

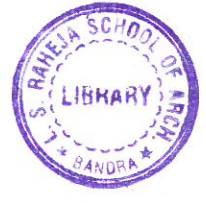
₹400.00 | ISSN 0975-0177

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JOURNAL OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



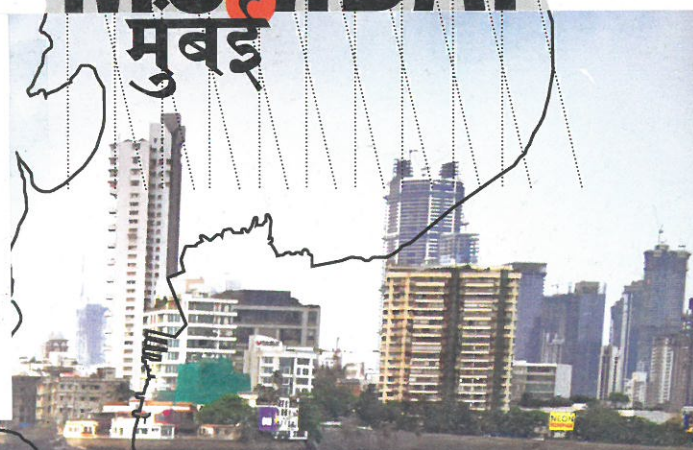
MUMBAI

मुंबई

L. S. RAHEJA SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

FACULTY ARTICLES

- 1. Ar. Shilpa Chandawarkar Page No. 15-18
- 2. Ar. Saylee Soundalgekar Page No. 73-78
- 3. Ar. Trupti Talmale Page No. 79-83
- 4. Ar. Urmila Rajadhyaksha Page No. 92-95



- tribute |
- 12** REMEMBERING MAHESH TARACHAND PALIWAL
Dr Aarti Grover
- mumbai |
- 15** READING MUMBAI
Shilpa Gaurish Chandawarkar
- 19** CITY | LANDSCAPE: A RUMINATION
Sriganesh Rajendran
- 28** THE RESILIENT RIVER: REJUVENATION OF MITHI RIVER
Priyajit Pandit
- 34** 'COLONIAL FANTASY' TO CONTEMPORARY HUBRIS
ONE MORE ATTEMPT AT RECLAIMING BACKBAY
Hussain Indorewala
- 40** MANAGING CITY'S ENVIRONMENT
IN CONVERSATION WITH DR PRASAD MODAK
- 44** SEEKING ANSWERS, CONSTRUCTING NEW QUESTIONS
IN CONVERSATION WITH RAVINDRA PUNDE
- 52** MIRRORED MODERNITIES
MOVIES AND MYTH / MARINE DRIVE AND DHARAVI
Rohan Shivkumar
- 58** MANTO AND THE CITY CALLED 'BOMBAY'
Amrita Kaur Slatch & Mohammed Esa Shaikh
- 66** RE-READING MUMBAI: THE LANDSCAPE OF NARRATIVES
Nisha Nair-Gupta
- 70** THE PARSİ BAUGS
HOW INDIA'S SMALL COMMUNITY HAS CLAIMED ITS SPACE
Farishte Irani

- 73** EXPERIENCING PUBLICNESS
Saylee Soundalgekar
- 79** PUBLIC REALM: MUMBAI
Trupti Talmale
- 84** DOCUMENTING HISTORIC URBAN LANDSCAPE
IN CONVERSATION WITH ABHA NARAIN LAMBAH
- 92** FROM LANDSCAPES TO LANDSCAPE PRACTICES
WOVEN INVISIBLY IN THE CITY FABRIC
Urmila Rajadhyaksha
- landscape conservation |
- 96** NURTURING CULTURE
IN CONVERSATION WITH SHIRAZ ALLIBHAI
- competition |
- 102** URBAN DESIGN CHALLENGE 2018
A DESIGN IDEAS COMPETITION
Anamika Bagchi
- seeing the unseen |
- 112** THE STORY OF FIG
Mike Shanahan
- book review |
- 116** TRAVERSING THROUGH THE "SEN'TREES' OF MUMBAI"
SEN'TREES' OF MUMBAI
Review by Khushboo Adhiya
- 119** THE ARCHITECTURE OF LOVE AND LONGING
GARDENS OF LOVE: STORIES OF A MARRIAGE
Review by Keki N. Daruwalla

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PRINTING ADVISOR Atul Naahar Paramount Printographics



REGISTRATION NUMBER: DELENG/2000/2943 | PRINT DURATION: Quarterly, 4 issues per year
EDITORIAL AND SUBSCRIPTION OFFICE: C-589, Vikas Puri, New Delhi 110 018 INDIA
TEL: +91-11-28547652, 41584375 | E-MAIL: lajournalindia@gmail.com
WEBSITE: www.lajournal.in | ISSN 0975-0177

OWNED, PRINTED & PUBLISHED BY Brijender S. Dua, C-589, Vikas Puri, New Delhi 110 018 INDIA
2018.12 | PRINTED AT Kaveri Printers, 4634/19-A, Daryaganj, Delhi 110 002 INDIA

