

**Revitalization Strategy for Historic Core of Ahmedabad****Utpal Sharma<sup>1</sup>, Parag Mistry<sup>2</sup>, Reema Prajapati<sup>3</sup>**<sup>1</sup>*Director, Institute of Architecture and Planning, Nirma University*<sup>2</sup>*Assistant Professor, Institute of Architecture and Planning, Nirma University*<sup>3</sup>*Visiting Faculty, Institute of Architecture and Planning, Nirma University***Abstract**

In India, dense historic urban settlements were developed with the intention of provision of spaces for adequate engagement of the people. Public squares and streets became important places of interaction. 'Historic core,' especially had public spaces meant for various socioeconomic groups. Ahmedabad city is a blend of a harmonious past and a vivacious present. Number of historical and architecturally important buildings were built during Muslim and Moghul rules. One of the first built structures within the walled city is the Bhadra fort, a citadel founded by sultan Ahmed Shah in 1411 with a huge public square in front, developed for purpose of procession and gathering. This Bhadra precinct went through various layers of transformation in different eras and now have become vulnerable due to congestion and encroachment. Though, a need for intervention was felt to bring back the lost vitality of the Bhadra precinct, it was realized that a comprehensive approach would be the necessity. Conservation and sensitive development approach was taken to tackle this problem through pedestrianization of the Bhadra precinct, re-routing of traffic and restoration of Bhadra fort. Larger level traffic and parking issues were also considered beyond the site. Alternative use of Bhadra fort as tourist information center was considered. Urban design guidelines were proposed for harmonious development in the surrounding area. This proposal was considered for funding under Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (*JnNURM*) and was implemented. Many issues were faced during implementation of Bhadra project due to contextualization of informal commercial, religious and other cultural activities. Political, social and administrative factors also played immense role in implementation of proposal. Now since Ahmedabad has achieved the status of World Heritage City through UNESCO certification further implementation of this project will be relatively easy due to envisaged strong political and administrative support.

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**Keywords**

Revitalization; Restoration; Historic core; Intervention; Public Square; Bhadra; World Heritage City

**1. Historic core as a place for public interaction**

There are key buildings and spaces around, which the city arranges itself - a temple or Grand Mosque, a fort or a palace with market squares, etc. This place and the buildings give rich feeling of sense of belonging -continuity and identity. Historic urban settlements have been an asset to the city since decades. Public squares and streets became important means of interactions. 'Historic core,' especially had a public square meant for various strata of

public interaction. Historic core may be defined as the neighborhood or environs of a place or a group of buildings that share or partly contain common physical, social, cultural activities. Most Indian towns and cities with a long history, have areas of strong architectural character, which are not formed. These in fact are the result of centuries of growth over which new elements are constantly juxtaposed with older ones. Old buildings and older areas of the city are the assets as they represent history of the communities, embodying their tradition, heritage, and culture through architecture and urban form (INTACH, 2015).

Table 1. Nomenclature

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| AMC    | Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation                                  |
| ASI    | Archaeological Survey of India                                   |
| CEPT   | Center for Environmental Planning and Technology                 |
| GDCR   | Gujarat Development Control Regulations                          |
| JnNURM | Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission                  |
| SEWA   | Self-Employed Women's Association                                |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |

### 1.1. Need for revitalization of historic core

Historic urban settlements is undergoing rapid changes and decline due to the pressures of urbanization. The historic core has become vulnerable over the period due these pressures. Decay of historic core often occurs within the context due to extreme density, overcrowding, and encroachments. Conversion of public square into smaller space leads to loss of engagement of people. There has always been a debate whether in any urban project, planning can be done taking historic developments into account. The protection and revitalization of historic center is a vital issue today as its existence is threatened by changing urban fabric. It is intimate and human in scale, often rich in diverse cultural, religious and social activities, they provide the variety in life's background needed to match the diversity of society and that, by doing, so they gain value and acquire additional human dimensions (Urbis Limited, 2001). Buildings with architectural significance and traditional values surrounding historic core are also considered for their preservation and conservation. Preservation of these heritage structures requires maintenance and is necessary to maintain the building precinct or artifact in its present state to prevent and retard deterioration. Conserving the unprotected historic core and architectural heritage surrounding the site ensures the survival of sense of place and character in a globalizing environment (UNESCO, 2013). It offers the opportunity not only to conserve the past, but also to define the future. Thus, the conservation and revitalization of historic urban center seek to retain the part of the urban environment whose character is important to national and local heritage.

## 2. Ahmedabad old city and the site

### 2.1. History

Ahmedabad is the seventh largest city of India and the largest city located in the state of Gujarat. The city is a blend of a harmonious past and a vivacious present. The city owing to its rapid industrialization, is also referred to as the 'Manchester of the East'. In spite of high industrial growth, it has retained its past glory as of imposing architectural monuments built in Hindu and Islamic styles. The city's, prosperous and eventful past and present is embodied in its rich kaleidoscope of history, art and culture, rich architecture and imposing monuments. The river Sabarmati divides Ahmedabad into two physically distinct eastern and western regions. The eastern bank of the river constitutes the old city, which includes the central area of Bhadra (Ahmedabadonline, 2008).

The walled city of Ahmedabad was founded in 1411 A.D. by sultan Ahmed Shah. The city is fairly, semi-circular, which is similar to many naturally grown cities on a river bank, core in the centre and radiating streets connecting the centre to the edge. The city enclosed by a strong fort wall, has a mixed pattern of activities and street layout.

