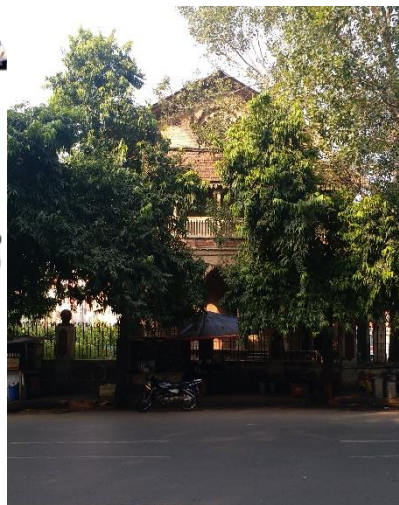
The Urbane Column

As we end the year and come out of a widely celebrated heritage week, remnants and hidden gems- the crux of the Urbane Column- will once again take center stage. Collectively many of these gems including the built and natural, the revered and the ordinary, the daily use and the forgotten- shaped areas, defining it and often times becoming landmarks and precursors or sometimes successors to its neighbors.

One such place, the *Kothi* area, a boundless precinct beyond the Sursagar area covered last time, is a consortium of historic built monumentality and administrative machinery all while retaining its socio-cultural relevance and fabric. Unlike the envisioned lush greens or tanks of the city, the *Kothi* area, where the district collector's office stands today, was part of the 'rebuilding' of the city as a center- an arrangement to show modernity and strength as the state grew.

Fact: When Sayajirao III planned a shift to the Laxmi Vilas Palace, the Sardars moved residence along with him, and thus shifted the administrative offices too. Lying at the end of the Raj Mahal Road, or the *Chamaraja* Wodeyar Road, the *Kothi Kacheri* came about. *'He thus created a central site from where power could radiate with equal beneficence in the manner of an ancient Roman city, which was arrayed around a pivotal form.'* – *Once Upon a time... there was Baroda.*

With a shift in the royal residence down the road to the Laxmi Vilas Palace in the late 19th century, the city slowly started getting rebuilt to accommodate public gardens, museums, libraries and other institutions of power. These displayed amenities of a modern civic culture and the beginning of this shift was kickstarted by rehousing the buildings in the *Kothi* area to serve as an administrative hub. The approximately eighty thousand square meter area is an assortment of buildings including a record office, secretarial and police offices along with a library. The buildings on either side of the forty feet wide road are arranged around what once would have been easily accessible green areas, lawns, trees and the like. Although now with most of the district functionary taking place from the out of scale- Kuber Bhavan, the older precursors lie neglected and in need of a friend.



Left to right: A google map of the considered area in the column- the Kothi precinct. The yellow shaded area together forms the precinct and highlights the central administrative built spaces; the hidden Jaisinhrao Library from the opposite side, the green lane in the Record Tower compound. Source: Author

The *Kothi* Kacheri area, was actually once the British Residency headquarters. Following the Second Anglo Maratha war, the Gaekwads acknowledged the British, allowing control of its external affairs in return for retaining internal autonomy, and thus the first land allocation would have happened further west of the old citadel and the Sursagar precinct to present day *Kothi*. The Residency was supposed to have been present prominently in the area roughly in the early half of the 19th century, before shifting to the White House a.k.a the Sayaji Bhawan in the MSU campus, and to the Cantonment in Fatehgunj, of what is now widely known and restricted to the E.M.E boundaries. It almost seems ironical, to have the area named *Kothi*, although when this jargon appears is unknown, it showcases how all activities on this land- from the British residency to the present administrative offices- all have been stately and within mansions of irrelevance to the lowly struggles of day-to-day life.

Although now, the area of concern lies hidden behind vehicles and half- chopped trees, roots of which are bound by tar sprees, offering little space for pedestrians to walk down the once tree lined road and leaving much to imagination of what it would once have been. The buildings still are prima facie to the Vadodara district functioning' (from Baroda State to District, after independence) walkers to the *Kothi*, are greeted by a grey compound, devoid of life in the morning, a scene that doesn't repeat itself until after offices close for the day. A built milieu of strong proportions and building colors that reflect in the whole of the city, underlies the excitement that lies in knowing the background of each.

