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## From the Editor's Desk:

In this issue of Dharohar we continue our series on iconic museums in our city with a special article by HH Maharani Radhika Raje Gaekwad on the Maharaja Fatehsingh Museum situated in the lush surroundings of the Lakshmi Vilas Palace right in the heart of the city. With its wonderful collections of art and artefacts, it is surely a must visit for both an old time Barodian as well as the first time visitor to understand the significance of Baroda being called Sanskarnagari.

We bring you some musings about how some old iconic bungalows and the beautiful greenery has given way to modern and often not so aesthetic structures at Pratapgunj. It is time for us to consider how we can balance preserving our our heritage with providing modern infrastructure for our burgeoning population.

Can we have heritage in an industrial setting? Our new President Sam Kherra has shown how innovative efforts can help transform a busy office into a warm and welcoming workspace. Read how SEE Linkages at Makarpura has incorporated heritage with a creative touch right within a vibrant industrial area.

We welcome the initiative of Navrachana University and SEDA in arranging interesting programs on heritage and are sure this would encourage future generations to understand, appreciate and be part of the city's heritage movement.

The Champaner Pavagadh Archeological Site has a special appeal for heritage lovers and especially the Heritage Trust. Being the first UNESCO World Heritage site of Gujarat, the concerted efforts of the then team led by the Founder President, Mr. Karan Grover will always be a significant milestone for our Trust. We bring you an interesting take by a Mumbaiker who shares her experience and wonderment at this amazing site which is of great historical significance for Gujarat.

Dharohar congratulates the new team of office bearers led by President Mr. Sameer Kherra and wish them a successful tenure. The outgoing President Mr. Vikram Singhal and his team deserve our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for their concerted efforts in steering the fortunes of our Trust through many challenges. We look forward to some interesting new initiatives in the days to come.

We would love to have our readers participate in Dharohar. We invite you to share photographs of articles that have heritage value in your own home with a caption or even a small write up. The best entries would be carried under "Heritage from Home" in the coming issues.

On a sadder note, the news about the Railway Salon Shed (c.1886) being demolished is a matter of concern for Barodians. We have shared our concern with the authorities and we are sharing this with our readers.

These are months for celebrating the many festivities that we have in our country. While wishing you many happy and joyous celebrations, do look out for some of the exciting programs that are being planned especially during the Heritage Week in November 2021 by the Heritage Trust and the Vadodara People's Heritage Festival.

- Avi Sabavala

## The Maharaja Fatesingh Museum

Located in the lush and idyllic surroundings of the Lukshmi Villas Palace Estate, the Maharaja Fatesingh Museum was formerly the Motibaug School where the royal young Gaekwads received their education. This jewel in the wilderness houses some of the most important artefacts and paintings collected, commissioned and curated by the Gaekwads of Baroda.

Always known for their patronage and proclivity to the arts and its many forms, the Gaekwads created a varied collection that decorated the interiors of their several grand palaces in India and in Europe. Maharaja Sir Sayajirao Gaekwad III (1875 – 1839) was the most prominent ruler of the state of Baroda and in his reign Baroda touched the renaissance of culture and art. This was also visible in his architecture and milieu of the city, still justifiably known as the cultural capital of Gujarat.

It is well-known that his benevolence, philanthropy and interest in education made Baroda a foremost state in contemporary India. That Maharaja Sayajirao never hesitated in consulting the right people is evident from the high quality of objects that he acquired and put on display. Among these experts was Augusto Felici, an eminent Venetian artist who not only advised Maharaja Sayajirao in acquiring western art objects but was also commissioned to do sculptures in bronze and marble, some of which are exhibited in this museum. Raja Ravi Varma, a prince from the Travancore state who was the first Indian artist to use oil as a medium, was brought to Baroda with some of his outstanding paintings on mythological subjects and was also commissioned portraits of the Baroda Royal Family. Other artists on display are Fyzee Rehman, a disciple of the English Artist Sir John S.

Sergeant and the Sculptor, Phanindranath Bose, whose sculptures were appreciated by the noted sculptor Rodin. There are replicas of paintings and sculptures by the greatest Masters of the Italian Renaissance (15th –16th century) one of the key periods of occidental civilization.