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- 121** BORN OF A DEEP LOVE FOR PEOPLE AND PLACE
BRINDA SOMAYA: WORKS & CONTINUITIES
Review by Dr Aruna Ramani Grover
- garden calendar |
- 124** AUTUMN-WINTER
Grotech Landscape Developers Pvt. Ltd.
- 126** AUTHORS+CONTRIBUTORS
ICONS: MUMBAI

Shilpa Gaurish Chandawarkar

READING MUMBAI

ये तेरा घर, ये मेरा घर,
किसी को देखना हो अगर
तो पहले आके मांग ले,
मेरी नज़र, तेरी नज़र

—‘साथ साथ’, १९८२ | गीतकार जावेद अख्तर

*To truly experience my abode,
you would need to see it through my eyes.*

—‘Saath Saath’, 1982 | Lyricist: Javed Akhtar

As an introduction to an issue which focuses on the ecological and socio-cultural nuances of Mumbai’s landscape, the intent of this piece is to derive frameworks that introduce the readers to the multiple aspects that constitute and define these attributes.

An intricate patchwork, Mumbai’s geography is the result of the fabric of seven separate islands woven tightly together with threads of rivers, lakes, hills, creeks and estuaries interlaced with mangroves, paddy fields and trees, further embellished with built forms signifying different slices of the city’s native communities and imprints of its colonizers. An elaborate network of roads, running parallel to the steady rail infrastructure, adds a layer of patterns to this fabric.



Surrounded by the seas and defined by the landforms, Mumbai, the 'maximum city'—a melting pot of cultures, attitudes, histories, and geographies—is a constant, complex conversation between the space and its people, built heritage, roads and vehicles, books and art and films and so on. This is the city of dreams for a country that houses a population of over a billion people, with its tangible chaos and intangible spirit.

A comprehensive reading of its landscape therefore necessitates an exploration of the aspects that are major contributors to the shaping of its environment. No study of the city would be complete without its people. As much as the people have shaped the city (literally through a series of reclamations, and figuratively through its undying 'Mumbai-never-sleeps' attitude), so it has shaped its people. Some of them have grown with the city, changed their lifestyles and occupations as the city changed, some held on to their social and cultural roots, and some, though very few in number, seem to have stood still through the passage of time (a reference in point would be the Parsi Baugs of Mumbai). The people of Mumbai would perhaps constitute the most interesting case study in the subject of human geography.

Henceforward, then, life in Mumbai can be better studied through its public realm, in the interactions in the space beneath a flyover, or on the corner of a footpath in a busy marketplace, or on a traffic island in high-density suburban Mumbai. The story of the shaping of the landscape of Mumbai will probably be best furthered by conversing with the architect and urban planner who chose to practice in the city and learnt enough of its problems to go back to the roots and set up a school of learning (the city is our laboratory, he believes), or the environmentalist who has worked globally in numerous cities dealing with their issues and is hoping to apply his experiences to his home city. The city's landscape has also found visibility on the global map through the works of a conservation architect who loves the buildings of the old city and has dedicated more than a decade of her professional life in making the cultural landscape precinct of Mumbai visible to the world, or the activist/architect who uses the potential of Mumbai's people to engage its public spaces, or perhaps the artists who used Mumbai to inspire them.

Speaking of the city and art, Bollywood is also quintessentially Mumbai—numerous films have been made in an attempt to mirror the city's soul and these will best describe the relationship between Mumbai, the land, and Mumbai, the people. The city has enacted different roles in these films—be it the setting, the villain or even the protagonist. Similar is the case with books that have been written about the city, in the city or for the city by writers who used Mumbai and even its trees, as a setting or as characters for their stories. The less-credited essence of the city, perhaps, lies within its natural features



- Urbanized Areas
- Railway Lines
- Major Roads
- Railway Property
- Airports
- Defence, Ports
- Gardens & Parks
- Mangroves & Tidal Flats
- Hills, Forests & National Parks
- Beaches
- Streams & Creeks
- Lakes



MAP | NATURE IN THE CITY

The map has been developed on the basis of the city map by Survey of India Map, 2005 and P.K. Das & Associates, 2011
Map drawn by: Uttam Singh Negi & M Shah Alam

FACING PAGE PHOTOGRAPHS

TOP TO BOTTOM

Near Hanuman Tekdi, Ghatkopar Hill.

Rocky shore at Haji Ali Dargah looking towards the city skyline.

Gateway of India and the waterfront at Apollo-Bunder area.

An old banyan tree, Juhu.

Photos credit: bsd+grafiniti



ARABIAN SEA

THANE CREEK

NAVI MUMBAI

such as the rivers, the estuaries, the caves, and the hills that have celebrated the city and its environment before they were literally 'swept under the carpet' of so-called development.

Several attempts at writing about this city led me to the conclusion that a generic perspective would hardly do it justice. One starts questioning the very term 'city's landscape' and what really constitutes it. Every exploration of this city is a perception by itself, based at a point in space and time, making every narrative emerge from a kaleidoscopic range of experiences that enable an understanding of this city. It only felt right, therefore, to remain true to the multitudes of lenses of Mumbai, and put together and present in the form of this journal the myriad facets of my city to the readers. Hence, the two lines at the beginning of this piece—every contribution in this issue is Mumbai through one turn of the kaleidoscope, and would need to be seen as such.

