Render Authenticity

Revisiting Intangible Heritage to Reflect on Historical Structure Network

by

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I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis.

This is a true copy of this thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners. I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Author's Declaration

"When we build, let us think that we build forever. Let it not be for present delight nor for our use alone. Let it be such work as our descendants will look upon with praise and thanksgiving in their hearts."

-John Ruskin

Shakhari Bazar in Old Dhaka, Bangladesh, was one of the first streets to be built in the region of South Asia, using the river network as major transportation route and home to invaluable artisans in the 17th century. It is a sanctuary to a specific ethnic group, and the only known home to some craftsmen. Therefore, this street is a rich treasure of both tangible heritage and 'intangible heritage'[1]. Unfortunately, the survival of these crafts is under threat, as the artisans seem to be changing their livelihood due to disconnected cultural ecology.

With the help of its artisan inhabits, Old Dhaka has been an area with buildings of architectural beauty as well as historical, religious and cultural significance since 1608. "They are eloquent testimony to the history, culture and tradition. These buildings are 'images' of the past with which people still identify Old Dhaka"[2]. But sadly, most of these historical buildings are either diminishing through ignorant renovations or collapsing due to neglect, resulting in hazardous living conditions for the unique artisans and migrants. If these present conditions persist, it will not be long until many of these structures, along with the intangible heritages they house, are lost forever.

Comprehensive research has led me to propose multi-disciplinary schematic strategies of spatial interventions that aim to rationalize the decentralized elements of craftsmanship through formalized institutionalization thereby encouraging dialogue, as well as additional schematic strategies that could reconstruct heritage structures and promote inclusion of the locals and artisans of Shakhari Bazar. To establish a sustainable conservation of the tangible and intangible heritages of Shakhari Bazar, and maintain the integrity of the live heritages they house, it is essential to pursue both these strategies simultaneously. This thesis proposes to instigate a healthy and informed dialogue between the formal bodies and informal systems of Shakhari Bazar to create a common goal of sustainable micro economy that refuses to accept uniformity and the disappearance of memory.

1. The term 'intangible heritage' has been popularised by UNESCO, and it includes traditions and cultural living adopted from the ancestors and passed on to the descendents. These traditions include rituals, festivals, craftsmanship, performing arts, and other practices and skills passed on from generation to generation.

2. IABNL. 1989. News Letter, Institute of Architects – Bangladesh (IAB), vol. 1989, Dhaka: IAB

Beautiful adventures, unexpected companionships, and humbling generosities are some of the key elements that helped make this thesis possible.

To *Professor John McMinn*, I thank you for your thoughtful guidance and encouragement that paved the way to the core of my thesis. To my committee members, *Dr. Mona El Khafif* and *Adrian Blackwell*, I am grateful for your piercing insights and mentorship. To *Professor Robert Jan van Pelt* and *Donald McKay*, thank you for opening my eyes and my mind to the importance of perspectives, and for your dedication to the success of your students.

I want to extend a special thank you to the wonderful *families of Shakhari Bazar* who generously welcomed me in their homes and lives. Your trust in me, compassion for the community and creative depth allowed me to make this journey possible. I am especially grateful for our candid conversations that showed me that happiness can be easily found when you simply pause.

To the *School of Architecture*, and to my *peers* of the past nine years, thank you for being my family away from home. Thank you for sharing your values, explorations, conversations and memories that will long remain with me.

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Thanks, last but not least, to my family, for being there for me emotionally, even when you couldn't be physically. To my father, *Lt. Col. Das* and mother, *Kanika Roy*, I am humbled attempting to thank you for your immeasurable love, support and trust. You have given me space when I needed, while assuring me guidance if I faltered. My appreciation for you is boundless. This thesis would not have been possible without your constant encouragement to grow, make mistakes and learn. I owe you far more than I can possibly express.

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For my Parents

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98	5.1	These are wedding crowns, made from styrofoam thrown away after being used to package large appliances. The styrofoam is then cleaned, cut, painted and turned into crowns. The crowns are traditional part of an Hindu wedding attire for both the bride and groom. Shakhari Bazar is one of the main areas that sell such crowns of excellent workmanship.
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124	7.4	Courtyard on the roof of Savitri's historical ancestral house in Shakhari Bazar
124	7.5	Busy putting finishing touches to the masks that needed to be delivered that day
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Preface



0.1 Naming of historical market a heritage site spurs anger. Locals go on strike to protest this decision in 2013

The street of Shakhari Bazar belongs to Old Dhaka in Bangladesh, and houses some of the oldest structures, dating back to the early 17th century. I remember Shakhari Bazar for a completely different reason - it is the only place in Bangladesh where one can talk to 'shakharis' and buy beautifully crafted 'shakhas'[1]. Since these bangles are brittle, they are susceptible to break quite often. As a young girl, I would accompany my mother in her venture to Old Dhaka with the aim of acquiring unique and authentic shakhas. It would take us approximately two hours with the traffic congestions from the new part of Dhaka, but that did not stop us from making our way to our familiar and trusted shakhari.

Because our car could not make its way through the narrow road of Shakhari Bazar, we would park our car at a nearby temple on the wider main road. Shakhari Bazar weaved in between the dense facade of shakha and gold and silver jewellery store fronts that lined the street. The pot-holes scattered along the entire way were filled with brown puddles making my mother nervous about our shoes and feet. The hot sunlight would peak out in between the structures to shape rows of light onto the cool dark street. The storefronts, mostly with wooden thresholds, were open to anyone to walk in, even if it was just for a friendly chat on the wooden benches placed in each store. The business owners and craftsmen mingled with the locals and visitors, resulting in an exuberant street life. Familiar faces would greet my mother from their stores, asking about our well-being. The shakhari, whom my mother always entrusted with creating the best shakha workmanship, would always welcome us with a smile that one would only see from a well-wisher. He would proudly exhibit and explain his hand-made creations as he sat near his tools on the floor. These memories flooded through me as I woke one day and read about Shakhari Bazar in the newspaper, marking the beginning of my thesis story.

1. Shakha is conch shell from which primarily bangles are made to be worn by married Hindu women, and shakharis are the artisans that craft these objects. This shell comes from large predatory sea snails that live in the Indian Ocean. With this conch shell, various other products can also be made, thereby making use of most of the shell. Other than bangles, a shakhari may also retain the shell's shape to craft a 'shonkho', the instrument used as a trumpet during both Hindu and Buddhist traditional ceremonies


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In recent times, the deteriorating conditions of the historical structures clearly needed to be addressed, but the locals tackled this issue by demolishing these heritage structures to replace them with modern multi-storied insipid buildings[2]. On September 1st 2013, I woke up to the news that Shakhari Bazar locals were angry that the street had been declared a Heritage Site for Preservation without consent of the locals and owners[3]. This action could mean that they would no longer legally own their ancestral properties and, as a result, would not be able to modify or tear down the crumbling heritage structures in order to construct new buildings. This caused the local owners to call a strike against the officials. In addition, the locals did not have faith in the Government of Bangladesh to be able to address the dangerous living conditions of their heritage structures in time before it engulfed more lives as the buildings collapsed, nor could they entrust their ancestral properties to the formal bodies with the intention of collaborative preservation. At that instance, my understanding of the word 'preservation' was limited, and I could not help but sympathise with the locals.