The collection has a unique and impressive section of Chinese and Japanese porcelain, to which an entire section of the gallery is earmarked. Besides that, there are Wedgwood, Royal Doulton ceramic services and other wares of exquisite Tiffany, Lalique and Orrefors glass. The decorated period room on the first floor is a good representation of the Rococo period with some very fine original pieces on display.

The Maharaja Fatesingh Museum has also on display a unique gallery of headgears, a personal collection of the late Maharaja Ranjitsinh Gaekwad.

Over the last few years our museum team had been engaged in documenting one of the largest private collection of the largest private home - the Lukshmi Vilas Palace. Here in we have documented photographs, crockery, furniture, paintings, textiles and many more.

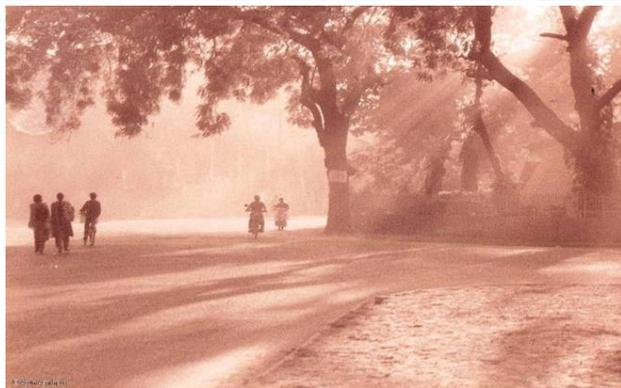
Like all of the objects of the Royal Gaekwad Collection, our textiles date back to the 1800s and are both unique and exquisite.

We look forward to receiving you at the Maharaja Fatesingh Museum.

-Radhika Raje Gaekwad



Maharaja Fatesingh Museum Image Source: Times of India – Gujarat Tourism



Believe it or not, but this is Pratapgunj in the mid-Eighties.



Pratapgunj Environs Image Source: Arun Agnihotri

## Plight of Pratapgunj

“There are eyes everywhere. No blind spot left. What shall we dream of when everything becomes visible? We’ll dream of being blind.” – Paul Virilo

Even though my parents had a house at the Railway Staff College, Lal Baugh – my Baroda (as it was known then), address in the early seventies was, ‘44 Pratapgunj’ – where I had a large room on the first floor and paid the princely amount of Rupees One Hundred per month as rent, inclusive of electricity charges.

Never did I imagine that nearly 41 years later, I would be witnessing the slow death of the retreat that was Pratapgunj.

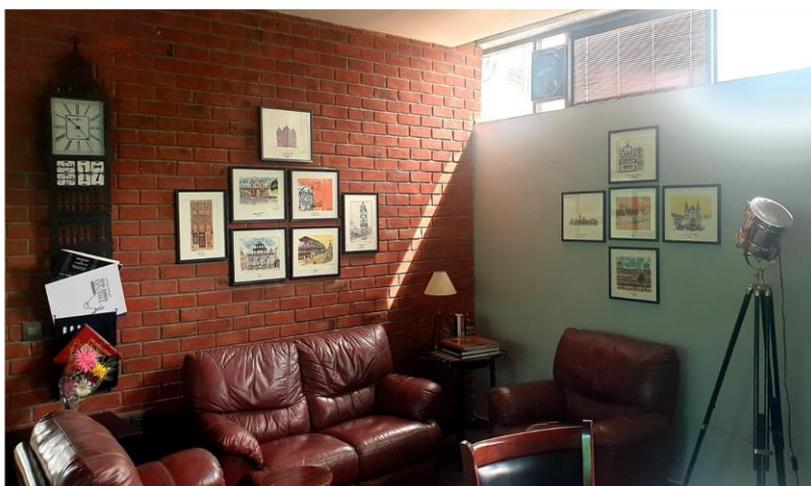
Those days, Pratapgunj was a copiously wooded area with large bungalows peeping magnificently through Neem (*Azadirachta indica*) trees or Limdo as it is known in the Gujarati language; Yellow poinciana (*Peltophorum pterocarpum*); Indian Laburnum/Amaltas (*Cassia fistula*); Common Crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*); Tamarind/Imlee (*Tamarindus indica*) and Banyan/Vad (*Ficus benghalensis*).....but it was mainly the Limbdo that ruled. I remember, once, I was helping a group of architect friends conduct a survey [1974 – 75?] and we had counted over 187 Neem trees between Adyapak Niwas and Natraj Talkies.