The walled city of Ahmedabad has all the historic characteristics with many historic buildings like fort, fort walls, gates, temples, mosques, and pols with its traditional houses.

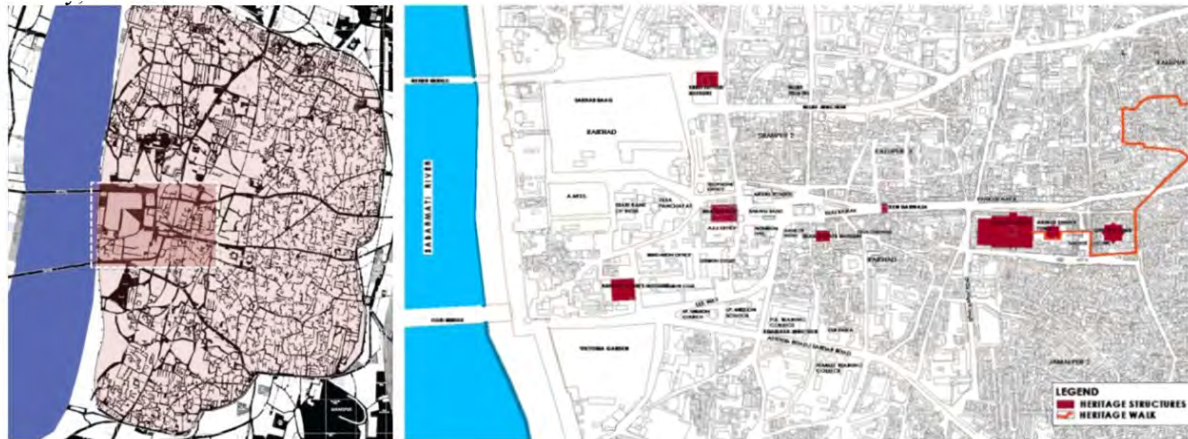


Figure 1. Map showing a walled city of Ahmedabad and heritage monuments within Bhadra Fort precincts

Stroll in the walled city takes one down the memory lane, making one aware of the city's glorious past. It is now packed with bazaars, the clustered and barricaded pol system of shanty buildings (traditional housing of Ahmedabad old city) with numerous places of worship. Most dominant elements of the city are located on the eastern bank of the river. These elements are the royal quarters, the maidan (the square), and the mosque complex that originate from the river and follow the main street, now called Gandhi Road — 'Bazaar street' (shopping street). The square in front of the Bhadra fort used to be identified as 'Maidan-e-Shahi' (Royal plaza). The British East India Company took over the city in 1818 (Ahmedabad, 2007). Ahmedabad grew rapidly, becoming an important center of trade and textile manufacturing. Structures like Karanj police station, police booth and bank got built during the British rule in India. These structures were located inside the Bhadra square within disturbed historic context. Further, the construction of new architecturally significant buildings during the modern era in west Ahmedabad led to a decline in visitors to the fort precinct. Lack of adequate guidelines relating to formal and informal commercial activity zones in the old city has led to increasing encroachments by informal commercial activities, endangering the structure and spatial qualities of the monuments (Burgess, 1900).

## 2.2. Bhadra fort and its importance

Ahmedabad blends harmoniously as an ancient heritage city with a vibrant present. Number of historical and architecturally important building exists even today were built during the Muslim and Moghul rule. One of the first built structures within the walled city is the Bhadra fort, a citadel founded by sultan Ahmed Shah in 1411. Bhadra fort served as the centre of royal government of the city during the Moghul rule. The area between Bhadra fort to Teen Darwaza was known as *Maidan-e-Shahi* henceforth mentioned as Bhadra square. It was designed as a processional space containing the main market place for the city. Spread over an astounding 43 acres of land, the fort precinct houses many palatial buildings. The Bhadra fort and gate are under the protection of ASI, while Azam Khan palace is owned by the Government of Gujarat. The fort gets its name from the Bhadra Kali temple being located within the fort precinct, a temple built during the Maratha rule, a heritage structure in its own right. The planning concept evolved around the central area of Bhadra. The Bhadra fort makes an axis with *Teen darwaza* (*triple arched gateway*). On the south side of the axis is the main complex of Jami Mosque with the King's, and the Queen's Tombs. Further south, and somewhat east of this complex's spatial sense, the area is the main wholesale and retail trade centre of the town. Presently, it is the busiest part of the town and congestion, overcrowding and chaotic traffic conditions.

– Heritage monuments in Bhadra fort precinct

Ahmedabad is endowed with a rich architectural heritage that is vital to the local identity and continuity of the place (AMC & AUDA, 2018). The heritage potential of the walled city is immense in most of the aspects like economically, culturally, socially and aesthetically for the city and to the state of Gujarat in a larger context. UNESCO in 2018, declared Ahmedabad walled city as a world heritage site. Hence, protection, and revitalization of historic centre, an ancient environment becomes a vital issue today as its existence is endangered. Since, past few decades, the old city has undergone significant changes. The original form of several structures has been altered to a large extent significantly. Today, the old city area has become a major commercial centre for the entire Ahmedabad city. The area is congested due to heavy traffic of two & three Wheeler and lack of parking facilities. Several monuments of heritage significance are located within and in close proximity to the Bhadra fort precinct. The famous Teen Darwaza, another major tourist attraction in Ahmedabad, lies at the eastern end of the fort. Initially, it served as an entrance to the Royal Plaza in the fort precinct. Ahmed Shah's, Mosque situated southwest of Bhadra Fort was built in 1414 and is amongst the city's earliest mosques (AUDA, AMC & CEPT, 2006). The Azam Khan Sarai located adjacent to the Bhadra Fort, was built in 1637-38. The main street of the Bhadra chowk, now called Gandhi Road is a '*Bazaar Street*'. The bazaar street is the major commercial area having a series of shops and are now encroached by daily job seekers and therefore required intervention in the form of redevelopment of the historic core.