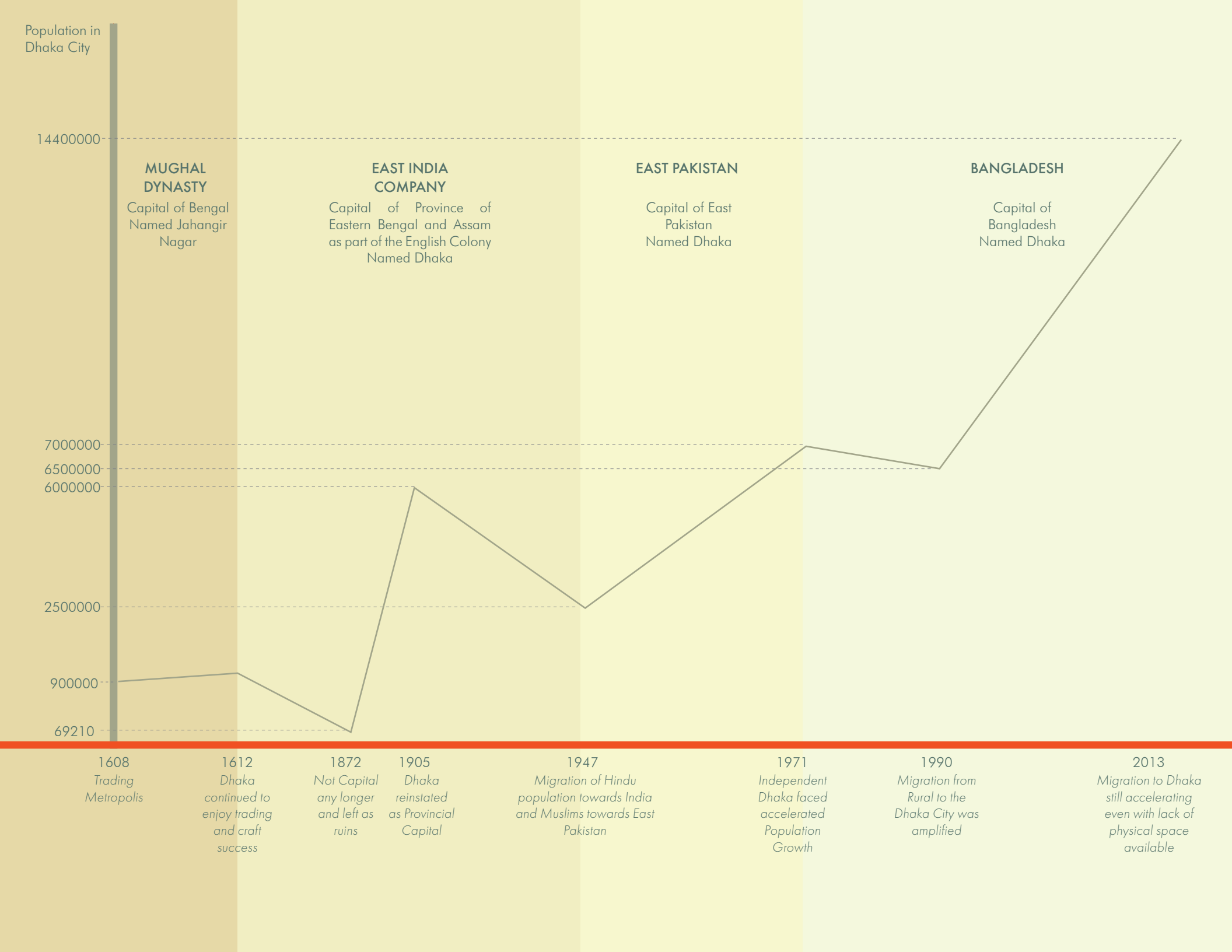
This is when I started asking myself how we can save Shakhari Bazar from collapsing without needing to preserve it, isolated from the healthy and natural evolution of identity and design of a living urban and cultural ecology. 'Preservation' freezes the object in time, but what about 'reconstruction' then? Reconstruction or adaptive reuse manipulates the object using new materials so it can function according to modern needs, while trying to keep the essence of its origins. This brought me to my next question:

How can we make it possible for Shakhari Bazar to conserve its traditions and heritage with the help of its occupants and local traditional artisans? After a comprehensive site survey in 2014, I realised that the solution to these complex issues lies within the area of problem itself – the craftsmen.

1.1 Morning on Shakhari Bazar, showing a local set up an informal 'store' in front of a 'formal' musical instrument storefront. This storefront is located on the ground floor of a heritage property. Like many buildings on this street, it has a mixed use with a social and cultural centre located on the second floor, and residences on the third floor.[1].

1. This observation was made during site survey between May 2014 to August 2014
2. "Protest for heritage Shakhari Bazar Old Dhaka", last modified September 1, 2013, http://www.demotix.com/photo/2554206/protest-heritage-shakhari-bazar-old-dhaka
3. "Protest for heritage Shakhari Bazar Old Dhaka"

Introduction


Population in Dhaka City
14400000
7000000
6500000
6000000
2500000
900000
69210
MUGHAL DYNASTY
Capital of Bengal
Named Jahangir Nagar
EAST INDIA COMPANY
Capital of Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam as part of the English Colony
Named Dhaka
EAST PAKISTAN
Capital of East Pakistan
Named Dhaka
BANGLADESH
Capital of Bangladesh
Named Dhaka
1608
Trading Metropolis
1612
Dhaka continued to enjoy trading and craft success
1872
Not Capital any longer and left as ruins
1905
Dhaka reinstated as Provincial Capital
1947
Migration of Hindu population towards India and Muslims towards East Pakistan
1971
Independent Dhaka faced accelerated Population Growth
1990
Migration from Rural to the Dhaka City was amplified
2013
Migration to Dhaka still accelerating even with lack of physical space available

Old Dhaka is nothing less than a series of labyrinths, generously honey combed with diverse networks of cultural and social interactions, each dedicated towards a myriad of goals, appearing to be a manifestation of unrelated array of disorganised schemes. This part of the city insists on maintaining its need to be outside the confines of political discipline. The various layers of history and politics have been etched boldly on each brick of the streets, and the inhabitants have found a way to combine them to manifest its own identity. It is almost as if the Temple, the Mosque, the ancestral shakha store, that passenger boat about to fall apart, that popular restaurant, or even the pharmacy, all form the city where the 'facts and imaginations simply must fuse'[2]. The rich and diverse history of politics and culture since it was named 'the village of Dhaka'[3], coupled with its environmental and physical surrounding, designates Dhaka as a survivor, so far.

Dhaka, a city of many identities, had and still has an exciting life of both grandeur and decay, as it changed from East Bengal to Dacca of East India Company to Dacca of East Pakistan and finally being known as Dhaka, capital of Bangladesh. Although, Bangladesh only appeared on the map in 1971, Dhaka can boast about the unparalleled majesty and prosperity it has enjoyed since the 17th century, and Shakhari Bazar, one of the first urban South Asian streets[4], serves as a perfect example. It had its own combination of secret weapons that were unmatched in the world of trade during the Mughal period – the craftsmen[5] and its wide-spread Buriganga River[6]. East Bengal, since the 17th century, had been a bustling metropolis and acted as an unrivalled model of sustainable authentic culture and economy of crafts that manifested its success through innovative and monumental architecture[7].

As East Bengal was an essential source of the Mughal Empire's sustenance, the Mughals built palaces and bazaars, and wealthy merchants built stately colonial mansions next to Buriganga River[8]. The Mughal Empire brought with it Persian architecture and designs,

1.2 (Opposite) Time line showing the various identities of this region, along with population and status changes.

2. David Harvey, T*he Condition of Postmodernity: An enquiry into the origins of cultural change*, (Oxford England: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 5
3. B. C. Allen, *Dhaka: Eastern Bengal District Gazetteer,* (New Delhi: Logos Press, 2009), 24
4. "*Conservation of Historic Mohalla*", last modified April 21, 2006. http://archive.thedailystar.net/magazine/2006/04/03/cover.htm
5. A. M. A. Muhith, *Bangladesh in the Twenty-first Century: Towards an Industrial Society*. (Dhaka, Bangladesh: University Press Ltd., 1999), 8
6. *Sharif Uddin* Ahmed. *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development.* (London Studies on South Asia; No.4. London: Riverdale, MD: Curzon ; 1986), 51
7. Abul Khair Nazmul Karim. *The Dynamics of Bangladesh Society.* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1980), 73

that eventually amalgamated with the existing Jor-Bangla architecture, introduced during the Gupta Dynasty reign in the Bengal[9]. East Bengal created its own architecture as the intricate patterns and construction methods of Islamic architecture fused with the medieval terracotta and craftsmanship of earlier years. Even during urban planning, as seen in Shakhari Bazar, the narrow plots given to each 'shakharis' during the Mughal period still contained shared courtyards that were adopted from the medieval style of Jor-Bangla architecture[10]. In addition, according to Mughal architecture, smaller courtyards, or light wells, were incorporated within each structure to allow for ventilation and lighting[11]. The shakharis, goldsmiths and silversmiths lived in and around Shakhari Bazar, producing some of the most creative forms of jewellery and other articles that marketed upper-class citizens[12]. Therefore, their workshops, which were also their homes, were well maintained and designed to host these clients and traders.