All images (except the BW/Sepia), were taken in the year 2009. Since then, more bungalows have been razed to the ground, more trees cut and new high-rise apartments created.

Aldo Leopold has rightly said that, “The oldest task in human history [is] to live on a piece of land without spoiling it.”

-By Arun Agnihotri,  
Artistic Director (Playhouse), Playwright & Consultant

## Heritage @ SEE Linkages



Art Works & Signages depicting Baroda Monuments Image Source: Sam Khera

SEE Linkages is celebrating its Golden Jubilee as an organization. At the core of the management belief to build a sustainable business, is the endeavour to co-exist with its ecosystem. This harmony with the environment and the built heritage has been at the centre of some of the initiatives taken by the management, be it energy conservation, solar energy generation and ground water recharge wells at its campus in Makarpura. Conservation of the built heritage is only possible by generating awareness of the history of the art and architecture, of which there is no dearth of in Vadodara. Consequently, the management took the initiative to name all its common meeting and training rooms around the heritage landmarks of the city. The water recharge wells as well are named after the various Step Wells in Vadodara to

highlight the issue of water conservation as well as to learn from our heritage. Shivani Pikle was commissioned to do the sketches and with content inputs from Shivani, Sanjeev Joshi, Sandhya Gajjar and Sameer Gaikwad, the project was completed in August, 2021. Heritage is at risk the world over, and collectively we need to do what is required to ensure it does not just remain as a signboard in the future. As it is said, those who forget history are condemned to repeat it.

-Sam Khera



Art Works & Signages depicting Baroda Monuments Image Source: Sam Khera

## Heritage Weekend @ Navrachana University

The Navrachana University's Center for Heritage Research is celebrated the Heritage Weekend from September 17-19th, 2021. The Center for Heritage Research was established at SEDA (School of Environmental Design and Architecture), Navrachana University last year with the purpose of conducting research in the area of Architectural and City Heritage. With rapid urbanization and haphazard development, our cities are losing their valuable heritage such as stepwells, old houses, older institutional buildings and even landscape and other infrastructure. Whereas change is inevitable in our society, however some exemplary (finest) examples of our heritage should be protected for future generations.

Faculty members and students of SEDA have worked in the Center for Heritage Research for last one year on some very innovative projects which are being showcased in the exhibition. Walking tours were also organized to the sites of the heritage projects.

The first project was the Architecture of Laurie Baker in Vadodara. Laurie Baker was a British Architect who had made India his home after being influenced by Gandhian thoughts. He practiced low-cost and sustainable architecture way back in 60s and 70s. He was invited by Nanubhai Amin, Chairman of Jyoti Ltd. to design buildings in Baroda. The exhibition and Heritage walk showcased these unique sustainable buildings that have never been seen before by public. These buildings have excellent natural climatic control features and are made using natural material.

Laurie Baker came to Baroda in the 1970s on the invitation of Dr. Nanubhai Amin, industrialist and institution-builder, and his educationist wife, Savitaben Amin. Baker's ideas about sustainable building dovetailed into Dr. Amin's passion for renewable energy, and so Baker designed administration buildings for Dr. Amin's company, Jyoti Ltd. that would not require air-conditioning. He designed a single-storeyed hostel for the physically challenged employees hired by Jyoti Ltd. who needed accommodation. It had a singular design with ramps, Braille-marked fixtures for the visually impaired, easily accessible kitchen platforms for those using wheelchairs. He also designed the Primary School classrooms and administrative block for Savitaben's school, Navrachana. While all buildings continue to be used for the purpose they were originally designed for, the hostel has been integrated for cultural activity centre for the students of the Navrachana School in the same campus.