And one more couplet to keep with you while you peruse this volume...

हर साँस में कहानी है,
हर साँस में अफसाना है,
ये शहर बड़ा पुराना है...

—'मया मेमसाब', १९९३ | गीतकार गुलज़ार

*This city has breathed a thousand lives
under the blanket of the changing skies.
With every page a new story to unfold
the ocean of memory this city does hold.*

—'Maya Memsaab', 1993 | Lyricist: Gulzar
English translation by Simar Kindra

The number of patterns and compositions created through a kaleidoscope is effectively without limit... so are the ways of seeing the city of Mumbai, as are the people who have participated in its constantly evolving landscape. The essays, interviews and articles included here personify just a few patterns seen through the city's kaleidoscope. A few more issues would be needed at the very least to comprehensively represent the fascinating city called Mumbai.



↑↑↑↑
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

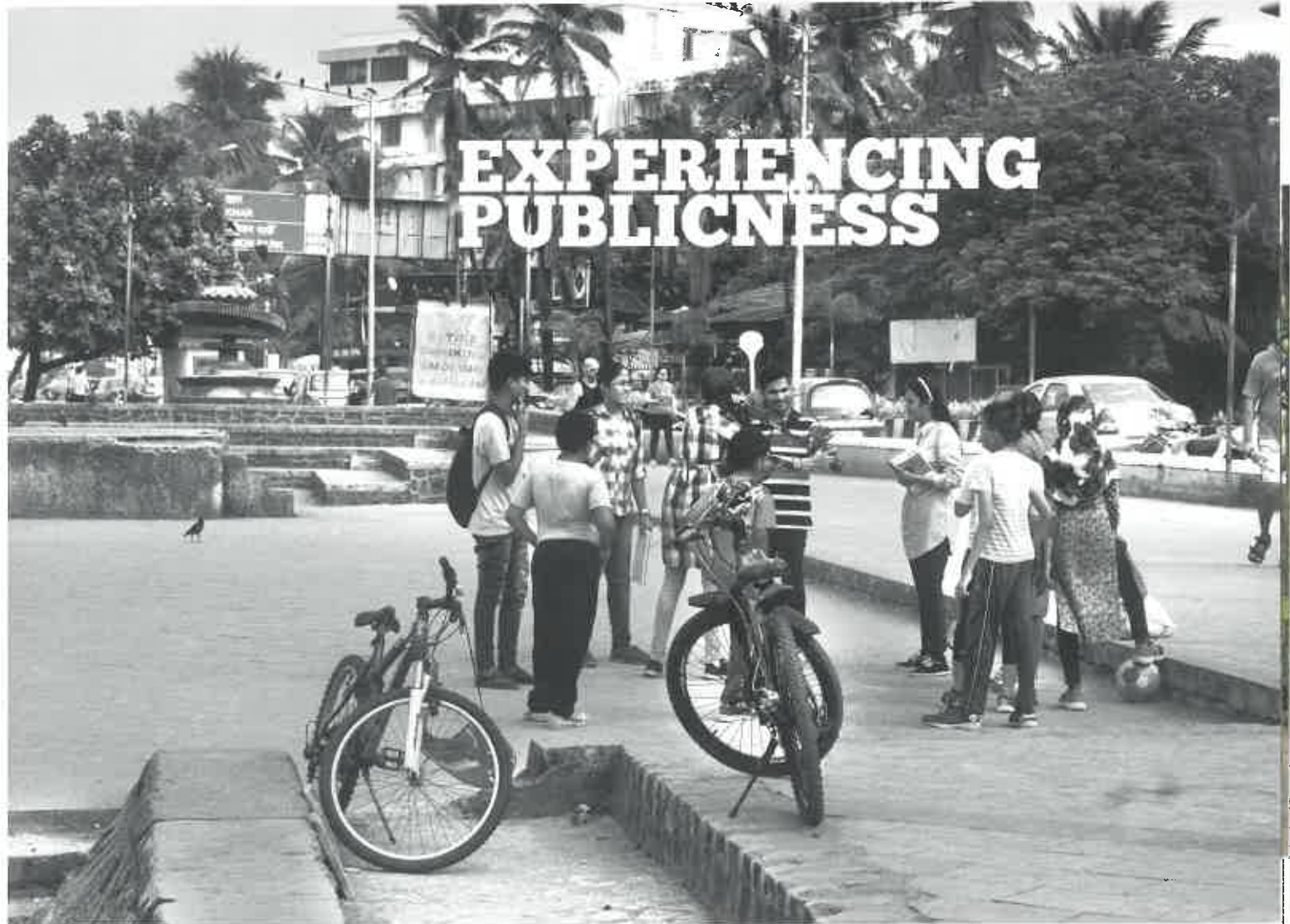
Dense mangroves near Vikhroli [a suburb of Mumbai], Juhu Beach and Prithvi Theatre
Photos credit: bsd+grafiniti