In the centuries that followed as Dhaka of East India Company, this region has seen much decadence, emptied by political neglect, its stature reduced to crumbling cornices and columns, rusted due to hopelessness of its occupants, but only to see it ones again an abundant city of new materials, new crafts, and new people in the mid 18th century. It had taken the identity of Dacca, trading capital of the Bengal region of the East India Company. It was one of the largest, most important cities on the subcontinent with a population of about 900,000[13]. With the introduction of essential administration buildings and prominent universities, Dhaka reached a high level of economical luxury that was directly reflected in the architecture of the region. Multi-storied buildings replaced the one storey houses in Old Dhaka, using traditional Mughal design with new 'English' methods of construction.[14] The craftsmen of Shakhari Bazar enjoyed affluent lifestyles and they tried to replicate spatial characteristics they saw in traditional mansions of landlords into their own homes. With the increase in social class homogeneity, architectural designs were adopted from

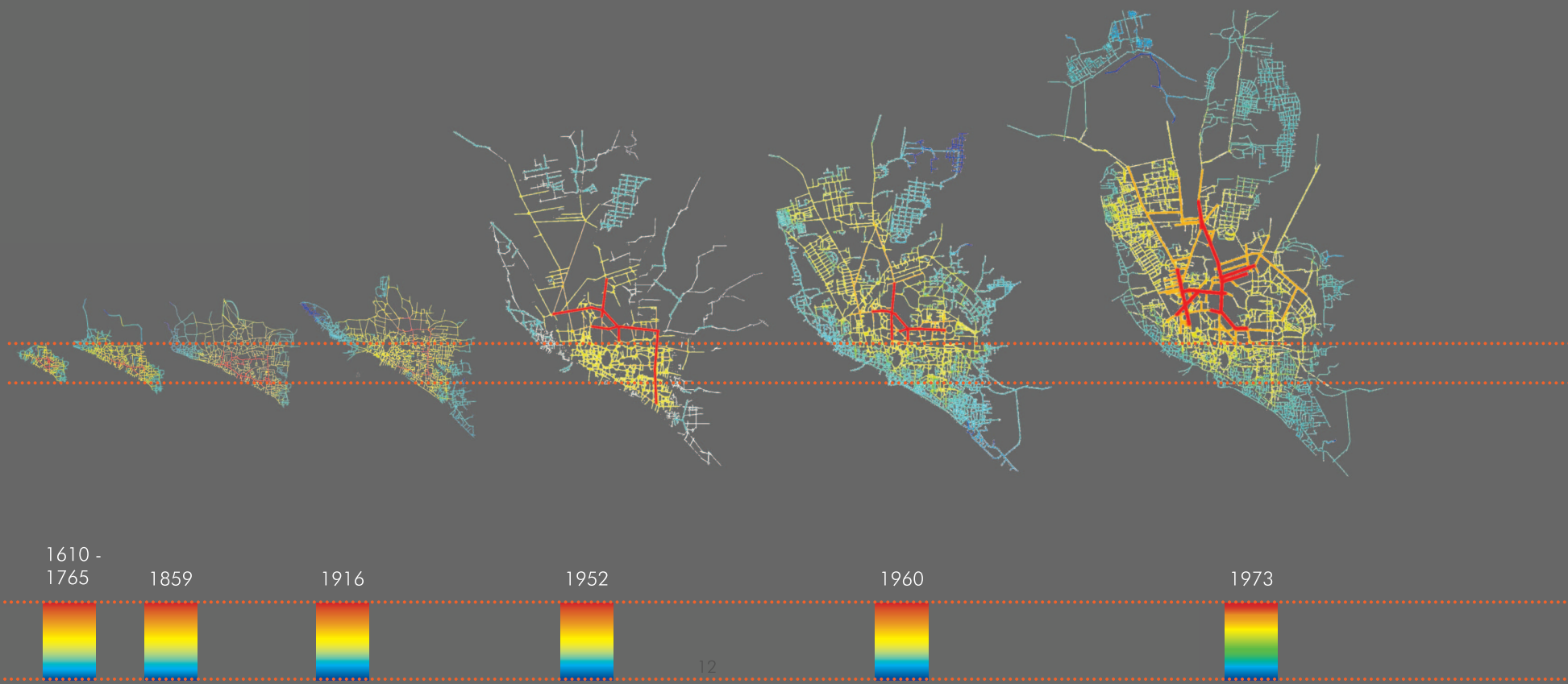
8. Ahmed. *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development*, 10
9. A. B. M. Husain, *Architecture: A History through the Ages. Asiatic Society of Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 2007.)
10. ibid, 431
11. Ahmed. *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development*, 11
12. "Conservation of Historic Mohalla"
13. Ahmed. *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development*, 115

whichever style that was most appealing to the owner, creating a beautiful array of mixed styles. Interestingly, as the building heights increased, the physical connection among neighbouring buildings became stronger with interconnected stairs that would connect to any floor of adjacent buildings. This helped develop the notion of joint families and close community, with bigger festival celebrations that allowed guests of all classes and religions to participate[15].

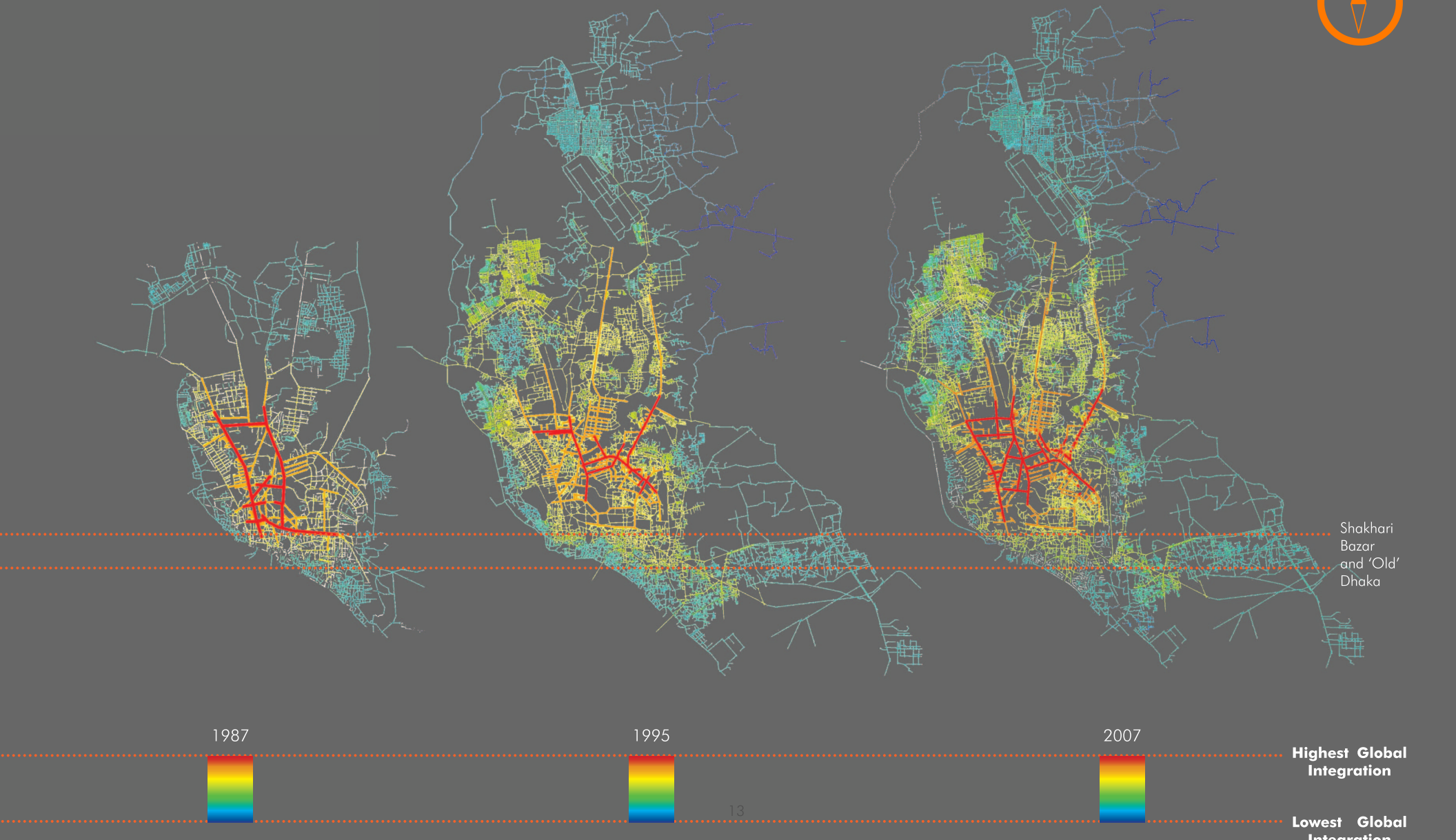
Then the design of the city again shifted in the wrong direction during its life as Dhaka, the capital of East Pakistan in 1957, bringing with it distasteful and bland architecture[16] that somehow replicated maliciously, leaving behind the awe-inspiring architecture it had produced in the past and their craftsmen to rust. It also left behind the philosophy of using architecture and design as landmarks for success. Shakhari Bazar and other such historical streets were left to organise and maintain themselves, giving rise to an informal system. The new architectural identity of Dhaka seems to have only taken into account 'quantity over quality'. Fortunately, some foreign architects, such as Louis I Kahn, started to look deeper into the need for new architectural identity in Dhaka by the end of 1960s and produced inspiring designs such as the Parliament Building of Bangladesh, which is still currently under construction[17].