The second project was the documentation and research on the "Narrow Gauge Railway History of Baroda". Baroda state was known for its narrow-gauge railways and was at the forefront of these technologies. The old locomotives, carriageways, workshop sheds have been documented by the students and faculty members of SEDA. This was showcased in the exhibition as well along with a walking tour that was organized at the Pratapnagar Railway station.

The Center has also initiated a unique project to map the heritage of Banyan trees in Vadodara with the project titled "Vad of Vadodara". The name of the city Vadodara comes from the Banyan trees itself, but due to urbanization we are slowly losing this unique natural heritage. "Vad of Vadodara" is a public participation geo-tagging project where the citizens of the city can help in creating a map of all the Banyan cities by just using their smart phones. This helps in documentation and also in raising awareness

During the Heritage weekend a book was launched on the Historic Houses of Rajasthan. This book is a result of student documentation of the old houses of Bundi in Rajasthan. The Heritage Weekend Exhibition was inaugurated by Smt. Tejal Amin, Chairperson, Navrachana Education Society at 4 pm on September 17th, 2021.



Vad of Vadodara Map & Railway Heritage Timeline Image Source: Navrachana University

### Champaner-Pavagadh: Following the sun through a heritage landscape

Do people in Baroda understand how lucky they are? Maybe not all. But one person certainly does. Sameer Kherra, My friend, Baroda-wala and an eternal traveler. Photographs from his frequent visits to Champaner-Pavagadh, filled me with travel-ache. So, when I was in Mumbai during Diwali holidays and started looking, corona-eyed, at places within driving distance, C-P was an obvious choice. I called Sam to see if we could go together. But, as expected, the man had a travel plan on those very days. Then he did the next best thing and sent me a detailed itinerary of places I must see, along with the best times of the day to see them! Hurrah!

C-P is an 8 hour drive from Mumbai and we left very early. On the way, we took a short detour to Udvada, a place I had been meaning to go to since some time due to its significance as a Parsi spiritual center. By 3pm we reached Baroda and took the turn-off to C-P. These last 30 kms. were astonishing, as the plains opened up to the Pavagadh hill. Even from a distance, we could see the temples and old structures around its summit. And as we passed the city of Champaner, located at the base of the hill range, we felt we had entered a region of special historic significance. And it is. This is the Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park, a vast area dotted by ancient monuments making it an important UNESCO world heritage site.

Our hotel Champaner Heritage Resort was a bit beyond the city of Champaner, in Bhamaria village, by the backwaters of the Kada dam. From a small island here, where we watched the sun going down that day, dazzled by the golden water and the silver bracelets of our boatman. And we watched the sun come up again the next morning. Near the top of the Pavagadh hill, at the Saat Kamaan or the Seven Arches.

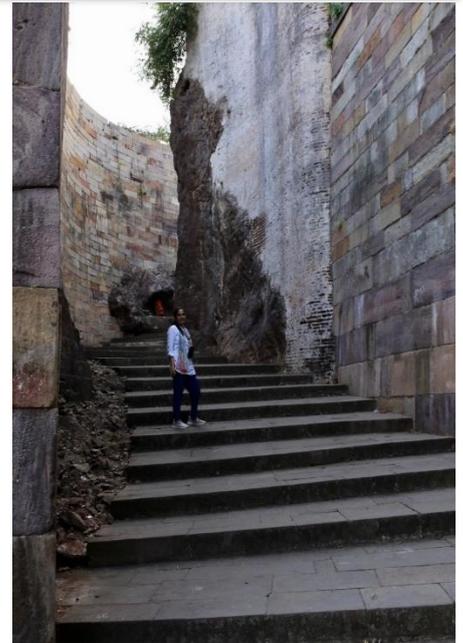
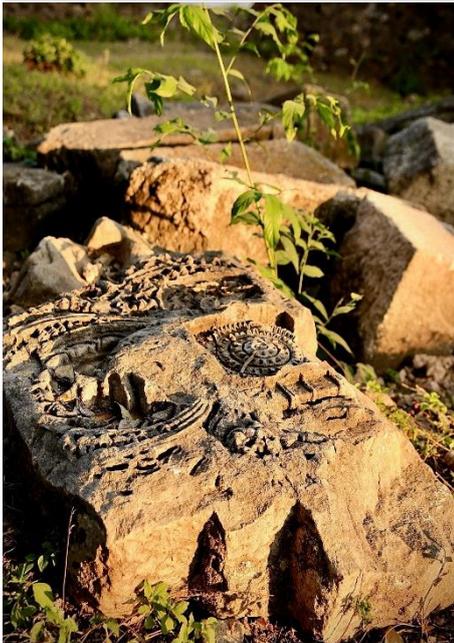
The hillside is strewn with monuments from the time of the Muslim rule of Sultan Mehmud Begda and earlier Hindu rulers, notably the Khichi Chauhan Rajputs. At the very top is the revered temple of Kalimata, attracting hordes of worshippers from all over. We did not visit the temple as the cable cars ferrying people to the temple were quite crowded. We meandered around the ruins, just below the jump off point for the cable cars. And discovered that we could have actually walked up the hill along a sheltered walkway that no one seemed to use.