Photos credit: bsd+grafiniti

Saylee Soundalgekar

EXPERIENCING PUBLICNESS



Any city breathes through its trees, through the water that flows through its streams and rivers and through its open spaces. The open spaces form a 'network' for the functioning of the city — a network for the human interventions. A city adopts and adheres to the altering environments around this network making itself habitable. So, it is often said that the state of open spaces reflects the state and quality of life within the city. Amidst its daily chaos, the city of Mumbai lacks any open space planning as an organized network. In this context, a couple of projects in the recent past that stand apart where the neglected open spaces have been transformed into vibrant places by the collective and

collaborative efforts of activists, citizens, professionals, authorities and politicians are the the Kaifi Azmi Park, Juhu and the Carter Road Promenade (Sangeet Samrat Naushad Ali Marg), Bandra. Designed by P. K. Das and Associates, these are part of a larger vision plan to augment the 'publicness' of open spaces, the idea that was carried forward in a public exhibition on Open Spaces of Mumbai held in March 2012.

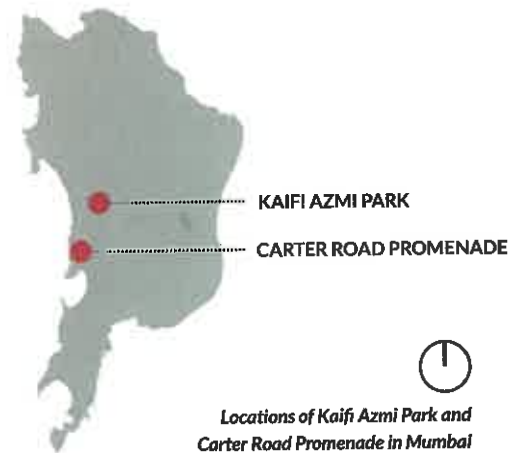
KAIFI AZMI PARK | JUHU, MUMBAI

CLIENT: RESIDENTS OF JUHU
 PROMOTER: SHABANA AZMI, MP (RAJYA SABHA)
 LAND: BRIHAN MUMBAI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
 AREA: 7000 SQMT

The linear neighbourhood park, located along the Irla Nullah, is surrounded by an educational campus and residential buildings. It is conceptualized as a part of a series of open spaces in the neighbourhood including the Kishore Kumar Baug and the Vijay Tendulkar Rangmanch. It is an important component in the Vision Juhu Plan which has envisioned the suburb to have a series of connected open spaces along its natural features. Introvert in character, the design of the park — sheltered, enclosed with a sense of security is in contrast to the flanking Carter Road. Designed for community fitness and well being, the park is used by distinct set of people — joggers, brisk walkers, office goers — and the leisure walkers, students, the 'knowledge-givers', and the ones lost in thought.

The walkways are lined with aromatic plants, medicinal herbs and flowering shrubs. The pergolas enclose spaces that are utilized for diverse activities such as yoga, personal boxing sessions, exercising. The amphitheater is a gathering space for the community and amateur as well as professional performances. The sparse foliage of trees with open branching pattern and slender trunks allows for visual linkage with most of the spaces within and outside the park, an inviting attribute of the design.

With universal design, the place amalgamates aesthetics with safety. While few of these open spaces are designed, others have been shaped by people and their activities. Such places in the city imbibe a sense of belongingness among its citizens, and make the city livable.



Locations of Kaifi Azmi Park and Carter Road Promenade in Mumbai



↑ →
 THIS & FACING PAGE
 General views of the Kaifi Azmi Park

“Networking public spaces is not just a physical activity, it is about social networking. When you start connecting spaces, you connect people because you engage people in the process of its development and networking and this has been an enriching experience for many of us as activists in Mumbai.”

— P. K. Das, Architect, Activist and Urban Planner



CARTER ROAD | BANDRA, MUMBAI

CLIENT: PROJECT UNDERTAKEN BY BANDRA WEST RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

PROMOTER: SHABANA AZMI, MP (RAJYA SABHA)

WATER FRONT LENGTH: 1.25 KM

CLIENT: BRIHAN MUMBAI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION



The 1.25 km long promenade that runs north-south along the water's edge was once considered a dumpyard of the suburb, the mangrove-lined edge supposed to have no aesthetic or ecological value and people found it unsafe to use the space for any recreational activity. It was in the early 90s that architect P. K. Das along with the local citizens decided to convert this neglected edge into one of the city's most popular promenades. Financial support came in the form of MP funds from Shabana Azmi and these efforts soon gave rise to a city-level public space replete with a linear pathway unifying the water, the regenerated mangroves and the rocky beach, punctuated with seating plazas, informal amphitheatres and play areas.



THIS & FACING PAGE

The rocky beach and mangroves form important backdrops of the Carter Road Promenade development

“A plan that redefines the ‘notion’ of open spaces to go beyond gardens and recreational grounds – to include the vast, diverse natural assets of the city, including rivers, creeks, lakes, ponds, mangroves, wetlands, beaches and the incredible seafronts.”

— P. K. Das, Architect, Activist and Urban Planner



The temporality of the sea through the daily tidal variations and through seasons, ironically, is the sole constant backdrop against the drama of amalgamation of human interventions with the natural environment. As one moves from the southern end of the promenade towards the north, the developed public space shows a diversity of character in the types of public open spaces ranging from the environmentally fragile spaces to hard core circulation areas.