Figure 2. Existing site (Source: Author)

Bhadra Precinct is believed to be the origin point of the city characterized by several pols, historical buildings/structures, marketplaces, cultural centers, religious places, etc. (Vastu Shilpa Foundation, 2015). Many important buildings and structures like Bhadra fort, Teen Darwaza, Bhadra Kali temple etc. are located in this area. Famous market places like Manek chowk, Fernandez bridge book bazaar, etc. are also found in this area. Also, city-level transport terminals like Lal Darwaza bus stop and important buildings like City Civil court, Premabhai hall etc. also form a section of this part of the old city. For a long period of time, these structures were neglected and hence were in a state of disrepair with Bhadra palace, its precinct, city wall and its gates in dilapidated condition. This urban heritage constitutes a living context, a technology, and a morphology, which required to be restored and adapted to meet the needs of the day (AUDA, AMC & CEPT, 2006). The Bhadra precinct displays new structures that have been added haphazardly with no respect to historic context. Lack of maintenance has led to collapses in the structure. All these factors, including the inadequate infrastructure, under utilization and existing incompatible uses here have culminated in the precinct becoming inaccessible despite being one of the most significant symbolic heritage monuments Ahmedabad has to offer.

With the consequent shift in population to the suburbs, the symbolic and functional value of Bhadra fort precinct as the heart of the city diminished over time, while the construction of new architecturally, significant buildings during the modern era in west Ahmedabad led to a decline in importance of the fort precinct. Hence, a strong need was felt to conserve this segment of the city, an area of immense heritage value (Vastu Shilpa Foundation, 2015).



Figure 3. Photograph showing procession at Bhadra Plaza - During British time (Source: AMC Archives)



Figure 4. Photograph of Bhadra plaza - existing situation (Source: Authors)

### 2.3. Issues in the present context

Old city of Ahmedabad is undergoing major transformation in terms of use as well as built form. The intensity of use of the commercial areas located in the old city is increasing with people coming to these areas. The heritage structures suffer from poor maintenance due to the lack of public awareness and respect for heritage precincts. The

structures are also impacted by traffic congestion, pollution, haphazard growth of the city and its surroundings and encroachments by vendors. Lack of adequate guidelines relating to formal and informal commercial activities in the old city has led to increasing encroachments in the fort precinct thereby endangering the structure and spatial quality.

Bhadra fort precinct also faced several problems which are as listed below:

– Traffic and transportation

Old city being the cultural and economic heart of the city has been subjected to tremendous pressure, due to changes in the land use from simple to complex and mixed uses and to more intensive uses. Residential units are being transformed into commercial units that attract more people and eventually increase in number of vehicles. Additionally, the traditional and informal shopping in the city center generates a very large volume of localized pedestrian movement (Bharti, 2014). This issue leads to problems like traffic congestion and haphazard parking. Vehicular traffic has predominantly increased through the years, blocking the visibility and accessibility of heritage buildings. The public transportation exists around the old city but transportation inside the fort area is a complex issue. The use of the local buses is limited because of inefficient route planning, overcrowding, frequency or availability, high travel time and poor maintenance of buses. Concentration of economic activities in the walled city attracts a large volume of traffic from all over Ahmedabad.

– Hierarchy of road network and vehicular movement pattern

The walled city has grown along the banks of river Sabarmati, similar to many naturally grown cities with a commercial hub in the middle and streets radiating from hub to the edge, with dead-end street at residential areas. The road stretch from Bhadra fort towards Kalupur railway station acts as a spine for vehicular movement. This road resides most of the major architectural heritage monuments and has major commercial activities. This combination creates increased vehicular traffic. Less availability of carriageway for vehicular traffic has further lead to overcrowding and traffic jams.