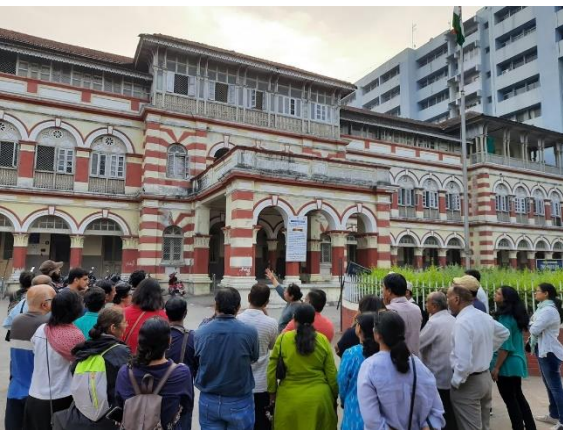
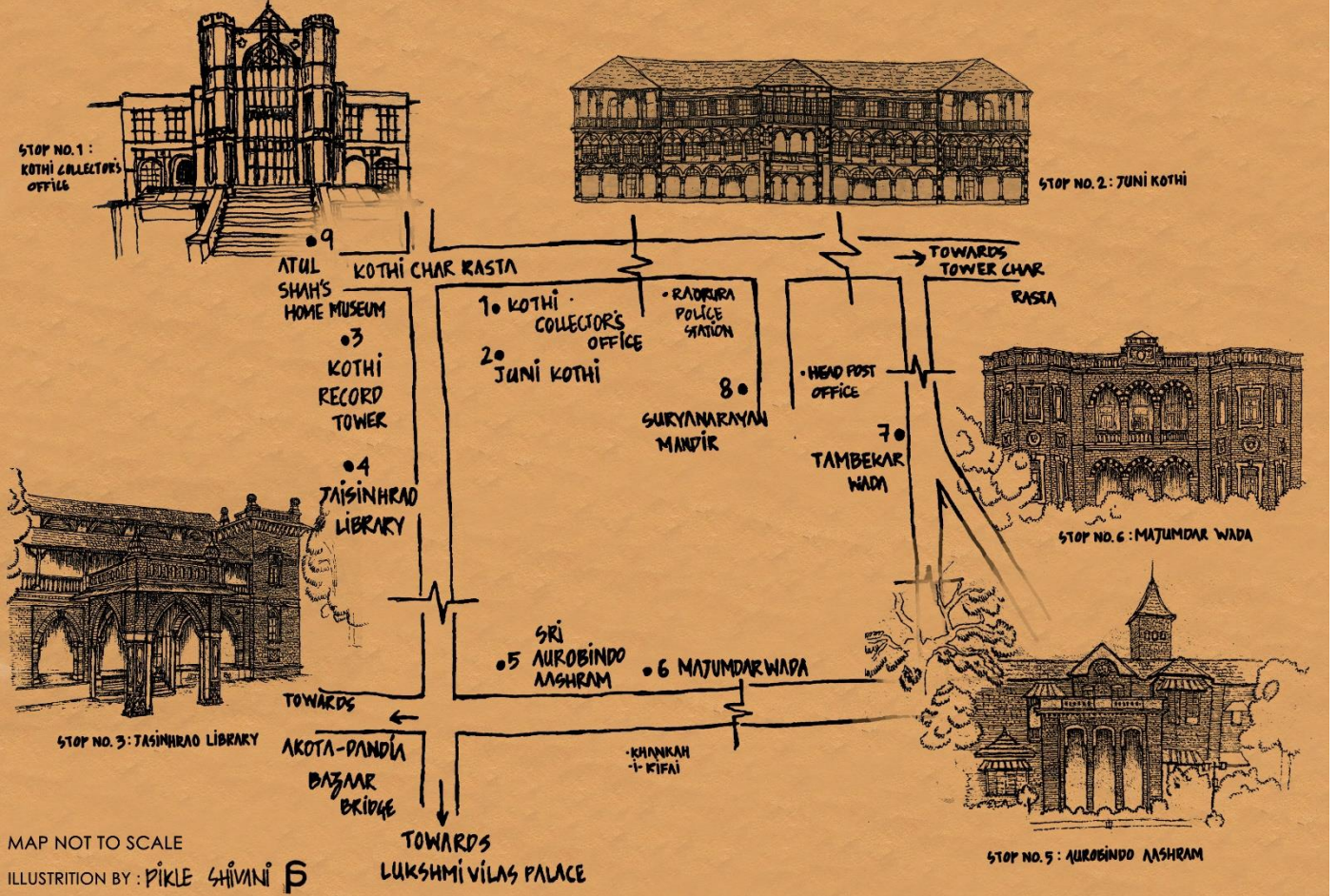
Beginning at the Old *Kothi* (designed in 1876 by Major Charles Mant) the first office building when the area was repurposed, is but a mere empty shell with over strewn offices and a scent of the past. The lush greens and top floor veranda are long gone, and now reflect the red and ivory of its neighbors. It is said a similar yet grander building used to once stand beside it, and used to function as the British resident's living quarters- so opulent in woodwork was it that white ants overtook the structure, and no efforts were made to save it. Thus, now you have the totally utilitarian and somewhat brutalist Kuber Bhavan, a maze of clerical offices and long corridors and un-inviting charm.

When one is allowed or undetected, you should head down the alley beside the Kuber Bhavan, and spot remnants of what was once the compound wall with its raised corner bastion- its thin brick now exposed and look into the Railway police grounds; given you are able to see beyond the dismay of the apparent restoration efforts on the annexes and office trash strewn behind them. The police grounds are where the British troops for the residency used to be once stationed.



