

Dharmaj Heritage Collaborative

CEPT Conservation Site School

A joint initiative by Center for Heritage Conservation (CHC), CRDF and Avichal Foundation. This report summarises activities conducted by CHC and Avichal Heritage Foundation under Dharmaj Heritage Collaborative from April 2022 to August 2023



Clock tower at Dharmaj (photograph by CHC, CRDF)

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Introduction

Center for Heritage Conservation (CHC), CEPT Research and Development Foundation (CRDF), Ahmedabad and Avichal Heritage Foundation, Dharmaj have collaborated in an effort to safeguard the heritage of Dharmaj.

A series of four initiatives focusing on the conservation and regeneration of valuable heritage assets of the village has been proposed through educational, research and outreach activities.

Center for Heritage Conservation (CHC)

Center for Heritage Conservation (CHC), CEPT Research and Development Foundation (CRDF), Ahmedabad has a vision of becoming the focal point in research, advisory and capacity building of the practice and policy of heritage conservation in the country. With a firm belief in the ethics of conservation and sustainability, the Center intends to perform practices on the ground to create sustainable and equitable solutions.

Address:

Near AES Boys Hostel Campus,
University Ground, Navrangpura,
Ahmedabad - 380 009
Email: chc@cept.ac.in

Avichal Heritage Foundation

Avichal Heritage Foundation is a non-profit organisation established with a vision to implement the engagement of the NRI diaspora and next generation through rebuilding and repurposing of Heritage Homes and public spaces in Dharmaj, with Rhodesia House being the first example to tell the story of the Indo-African connection through events or workshops to build awareness on restoration, preservation initiatives and cultural tourism.

Address:

Rhodesia House, Station Rd,
Opp. Akhada,
Dharmaj, Anand - 388 430
Email: info@avichal.org



Buildings in Dharmaj (photographs by CHC, CRDF)

Timeline of Activities

April 2022

First phase of dismantling work at Mukhi Delu

May - June 2022

Careful dismantling of the back wing of Kalidas Jethabhai House

July 2022

CEPT Professional Program (CPP) on 'Non-Destructive tests on Historic Buildings' at Mukhi House and Kalidas Jethabhai House

August 2022

Event: 'Meet at Dharmaj'

-Exhibition of student work from Masters in Conservation and Regeneration (MCR) and Masters in Architectural History and Research (AHR), Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University

-Open House at CEPT Conservation Site Schools: Mukhi Delu and Kalidas Jethabhai House

-Young Heritage Explorers Program (YHEP) in collaboration with H.M Patel English Medium School

January 2023

Event: 'Celebrating the Cultural Heritage of Dharmaj'

-Open house at CEPT Conservation Site Schools: Mukhi Delu and Kalidas Jethabhai House

-Young Heritage Explorers Program (YHEP) in collaboration with Tri Gi Mishra Shala and VN High School

-Exhibition of student work at Kalidas Jethabhai House and Bhagol (clock tower square)

-Commencement of Architectural Conservation Studio, MCR, CEPT University

-Directed Research Project (DRP) by Masters in Conservation and Regeneration (MCR) and Masters in Architectural History and Research (AHR), Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University

March 2023

Pilot project on Mukhi Delu as part of the Endangered Wooden Architecture Program (EWAP)

May 2023

Event at CHC: CEPT Conservation Site Schools as a pedagogical tool

June 2023

Webinar: Conservation and Community-Dharmaj with Dharmajians

Digital interactive map of heritage assets

The project is envisioned as a digital platform that enables residents and diaspora of Dharmaj to virtually explore, learn about, and reconnect with the history and heritage of their homeland. The interactive map will serve as a digital repository of cultural heritage assets, oral narratives and traditional knowledge systems of Dharmaj. The platform will also allow residents and diaspora to contribute to the map by sharing information and insights about the place and its people.

1. Educational Activities

(A). Directed Research Project (DRP),

Masters in Architectural History and Research (AHR), Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University

April 2023

The research titled ‘Transition of Dharmaj-Cultural Flows and its Influence on the Architecture of Dharmaj’ studied the influences of 20th century transnational cultural flows on the Architecture of Dharmaj. It aimed to establish a link between the cultural flows happening through trade, migration and remittances and the built environment.

(B). Architectural Conservation Studio,

Masters in Conservation and Regeneration (MCR), Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University

January - May 2023

The students worked with three sites in the historic core of Dharmaj - Kalidas Jethabhai House, Mukhi Delu and Shri Krishna Bhavan through documentation, material understanding and Analysis of the buildings. The outcome of the studio contributed to building the digital repository on Dharmaj.

Transition of Dharmaj –
Cultural Flows and its Influence on the
Architecture of Dharmaj



DRP by Sushmita Pai



MCR students at Dharmaj (photographs by Audrey Alvares)



CEPT Conservation Site Schools

CEPT Conservation Site School is an initiative that is conceptually based on a premise that many heritage sites that are highly valuable for their historic importance are neglected due to lack of active use or lack of funds and resources. The imperative of conserving such sites and structures lies collectively among the citizens. These sites are a great repository of historic knowledge and present an opportunity for conservation training and knowledge sharing.

The initiative seeks to actively engage local residents, heritage professionals, architects, site managers, craftspeople and students through workshops, short courses and volunteering opportunities. The larger aim is to initiate action for heritage conservation in Dharmaj through training and capacity building. Once conserved, a new use for the site may be proposed based on a process of community consultation and the consent of the owner.

Under DHC, two Site Schools have been adopted as pilot projects to demonstrate the process of conservation for people who own a house in Dharmaj and wish to give it a new life by conserving. CHC, CRDF and Avichal Heritage Foundation have entered into a financially non-binding agreement with the owners of both these sites under which CHC will carry out educational and outreach activities at the site and in the process, conserve the building.



Kalidas Jethabhai House (photographs by Audrey Alvares)

Mukhi Delu (photographs by Audrey Alvares)

1.Site School 1: Kalidas Jethabhai House

Kalidas Jethabhai House has been adopted as a Conservation Site School at Dharmaj as part of ‘Dharmaj Heritage Collaborative’, a joint effort by Center for Heritage Conservation (CHC), CRDF and Avichal Heritage Foundation to safeguard the heritage of Dharmaj. The site, located within the historic core of Dharmaj, is under the ownership of the heirs of Kalidas Jethabhai Patel. CHC, CRDF and Avichal Heritage Foundation have entered into a financially nonbinding agreement with the owners of the house under which CHC will carry out educational and outreach activities at the site and in the process, conserve the building. Once conserved, a new use will be proposed for the site in consultation with the owners and community.

(A). On-Site Activities

Careful Dismantling of the Back Wing May - June 2022

After safeguarding the building, the next stage of work was the careful dismantling of the back wing. From May to June 2022, CHC took up the careful dismantling of the dilapidated back wing. Safety protocols were followed by the labourers and anyone on site at all times. The process included gradually bringing down the roof followed by the walls of the first and second floors. The entire dismantling process was done manually and utmost care was taken to minimise damage to material. Timber members like doors, that are heavy were partly dismantled and then brought down. Care was taken to salvage building material with the intention of reusing them during reconstruction. Most of the walls and floors at the ground level are retained as they were found to be in fairly good condition compared to the rest of the structure.