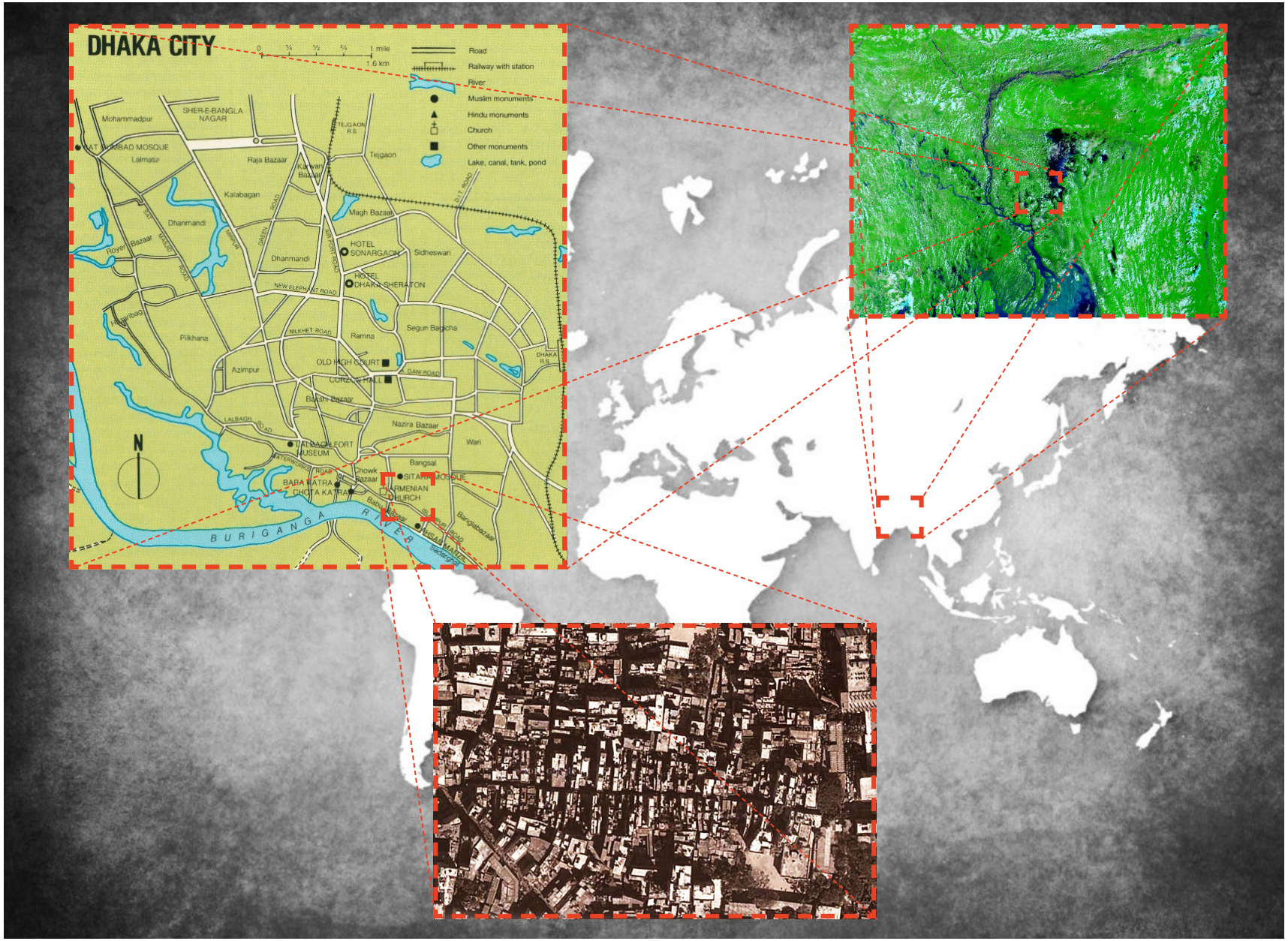
Following its position as capital of an independent country in 1971, Dhaka re-populated uncontrollably and informally towards the north away from its origins near the Buriganga River and the craftsmen of what is now called Old Dhaka, and Shakhari Bazar. That sense of community that had survived for hundreds of years in this region suddenly disappeared in the new north-bound sprawl of Dhaka (fig. 1.3). In the meantime, Shakhari Bazar, in Old Dhaka, became a sanctuary to squatters and migrants who moved to the capital in search of better lives and jobs[18]. These new occupants of Old Dhaka, are like 'nesting birds

14. Ahmed. *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development*, 13
15. A. B. M. Husain, *Architecture: A History through the Ages. Asiatic Society of Bangladesh,* 506
16. Abul Khair Nazmul Karim, *The Dynamics of Bangladesh Society*, 8
17. A. B. M. Husain, *Architecture: A History through the Ages. Asiatic Society of Bangladesh,* 521
18. ibid, 514


Shakhari
Bazar
and 'Old'
Dhaka
Before
1610
1610 -
1765
1859
1916
1952
1960
1973

1.3 Timeline showing the planned areas during the evolutionary changes in Dhaka City




DHAKA CITY
0 ¼ ½ ¾ 1 mile
1.6 km
Road
Railway with station
River
Muslim monuments
Hindu monuments
Church
Other monuments
Lake, canal, tank, pond
Mohammadpur
SHER-E-BANGLA NAGAR
Lalmatia
Raja Bazaar
Kalabagan
Dhanmandi
Royer Bazaar
Dhanmandi
Pilkhana
Azimpur
Nilkhet
Ramna
Segun Bagicha
Bakshi Bazaar
Nazira Bazaar
Wari
Bangsal
Chowk Bazaar
BARA KATRA
CHOTA KATRA
Babu Bazar
Banglabazaar
Sadarghat
Tejgaon
Karwan Bazaar
Magh Bazaar
Sidheswari
HOTEL SONARGAON
HOTEL DHAKA SHERATON
OLD HIGH COURT
CURZON HALL
DHAKA R.S.
TEJGAON R.S.
LALBAGH ROAD
NEW ELEPHANT ROAD
D.I. ROAD
GANI ROAD
N
BURIGANGA RIVER

– grabbing everything that could be taken from where it was and put it in another place to serve a different use'[19]. Today, this group of collectors and 'patch-ers', or squatters, live side by side with the craftsmen that remained in their ancestral historical homes in Shakhari Bazar, unaware of its heritage and pride. Neglect towards the craftsmen is directly reflected on the neglect towards their once grand homes and workshops, which are now dilapidated in ruins. In the race to catch up with the global world, and the need for fast and quick turnovers, these craftsmen are left behind with their traditional methods and cultures, and an informal system[20].

With the declaration of Shakhari Bazar as a heritage site in 2013 came large conflicts between the informal system of Shakhari Bazar and the formal economy of the country[21]. The neglect that Shakhari Bazar had faced for many decades continued when this new designation was forced onto them without any prior consultation with the locals and owners of the street. The drastic divide and disconnect between the Old Dhaka culture and systems and the ones in new Dhaka was evident during my site visit from May to August of 2014. The conflicts gave rise to many strikes in Shakhari Bazar. I had to acquire special permission from the head of the informal community board to take photographs of the street. While speaking with many of the locals, I understood that they did want to live peacefully in a fully renovated houses, but they were dissatisfied with the process being used to attain this by the government, which may require them to give up the rights to their ancestral homes and properties. As the government has a reputation of being highly corrupt, and as Shakhari Bazar contains mostly Hindu minorities in a Muslim country, the locals are fearful of their future living situations. There is distrust in the government's intentions, especially since they were not included in the initial decision-making process[22].

1.4 (Opposite) Location of Shakhari Bazar in the context of a world map

19. Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 106
20 Kamal Siddiqui,. *Social Formation in Dhaka, 1985-2005 A Longitudinal Study of Society in a Third World Megacity* (Farnham, Surrey U.K., 2010), 272
21. Matiura Rahamana, *Globalisation, Environmental Crisis, and Social Change in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: University Press, 2003), 22
22. "Shakhari Bazar residents to boycott Durga Puja", last modified September 5, 2013, http://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2013/09/05/shakhari-bazar-residents-to-boycott-durga-pujav

METHODOLOGY

To understand the complex architectural and cultural setting of Shakhari Bazar, I felt it was important to begin with the understanding of the cultures and identities that this street had maintained through literature, either as physical books, online articles, or even newspaper clippings. These helped me understand the role of craftsmanship and its relationship with the economy and urban design of the city.