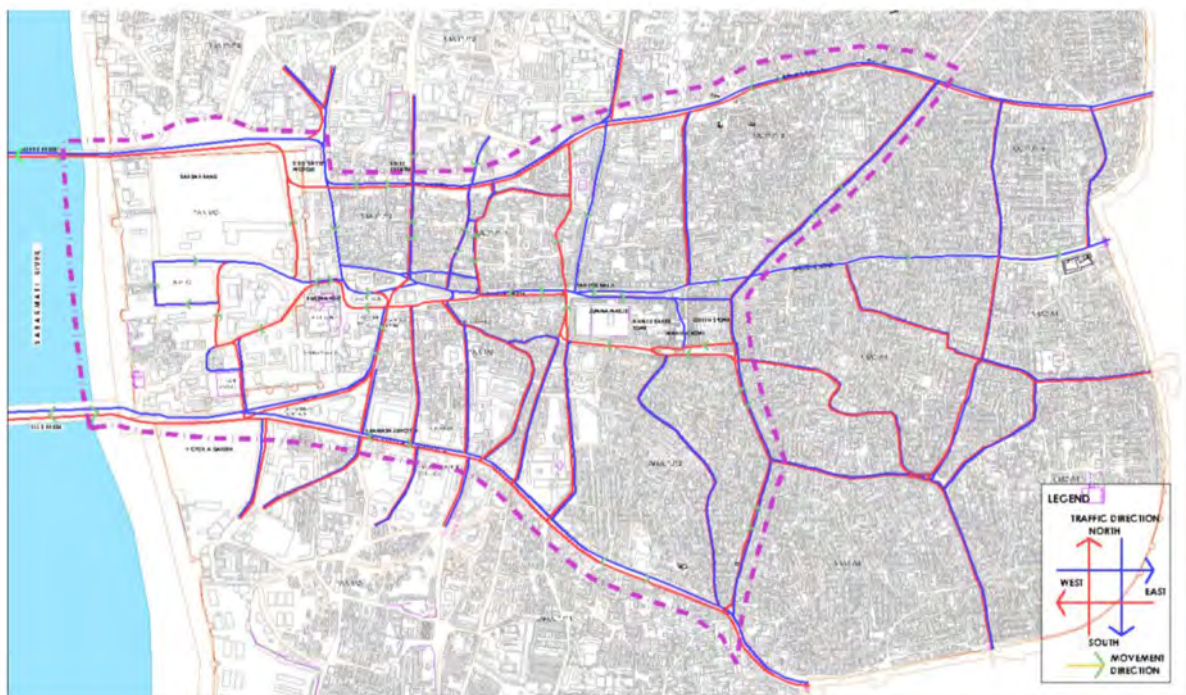


Figure 5. Existing vehicular movement around the site (Source: Authors)

– Haphazard parking along Bhadra precinct

The growing intensity of commercial land-use is attracting a large number of people every day. Lack of adequate parking space has led to regular traffic jams in this area. All along this growth, a constant check for planning and development of these older sections of the city is largely required. Lack of this arrangement of constructive development towards providing organized parking, has created chaos in the old city. The area has few pay and park facilities and on-street demarcated parking.

- Informal activities

Presence of the informal sector at critical locations in Bhadra precinct invites several problems. It causes traffic congestion, reduces the carriage way width and takes away pedestrian walkways. Street vending has been existent in the old city. The number of hawkers has increased manifold in the recent years. Always crowded and congested, the competition for space in this old city area has only intensified over the years (Oriard, 2014).

- Pollution

Air pollution from vehicular exhaust is increasing causing irreparable damage to the heritage resources. The air pollution has increased at an alarming rate due to increase in vehicular traffic and inadequate public transport.

- Loss of visual character

The visual character and aesthetic ambience of the heritage buildings or precincts is largely engulfed by intense commercial activity, signboards etc. This issue is coupled with actual physical encroachments around these historic precincts (AUDA, AMC & CEPT, 2006).

### **3. Strategy for revitalization of historic core**

#### **3.1. Current scenario**

The once abundant economic opportunities in the fort precinct got exhausted over time with the break-down in its conventional political system, while the migration of the city's influential population from the old city to its newer parts led to significantly decreased the maintenance and lack of civic amenities. A culmination of resultant factors such as weakened urban infrastructure, poverty, and lack of access to the power elite who formulate policies for the urban region has led to the Bhadra Fort Precinct being reduced to its current state of disuse and dilapidation and the loss of its status as the heart of Ahmedabad. Despite its present dilapidated condition, the grandeur of the precinct can still be perceived in the existing structure (Nayak, 2003). Though in decay and in the need of critical repairs, the Bhadra fort precinct reflects a past glory that calls for urgent conservation and rehabilitation. The entire fort precinct is under ASI's (Archeological Survey of India) control. Areas assigned to the state offices are now lying in disuse, while new structures have been added haphazardly without much respect for the historic context. All these factors have culminated in this historically extremely significant monument becoming inaccessible to tourists and locals alike due to its distinctly inadequate infrastructure and incompatible uses. The principal issues identified as critical and need to be duly addressed while carrying out a comprehensive and sustainable revitalization of Bhadra fort precinct was:

- Loss of status as the heart of Ahmedabad
- Dilapidated structures, damaged masonry and structural damage of buildings
- Illegal encroachments which are harmful to the physical and spatial character of the precinct