Careful dismantling of the back wing of Kalidas Jethabhai House (photographs by Audrey Alvares)

II. PROJECT 2: CEPT Conservation Site Schools

Material Inventory June - July 2022

As the dismantling was being carried out, timber members and samples of building materials like lime plaster, mud mortar, bricks etc were being segregated and labelled based on the location they had been taken from. This was done to later test and record any difference in the composition of materials. A material shed was constructed on the open ground to stack the labelled materials that were recovered during dismantling. A few samples were brought back to be documented and stored at the Conservation Laboratory. As and when the need arises, tests will be conducted on these samples which can later be used as a guide to understand the ratio and composition of materials that could be used during reconstruction of the back wing. Part of the brick bat and rubble is stored on the site to be recycled and reused during the reconstruction of the back wing.



Recovered material in the material shed (photographs by Ashna Patel, Audrey Alvares)

II. PROJECT 2: CEPT Conservation Site Schools

(B). Educational Activities

CEPT Professional Program on Non-Invasive Testing Methods for Historic Buildings

26th to 30th July 2022

This workshop conducted by Conservation Engineer, Nigar Shaikh, CHC, CRDF was designed to help participants to develop the skill of conducting Non-Destructive Tests and Minor Destructive Tests for historic buildings through hands-on engagement. These methods of material investigation are imperative for retaining maximum historic fabric, while providing useful information regarding the building material and structure. The participants collected samples of mortar, plaster, bricks and prisms from the recovered material of the back wing to test their compressive strength. The workshop included a series of sessions by experts in the field of conservation.

Directed Research Project (DRP),

‘Understanding the material fabric of Kalidas Jethabhai House through the Characterisation process’,
Masters in Conservation and Regeneration (MCR), CEPT University

26th to 30th July 2022

The research aimed to understand the materials used at Kalidas Jethabhai House over time and its behaviour with other materials. Samples were collected and tested to understand the composition of materials and their strength. The findings of this research can be used to arrive at compatible repair materials that can be used in the restoration of Kalidas Jethabhai House.



NDT tests at Kalidas Jethabhai House (photograph by Audrey Alvares), Sample collection (DRP report)

II. PROJECT 2: CEPT Conservation Site Schools

Architectural Conservation Studio, Masters in Conservation and Regeneration (MCR), Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University January - May 2023

This studio focused on imparting and developing essential skills and understanding of conservation processes with an aim to build student's capacity for engagement with complexities of built heritage conservation. The studio was led by conservation experts Khushi Shah and Benny Kurikose, and assisted by Sneha Anand. Students studied Kalidas Jethabhai House through the following processes:

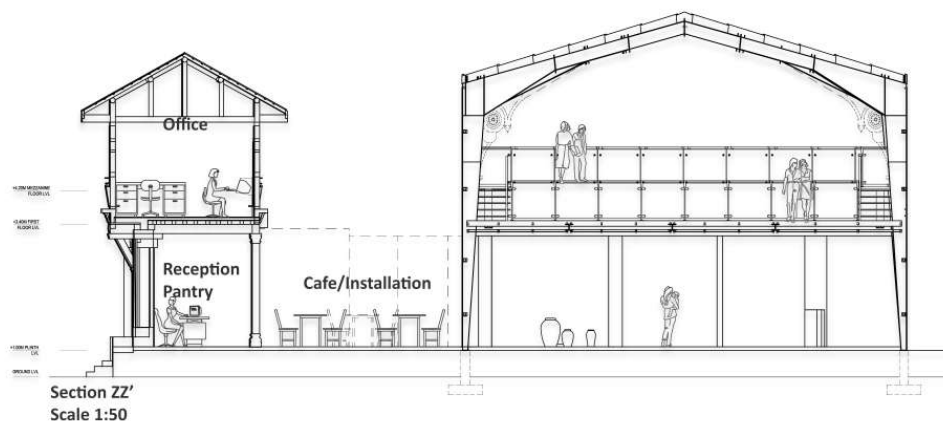
Documentation: The building was recorded manually for a week by a group of students. The present condition of the structure was recorded and this led to the students presenting their individual analysis on the reason for the deterioration and the various repair strategies that can be adopted.

Material Understanding: A detailed understanding of traditional building materials identified at Kalidas Jethabhai House, their properties, life cycles, and deterioration processes was produced through hands-on exploration and laboratory analysis. Students were able to propose appropriate conservation action using materials compatible with that used in the historic structure.

Analysis: Tools and methodologies for studying historic elements, buildings, precincts, sites, and landscapes were applied to the site. Students presented their analysis of the building and their contexts through creative visual representation and identification of heritage values.



Proposal by Anshika Sharma, Student of Masters in Conservation and Regeneration, CEPT University



Proposal by Harshida N, Student of Masters in Conservation and Regeneration, CEPT University

II. PROJECT 2: CEPT Conservation Site Schools

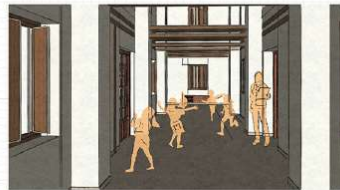
Dharmaj - Centre for Learning Adaptive reuse - Spatial layout



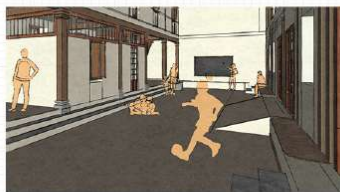
Living area & Kitchen



Learning Center



Activity Area



Children's play area



Outdoor learning space



Library

Spatial planning

The ground floor consists of Admin, Library, Children's play area, Activity area, Living room and kitchen for the Guest accommodation and other services.

The first floor consists of bedroom, terrace area and timber ladder that leads to the second floor. Second floor consists of Home theatre facilities in the loft space.

Material and Construction

It is a composite structure with brick masonry and timber lacing. The ground floor walls are 55cm thick brick and mud mortar masonry wall with lime plaster.

The floor slabs are with timber joists, masonry and finished with kota stone tile. The first floor is a timber structure with brick masonry filling of 12cm thick.