A site visit in 2014 helped me understand that the existing multifaceted issues are a build up of the various cultural, traditional, and political events since the origin of Shakhari Bazar in the 1600s. The architecture and spatial program distribution are also directly affected by the layers of culture, traditions and politics of the region. In order to create an informed and authentic reconstruction and conservation strategy for both intangible and tangible heritage, it is important to understand the origin and detailed history of its modifications since then. This includes the knowledge of chronological political and cultural influences that have given rise to Shakhari Bazar and the spatial network of urban landmarks, and their craftsmen and crafts industry. This information could help determine the cultural and architectural influence on the tangible and intangible heritage that could be revived in order to implement an informed reconstruction and conservation strategies.

Understanding the key terms and processes of conservation of heritage structures also allows for a knowledgeable approach to reconstruction. Literatures on UNESCO, and its definition and process of preservation and reconstruction, seemed to be the perfect choice for this thesis as they are one of the major organizations involved in this process. They are also one of the first organizations to address intangible heritage as an important culture that can be conserved. Understanding the definitions of these and other related terms were a big

part of dissecting the exact process for conservation. In the case of Shakhari Bazar, it was the culture of craftsmanship, since that has been a major factor that gave rise to the historical architecture and objects in Shakhari Bazar in the past[23]. The next step was to understand the role of craft that is still evident in the present world, which led to the understanding that Bangladesh could benefit greatly with the inclusion of crafts and artisans in the formal economy.

An extensive informal survey was conducted initially in May 2014, the results of which are presented in the chapter 5.1.0, entitled Shakhari Bazar. As a starting point, I acquired ethics clearance to conduct formal interviews with the locals. These interviews contained questions pertaining to statistics of the area, such as number of occupants, number of breadwinners, types of occupation, property types, etc. that resulted in uncovering the proportion of occupations in Shakhari Bazar that still fall under the craft industry. Some of the younger occupants were easier to talk to as they seemed especially keen to understand how these complex issues can be tackled. They provided me with information on the structural issues they or their neighbours have to face. They made me aware of the extreme conflict the locals have with the government. They also took me to their homes so I could document and photograph the heritage structures. In my last few months in Shakhari Bazar, I concentrated mostly on taking photographs and key measurements to produce basic spatial and physical layouts and designs. I also focused on the major crafts and understanding the designs and layouts of their workshops through personal observations and by asking the craftsmen about their processes and methods of production.

I maintained a personal journal during the survey in 2014 where I reflected on my observations and personal thoughts regarding Shakhari Bazar, craftsmanship and its internal conflict and disconnect. These journals remind me that I am trying to connect with real

23. Ahmed. *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development*, 91-117

people who are facing complex issues and have done so for a very long time. They also imply the importance of including craftsman and occupants in the design process, since that is one of the major complaints I have gathered during my survey. The local craftsmen are also designers that understand the method of design through dialogue between the maker and the user. I believe including them in the initial design process would produce a sustainable and powerful outcome that could benefit all parties involved and future generations.

As I reflect back on my thoughts, the main issues that dominate the problem in Shakhari Bazar are:

1. Disconnect between the formal bodies or the Government and the locals or craftsmen
2. Lack of respect for the crafts and the craftsmen due to limited knowledge on its history
3. Lack of respect for heritage structures by the occupants due to limited knowledge of their origins
4. Lack of organization within the various crafts and between crafts that could act as a collective body in regard to advocating for recognition of the significance of the crafts based economy in the wider context of the city and the country

It was essential, therefore, to focus primarily on strategies that would empower and organise the crafts, so that could act as a common concern and interest among the various parties involved and become a medium for sustainable reconstruction of the physical heritage. Since Shakhari Bazar faces issues of various disciplines simultaneously, it is also important to approach the issues equipped with a multi-faceted strategy.

FORMAL AND INFORMAL STRATEGIES OF RENEWAL

With an understanding of Shakhari Bazar's prominent history in the compelling connection between architecture and crafts, and present issues, this thesis proposes two strategies of design methods that could be implemented: informal and formal.

The informal method attacks the problem on a fundamental level and deals with two of the main issues – lack of spatial and pragmatic organization among the crafts and craftsmen, and lack of respect for the craftsmen and the crafts. This thesis proposes strategies that involve spatial facilitators to formulate a network of crafts schools to encourage dialogue and learning of the various crafts.

The formal method addresses the other two main issues – disconnect between the formal bodies and the locals or craftsmen, and lack of respect for heritage structures by the occupants. This strategy aims to reconstruct and renovate physical heritage, in collaboration with the locals and craftsmen, using their expertise to authentically reconstruct and maintain heritage structures. This strategy could help produce a sense of responsibility and respect for the heritage structures, and help promote dialogue and collaboration among the various groups involved.

Given the historical understanding of how these two methods produced the most successful outcome, I believe that both these methods could result in a holistic outcome that could benefit the craftsman, tangible heritage, intangible heritage, and maybe even the government. This aggregated design and teaching of build strategies aspire to diminish friction among the craftsmen, locals and the formal bodies through informed dialogue, and render authentic heritage in Shakhari Bazar.





0.3 A local labourer poses for a photograph
0.4 A vegetable hawker smiles for me

Journal
A Journey Back in Time

15th May 2014

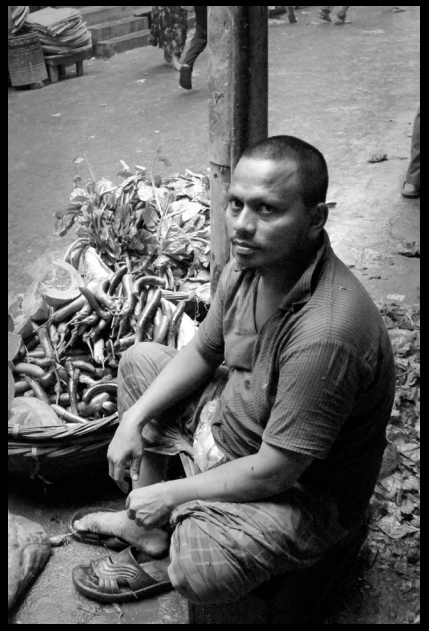
How can I possibly describe hundreds of years of life, identity, culture, tradition and authenticity in one book? Walking through the streets, I had to confront my memories and imaginations of Shakhari Bazar and accept that this 400-year-old street has once again evolved within my lifetime. In Old Dhaka, streets designed for palanquins, horse carriage, elephants and foot traffic are now being used by push carts, rickshaws, motorbikes, and sometimes even vans. The narrow, torturous roads and alleys were further constricted by public standpipes, hawkers and spill-over of businesses onto the streets. I could not help but feel that the streets were narrower than they were even 15 years back. Regardless, as we drove four hours through traffic congestions from new Dhaka to Old Dhaka, I imagined moving back in time, to where the city first began.

At first sight, the interwoven chaos and congestion of the street left me baffled and almost defensive. As I walked along the street, I noticed there was garbage piled up on the sides of every house or storefronts. Most of the properties were narrow – not more than 10 to 15 feet wide. Summer afternoons seemed especially hot and humid in Dhaka in 2014, but this street was closely packed and towered by new buildings on either side, letting in a light cool breeze to surround us. I could not shake off the feeling – these new buildings were not supposed to be there. At the same time I felt a sudden sense of calm and comfort, as if I finally reached home. This complexity between disappointment and satisfaction left me confused, but also more curious.

As Italo Calvino might describe, Dhaka city consists of relationships between the measurements of its space and the events of its past. The city, however, does not tell its past, but rather contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the rusting of the iron gates, the antennas of the lightning rods, the poles of the flags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls, and sometimes the old photographs of parents and the founders on their historical storefronts.

I paused and examined carefully. There were smiles, cries, laughter, screams, joy, giggles,





0.5 A local inhabitant. She asked me if she looks alright in the picture

0.6 Another vegetable hawker poses with his work-appropriate facial expression

suspense, love, passion, hatred, care, and the lives of thousands of people, completely exposed and inclusive, as if inviting me to participate. It was at that point, that Shakhari Bazar stopped being just a research site for me. It was my opportunity to understand the authentic lives surrounded by complex issues that are situated somewhere between old and new, formal and informal, or even past and present.

In Shakhari Bazar, Old Dhaka, families of every background seemed to share the same upbringing of united culture and social class that was established hundreds of years ago, and almost extinct in new Dhaka. Everyone on the street seemed to be familiar with each other – as if the four walls in their building or room did not constrain their affection and trust for each other. As I pranced along the street, mostly to avoid puddles and oncoming traffic, the evidence of this genuine care among the locals was inescapable. Conversations with them flowed naturally as they told me about their daily lives. The present generation of Shakhari Bazar received love and guidance not just from their parents, but also from 'Uncles' and 'Aunties' of the street. They consider their neighbours as their extended family, where the elders look out for the safety and well-being of the younger generation as a team. When one member accomplished something, the whole street rejoiced, sometimes having musicians and drummers declare it with songs and dances along the street. If someone was in trouble, they would gather to figure out a solution.