Top: Sunset @ Bhamaria, Bottom: Boatman with Silver bracelets Image Source: Hardeep Singh

A little while later, down in Champaner city, we sought out a guide. The rest of the day we tramped through the wilderness and saw a bewildering array of mosques. The One-Minar mosque, Shaher ki Masjid, Nagina Masjid, Kewada Masjid, Kamani Masjid. It appears that Sultan Begda, who made Champaner the capital of Gujarat in the 15th century, spread his troops and families all across the area. Where they settled, they built a mosque. Once the city went into decline, these mosques were taken over by the forest. All the mosques are similar in architectural style – a masterful blend of Hindu and Islamic. While the domes and minarets make you completely certain you are entering a mosque, the Hindu motifs and carvings inside, throw you off totally. Our guide told us that Sultan Begda did not have access to any Islamic artisans and he basically had to rely on local ones. These artisans went wild making what they knew best. And the result is that the Champaner city is “the only remaining complete and unchanged Islamic pre-Mughal city”, as quoted by UNESCO.

With the sun following us, we went from one awe-inspiring monument to another, covering mosques, step-wells, and fortifications. We spent many delightful moments just watching trucks,



Rubble from Ruins littering the Forest Floors

Image Source: Hardeep Singh

Fortifications @ Champaner

Image Source: Hardeep Singh

trams, rickshaws, people crossing the gates of the walled city.

Finally, we saw the sun setting from the Vadatalav Lake in a majestic glow of light behind the Pavagadh hill. We could not get a very good photograph, so I am using Sam's below from his earlier visit.

This 'follow the sun' itinerary was really a wonderful gift and guide from Sam. It gave us a compass and companion, even when he wasn't around. We felt also the presence of many other people who had invested time and energy in preserving this unique place. Our guide Manoj Joshi's father Ghanshyam Joshi, has passionately recorded the monuments, contributed to archaeology books and played an important role in lobbying for UNESCO status for the area. They can be contacted at 9879542611/02676245611. Rahul Gajjar whose name came up several times, has photographed and organized events to highlight the importance of the monuments here. And the Sarvaiyas, affable owners of Champaner Heritage Resort, who are restoring their property and making it possible for more people to stay a few days and take in its beauty.

As Manoj ji told us, the Pavagadh hill range has many more monuments to behold. But we had to leave the next morning. So, as the sun rose, we potted around the mango groves and village ponds, leaving the boat people to their centuries-old rituals. We are, after all, only passers-by. But this treasure remains, a breath away, for the people here and I hope they forever take care of it.

-Vinita Gursahani Singh

Travel Freak, Heritage Enthusiast whose mantra is Exploration. Engagement. Empowerment.