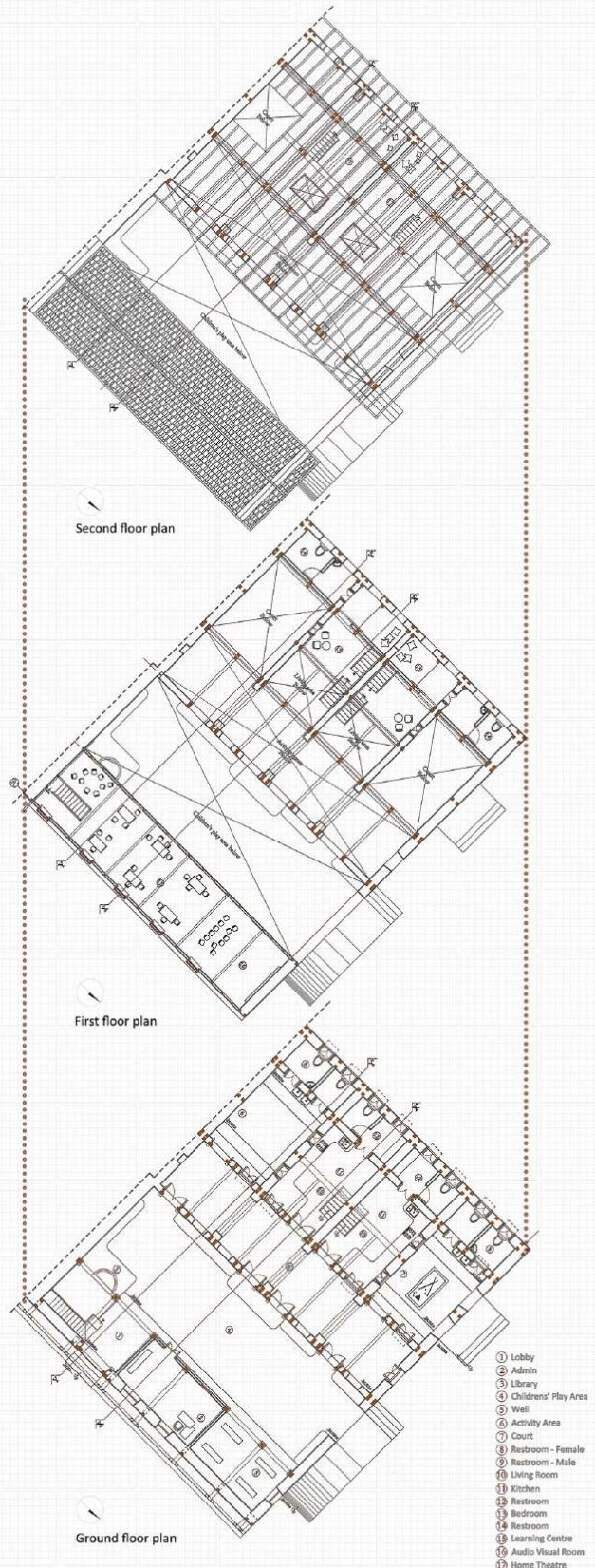
The roof is of with timber structure covered with terracotta tiles.

Construction system

The construction is a composite system with vertical and horizontal timber members as supports and lacing embedded into the masonry.

Lighter mass at top and heavier mass at bottom by using timber and brick.

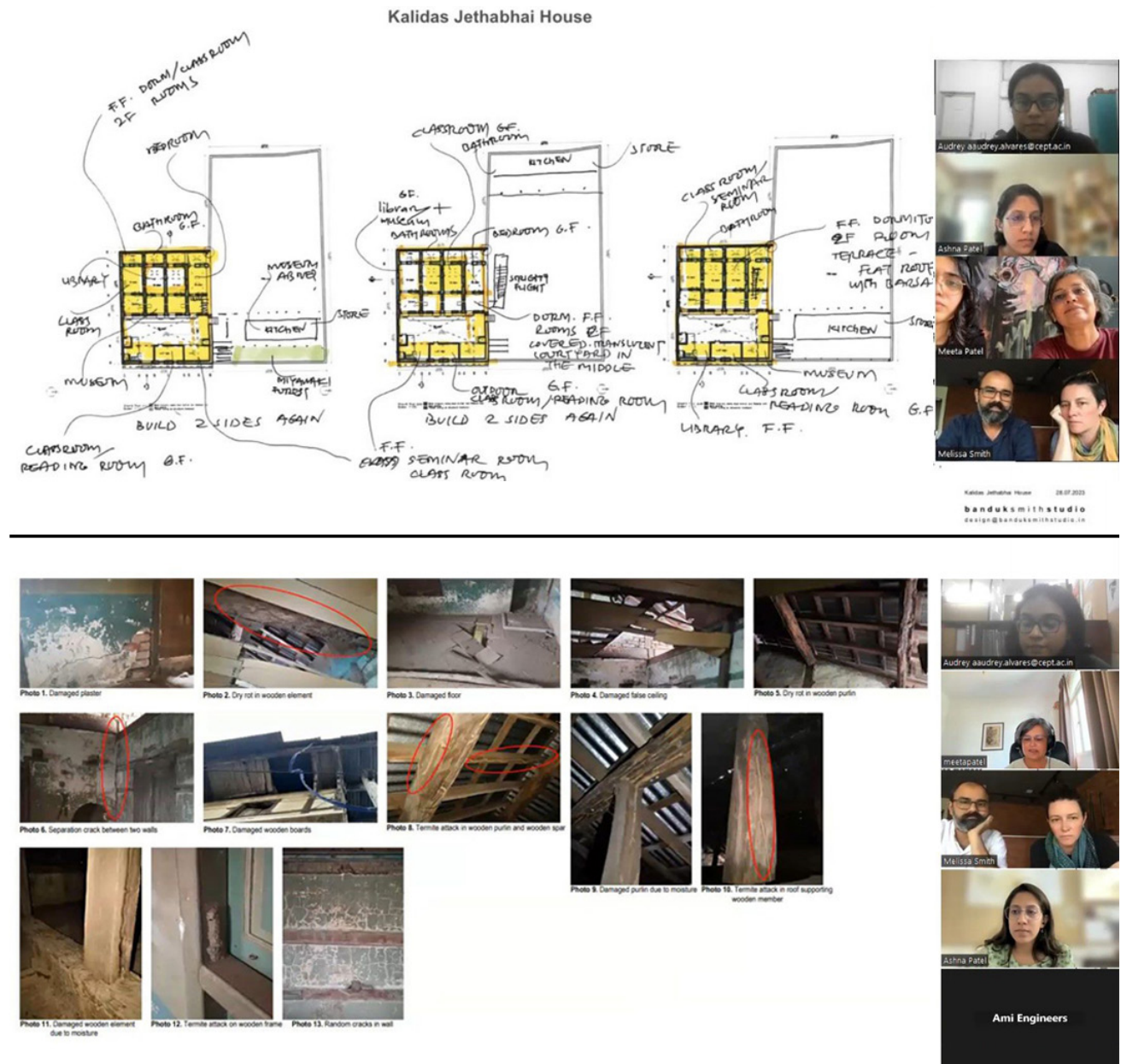
Composite structure in which both wood and brick perform together in which timber acts like reinforcement to brick work makes the wall ductile during earthquake.



II. PROJECT 2: CEPT Conservation Site Schools

(C). On-Going Activity

The educational activities and on-site work carried out at Kalidas Jethabhai House is currently informing a 'Conservation-led design' at the site in collaboration with the heirs of Kalidas Jethabhai Patel and an Ahmedabad-based design studio.



