Pathways to Heritage Conservation
Protection & Management Strategy
for Pune’s Sadar Bazaar
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Queen’s University School of Urban and Regional Planning

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Special thanks to Janwani, our local partner, and especially Prajakta Panshikar and Benedicte Le Bris for generously offering their time to introduce the team to Pune heritage. Working with you was an instructive and wonderful experience.

Many thanks to Dr. Kiran Shinde and Prof. Archana Gaikawad of Bharati Vidyapeeth University for their input, as well as to students Nikhil Kapare, Harshad Manglori, Sharon Mariam, Prashant Patil, Shanjo Sebastian, and Shreyasee Shinde, who took time away from their studies to assist with the fieldwork.

Thank you to all who attended the presentations in Canada and India, and to the informants who contributed their time and insights along the way: Christopher Benninger, Sonal Chitnis-Karanjikar, Barjor Cooper, Narendra Dengle, Khushru Irani, Kiran Kalamdani, Saurabh Malpani, Ramprasad Naidu, Zoher Siamwala, and Jui Tawade.

Finally, we recognize the extraordinary support of Dr. Ajay Agarwal, without whom none of this would have been possible. His attention and guidance saw to the successful completion of the project and a terrific experience in India.

Thank you.
About the Project

This report is the product of a team of master’s students from the School of Urban and Regional Planning at Queen’s University, Kingston, Canada. This marks the third consecutive year that students enrolled in the international project course have travelled to India.

The Project Team (Left to Right)
Ajay Agarawl, Corinna Thomassen-Darby, Daren Zuk, Miranda Spessot, Benedicte Le Bris (client), Mazen Shuhaibar, Natasha MacDonald, Samantha Romlewski, Robert McIntosh, Thomas Douglas, Jesse Dostie-Provost
This report recommends strategies to improve heritage conservation and promotion in Sadar Bazaar, Pune. These measures engage with the local population in a bottom-up approach that encourages stakeholders to take pride and ownership in their heritage. It diverges from traditional heritage conservation strategies in that it is community-based.

Before travelling to India, the project team contextualized the study by conducting research into the history of Sadar Bazaar and Pune, studying its existing conditions and local legislative and policy framework. In addition, the team examined a range of international case studies of heritage districts and heritage walks to identify best practices, and developed an assessment tool to use for choosing an appropriate route.

In Pune, the project team presented to the client at a local university, and held a workshop with local residents to gather feedback and inform the direction of the field research. A key takeaway was that a government-regulated heritage district was unlikely to succeed. With this input, the team devised a more bottom-up heritage conservation strategy.

Working from heritage assets identified by the client, and information gained from the workshop and informant interviews, a modified assessment tool was employed for fieldwork in Sadar Bazaar. Major considerations in evaluating sites and street segments between them were the quality of physical design, accessibility, user comfort, availability of public amenities, wayfinding, and, more abstractly, the overall experience. The results were synthesized and are reflected in the proposed heritage walk. Highlighting the history and urban character of the Sadar Bazaar, the walk features 21 sites along a 2.7 kilometre route.

The recommendations for a broader Sadar Bazaar heritage conservation strategy seek to cultivate the area’s place identity and increase public engagement with its heritage. Some are easily implemented and come with modest costs, while others may be longer-term initiatives. All are valuable steps. The measures are organized in the key themes of community mobilization, branding, and urban design.

Community mobilization measures aim to increase appreciation of heritage assets in Sadar Bazaar to encourage local stakeholders to preserve and maintain the area’s historic character. Key recommendations include the introduction of awards that recognize
outstanding examples of heritage conservation, programming tailored at schoolchildren in educational activities, scavenger hunts that increase the appeal of heritage to all ages, mobile apps that widen the reach of heritage content, and pilot projects that showcase and generate interest in restoring traditional architecture.

Branding measures should highlight Sadar Bazaar’s distinct heritage character by showcasing its unique characteristics, fostering a community identity. The Sadar Bazaar name should be reintroduced, and websites and printed material development should follow.

Urban design strategies for the public realm support branding with uniform elements that showcase Sadar Bazaar’s historic character while enhancing the urban environment. Recommendations include implementing footpath designs and standards, targeted signage and wayfinding improvements, public art installations that contribute to place identity, increased pedestrian-scale vegetation, such as potted plants, and public lighting and seating improvements.

A management structure is included to assist in defining key actors and suggested timelines for the strategy. Heritage conservation in Sadar Bazaar would benefit significantly from its implementation.
# Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction ..................................................................................1  
2.0 Background..................................................................................3  
   2.1 History of Pune and Sadar Bazaar ....................................3  
   2.2 Existing Conditions .........................................................8  
   2.3 Policy Context ......................................................................8  
3.0 Methodology................................................................................10  
   3.1 Literature and Document Review ..................................10  
   3.2 Workshop .............................................................................11  
   3.3 Site and Route Observation ........................................11  
   3.4 Key Informant Interviews .............................................12  
4.0 Case Studies...............................................................................15  
   4.1 Heritage Districts ............................................................15  
      4.1.1 Byward Market ..............................................16  
      4.1.2 Queen Street West .........................................21  
      4.1.3 Kampong Glam ..............................................25  
      4.1.4 Campal Heritage Precinct..........................31  
      4.1.5 Hemel Hempstead ........................................32  
   4.2 Heritage Trails .................................................................33  
      4.2.1 Boston Freedom Trail .....................................33  
      4.2.2 Kampong Glam ..............................................35  
      4.2.3 South Dublin County .....................................37  
      4.2.5 Curious About...? ...........................................38  
5.0 Sadar Bazaar Heritage Trail......................................................41  
6.0 Broader Heritage Protection: Place Identity and Engagement .................................................................57  
   6.1 Community Mobilization ..................................................58  
      6.1.1 Heritage Awards .............................................58  
      6.1.2 Youth Programming .......................................58  
      6.1.3 Scavenger Hunts .............................................59  
      6.1.4 Mobile Apps ..................................................60  
      6.1.5 Pilot Projects ..................................................61  
   6.2 Branding ..............................................................................63  
   6.3 Urban Design .................................................................65  
      6.3.1 Footpaths ..........................................................65  
      6.3.2 Signage ...............................................................66  
      6.3.3 Public Art ...........................................................71  
      6.3.4 Vegetation ............................................................73  
      6.3.5 Lighting ...............................................................73  
      6.3.6 Seating ...............................................................74  
7.0 Further Study ...........................................................................77  
8.0 Conclusion ..............................................................................78  
9.0 Appendices ..............................................................................81  
References ....................................................................................107