Blog: [ocdfortravel](http://ocdfortravel.com) | [SHORT trips and LONG circuits](#)



Vadatalav Image Source: Hardeep Singh

### Railways and Heritage @ Baroda

The Railway Saloon, a linear exposed brick building built in the 1880's, once acted as the shed for royal saloons or luxurious boogie's/coaches of the Gaekwads. It boasted of regularly placed round arched windows framed by rough stone sills and brackets. Stone quoins at the corners of the walls added to its strong yet elegant persona. The pitched hip roof once rested on huge steel trusses and purlins, which on the inside would have been covered by wood battens inside. The building was accessible from its shorter ends, i.e. north-west and south east side, via arched entrances, making it comfortable even in hot summer conditions. It would also have had a small porch on the road side (east) for exit onto forward journey for the king and his family.

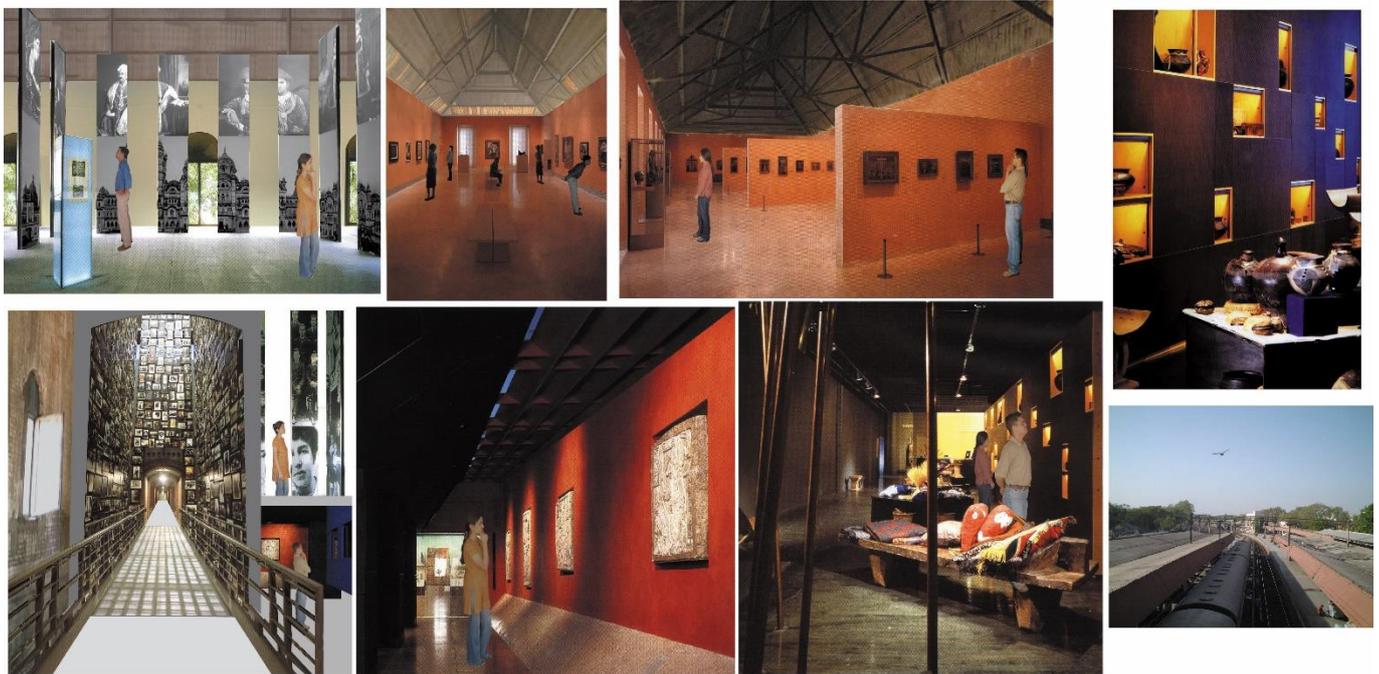


The east (road side) and west (rail line side) facades of the Railway Saloon in early 2000. Source: KGA

The Heritage Trust had been trying very hard to save this building since 2000. On Gujarat Day, May 1, 2002, the state government had declared Vadodara as the center for celebration. Heritage Trust used that opportunity to clean up

the Railway Saloon and propose it as a site for a City Museum. City based architect Karan Grover and his office created animated digital recreations of what such a museum would look like from within.