Online meetings for design discussion

2.Site School 2: Mukhi Delu

Mukhi Delu has been adopted as a Conservation Site School at Dharmaj as part of ‘Dharmaj Heritage Collaborative’, a joint effort by the Center for Heritage Conservation (CHC), CRDF and Avichal Heritage Foundation to safeguard the heritage of Dharmaj. The site is located within the historic core of the village and is owned by Harish Patel, a former resident of the village, now based in the USA. CHC, CRDF and Avichal Heritage Foundation have entered into a financially non-binding agreement with the house owner under which CHC will carry out educational and outreach activities at the site and conserve the building in the process. Once conserved, a new use for the site will be proposed in consultation with the owner, the community and administrative stakeholders of the village.

(A). On-Site Activities

Careful Dismantling - Phase 1 April 2022

Elements of the third floor parapet of the building were severely dilapidated. After consultation with structural engineers, they were carefully removed. To achieve this, the stone parapet on the second floor was dismantled carefully. The overhang too had to be dismantled to further reduce the load. The whole process of dismantling was challenging and had to be done carefully due to the limited open space available. With little to no space between houses, care had to be taken not to cause any damage to the neighbour’s property. Safety of the workers at site was ensured at all times.



Careful dismantling of the stone parapet at Mukhi Delu (photographs by Ashna Patel)

II. PROJECT 2: CEPT Conservation Site Schools

(B). Educational Activities

CEPT Professional Program on Non-Invasive Testing Methods for Historic Buildings

26th to 30th July 2022

This workshop conducted by Conservation Engineer, Nigar Shaikh, CHC, CRDF was designed to help participants to develop the skill of conducting Non-Destructive Tests and Minor Destructive Tests for historic buildings through hands-on engagement. These methods of material investigation are imperative for retaining maximum historic fabric, while providing useful information regarding the building material and structure. The participants collected samples of mortar, plaster, bricks and prisms from the recovered material of the back wing to test them for compressive strength. The workshop included a series of sessions by experts in the field of conservation.



Participants conducting non-destructive and minor-destructive tests (photographs by Audrey Alvares)

II. PROJECT 2: CEPT Conservation Site Schools

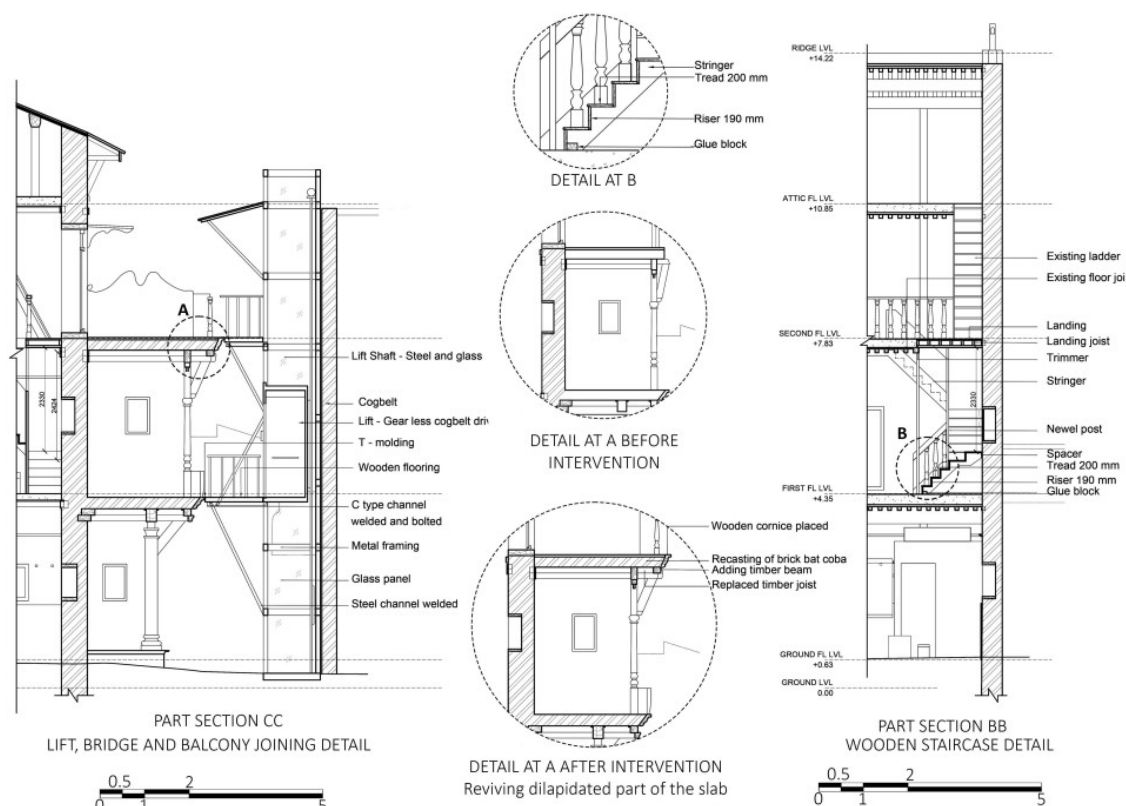
Architectural Conservation Studio, Masters in Conservation and Regeneration (MCR), Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University January - May 2023

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Documentation: The building was recorded manually for a week by a group of students. The present condition of the structure was recorded and this led to the students presenting their individual analysis on the reason for the deterioration and the various repair strategies that can be adopted.