I asked one local gentleman why he insisted on living on this street when he could move to new Dhaka with clean streets and modern living conditions. He was waving a hand fan to cool himself down in the heat. As soon as he heard what I had to say, he burst into laughter. Seeing my puzzled face, he responded, "If I move there, I will only be surviving, and maybe even surviving well, but here I can live." I looked in his eyes and could see that he meant every word. This gentleman's family has been living in Shakhari Bazar for five generations. He explained to me that there is nothing more important than knowing that in every corner of the street there is someone genuinely rooting for his success and accomplishments. Why would he ever leave this family, to live where his neighbours might not even know his name? It somehow made sense to me, and it only made me happier to realize that I will be spending the next few months among one of the oldest families in Old Dhaka.

1.0.0 Urban Uprising



2.1 (Opposite) The Puthia Temple Complex in Bangladesh was built in the 16th century, in the Jor-bangla style[1] of architecture which originated during the Gupta Dynasty, along with traditional terracotta. This style heavily influenced the future architecture of the Mughal Dynasty

1. The style of Jor-Bangla originated in the Bengal and involves two structures that resemble the traditional village huts of the region, one that serves as a porch, in front of the other that serves as a shrine. Jor Bangla, *http://www.chitrolekha.com/V2/n1/01_Temples_Bengal_Style_Technology.pdf*


INDIA
ad mentem Ptolemaei.
SACAE
SCYTHIA
SERICA
TAPROBANE
Chryse Chersonesus
Magnus sinus
Perimulicus sinus
INDIA
sp. Ammianum, Philostorgium, Stephanum Byz. etc.
INDIA
ad mentem Pomponii Melae.
Scythae
Seres
Tauri iuga
Indicum pelagus
Taprobane
INDIA
sec. tabulam Peutingerianam.
Cirrhae Indi
Caspyrae
Andrae Indi
Damirice
Scytia Dymirice
Insula Taprobane
INDIA
Nomina Sanscritica
Pandaei - Pāndara. Pandiones - Pāndarja.
TAPROBANE, TĀMRAPARNÎ
SIELEDIBA (Cosmas), SINHALADVÎPA
PALAESIMUNDU, PĀLISÎMANTA
Insulae 1378, quae iacent ante Taprobanem.
SERICA
INDIA
EXTRA GANGEM
Gangeticus sinus
Sabaricus sinus
Magnus sinus
Perimulicus sinus
Therioides sinus
DAKSHINAPATHA
DACHINABADES
Ganges fl.
Indus fl.
Emodus mts
Maesandrus mts
Oritae
Gedrosia
Arachosia
Paropanisadae
Ottorocorrha Uttarauru
Binagara, Minagar
Palimbothra, Pāṭaliputra
Gangaridae
Sandrabatis
Coronagae
Pithitis
Pitundra
Musopalle
Tyrannosboas
Malanga
Mallarpha
Cottonara, Cottiara
Bati regio
Gamma
Modura, Mathura
Canogaza, Kanyākubja
Sangala
Taxila
Indabara, Indraprastha
Chaleitis
Ozene
Tamala prom.
Tamus prom.
Tamarum promot.
Sabana
Labadiu
Iabadiu
Taprobane
Ptolemaei
Cattigara
Sinae
Thinae
Serae
Sera metropolis
Scythia extra Imaum montem
Scythia intra Imaum montem
Imaus mts
Asmiraea
Asiaca
Asiatica
Aspidiotis
Aspidiotae
Aspidiotis
Aspidiotae
Aspidiotis
Aspidiotae

1.1.1 Mughal Dynasty

Early 1600s



2.2 Map of combined India showing the water routes, with Dhaka in the central water path system between the East and the West.

Bangladesh, called East Bengal of India until 1957, is a true riverine country, where most of its land is formed from silt deposits from the Bay of Bengal[1]. The Ganges River and Brahmaputra River have their many tributaries dominating most of the geography of the East Bengal region, giving Dhaka the advantage of possessing one of the most advanced cross-country communication systems. In 1765, James Rennell observed, 'The Kingdom of Bengal, particularly the Eastern part, is naturally the most convenient for trade within itself of any country in the world; for the rivers divide into such a number of branches that the people have the convenience of water carriage to and from any principal place'[2]. As Dhaka was situated conveniently at the centre of East Bengal, it achieved a major command over the water routes. It connected with various other rivers, such as Padma and Meghna, as well as many minor rivers and creeks, making it a suitable junction for various water transportations and trade. Dhaka was also comparatively fortunate in terms of land communications since it is located on the southern edge of an old alluvial terrace. It was this favourable geographical location of Dhaka that convinced Islam Khan, the Mughal Subahdar or governor of Bengal, to move his capital there from Rajmahal in 1610[3]. Soon after, Dhaka became the provincial capital. This was the beginning of what we now call Old Dhaka.

Dhaka developed commercial, industrial, administrative, cultural and political relationships very early on. Since the Mughal reign of the 1600s, Dhaka has been both a centre of trade and commerce[4]. Dhaka observed a change in social and family dynamics as it gained popularity and sudden increase in population. As Baden-Powell observed of Bengal with regards to the effects of the Mughal reign, 'the fiscal system of the Muhammadan (Islamic) conquerors encouraged the original joint administration developed undivided clan or joint family by emphasising collective fiscal responsibility'[5]. The prevalence of joint family systems further resulted in living quarters for extended families to reside in and work from

1. Thomas Höfer. *Floods in Bangladesh History, Dynamics, and Rethinking the Role of the Himalayas,* (Japan; Tokyo, 2006), 10
2. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development. London Studies on South Asia*, (London: Riverdale, 1986), 10
3. ibid, 11
4. ibid, 90



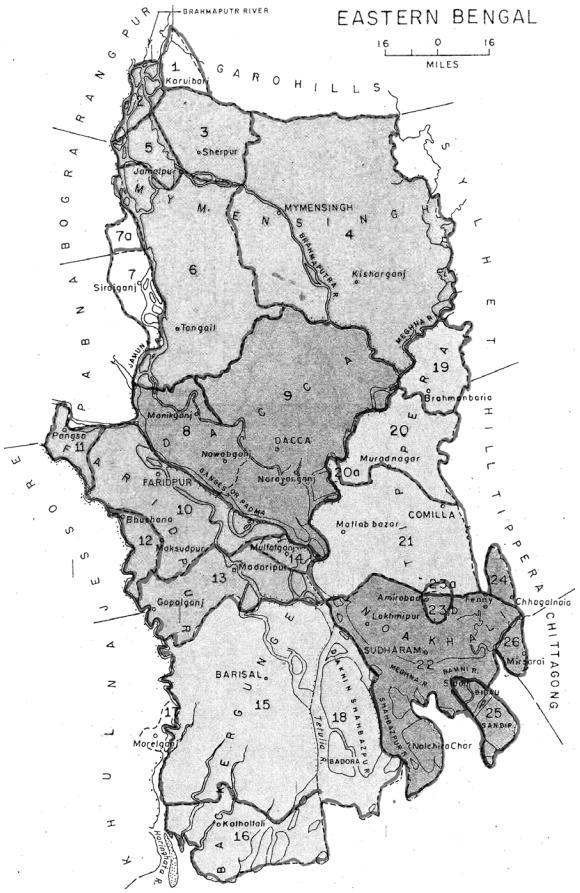




2.3 Painting from circa 1740-1750 of an elaborate marriage procession at royal court accompanied by music, dance, gifts and fireworks. Creating the various types of fireworks is a skill which remains a specialty of artisans even today.

2.4 Painting from 1659 of the Mughal army

2.5 Panorama showing the procession of the Mughal Emperor to celebrate Eid



2.6 Map showing the province of East Bengal with Dhaka as the provincial capital . It includes the Orissa and Bihar states of present India

with shared communal courtyards[7], which eventually formed one of the first urban streets of South Asia.

In the early 1700s, Dhaka reached its peak, and was recognized as the queen of cities in India by various foreign travellers and scholars. During that time, Dhaka and its suburbs had a population of 900,000[8]. The city itself extended seven to ten miles along the Buriganga and up to two and a half miles inland. The suburbs extended fifteen miles inland to the north, and about ten miles west[9] (fig. 1.3). This dense population gave rise to multi-storied storefronts and private houses being built out of entirely 1.5" clay and limestone bricks[10]. Shakhari Bazar, Tanti Bazar, Islampur Road and various such streets of Dhaka had transformed into a dense urban scape for various craftsmen, merchants and government authorities.