Left- A thoughtful addition of a hanging balcony connecting the back side of the New Kothi (on the left) and the north façade of the Old Kothi (on the right), Source: Heritage Trust; Right: An old file image of the Junji Kothi from 1880- note the boundary, greens and the open veranda on the top floor, Source: British Library

KOTHI HERITAGE WALK ROUTE. BARODA



Glimpses from the Kothi Walk- led by Sandhya Gajjar

Images: An excellent illustration of the Kothi route by our in-house coordinator Ar. Shivani Pikle, and other images from the walk. Source: Heritage Trust. The Kothi precinct offers many heritage walks, have you been to one? Contact us to know of places to visit in the old city when you plan to visit or tag us on social media if you were on this one.



Adjacent to the Old *Kothi*, is the New *Kothi* building or the Collector's office (designed in 1922 by A H Coyle, said to have been inspired from the Balmoral Castle in Scotland), sitting on a raised platform marooned amidst a crowded bazaar. It is best entered from the back, as the majestic roadside front seems to have no easily spotted or even open entrances, although it does have a gallery space at the road level, which many are unaware of, and is an afterthought of an addition post-independence.

On the opposite side of the road, and of the Juni *Kothi* is the second half of the *Kothi* complex. Altogether a complex of 5-6 buildings, the verticality and massing of these makes one stop in awe when within the complex. The apex of the complex being the archives or the Record Room where records are said to be maintained in excellent condition and in order, from rare *Bahis* to other district records from the 1770's until just before independence. The complex hosts other structures reminiscent of vernacular styles like a court office (in the utmost state of disrepair) and the most revered' Baroda State Library. Now better known as the Jaisinh Rao library, a precursor to the Baroda library movement, its silence almost eerie as its intricate wooden awnings and brackets lie in ramshackle, beckoning mostly the daily office worker to its collection of the daily news and a few interesting books. The unplanned road height with filling of tar or paver blocks, now right up to its first step has taken much away from the building making the negligence apparent.

The complex itself seems to once have been lush with greens and upright buildings holding matters of importance to the functioning of the Baroda State. With courtyards and fenestrations, cavity walls designed to protect from the elements, the buildings in the complex seem to have once provided a comfortable macro-urban environment beyond the buzz of the neighboring markets and *wada*'s. Even today as you walk in, the nip in the air is surreally felt.

However, over the years the city has undergone unrecognizable change, and that becomes apparent in the *Kothi* precinct too. Apart from the monumental mentioned above, many of the ancillary buildings give a sense of fated abandonment and one can only wonder of the stories behind them. Stripped down and under duress of demolition via neglect, the Record Tower complex itself is host to structures what once is supposed to have housed the jail, the court official's residence and more.

A walk down the adjacent roads hint at what could once have been a towering and majestic skyline when all building campaigns would have been over, sitting on the higher land and adjoined by residences and open greens. The *Wada*'s and the *manzils* would have faced the Government and Press stationery and library, and also the Suryanarayan Mandir. The Raopura Police station further down beside the temple shows how high the elevated area overall would once originally have been, and leads you to the police grounds at its south.

Fun Fact: The Suryanarayan Mandir, was erroneously built facing east- an act that is said could have brought misfortune to the entire settlement and urban legends have it that the *Airavat* (divine elephant) facing it, was a later addition to negate any possible mishaps. Some also say that there is a *Vaav* underneath the garden and amidst the corner trees, birds chirp and dogs sleep- Read more in *Once Upon a time... there was Baroda*.

What was once a city at its heights- a place of palaces, and institutions to impart education, administration and culture, with hospitals and markets for all, now is swamped by the concrete and glass of mundane structures. Over time such precincts' boundaries get blurred, some in the pretext of progress while some victims to time, walks to these places tingle the senses to those who look behind. Beneath the coffers and the kind, beyond the trees and plaques lies heritage of our kind.

Become a member

As a non-profit, we rely on your support as our member and encourage you to send more heritage enthusiasts our way.

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Have an idea you would like to explore?

Want to collaborate or organize a tour?

Get in touch with us!



“Hey, would you mind taking a quick sculpture of me and my family?”

Humor- How many did you click this heritage week? Tag us the next time you visit our event and don't forget to fill our visitor book., we are old school, that way. Source: As credited on image



Click of this Quarter- Because we believe that learning begins young and continues forever. Source: Shivani Pikle for the Heritage Trust

Publications

Looking for books as gifts? The Trust has published more than half a dozen books, four of which have been on Pavagadh. Three other books on Baroda, one of which is for children, and is still available in print. These would make great corporate gifts in the coming festive season.

Available:

Once Upon a Time...there was Baroda- Rs. 3000/- copy

Children's book on Baroda (Gujarati) - Rs. 20/copy

Heritage Week Future

Events:

'Christmas Spirit of Baroda' on Friday, 3rd January 2020, 6 pm sharp

The walk will explore the Churches of Baroda and culminate in a traditional Christmas Dinner.