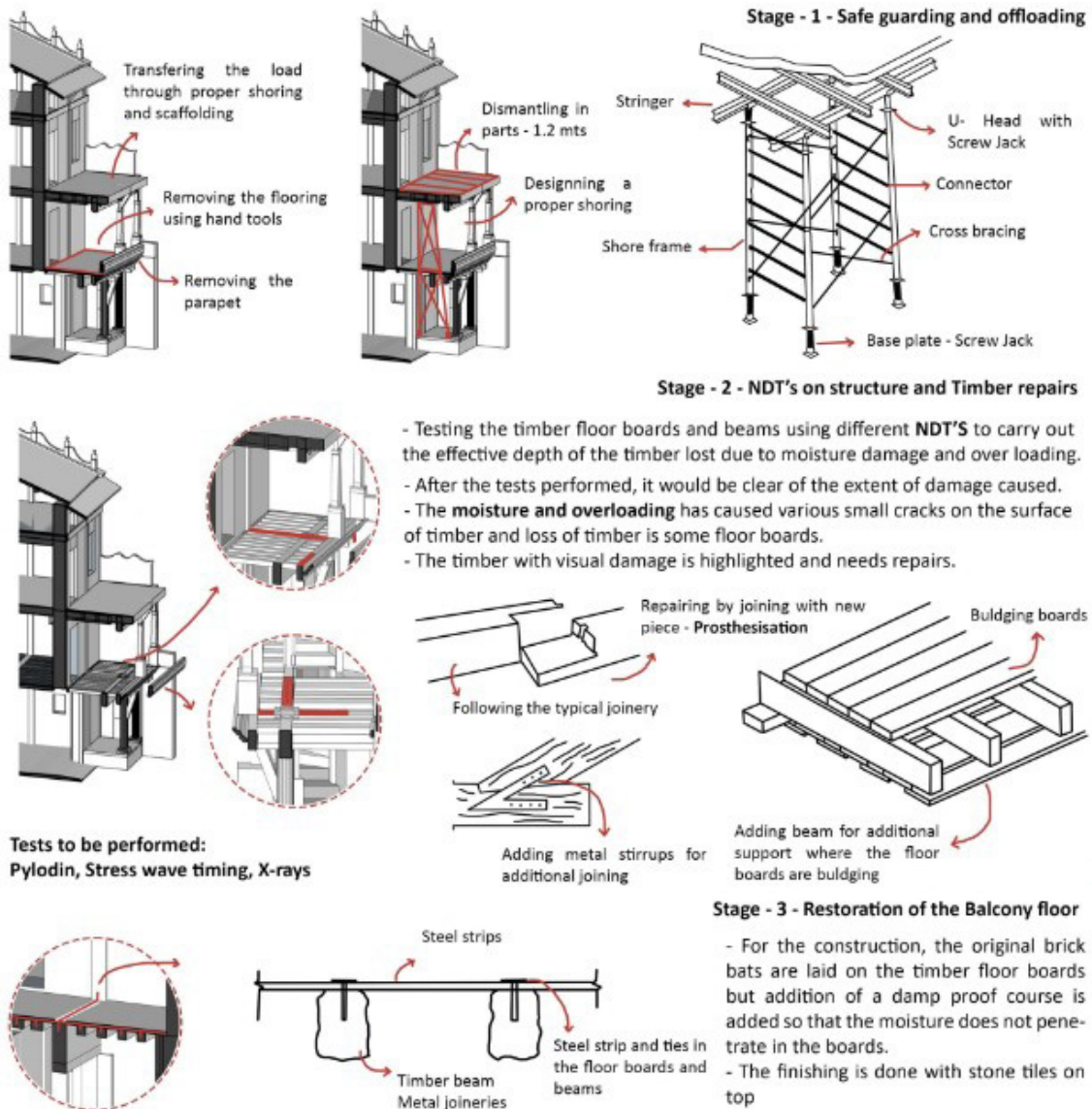
Material Understanding: A detailed understanding of traditional building materials identified at Mukhi Delu, their properties, life cycles, and deterioration processes was produced through hands-on exploration and laboratory analysis. Students were able to propose appropriate conservation action using materials compatible with that used in the historic structure.

Analysis: Tools and methodologies for studying historic elements, buildings, precincts, sites, and landscapes were applied to the site. Students presented their analysis of the building and their contexts through creative visual representation and identification of heritage values.



Proposal by Dnyanada, Student of Masters in Conservation and Regeneration, CEPT University

II. PROJECT 2: CEPT Conservation Site Schools



Proposal for repair by Vishwa Shah, Student of Masters in Conservation and Regeneration, CEPT University

II. PROJECT 2: CEPT Conservation Site Schools

EWAP Pilot Project: Digital Documentation

As part of the Endangered Wooden Architecture Program (EWAP), Mukhi Delu was chosen as a Pilot project. The field visit and data collection were done on the 1st and 2nd of March 2023. It was documented with the help of LiDAR scanning, Aerial Photogrammetry (demonstrated by the agency) and partial Terrestrial Photogrammetry.

Testing timber of Gujarat's wooden architectural heritage

Parth.Shastri@timesgroup.com

Ahmedabad: A team from the Centre for Heritage Conservation (CHC) at CEPT University has embarked on an 18-month project to document 60-odd wooden structures across the state both through drawings and 3D mapping techniques to put the state's architectural heritage on a global map.

Prof Jigna Desai, centre head and principal researcher at CHC, said that it's a project with grant from the Endangered Wooden Architecture Programme (EWAP) by the UK-based Oxford Brookes University.

"Under the project, we will be identifying the havelis primarily using wood as structural material and document them in detail. While we carried out pilot projects with satisfactory results for 3D scans, we will be taking about 10-12 samples from five regions of Gujarat — Saurashtra, Kutch, North Gujarat, Central Gujarat and South Gujarat. Thus, the final project will include 60-odd structures from the state," she said. "Properties in Ahmedabad will also be part of the initiative."

CHC officials said that the project is important as it's for the first time the EWAP has identified Indian beneficiaries for the grant. Apart from Gujarat, another such initiative has commenced in Jammu & Kashmir this year. Saatvika Pancholi, research associate at the CHC, said that one can understand the scale of the work based on the fact that they found 90-odd havelis that fit the

PEERING INTO ARCHITECTURE OF HAVELIS

- The project will study the type of wood used, the probable age of the wood, its source, and regional peculiarities
- The project will also include a master carpenter to understand the joineries and specialties of the regions. For example, several joineries in Kutch were found to be unique as they were made by the same artisans who built ships
- The project will give a record for posterity in terms of 3D mapping, a technique which will be handy if a property gets damaged or is not physically on the ground anymore
- The region-wise architectural style will also be documented to understand typology and plan layout which evolved over the decades with influence from different countries in terms of motifs, designs, and ornamentation

criteria. "Average age of these private properties—several of which are still used as residences — is about 100-150 years. We'll be finding the best representation of the regional architecture with distinct styles and different periods," she said. Mrudula Mane, programme director (documentation), said that a 3D laser scanner is used for the project along with

techniques such as photogrammetry and geo-referencing. "The outcome will provide an interactive 3D structure where one can see both interiors and exteriors. Due to the nature of the project, we also developed consent forms based on international standards so that we can safeguard the privacy of the property owners," she said.

Newspaper article on the EWAP Project

Regeneration of M D Sarvajanik Pustakalay

The initiative aims to modernise the Shree Motibhai Dahyabhai Sarvajanik Pustkalay for the residents of Dharmaj as an interactive place with improved access to books and archival resources on the history and heritage of Dharmaj while parallelly digitising rare books from the collection for preservation. During a preliminary visit to the Shri M. D. Sar Pustkalaya, Dharmaj on 13th June, 2021, team members of DHC found that the place has a historic value for the region. The significant collection of the library and the structure represent the institutional push towards education by the leaders of the region. The experts have proposed three projects:

A. Creating a Digital Archive of the Material at the Library: Identifying the nature of the archive, its value and current accessibility and digitising the valuable resource with the support of external funding.

B. Conservation and Regeneration of the Structure and the Site: Conserving the structure through a series of training and capacity building programs and preparing a maintenance manual to facilitate continuous repairs to extend the life of the structure.

C. Setting up a Resource Center: Enabling the center to become an important anchor for scholars, students and professionals to visit for the purpose of knowing more about the history, architecture, ecology and environment of the region.