Abu'l-Fath Jalal ud-din Muhammad Akbar, one of the most influential leaders during Mughal reign, saw architecture at the frontier as a symbol of Mughal power, while Jahangir, Akbar's successor, saw architecture as an indication of ingenuity, serving permanent populations as well as encouraging trade across the empire[11]. The buildings in Dhaka reflected the unique style of an amalgamation of Mughal Architecture (Islamic and Persian) and architecture derived from the reign of Gupta Dynasty (Hindu) (fig. 2.12). The surfaces of each building included ornately carved limestone on the outside and sumptuously painted interiors. The typical interior plan of the structures reflected the social and cultural status of the inhabitants. The buildings ranged from 1 storey to 3 storeys high, depending on the number of occupants, the storefront and the storage requirements of the craft or trade[12]. Most of the buildings acted as a multi-use structures for both professional and domestic use, and most of the ground floor was dedicated to various crafts stores, trading areas or other commercial storefronts. The typical domestic house would be rectangular in shape with narrow facades

5. Abul Khair Nazmul Karim, *The Dynamics of Bangladesh Society,* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1980), 13
6. Md. Bahauddin, *Conservation and Management of Historic Buildings Advanced International Training Programme: Conservation of Shakhari Bazar,* (2010), accessed Sep. 14, 2014
7. A. B. M. Husain, A*rchitecture: A History through the Ages. Asiatic Society of Bangladesh,* (Dhaka: Bangladesh, 2007), 428
8. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development. London Studies on South Asia*, 13
9. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development. London Studies on South Asia*, 40
10. A*rchitecture: A History through the Ages. Asiatic Society of Bangladesh,* 442













2.7 Columns of Puthia Temple in Bangladesh influenced by Mughal architecture, making it a fusion style of Jor-Bangla and Mughal

2.8 Mughal brickwork – very thin bricks usually arranged close together to form load-bearing walls and free-standing arches

2.9 Typical terracotta facade detailing on Puthia Temple in Bangladesh, using brick as the major construction material

2.10 Ceramic- and tile-decorated facade of Sonargaon Museum, Dhaka, erected during Mughal influence, using floral motifs

2.11 Colourful cut tiles are used as mosaic facade decoration, influenced by Persian and therefore Mughal architecture

2.12 Kantajir Mandir in Bangladesh displaying Hindu mythology on terracotta facade influenced by the Gupta Dynasty era

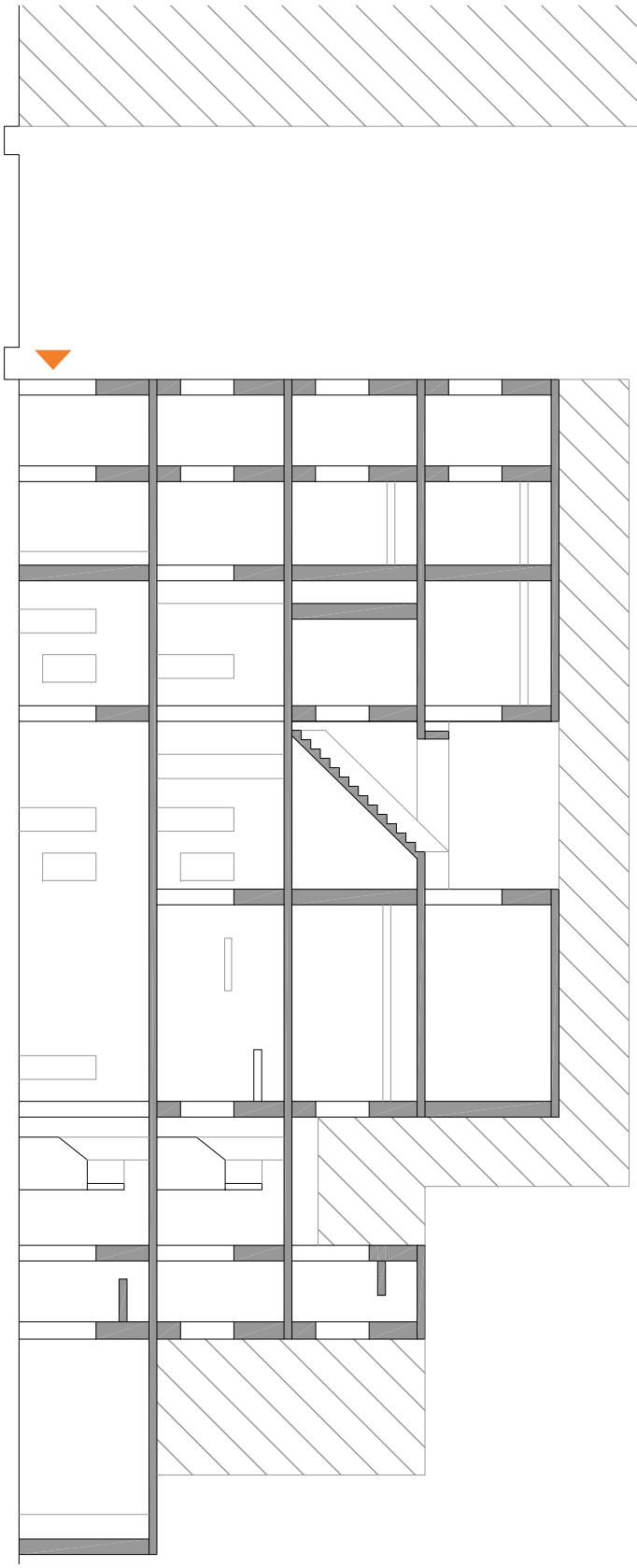
2.13 (Opposite) Typical interior of a Mughal residence showing double- or triple-height gathering spaces for artists at 'dewan khana' and courtyards.

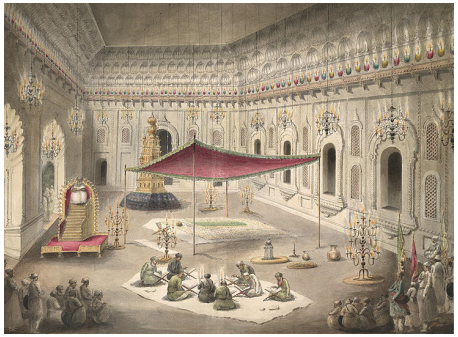

که او را قدرت استنباط نباشد اصلا (؟) ماجون وصیتها صاحب صناعت
دران باب حفظ کند و تبانی تتبع آن وصایا میکند عمل تمام شود



2.14 Typical plan of narrow mixed-use houses on Shakhari Bazar

2.15 (Opposite) Typical section of a multi-storied building using passive lighting and cooling systems.









2.16 Painting of a grand courtyard of a landlord that acted as a working and meeting space among various officials and castes. Exact building is unknown

2.17 Open courtyard located on the roof of a narrow Shakhari Bazar building that can be accessed from neighbouring roofs and various other stairways

2.18 Open courtyard located in the middle of a historical structure located in Panam Nagar, Bangladesh



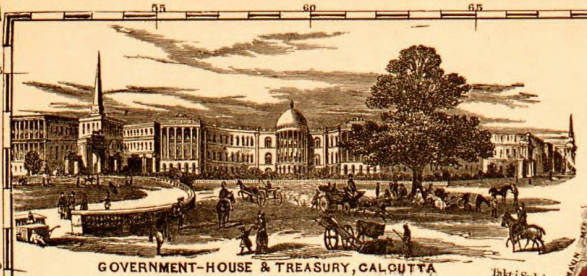
2.19 Painting depicting cohesive culture and celebrations of both Hindu and Muslim festivals for New Year, under the Mughal reign, in a Palace of a Mughal ruler.

to the main streets, similar to how the plots were divided and distributed to the craftsmen and traders in the 1600s[13] (fig. 2.15). The domestic interior would consist of a high central chamber almost certainly always used as a 'Diwan Khana', or the main reception room (fig. 2.13). This room was surrounded by various ancillary chambers on all floors, which overlooked the double or triple height central room[14] (fig. 2.18). Since the Mughal Empire was most tolerant of Hindu nobility, one would find at the entrance a centrally placed figure of the elephant-headed god Ganesh, at many Hindu dwellings. The traditional shared open courtyard at the back of each building represented the typical Gupta Dynasty architecture and social setting that encouraged family-like relationship with neighbours (fig. 2.17). Some of the upper class Bengali inhabitants had communal roof-top courtyards that could be accessed through a dense network of stairways from buildings on either side of the plots[15]. These areas served as a bigger stage for various cultural entertainments such as local dance and music shows, and rituals such as Hindu Durga Puja (fig. 2.19). In addition, Hindus who were part of the Mughal administration system could display their status and wealth by building temples in the neighbourhood, which assumed an increasingly regional architectural character of Bengal, unlike the temples built in other regions of India. Kali Bari on Shakhari Bazar is the perfect example of such a temple built by one of the upper class inhabitants of the street. Even during the Mughal reign, Hindu temples such as Dhakeshwari National Temple built in the 12th century[16], and Ramna Kali Bari from about a thousand years back, remained prominent landmarks that could be visible from miles away.