The dog park with children and adults celebrating the co-existence of fauna with adjacent mangroves, the kids’ play area, followed by a palm hedge stop, capture and filter the evening sun rays adding immensely to the variety of performances. And just when the marshes seem inaccessible, the waves uncover a rocky path that walks inwards into the sea. The temporality of the space is best appreciated here. Exposed during the low tide, the water-leaves behind its presence in the rock crevices.



The proposal protects the sea against wanton dumping and abusive activities that claims the green spaces of the city. The amphitheater, the open air gym, the tree grove, the inbuilt board game table tops and the large cricket bat share a common intermediate backdrop of the rocks and in the front lay the eat outs and clubs that speak of the vibe of an urban hangout place.

Yet again, towards the northern edge, as the promenade ends, the Khar Danda with the fresh Bombay duck dried on the nylon ropes and the primitive wooden boats anchored over the sea are a reminiscent of the days that saw the riches of the fishermen (*koli*). The linearity of the city overlapped with that of the open spaces leads to a design that is humane in scale and easy to identify with.

These kind of culturally active open spaces that blur the distinction between affordability and accessibility, I believe, are the markers of the 'publicness' and the community cohesiveness that the city needs to replenish.

↑
The redesigned Carter Road Promenade is a vibrant urban hangout place today



All images courtesy the Author

Trupti Talmale

PUBLIC REALM

MUMBAI

Mumbai, the city whose population is expanding exponentially, is getting flooded with soaring high rise towers, connecting road networks, kilometers long flyovers, traffic guiding roundabouts / islands, pedestrian sky bridges and many such unaccountable construction elements. While the city is rapidly growing vertically as well as horizontally, its open space seem to be shrinking at a rapid pace as well. Open spaces in Mumbai are often either inaccessible, offer only partial access or have been encroached upon. Gardens, recreational grounds, clubs and gymkhanas, reserved greens within the gated communities presently account to most of the open spaces in Mumbai.

As per the report prepared by Observer Research Foundation, out of a total of 3780 acres of public open spaces in Mumbai, 422.5 acres are in the form of clubs and gymkhanas while another 242 acres are those which had been given to various trusts affiliated to politicians from 1995-1999. In all these account to 17.5% of the city's open spaces that can be accessed only by those who are members and are out of bounds for ordinary Mumbaikars. Other than gardens and grounds Mumbai has vast and diverse natural resources like coastline, river, creeks, mangroves, wetlands, etc. that are obvious potential open spaces to be included in the DP plan.

Does the fast pace life of this city where people need to travel long distances to reach even their daily work places allows them to take out quality time to be spend in these recreational spaces? Is there a need to identify spaces that can be treated as open greens which itself becomes the route of travel and adds quality to the travel time? Can the residual spaces below fly overs or sky bridges, stretches along pedestrian ways or traffic islands outside of inside the gated communities become an add on layer of networking greens to the hard core concrete layer of roads and buildings? Can the left over or unused spaces be sincerely put to their best potential usage in the benefit of the general public to improve the quality of their day to day life? Can we provide spaces which prove that recreation is not just a 'weekend affair' but it's an important part of our daily routine? Can we scoop out or mark out such unbarred convivial spaces within the hard core city where people can be sociable and festive?

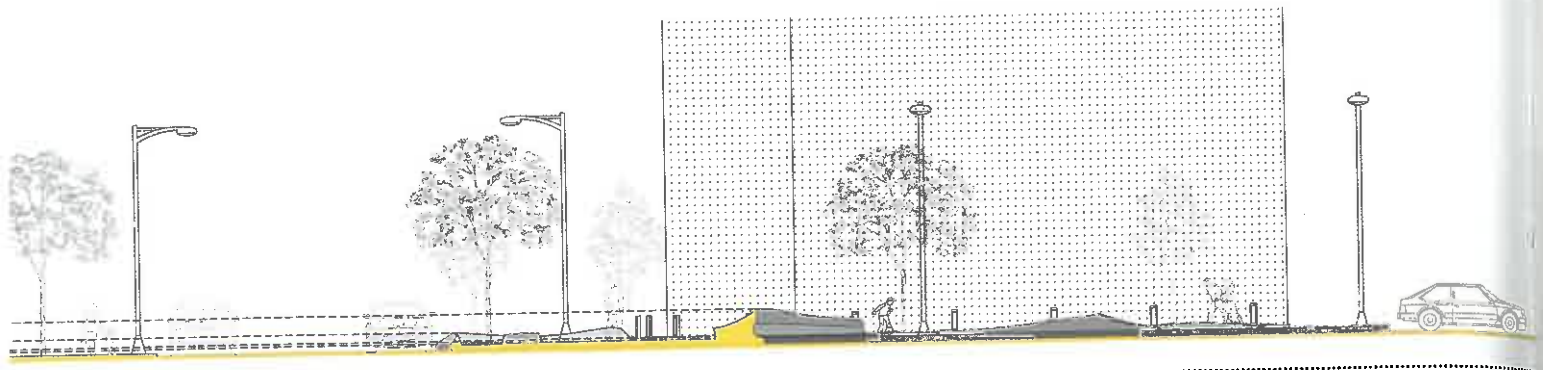
Here, we focus upon three small projects within the city that have started looking upon residual spaces as the potentials to creatively convert them into recreational spaces.