Cataloguing the collection

A call for volunteers was announced in June 2021 to support DHC in cataloging the library collection comprising of over 8500 books. Approximately 30% of this collection was reviewed by August 2021 which marked a step further towards identifying the nature and accessibility. Further work on the collection will be taken up once DHC receives funding for the project.



M D Sarvajanik Pustakalay at Dharmaj (photographs by CHC, CRDF)

Owner's Guide to Conservation

The project is an effort to channel the existing awareness of heritage to actual conservation efforts in Dharmaj. A set of conservation guidelines will be specifically designed for residents and diaspora of Dharmaj who wish to upgrade their houses in a way that preserves and enhances the heritage value of the building. CHC and Avichal Heritage Foundation acknowledge that many residents are aware of the significance of heritage assets that form an integral part of the character and identity of Dharmaj and want to make a positive contribution towards safeguarding them for present and future generations.

1. Ongoing Activity

Following the Directed Research projects (DRP) conducted by the Masters in Conservation and Regeneration (MCR) and the Masters in Architectural History and Research (AHR) students over the past two years, the team will commence the preparation of a Dharmaj Heritage Charter for citizens wanting to conserve their properties.



Heritage building in Dharmaj (photograph by CHC, CRDF)

1. Outreach Activities by DHC

(A). Meet at Dharmaj
26th and 27th August 2022

A two-day event was organised by DHC at various sites in Dharmaj with the support and cooperation of Dharmaj Kelavani Mandal. The event included the following range of activities to engage visitors, local communities and young students.

Open House at CEPT Conservation Site Schools

Activities undertaken at the two Conservation Site Schools were displayed in addition to research on safeguarding and repair of Timber Architecture in Dharmaj, Research on family migration histories in Dharmaj, Directed Research Project, Masters in Conservation and Regeneration, Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University.



Open house at CEPT Conservation Site Schools (photographs by Zeus Pithawalla)

V. Outreach Activities by DHC

Young Heritage Explorers Program (YHEP), Dharmaj

YHEP, designed and conceptualised by Gauri Bharat, CHC, CRDF, aims to introduce and educate young people about the significance of heritage sites and the role of history and heritage conservation in our contemporary lives.

The program was conducted with students of H.M. Patel English Medium School, Dharmaj at Shri M.D. Sarvajanik Pustkalay (Public Library in Dharmaj). The program was organised with the support of Dharmaj Kelavani Mandal and funded by the Heirs of Kalidas Jethabhai Patel.

Exhibition of Student work at Shri M D Sarvajanik Pustkalay (Public Library)

Student work done as part of the Masters in Conservation and Regeneration (MCR) and Masters in Architectural History and Research (AHR) programs, CEPT University was exhibited along with an Undergraduate Research Thesis on Transformation of threshold spaces in the residential typology of the historic core of Dharmaj in collaboration with School of Environmental Design and Architecture (SEDA), Navrachana University, Vadodara.



Activities for young students and exhibition of MCR student work at the library (photographs by Zeus Pithawalla)

V. Outreach Activities by DHC

(B). Celebrating the Cultural Heritage of Dharmaj 11th and 12th January 2023

A two-day event was organised by Dharmaj Heritage Collaborative on 11th and 12th January to celebrate the Cultural Heritage of Dharmaj. The event included an open house at both the Site Schools to showcase the extensive work that had been completed, an exhibition of MCR student's work at the clock tower, Heritage walks conducted by the MCR students to share their understanding of the place and activities for school students to create awareness on Heritage Conservation. The meet facilitated interesting conversations between the CHC team, Avichal foundation, owners of heritage properties in Dharmaj and individuals interested in Conservation.

Open House at CEPT Conservation Site Schools

The event included an overview of site school activities undertaken by CHC, a display of related research work by Masters in Conservation and Regeneration (MCR) and Masters in Architectural History and Research (AHR), Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University.



Event at Dharmaj (photographs by Drashti Nakrani and Komal Gandhi)

V. Outreach Activities by DHC

Young Heritage Explorers Program (YHEP)

The program was conducted with students of Tri Gi Mishra Shala and V N High School at Shri M.D. Sarvajanic Pustkalay (Public Library in Dharmaj). The program was organised with the support of Dharmaj Kelavani Mandal and funded by the Heirs of Kalidas Jethabhai Patel.

Heritage walks by CEPT Students

Four heritage walks were curated and conducted by students of the Masters in Conservation and Regeneration (MCR) program, Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University on the following themes:

- Dharmaj in the presence of absence (Curated and conducted by Vishvesh Pathak)
- Timber architecture in Dharmaj (Curated and conducted by Amriteshwari Arun)
- Art Deco in Dharmaj (Curated by Pranjali Mathure, Priyanka Baghel, conducted by Priyanka)
- Tobacco as Industrial Heritage (Curated by Bhanumathi V, conducted by Amriteshwari Arun)

Exhibition of student work at Bhagol (Clock tower square)

A display of academic work from Masters in Conservation and Regeneration (MCR) and Masters in Architectural History and Research (AHR) programs, Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University.



Activities at the library, exhibition at the clock tower, heritage walks by MCR students (photographs by CHC, CRDF)

V. Outreach Activities by DHC

(C). CEPT Conservation Site Schools as a pedagogical tool 19th May 2023

CEPT Conservation Site Schools at Dharmaj are open as prospective sites for studio-based learnings to the tutors of CEPT University. A display of educational, outreach and safeguarding activities conducted by CHC along with potential studio themes for each site led to interesting discussions on the wide-ranging educational potential of these historic buildings and various pedagogical directions that can be undertaken by engaging with them.

The event marked a step forward by the CEPT Conservation Site Schools program towards encouraging collaborative processes and approaches of academic exploration in Architecture and Design, Landscape Design, Urban Studies and Construction Technology.