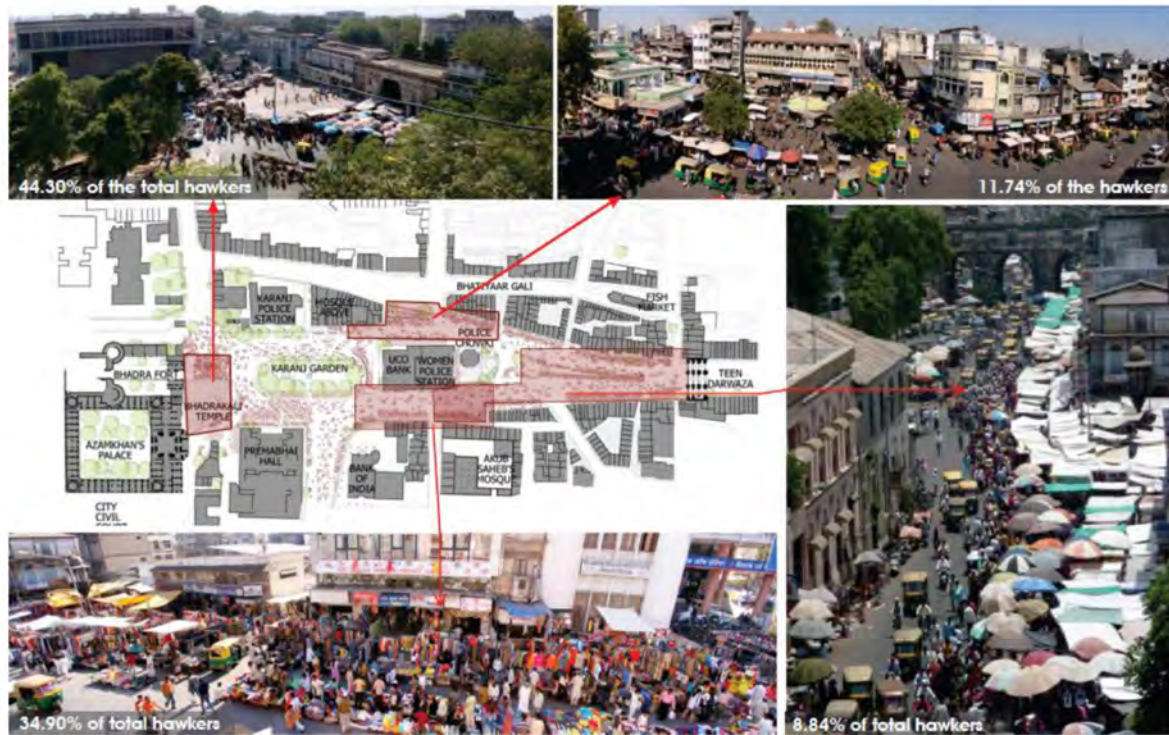


Figure 6. Existing structures within Bhadra precinct (Source: Authors)

### 3.2. Proposal on the revitalization of Bhadra Precinct

A strong need was felt to conserve this segment of the city area of immense heritage value. An attempt for restructuring and revitalizing to conserve this area was proposed. The proposed pedestrianization of Bhadra chowk & restoration and re-use plan aims to arrest critical issues by putting forth improvement strategies, overall revitalization plan of Bhadra square. The area between Bhadra fort to Teen Darwaza (Triple arched gateway) is now proposed to be pedestrianized for people to move around comfortably and leisurely with covered walkway. The Bhadra Plaza is enhanced by adding on various landscape and design elements. The idea is to activate the Bhadra area in the day and at night so that it acts as a city level public 'place'. The hawkers' zone is re-organized to avoid crowding of this place. Restoration of old heritage buildings is proposed keeping the traditional setting of open space and streetscape. Urban design guidelines, architectural controls and conservation guidelines are part of the proposal. The proposal also recommends the restoration of buildings of heritage value around Bhadra fort including Bhadrakali Temple, City civil court.

Looking at the intense use and the character of this part of the old city, the proposal was divided into following parts:

Revitalization:

- Pedestrianization of street (Bhadra Fort precincts & Bhadra Plaza to Teen Darwaja (Triple arched gateway))
- Identification of tourist nodes and corridors along the street for heritage importance (like Azam Khan sarai, Bhadrakali Temple, Bhadra tower, Shah Qutub's Masjid, Tomb of Ahmed Shah, Queen's Tomb)
- To reduce encroachments around Bhadra plaza to Teen Darwaja
- Traffic studies (including parking), analysis and identifying problem areas; and
- Up-gradation of required infrastructure along fort precincts and plaza

Urban design guidelines:

- Urban design guidelines and Architectural controls for surrounding structures

Restoration:

- Restoration of Bhadra fort
- Conservation and Adaptive reuse of Azam khan Sarai

The proposal address these issues critically and is an attempt to improve the situation qualitatively by conserving the heritage structures that are one of the rare examples worldwide in history. Realizing the tremendous potential presented by the Fort Precinct in becoming a revitalized symbol that reinstates grandeur and power that the city of Ahmedabad exuded in the past, the reuse functions of the precinct are based on capitalizing on the spatial structure of the precinct that offers places of various scales and quality enabling its reuse as a place for citizens where cultural and recreational activities are carried out and restoring the function of the precinct as the central space for the city. Conservation and sensitive development is the approach to the problem of such historic areas.

### 3.2.1. Revitalization of Bhadra precinct

Pedestrianization of Bhadra precinct:

An effort to pedestrianize this street and making it walkable, safe and comfortable, for the pedestrians was taken up as a component under this project. Widening of sidewalks, improvements to intersections, street-scaping was identified interventions to improve the pedestrianization of the area. The aim was to provide public access to the Bhadra area — heart of the city and enhancing link to streets.