Locations of the projects
in the city of Mumbai

Pedestrian walkway at Gokhale Road, Prabhadevi | PROJECT ARCHITECT: **STUDIO EMERGENCE**

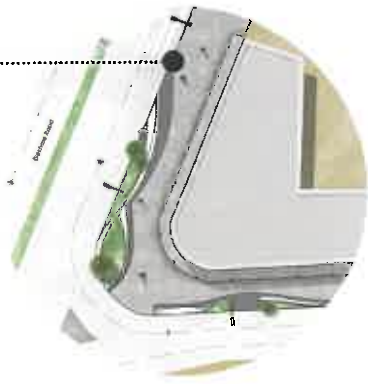
The site is located on a strategic location in terms of connectivity and local amenities. This route is taken by the majority of the population who wish to travel from the central side of the city to the business hub of lower Parel and



SECTION



↑↑↗ Night views of the designed Pedestrian walkway at Gokhale Road with edge treatment, seating, lighting and planting



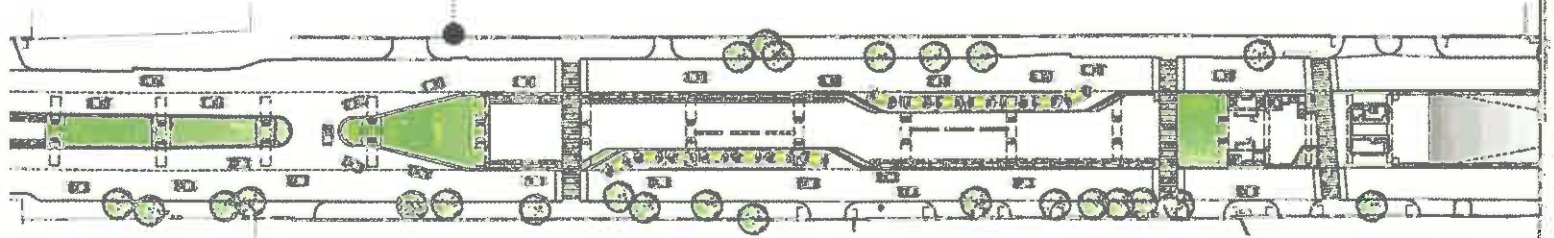
Worli, hence the visibility of the intervention is very high and vantage points for design could be obtained that helped in designing the space. Due to the largely surrounding residential zone and nearby schools in the vicinity, the footfall on the pavement is very high.

The intervention was designed keeping this in mind wherein the major area on the pavement was reserved for the people to walk on and the sides which were usually used for bike parking was utilized for plantation of trees and shrubs which also creates a respite for people from the polluting vehicles.

Public space under the fly over at Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel

PROJECT ARCHITECT: **STUDIO POMEGRANATE**

The Fergusson flyover was built in 2001 to relieve congestion at the junction of Pandurang Budhkar Marg, and Senapati Bapat Marg. At the time, Phoenix Mills had a bowling alley, a few offices, and restaurants. The other mills in the area were



↑
Master Plan - Phase-1 for
the space under fly over at
Senapati Bapat Marg

lying defunct. Today, with every kind of establishment on this road, the area is marred with insufficient infrastructure, and is saturated. The most affected by this are pedestrians, who squeeze themselves into leftover pockets, stumble on uneven footpaths, if they even exist. First phase of this project looks at efficiently adding public space to kick-start the process of positive urban change.

Work on design of the stretch started in March 2016 with a thorough study of the area. A sample count of vehicles, interviews, visual inspections, and measurements were taken at every junction, level change, crossing, and physical divisions. On the basis of this study, interventions were decided to be given in three parts — the junction to a free U-turn, the U-turn to the end of clear walkable space, and an additional space inaccessible from the contiguous space under the flyover.

The junction to U-turn space is constantly in the throng of cars, this space will have a designated spot for the police, and the rest will be landscape. From the junction onwards is a space that enhances the walking space available for users walking to and from their offices in the north to the Lower Parel railway station. Addition of crossings enables one to walk in the shade at any time of the day. A shared taxi stand near the entrance of Empire mills, and another one outside Mathuradas mill compound has been moved, and has expanded, providing safe pick-up and drop off, space to wait; decongesting the earlier locations.



This is mostly a wide open space with an assembly of benches, planters, and safety buffers which will allow users to take a break, wait for friends, or simply be. The benches are polished concrete, held in place by block planters, which also keep in place weathering steel crash barriers on the outside. The plantation—*Sansevieria trifasciata*, *Rhapis excelsa*, *Cordyline*, *Lantana Camara*—are robust plants that are helpful in mitigating pollution, insect repellent, and require moderate watering. They are the visual division between the road, and pedestrian space. The final space is separated by a deep beam, and lends itself well to introducing a public toilet, and administration block. The toilets are utilitarian, well ventilated, and a separate block is built for the physically challenged.