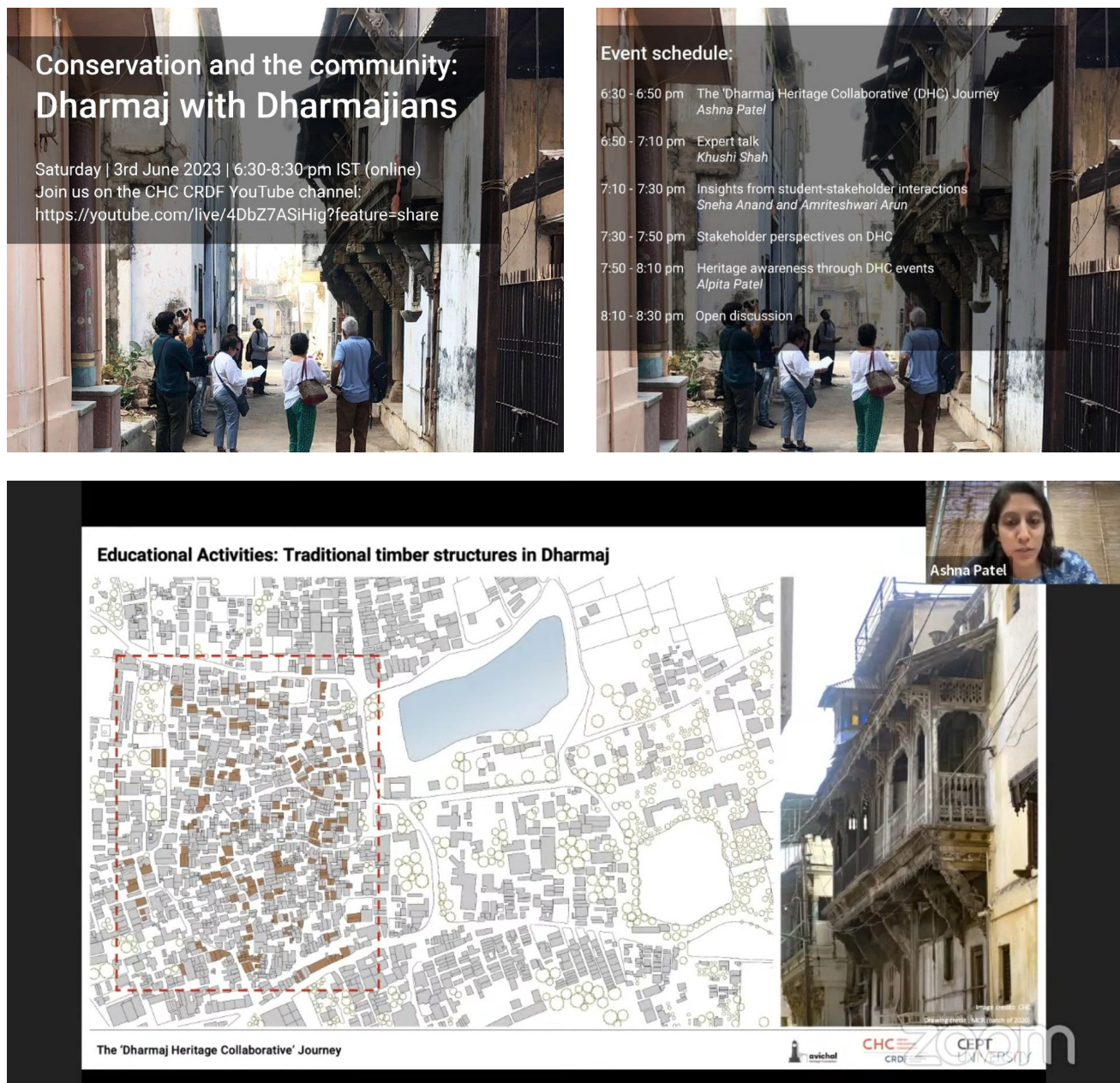


Event at CHC, CRDF (photographs by Drashti Nakrani and Komal Gandhi)

V. Outreach Activities by DHC

(D). Webinar - Conservation and the Community: Dharmaj with Dharmajians 3rd June 2023

Dharmaj Heritage Collaborative invited Dharmajians from all across the globe to join for an insightful webinar that aimed to showcase the work under the initiative, specially focusing on the role of stakeholder-led processes in heritage conservation. CHC along with the faculty and students of CEPT University presented their experiences of engaging with local stakeholders in Dharmaj. Stakeholder perspectives on the work undertaken by DHC and its potential long-term contribution to the village was also shared.



The image shows a promotional graphic for a webinar titled "Conservation and the community: Dharmaj with Dharmajians". The graphic features a background image of a narrow street in Dharmaj with people walking. The text on the graphic includes the title, date (Saturday | 3rd June 2023 | 6:30-8:30 pm IST (online)), and a YouTube link: <https://youtube.com/live/4DbZ7ASiHig?feature=share>.

**Conservation and the community:
Dharmaj with Dharmajians**

Saturday | 3rd June 2023 | 6:30-8:30 pm IST (online)
Join us on the CHC CRDF YouTube channel:
<https://youtube.com/live/4DbZ7ASiHig?feature=share>

Event schedule:

- 6:30 - 6:50 pm The 'Dharmaj Heritage Collaborative' (DHC) Journey
Ashna Patel
- 6:50 - 7:10 pm Expert talk
Khushi Shah
- 7:10 - 7:30 pm Insights from student-stakeholder interactions
Sneha Anand and Amriteshwari Arun
- 7:30 - 7:50 pm Stakeholder perspectives on DHC
- 7:50 - 8:10 pm Heritage awareness through DHC events
Alpita Patel
- 8:10 - 8:30 pm Open discussion

The presentation slide titled "Educational Activities: Traditional timber structures in Dharmaj" shows a map of Dharmaj with a red dashed line indicating the area of focus. A small inset image shows a traditional timber structure. The slide also includes the text "The 'Dharmaj Heritage Collaborative' Journey" and logos for avichal, CHC, CRDF, and CEPT University.

Educational Activities: Traditional timber structures in Dharmaj

Ashna Patel

The 'Dharmaj Heritage Collaborative' Journey

avichal CHC CRDF CEPT UNIVERSITY

Presentation by Ashna Patel, CHC, CRDF

V. Outreach Activities by DHC

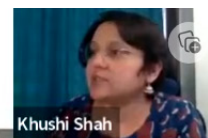
Understanding the Place

Week 1 to 3, Field work in Dharmaj– measuring, recording, observations & Mapping



Source: MCR, S23

Presentation by Khushi Shah, CEPT University



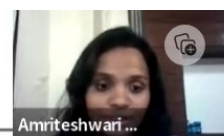
Khushi Shah



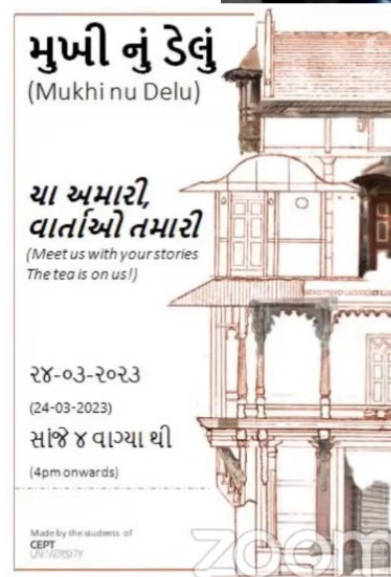
Source: CHC, CRDF

Importance

- Stakeholder consultation aims to build relationships based on mutual trust and benefits.
- The long-term effectiveness of a project can depend on its relationships with stakeholders, ensuring commitment for any future strategies and challenges.
- It increases accountability, and responsibility towards any project. It ensures a long-term success of the project.
- Accountability shows interest towards heritage, raising awareness;



Amriteshwari...



Presentation by Amriteshwari Arun, Student of Master's in Conservation and Regeneration, CEPT University

Modes of engagement

Tutors: Jayashree

Sneha Anand

Teaching Associate: Zeus Pithawalla

ACTIVITY ONE: What do you like? What do you prefer?