Figure 7. Proposal for Bhadra plaza (Source: Vastu Shilpa Foundation)

Additionally, upgrading and coordinating physical elements such as signage, lighting, landscaping, pavement, food kiosks, public toilets and street furniture was proposed to make the whole area pleasant to walk through. The proposal attempts to reorganize the activities in hawking spaces, to define the spatial quality and bring forth the old grandeur that walled city and its historic precincts is renowned for. ‘No vehicle zone’ aims to make the streets more community friendly and reduce pollution was proposed. The implementation of street improvements contributed to historic core rejuvenation as an appealing, vibrant, and economically-vital community. The aim was to improve the pedestrian circulation system by reducing congestion, improving safety, and providing better pedestrian access to transit nodes and open spaces. This idea was proposed to create social and diverse cultural

spaces with many opportunities for people to interact. Multi-level parking facility was proposed nearby to prevent the vehicular access entering the plaza and providing people a true pedestrianized plaza. A good connectivity to city level transport nodes was proposed to encourage visitors and tourists. Thought on the provision of battery operated buses on identified route and connecting to city level transport nodes located adjacent to these areas. This idea would help in encouraging people to use public transport for coming to the old city and not bringing their vehicles. This event in turn, will cause reduction in demand of parking space and provide freedom from excessive noise, air pollution, and traffic grime. The overall thought to pedestrianize this street was to develop it as a good pedestrian street created by closing the commercial street to vehicular traffic, permanently or over certain hours each day. Retaining and conservation include both tangible and intangible heritage structures of unique architectural, cultural and historical value in Bhadra Precinct. A multi-angular approach with a modest plan is designed by conserving these buildings without hampering the facades but giving a face-lift by providing the temporary encampment and covering the buildings (heights in the limits of the urban guidelines) without compromising the livelihood of the street vendors.

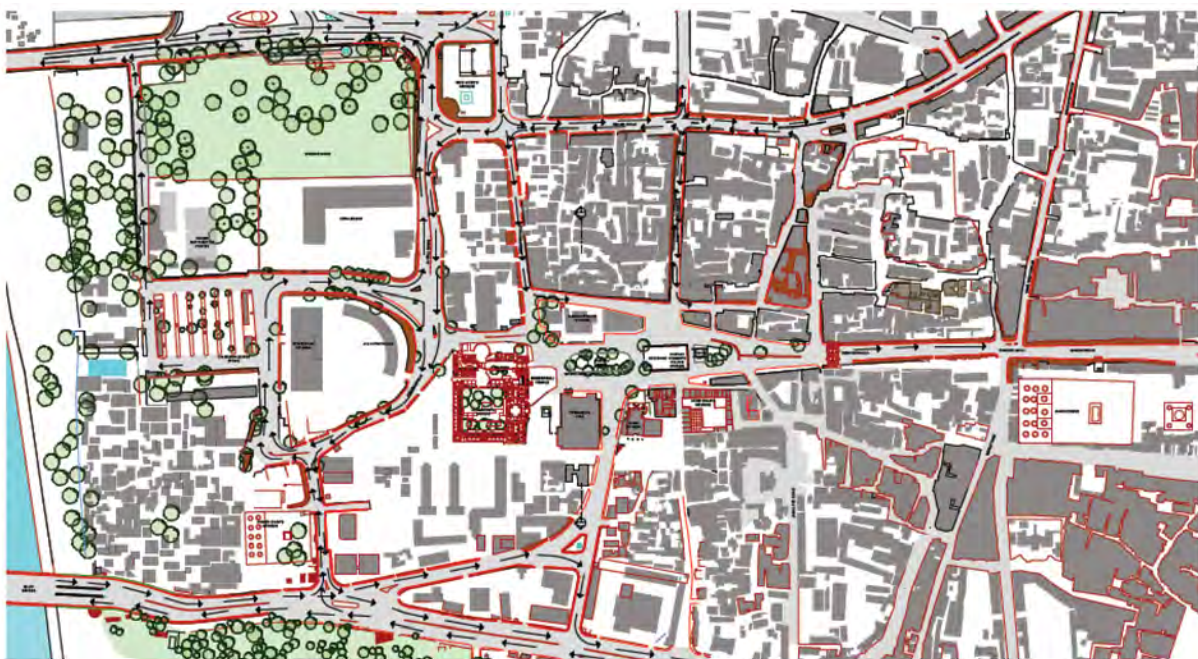


Figure 8. Proposed vehicular movement for pedestrianization of Bhadra plaza (Source: Authors)



Figure 9. View of proposal for Bhadra plaza from the fort



Figure 10. Actual execution of proposal

#### – Infrastructure up-gradation & Facilities augmentation

The streetscape and heritage conservation have been the concerns while designing this area. Pavements to provide along the entire length of the road, dotted with few trees and to provide informal hawking spaces along the road which leads to Teen Darwaza. Ample amount of regularized parking lot was also designed for the contentedly of the visitors. An attempt to hold the existing inner-city character while the proficient design transfers the heritage zone to a realistic contemporary built-up to conserve the character of the fort area was approached. The pedestrianization path from Bhadra to Teen Darwaza deals with providing formal ‘stalls’ located and provided for hawkers/ informal activities for shopping along the footpath on the walkway, which act as a screen and lends a unique character to the street. The facade adds a screening effect to the old shopping street and the old shopping building. The demarcation of allocated spaces for hawkers would clear the arcades and provide free and uninterrupted pedestrian movement all along the shop edge. The design dealt with an organization of informal activities and traffic resolution. The mix of many small businesses and street vendors will still be a preferable form of commercial activity in the inner city and continue a traditional way of conducting business with a contemporary design. This idea will legalize the vendor market and allocate place for every vendor to continue with the livelihood lawfully. Active sidewalks that is directly linked with adjacent commercial uses at the ground floor help animate the street. The street includes various public spaces of a scale where pedestrians can move comfortably and where informal activities can take place and can reinforce a vibrant street life in the old city (Centre for Responsible Citizenship and Sustainability, 2005).