↖ ↑ ↗
The designed space under the flyover is a wide open place with an assembly of benches, planters, and safety buffers

Entrance island of a residential society, Kurla West | PROJECT ARCHITECT: TRUPTI TALMALE

A small parcel of land (approximately 2,500 sq.ft), acting as an island surrounded by the main driveway, was left barren and unused except the four big existing copper pod trees standing dominantly. The idea was not only to



For the entrance island of the residential society at Kurla West, the idea was not only to make it greener but to enhance it as a pivotal space associated with other small activities including flag hoisting ceremony etc., while keeping its functionality intact.

make it greener but to enhance it as a pivotal space associated with other small activities like kids enjoying the fountain, mothers and kids waiting for school bus, flag hoisting ceremony twice a year, etc., while keeping the functionality intact. While focus is always a good design, in this case the journey of making it was rather more interesting and challenging since it was a self-initiative. It involved several design presentations and a clay model to the working committee of this society and to convince them to a level where they agreed to release a minimal fund for its execution.



The other challenge was to get the design (which primarily involved sculpting of 1:1 slope earth mounds) executed on site without any landscape contractor but only with 2-3 *maalis* in a two months' time that overlapped with onset of monsoons. Considering all these conditions and no time left for detailed drawings, very basic methods and simple tools like ropes, bamboos, lime powder, boulders, measuring tape, etc. were explored to their fullest in engineering of these mounds. The work just got over with dibbling of lawn on slopes and a basic planting by around second week of June when the heavy rains of Mumbai had already peeped in. The earth sculpture was then put to a test where it behaved as a 'floating garden'. During this time small drainage issues could be resolved by adding few little details like creating a catch pit that also acts as a pebble court.

The growth of Paspalum grass on slopes under the shade of fully grown trees in heavy rains was a tough task but the four months of care and nurture during this season helped it to get stronger and the garden flourished to its best during October heat.



Plan and images courtesy the Author / respective offices



Urmila Rajadhyaksha

FROM LANDSCAPES TO LANDSCAPE PRACTICES

WOVEN INVISIBLY IN THE CITY FABRIC.....

Though various portions of the present-day landmass known as 'Greater Mumbai' have seen settlements at different points of time since a few centuries before the Christian Era, the beginnings of the present 'megalopolis' of Mumbai can be traced back to seven islands, volcanic in origin, along the western coast of the Konkan region. Once the British realized the benefits of this calm harbour for trade, they consolidated their own position and along with it the city too. The global city that grew out of those islands eventually grew into its neighbouring islands as well as the mainland and is still growing. This global city spawned global citizens who travelled the world and brought back memories of memorable landscapes that they then built into the natural landscape that 'Bombay', as it came to be known, was richly endowed with.



Much of the nineteenth century in Bombay, as the largest of the seven islands was known, then witnessed the creation of landforms that impeded the tidal waters from revealing land all through the year and layers of reclamation pasted on these further firmed up the process. A variety of landscape spaces...landmarks for the city then and now were laid out both by the government of its time and the well-travelled and heeled citizens of Bombay. The Hanging Gardens laid out atop a water reservoir, the Esplanade, followed by the metamorphosis of the space the fort walls covered into the *maidans* of Mumbai, the sweeping Marine Drive are some of these. Unsurprisingly most of those who created these are relatively unsung though the benefactors are sometimes known.

With the rise of the profession of landscape architecture worldwide, in the USA followed by Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the profession and professionals slowly made their way into Bombay too.

A first such was S. D. Vaidya whose training in agriculture led him to establish the Department of Parks and Gardens in neighbouring Pune, and eventually he was supported to study at Versailles in 1958 by the Atomic Energy Establishment, whose landscape he came back to shape. Also worth mentioning is the brief sojourn of Prabhakar Bhagwat around 1954 to 1957, when in his own words—'I did a lot of work for Burmah Shell'—he also taught landscape architecture to students of architecture at Sir J.J. College of Architecture. Pune's Professor Shankar Brahme



continued the tradition of teaching at Sir J.J. College of Architecture. Among his fascinated students was one particular student Kishore Pradhan, whose landscape practice in Bombay—now Mumbai—spans nearly five decades but who actually became a landscape architect quite by chance as his leisure hobby of learning the French language in his spare time led to opportunities for scholarships in the field of architecture where landscape architecture was offered. Education in landscape architecture at Versailles meanwhile had grown by leaps and bounds and had become renowned in Europe. In the 1970s, when upon completing his studies he returned to Bombay to initially look for a job, he ended up setting up his own practice. To quote his own words once started, he 'never had to look for work... it kept coming'.

While working and teaching, Pradhan inspired and influenced many young professionals to pursue landscape architecture as a practice. Over years, the practice Kishore D. Pradhan Architecture+Landscape is recognized for creative design solutions and efficient project performance. A few years younger than Pradhan, Vijay Hattangadi—post studying landscape architecture and working with Ravindra Bhan in Delhi—returned to set up his practice in Mumbai which was tragically cut short by his untimely death. He, like Pradhan, had a wide range of works. Some of his works such as Vijay Mallya's bungalow at Alibag have been featured in newspapers.