Upon receiving materials from the heritage Akhada in Dandia Bazaar courtesy their trustee, the late Bapusaheb Mahajan, they were displayed in the Saloon. A half day National Conference on Contemporary Museums was organized IN THE SALOON that had speakers such as Dr.Chowdhary, Director, National Museum, Delhi, Dr.Kalpna Desai, Director, Prince Of Wales Museum, Mumbai, experts from Calico Museum Ahmedabad and museologists from across the country. The exhibition and conference was inaugurated by the then CM, Shri Narendra Modi who was at the Saloon for more than an hour looking at the exhibits in detail. The Trust had already identified that the Saloon technically belonged to the Road & Buildings Department (R&B) and to make it into the City Museum, it needed to be transferred to the Culture Dept. The process had already been initiated, when a news article in a leading daily, apparently spearheaded by some local museologists questioned the safety and other aspects of this building to be converted into a museum. This created doubts forcing the Trust to clarify a number of issues with the government, which after technical consultations got resolved. The activity was also covered by another leading daily in 2009, and can be read here <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/vadodara/historic-railway-shed-to-be-developed-as-museum-by-2010/articleshow/5255862.cms>



Some glimpses from the presentation, 3D model done by KGA and presented to the government and relevant departments. The idea presented was that the Baroda Heritage Museum would be distinct from the Gujarat State Museum at Sayaji Baug as it would specifically focus on the city, its building and its tangible and intangible heritage. Source: KGA

But as time went by, due to several inter-departmental issues within the Government, which were beyond the control of HT, like an issue in which the Culture Department would have to transfer the same amount of land on which the Saloon was standing to the R&B department and more, the proposal got stalled indefinitely. The proposal by the Architect's office was once again along with a physical model of the building as a City Museum was presented at one of our annual Viraasat lectures (in 2016 or 17) to the then Municipal Commissioner.

Post this an MOU was signed with Mr. Nehra, the then Collector and funds were organized by him. The file gathered dust until Heritage Trust took it up again when Ms. Avantika Singh was District Collector. She setup the Vadodara Heritage Society to manage the project, got CSR funds from GACL. However she got transferred, and the file has subsequently got lost between Kothi Kacheri and Khanderao Market bureaucracy.

The conversation around conservation is no longer avoidable. Heritage provides a window into the soul of a city, and the alternative to remaining silent is to lose that soul, brick by brick.

Heritage Trust

### Heritage being Bulldozed

The Heritage Trust, Baroda deeply condemns the actions of those involved in allowing for the loss of Vadodara City's heritage via a 'demolition by neglect' agenda. The Railway Saloon Shed (c.1886) was an exemplary example of what royal salons were and if restored could have carried forward the glory of the erstwhile Sayajirao Gaekwad III and become an example of how the city respects its glorious history. The heritage of Vadodara has time and again faced the axe of unwilling and disinterested authorities, who despite being given many representations from our side as well as other heritage activist groups and individuals, have not formulated a safety plan for any of them. Despite multiple requests and propositions to save our heritage, we believe the authorities are shirking their duty, and it would not be long before the city of Vadodara, loses its name as the 'cultural capital' of Gujarat and soon be one among the many cities of the nation without any tangible glory to nourish.

We at the Heritage Trust call for an urgent meeting with all stakeholders including the municipal authorities, the central state agencies present in the city and all the local bodies under which or who have a stake in the heritage of our city to an open platform to take a definite step in saving our heritage. The time is now, and the conversation around conservation needs to become a necessity.



Pile of Rubble @ the site of the historic Saloon Shed Image Source : Times of India

### Become a member

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

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### Member

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### Member

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### Corporate Member Rs.

25,000 / year

Have an idea you would like to explore?

Want to collaborate or organize an event virtually?

Get in touch with us!



Humor:  
Trying to get to the bottom of it



**Heritage From Home:**  
Bought from Shukrawari more than 25 years ago this is an old pendulum scale was often used in post offices. Source : Heral Trivedi

### Publications

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

### Available:

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

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

### Future Events:

We hope to come back with physical events soon, but till then we will be planning for online lectures- look out for announcements on our social media!