An activity where participants had to put stickers on aspects they liked in built structures that acted as a trigger.



INFERENCES

- Women were in favor of modern style houses as they were easier to maintain and keep clean. Children were keen on this as well, as they thought it looked "nicer" than old homes.
- People preferred to demolish their houses as wood was hard to maintain. A lot of houses had termite infestations.
- Wood and wooden parts from these houses are resold to the other houses.
- Many houses were left abandoned and vacant due to the need of expansion.
- Integrating modern facilities was difficult, so it was easier to construct a new house by abandoning or demolishing the house.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. There is a lack of knowledge on how to maintain wooden structures.
2. There is a general need of expansion of houses seen.
3. Integrating modern facilities is a requirement that seems to be needed.

An activity where participants explained their aesthetic preferences and connections to built structures

Source of pictures from author and team members



INFERENCES

- There was an evident inclination towards ornamentation motifs and designs that are seen across different elements.
- Many people said their houses retained these features even though they had reconstructed with cement.
- People across all ages recognized and related to the ornamentation on doors, windows and columns.
- Heritage homes is an idea that people have in their minds.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. There is a value associated with the decorative elements.
2. It is given a symbolic, aesthetic and associative values.

ACTIVITY TWO: Tracing routes

An activity where participants had to trace their pathways



INFERENCES

- There are clear distinctions in active zones within the village
- Schools are located on the outskirts of the village, the children then use the primary roads to get to their schools
- Locals were able to pinpoint and relate to the locations they cross

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Activity was based on the map re-work
2. Centralized and decentralized institutions, be it schools or other places in the village

Group: Amriteshwari Arun, Anagha L, Bhanumathi VV, Priyanka Baghel, Sneha Anand, Sneha Gireesh, Vishvesh Pathak

Presentation by Sneha Anand, CEPT University

Initiatives by Avichal Heritage Foundation

Reviving the Rhodesia House

Step 2: Adaptive reuse – Heritage Walks



Image credits: Avichal Heritage Foundation



Alpa Patel

Presentation by Alpa Patel, Avichal Heritage Foundation

Upcoming Activities

1. Publication on Dharmaj

CHC will be working on a publication that collates all information that has been collected through students work, outreach and educational activities and on-site work by CHC at Dharmaj.

2. Digital documentation of wooden houses in Dharmaj

As part of the Endangered Wooden Architecture Program, CHC will be identifying and digitally documenting wooden houses in Dharmaj. The pilot project on Mukhi Delu has been completed.



Street in Dharmaj (photograph by CHC, CRDF)

Data collected

1. Masters in Conservation and Regeneration (MCR), CEPT University June 2023 - July 2023

A. Documentation work

Photographs, Measured drawings, Condition mapping, Stakeholder consultation and Architectural analysis of:

Foundation Studio (2021)

- M D Sarvajani Pustakalay
- Athamni Khadki
- Aurobindo Bhuvan

View students' work [here](#).

B. Architectural Conservation Studio (2023)

- Kalidas Jethabhai House
- Mukhi Delu
- Shri Krishna Bhavan

View students' work [here](#).

C. Urban Regeneration Studio (2021)

- Historical timeline of the development of Dharmaj
- Social narrative of Dharmaj and the Charotar region
- Maps showing:
 - Settlement fabric
 - Street networks
 - Cultural heritage assets and landmarks
 - Building use and current occupancy status
 - Architectural styles
 - Building heights

View students' work [here](#).

2. CEPT Winter School Heritage and Digital Methods of Documentation

- Aerial Documentation of Dharmaj
- Street elevations
- Unfolded elevations and views of Kalidas Jethabhai House

View the Winter School booklet [here](#).

Volunteer work

- Cataloguing of 2800+ books from the library collection
- Analysis on nature of library collection (30% of the collection)

3. Directed Research Projects (DRP)

Masters in Conservation and Regeneration (MCR), Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University

- A framework for an owner's guide to conservation of traditional timber structures in Dharmaj (Amriteshwari Arun, 2022)
- Art Deco in Dharmaj: Mapping and Inventory (Priyanka Baghel, 2022)
- Cultural Heritage Tourism as a Potential Tool for Regeneration in Dharmaj, Gujarat (Sacheen Pai Raikar, 2022)
- Material Characterisation of Kalidas Jethabhai House, Dharmaj (Jigar Rathod, 2023)

Masters in Architectural History and Research (AHR), Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University

- Migrant narratives and their impact on the evolution and transformation of Dharmaj (Meena AL, 2022)
- Tracing the history of Art Deco in Dharmaj (Pranjali Mathure, 2022)
- Artisans of Dharmaj: History of Timber Architecture through the Lens of the Makers (Sriparna Seal, 2022)
- Cultural flows and its influence on the Architecture of Dharmaj (Sushmita Pai, 2023)

Bachelor's thesis in collaboration with School of Environmental Design and Architecture, Navrachana University, Vadodara

Understanding the transformation of threshold spaces in the residences of Dharmaj (Kamya Patel, 2022)

4. CEPT Professional Programs Course (CPP)

Non-Invasive Methods of Testing Historic Buildings

- Hands-on testing : Non-Invasive tests on Kalidas Jethabhai House and Mukhi Delu using ultrasonic pulse velocity tests (UPV), rebar locator, rebound hammer, moisture meters and borescope.
- Tests at CEPT Laboratory: Compressive strength tests on prisms, timber samples, bricks and mud mortar samples collected from the Site Schools.

Credits

DHC team: Dr. Jigna Desai, Ashna Patel, Audrey Alvares, Nigar Shaikh, Dr. Gauri Bharat, Mrudula Mane, Zeus Pithawalla, Saatvika Pancholi, Drashti Nakrani, Komal Gandhi and G R Sreeram from CHC and Alpita Patel from Avichal Heritage Foundation.

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We thank Chetan Gajjar and his team for safeguarding and Vikikumar Vaghari and his team for their work towards the careful dismantling of dilapidated parts of the building. We also appreciate and acknowledge the local community in Dharmaj for their continued support towards all our work. We thank Nidhi Patel and Dnyanesh Divekar for volunteering their time during various stages of on-site work at the CEPT Conservation Site Schools.

We thank Aastha Desai, Aditi Dalia, Jahanvi Sinha, Juhi Bafna, Khushboo Patel, Nidhi Patel, Purvi Dabhi, Priyanka Baghel, Soumyaa Babaria, Srina Desai, Stuti Pandya, Tanmay Bhavsar and Zalak Pandya for volunteering their time and skills to catalogue the library collection. We thank Amriteshwari Arun, Bhanumathi V, Jigar Rathod, Pranjali Mathure, Priyanka Baghel, Sushmita Pai and Vishvesh Pathak for their time and efforts for the event ‘Celebrating the Cultural Heritage of Dharmaj’ in January 2023.

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Write to us:

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