Mumbai has also stood witness to talented landscape practices which evolved from an intrinsic affinity for this field, as some of these practitioners developed their practice despite their training in other spheres. For many such practitioners, the practice of landscape architecture meant leaving behind established jobs and beginning anew. A risk they took willingly. A prominent practice among them would be that of Padmaja and Rajoo Pradhan who, in spite of their professional training in architecture and urban planning, plunged into the landscape design practice due to their sheer passion in the field.

Landscape practices during this period thus largely evolved around the persona of the principal lead and studios / offices were generally not large. Most of these revolved around a sense of a 'calling' to pursue the profession which was extremely personal, quite similar to the early architectural practices. A point to note here perhaps is that in a city driven by business, this was probably a little unusual. Some architects hailing from Mumbai chose to establish their practice in other cities as the conditions for growth of a landscape practice were considered to be more favourable elsewhere.

The changes in the real estate industry in the 1990s changed some of these equations and architects were quick to perceive this, and many architectural firms developed strategies to meet these developments by expanding their role to service providers and thereby growing in size and structure formally and informally. Most landscape firms, however, continued to retain their size and modalities of structure. However, the sense of 'ethics' was very strong among landscape architects and this translated into a strong sense of camaraderie.

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↑ *Hotel Hyatt Regency, Mumbai*
Landscape Consultant: *Kishore D Pradhan Architecture+Landscape*



↑ *Lodha Group iThink, Mumbai*
Landscape Consultant: *Newarch Landscapes*

As Kishore Pradhan notes, “In initial years of the profession in eighties and nineties, struggle of professionals like Suvarna Sathe, Swati Dike and Rajoo Pradhan needs to be recognized. They were professionals who increased an awareness about the practice in various scales of works in the city.”

Bombay soon became Mumbai and the pace, always fast, grew frenetic. The new entrants into the field of landscape architecture recognized the need to evolve beyond the persona driven practices and to develop a team of the ‘we’ as against the ‘I’, which characterized established practices. This period also saw the entry of international master planning and landscape practices in the Indian realty sphere intensify, and recognizing this existential threat, many landscape architects in Mumbai explored ways of combating this. An off the beaten track experiment in this respect was that of Newarch Landscapes LLP which from its inception in 1999 charted a new course based on the concept of ‘we’. All employees in Newarch are stakeholders—in varying ways as decided internally—in the work they do. Landscape practices in the city perceived the need to expand their capacities but knowledge of the value they could provide the city was restricted to the few converted. And most attempts at advocacy were restricted to preaching to the converted. This despite the multiplicity of typologies and scales that landscape architects worked across.

Pradhan notes, “At present, there are very few opportunities (apart from builder related projects) to work on landscape architecture in Mumbai, due to high land value, unplanned development and rampant encroachments in the city. This may explain why the profession of Landscape Architecture does not get its due recognition here. The course at L.S. Raheja College, headed by Urmila Rajadhyaksha, a dynamic personality, would be significant in bringing up the profession in Mumbai.”

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↑ *Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bandra Kurla Complex, Mumbai*
 Architect Consultant: *Concept Architectural Services Pvt. Ltd.*
 Landscape Consultant: *Enviroscape India*



↑ *Headquarters of Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, Mumbai*
 Landscape Consultant: *Urmila Rajadhyaksha*

reflecting a sense of urgency, the recently established practices in mumbai are emphatic about environmental and ecological considerations being central to landscape... need perhaps, to weave a new idiom and develop ways and means to position themselves so that they can be seen as meaningful to their unique city.

With the dawn of the new millennium and increasing schools offering Master's programs in landscape architecture across the rest of the country, the number of landscape architects in Mumbai too have increased. Some multinational landscape and omnibus architectural firms from across the globe set up their offices in Mumbai. Some practices—nationally headquartered but outside Mumbai—also set up offices in the city, including those of Design Cell (Delhi-NCR) and M/s Prabhakar B Bhagwat (Ahmedabad).

With the relentless growth of urbanscape, the city continues to fester and swelter. Reflecting a sense of urgency, the recently established practices in Mumbai are emphatic about environmental and ecological considerations being central to landscape. However, despite this network of professionals, and the existence of landforms that define beautiful landscape spaces in the city, recognition of the role of landscape architects remains largely unperceived by the city at large. Perhaps this 'invisibility' can be attributed to the singular lack of ambition exhibited by landscape architects, especially when this is contrasted with the kind of clout enjoyed by an architect with equal or less years of practice... and this after nearly five decades of existence. Mumbai's landscape architects need perhaps, to weave a new idiom and develop ways and means to position themselves so that they can be seen as meaningful to their unique city.



With inputs from Kishore Pradhan, Tarini Hattangadi, Shashank Vaidya, "Bade Sir: An Era Ends" P. B. Bhagwat talks to Aniket Bhagwat, Swati Dike, Suvarna Sathe, Rajoo Pradhan, Sriganesh Rajendran, Bhakti Thakoor, Arjun Sharma and the faculty at the Master of Architecture in Landscape at the L.S. Raheja School of Architecture

Photographs courtesy the individual offices.