#### 3.2.2. Urban design guidelines

No adequate means of conservation can be devised without carefully considered plans of control for the maintenance and existence of buildings of historic and architectural values situated in human settlement areas. The controls ought not to be excessively restrictive but to be responsive to the physical, social and economic needs of the area and should stimulate conservation rather than stifle new development. It must consider the needs, convenience and natural aspirations of the people living on the site. The main objective was to preserve through ages an active historical heritage with its forms and original materials with adaptation and interventions without any tendencies to falsify. This idea was to preserve and protect against the damage of all kinds either done with intentions, negligence, or unawareness. As per the general development control regulations [GDCR (Gujarat Development Control Regulation) (section 17.20)] of Ahmedabad, no development or redevelopment or change of use or engineering operations or additions, alterations, repairs, renovations including painting, replacement of special features or demolition of the whole or part thereof or plastering of heritage buildings and heritage precincts and pols shall

be allowed except with the written permission of the competent authority. Only the competent authority on the advice of the heritage conservation committee would prepare list of heritage buildings and precincts to modify

### 3.2.3. Restoration

The conservation of historical buildings that are neglected endangered, and which require immediate attention is one of the key strategy tried to achieve in this proposal. The focus area of the project includes the stretch from gates of Bhadra fort to the gates of Teen Darwaza. This fact also includes the restoration and revitalization of the heritage structures by the side of this proposed street avenue.

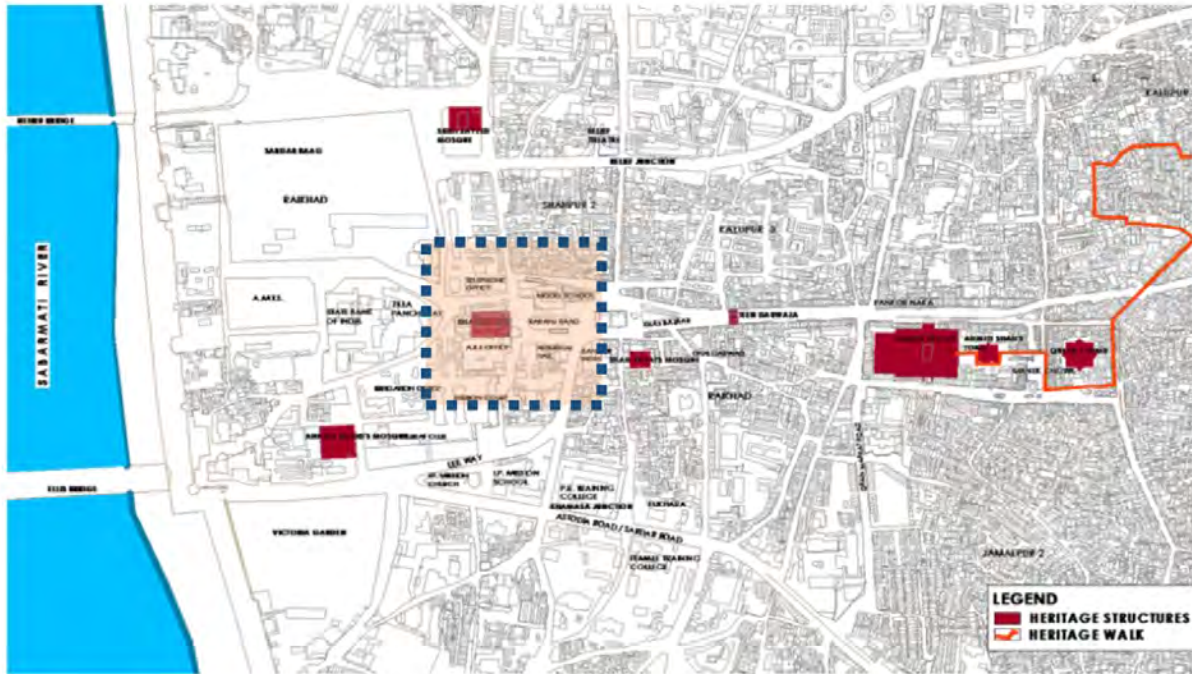


Figure 11. Monuments considered for restoration

The precinct can also be conceived as a Tourist Center with facilities that allow tourists to explore the intricacies of life in the city, state, and the region. It could also become a starting point for all heritage activities in the city and the walking tours. Renewing and restoring the masonry which has suffered considerable damage due to lack of maintenance is also taken up as part of the project. Restoration shall include strengthening the structure of the fort precinct including Azam Khan’s Sarai to prevent further damage to the structure. Azam Khan’s Sarai could be remodeled as a Sarai again by providing for all tourism-related needs, facilities for cultural events, food and ethnic markets and could be developed as an important exhibition center.



Figure 12. Proposed nature of use of space

Various new structures have been added haphazardly in the fort precinct without any sensitivity to the existing heritage context. Removal of these incongruous structures to retrieve valuable spaces is also taken up as a part of the project. Comprehensive landscape design, to enhance spaces in the structures with due consideration of their scale and architectural qualities and use was planned to revitalize the structures which currently lie redundant or occupied by incongruous structures. Considering the prominence of Ahmedabad as a UNESCO world heritage site and one of the most attractive tourist destinations, the process of revitalizing the Bhadra Fort Precinct necessarily needs to account for many visitors to the city each year. Revitalizing the precinct hence has a proposal of the addition of adequate tourism infrastructure such as a tourist information center, signage and enhancing existing amenities to adequately cater to the estimated tourist influx. Since the precinct with its variety of spaces — open and enclosed, offers numerous opportunities for the reuse of the sarai. An important son et Lumiere was planned around the fort and bastions to showcase the various phases of city's history. The revitalized Precinct could be endowed with attributes that promote this place in becoming a major place for the celebration of public festivals and fairs. Revitalization plan will arrest the issues critically and improve the situation qualitatively by conserving the heritage structures that are one of the rare examples worldwide in history.

