TRANSQUEBAR

Transforming cities through heritage preservation and places for people
INTACH Pondicherry
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Today our cities face a multitude of challenges and some among them are preserving our architectural heritage and creating public places for people. This little book gives one an idea of what can be done from examples achieved in Tranquebar with support from people and most importantly the local Government. The projects have been carried out by INTACH Pondicherry and persons closely associated with it. For more information log on to: www.intachpondy.org

This book shows some examples of restoration of heritage buildings, architectural façade control of new structures in the heritage precincts as well as creation of public places for people. There are also digital simulations of buildings that need restoration. One can see that even seemingly ‘hopeless’ buildings can be restored and infused with life!

It is hoped that this publication will encourage similar work in our country.
Tranquebar
Tranquebar

Tharangampadi’ (also known as Tranquebar), or the ‘land of the singing waves’ has a rich history of several cultural legacies that influenced the co-habitation and development of various communities over centuries along the Coromandel Coast.

One of the characteristics that sets Tranquebar apart from the neighbouring towns and villages is the Danish colonial architecture - the houses, villas and the fort that remind the visitor of former Danish presence. There are also Tamil vernacular streets and houses. The town is perceived as unique because of this architectural setting which is an outcome of a synthesis between Danish and local Tamil vernacular. However, this unique architecture today stands endangered because of development pressures and lack of sensitivity and appreciation.

In the Indian context, where urban heritage preservation is an exception than a rule, Tranquebar has covered good ground in this area. The major players have been the Neemrana Hotels, Bestseller Foundation, National Museum of Denmark, Tamil Nadu Tourism Department and the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India and INTACH Pondicherry. As can be seen from the various projects illustrated in this book, all these organizations have contributed towards preserving heritage buildings and improving the urban environment.
Some of the following examples demonstrate that even highly dilapidated heritage structures can be restored, extended, modernized and adapted to contemporary uses like hotels, shops, museums, residences or whatever other uses one may have in mind. The basic principles of restoration are to use, as much as possible, traditional technology and materials that were employed in the original construction. Modern amenities like good bathrooms, kitchen and air conditioning can easily be incorporated in the design. The end result invariably, if done well, can please both owners and visitors. Often we are asked how long a building can last after restoration – if given basic care and maintenance these buildings can last decades and centuries.
RESTORATIONS
Bungalow on the Beach
Year: 2004
Sudhir Mulji & Neemrana Hotels
8 room hotel
Architect: Ajit and Ratna Koujalgi
(Restoration and extension area/cost: 1700 sqm / Rs. 15 million)
Bungalow on the Beach
Bungalow on the Beach
Bungalow on the Beach
Bungalow on the Beach
Goldsmith Street
Year: 2007
Bestseller, 3 room guest house
(Restoration and extension area/cost: 1000sqm /Rs.3 million)
Nayak House
Nayak House
Goldsmith Street
Year: 2007
Bestseller, office and cultural Center
(Restoration and extension area/cost: 1700 sqm /Rs.15 million)
The Houses on Goldsmith Street
The Houses on Goldsmith Street
HOUSE # 3

The Houses on Goldsmith Street
HOUSE # 5

The Houses on Goldsmith Street
Gate House
Year: 2009
Neemrana Hotels
8 room guest house
Architect: Ajit and Ratna Koujalgi
Restoration and extension area/cost: 1700 sqm /Rs.15 million)
Gate House
Governor’s Bungalow  
Year: 2012  
Tamil Nadu Tourism  
Funding National Museum of Denmark,  
Cultural Centre  
(Restoration and extension area/cost: 750 sqm /Rs.22 million)
Governor’s Bungalow
Governor’s Bungalow
Governor’s Bungalow
Governor’s Bungalow
Governor’s Bungalow
Governor’s Bungalow
All our cities in India are being reshaped in favour of motorized traffic and people have no proper and safe place to walk or congregate – unhassled by vehicles, noise and pollution. The following pictures show some examples. We hope that in future more urban areas are won back for people – where pedestrian has the priority, especially in commercial streets.
URBAN INTERVENTIONS
Year: 2011
Department of Tourism
Government of Tamil Nadu
(Restoration and extension area/cost: 8500 sqm /Rs.33 million)
The Parade Ground
The Parade Ground
Spiritual Centre, King’s Street
URBAN INTERVENTION PROPOSAL