#### **4. Implementation of proposal**

As mentioned above, the proposal has two major components with various sub-components which are as follows:

Component 1 — Restoration of Bhadra fort and Azam khan Sarai

Sub-components

- Renewing and strengthening of the structures
- Reuse of existing structures by the provision of tourist spaces
- Retrieval of invaluable spaces by the removal of incongruous structures
- Comprehensive landscape design
- Son Et Lumiere

Component 2 — Revitalization of Bhadra square

Sub-components

- Pedestrianization of the square
- Re-routing traffic to relieve traffic congestion
- Protecting character of walled city
- Providing hawking zones
- Solving parking issues
- Revised planning and development of existing bus terminal to accommodate parking and informal activities

Currently, the project was implemented on a site through support from urban local body (AMC — Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation) and funding from central government and state government. To implement the project without disturbing the norms and guidelines of protected monuments of ASI, partnership was made between ASI and urban local body (AMC) with necessary guidance of National Monument Authority, Government of India. Due to funding under Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM), implementation of the project went on smooth. Implementation of project was done in phase wise manner. Apart from planning and development of bus terminal and implementation of parking plan along with provision of parking facilities, the rest of the project is implemented on the site.

#### **4.1. Role of various factors during implementation**

The project has many stakeholders and hence, various organizations were involved either directly or indirectly in the development of the project. Further, many political, social and administrative factors played important role in implementation of the project. These factors still have influential role in maintenance and current status of the project. Due to various reasons like the need to address additional space for hawkers within or in nearby areas, the implementation of the project has stopped. This issue is due to shortages of funding from JnNURM mission under Government of India. However, with UNESCO announcing Ahmedabad walled city as a world heritage site, smooth further implementation of the project is envisaged.

Following is the list of organizations involved directly or indirectly in the project:

Organizations directly involved:

- Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation
- Archeological Survey of India (ASI)
- National Monument Authority, Government of India
- Consultants (CEPT University, Vastu Shilpa Foundation)

Organizations indirectly involved:

- Bhadra Kali temple authority
- Bank of India
- Premabhai Hall Trust
- City Civil Court — Bhadra
- Bhadra vendor Association
- Self Employed Women Association (SEWA)
- Bhadra Taxi Stand Association
- Karanj Police Station- Bhadra

Both types of organizations played an important role in the development of the project. Role of organizations indirectly involved was also as important in the implementation of the project. Delay was faced due to the involvement of multiple stakeholders in the project. Differences in opinion within stakeholders had an adverse influence on the project.

#### **4.2. Issues faced during implementation**

Site being the historic core of the walled city and since multiple stakeholders were involved in the project, many issues were faced during implementation of the project. Space constraints, several activities in this hyper active area slowed the pace of implementation of the project. The project is linked to the city and its life in many ways. The old city also had a concentration of informal shops. There is no demarcated hawking space and hence the informal sector spread through the old city. There are 80 to 100 (as per primary survey by the author) types of specialized markets such as clothes, general retail, utensils, vegetable/fruits/grain, hardware, shoes, jewelry, female accessories, stationary, etc; which is majorly used by the lower and middle income residents of the city. This hustling and bustling crowd has a footfall of an average 1 to 1.5 lakh (as per primary survey by author) visitors and tradesmen etc. to and fro from Lal Darwaja bus station to Teen Darwaja. Since this footfall couldn't

be restricted, it created a hindrance in the development of the project. Lack of public awareness was another issue that prolonged the project time. Since people were not sufficiently aware about the project, resistance from their side was felt during implementation and hence, there was lack of co-operation from their end. Bhadra plaza being the core of the city, is an important premise for holding all celebrations on huge scale for all religions alike. Around 300 – 400 thousand people gather in this area during these festivals. Hence, the work stopped during these festivals which resulted in delayed implementation of the project. Development of 22,000 square meter plaza area with multistorey parking and better transportation was planned that could impact this place socially, culturally and economically. Even though the plaza has been built, funds from central government stopped that stopped the development of multi-storeyed parking and bus terminal. Further, as per the new street vendor policy, licenses was given to existing hawkers and street vendors. Due to delay in implementation of the project the number of hawkers increased two-folds. However, these were unregistered hawkers. Bhadra vendor association as well as Self Employed Women Association were against decreasing the number of hawkers since it will affect livelihood of many hawkers. This mismanagement lead to unorganized hawking spaces. Further, incomplete development led to many problems like over-crowding, unregulated use of space, mismanagement in associations, etc created doubts on design and execution of projects.

## 5. Conclusion

Bhadra Precinct is a renowned historic core. The identity of the square as a historic core, needs to be re-established to sustain its importance within the city. Revitalization and re-development of Bhadra square was taken up to regain the losing identity of this historic core. However, the objective of any project cannot be achieved unless the project is implemented on site. After Ahmedabad old city being declared as a world heritage site by UNESCO, it is expected that the envisaged project can be implemented to regain its identity as historic core of the city with strong public participation and political patronage.

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