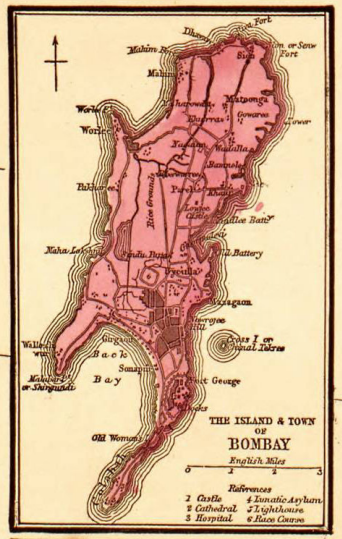
11. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development. London Studies on South Asia*, 130
12. Catherine B. Asher, The New Cambridge History of India: Architecture of Mughal India. (United Kingdom, 1992), 42
13. Md. Bahauddin, *Conservation and Management of Historic Buildings Advanced International Training Programme*
14. A. B. M. Husain, *Architecture: A History through the Ages. Asiatic Society of Bangladesh,* 462
15. Md. Bahauddin, *Conservation and Management of Historic Buildings Advanced International Training Programme*
16. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development. London Studies on South Asia*, 147

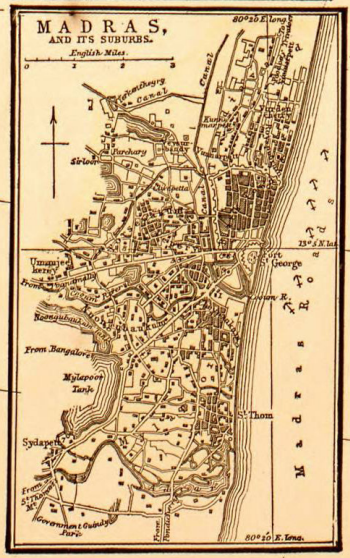
JOHNSON'S HINDOSTAN OR BRITISH INDIA.

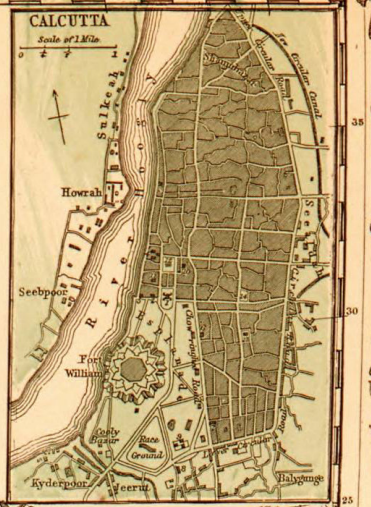
BY JOHNSON AND WARD.



GOVERNMENT-HOUSE & TREASURY, CALCUTTA







EXPLANATION

Capitals of Empires
Presidencies &c. ◦ CALCUTTA
Principal Towns ◦ Hyderabad
Rail Roads

SCALE OF STATUTE MILES 69.16 TO 1°
0 50 100 200 300

Longitude East from Greenwich

HINDOOSTAN

BENGAL

BAY OF

INDIAN OCEAN

BIRMAH

SIAM

CEYLON

MADRAS

BOMBAY

CALCUTTA

Yarkand

Lahore

Delhi

Agra

Lucknow

Allahabad

Benares

Patna

Moorshedabad

Nagpoor

Hyderabad

Ahmedabad

Baroda

Poonah

Bangalore

Seringapatam

Trichinopoly

Madura

Tanjore

Pondicherry

Calicut

Cochin

Colombo

Kandy

Trincomalee

Jaffnapatam

Pamban

Manaar

Negapatam

Cuddapah

Nellore

Masulipatam

Vizagapatam

Ganjam

Cuttack

Midnapoor

Burdwan

Dacca

Chittagong

Akyab

Arracan

Pegu

Martaban

Rangoon

Prome

Ava

Mandalay

Bhamo

Monchoboo

Kiangtung

Zimmé

Bangkok

Ligor

Tavoy

Mergui

Junkseylon

Penang

Malacca

Singapore

Sumatra

Andaman Islands

Nicobar Islands

Little Andaman

Great Nicobar I.

Car Nicobar I.

Preparis I.

Great Coco I.

Barren I.

Duncan Passage

Nine Degrees Channel

Eight Degrees Channel

Gutzlaff's Channel

Sombrero Channel

Straits of Malacca

Mouths of the Ganges

Mouths of the Irrawady

Mouths of the Cambodia

Gulf of Martaban

Gulf of Siam

Gulf of Cambodia

Gulf of Manaar

Palk's Bank

Adam's Bridge

Cherbanian Reef

Padus Bank

Maldive Islands

Laccadive Islands

Minicoy

Gollomandoo Atoll

Moloque Atoll

Male or King's I.

Goidoo I.

Ari Atoll

Mountains of the Moon

Himmaleh Mountains

Hindoo Koosh

Thibet

Cashmere

Nepaul

Bhotan

Assam

Yunnan

Kwangsi

Kwangtung

Cochin China

Laos

Siam

Cambodia

Tenasserim

Arracan

Pegu

Martaban

Ava

Birmah

Kachao

Pirates I.

Sandoway

Aracan

Akyab

Chittagong

Dacca

Midnapoor

Burdwan

Moorshedabad

Benares

Patna

Allahabad

Lucknow

Agra

Delhi

Lahore

Cawnpoor

Bhurtpoor

Ajmeer

Joodpoor

Scinde

Hydrabad

Cutch

Guzerat

Baroda

Ahmedabad

Surat

Bombay

Poonah

Nagpoor

Berar

Orissa

Gondwana

Hyderabad

Golconda

Bijapoor

Darwar

Belgaum

Goa

Canara

Malabar

Coimbatore

Madura

Tanjore

Trichinopoly

Seringapatam

Bangalore

Mysore

Coorg

Pondicherry

Calicut

Cochin

Travancore

Tinnevelly

Ramnad

Negapatam

Tranquebar

Cuddalore

Pulicat

Madras

Nellore

Ongole

Guntoor

Masulipatam

Vizagapatam

Ganjam

Cuttack

Midnapoor

Burdwan

Moorshedabad

Calcutta

Chittagong

Dacca

1.1.2 East India Company

1765

In 1715-16, Dhaka lost its status as a provincial capital by the newly appointed governor, but it remained the headquarters for the administration and the Mughal army and navy[17]. With the introduction of European trading companies, Dhaka reached a new dimension in export and trading. The inhabitants of Dhaka continued to enjoy great luxuries as they did when Dhaka was the provincial capital. This prosperous time ended in 1765[18] with the signing of the rights to taxation between Mughal Emperor to the British Army and establishing East India Company as military and commercial power (fig. 2.22).

The East India Company imposed excessive custom and town duties which led to the departure of many foreign and local merchants from the city[19]. Therefore, a sharp decline in trade was observed in East Bengal as the British took over the civil administration of the country. The elimination of Mughal administrations also caused the traders, craftsmen and manufacturers to lose their most valued Mughal patrons. Bengal society fell into a state of decay, both physically and economically, because of the decline of Mughal centralized power. In 1765, James Rennell reported that Dhaka had an estimated population of 450,000[20]. By 1828, the local artisans also had to fight against the large influx of British machine-made cotton goods, brought about by the Industrial Revolution in England[21]. The population showed a sharp decline to 200,000 in 1801, followed by only 68,610 inhabitants in 1838, which also resulted in the city shrinking to less than half its original area[22]. The jungle-beset city declined to such an extent in 1859 that when a topographical map was prepared, the main city was shown covering an area only a little over three and a quarter miles by one and a quarter miles[23]. Dhaka started to see a shift in its community and social traditions. As Radhakal Mukerjee said, "Both in Bihar and Bengal, from the days of Muhammadan administration, there have been superimposition by the State of individualistic and capitalistic ideas of property. There has been remarkable development and juristic institutions. While, on one hand, capitalistic farming and landlordism

2.20 (Opposite) Map made by the British showing what the British Empire ruled as India or East India Company. Dhaka fell under the state of Calcutta

17. Kamal Siddiqui, *Social Formation in Dhaka, 1985-2005 A Longitudinal Study of Society in a Third World Megacity*, (Surrey U.K. Ashgate, 2010), 2
18. Abul Khair Nazmul Karim, *The Dynamics of Bangladesh Society,* 22
19. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development. London Studies on South Asia*, 90
20. ibid
21. ibid, 95
22. Kamal Siddiqui, *Social Formation in Dhaka, 1985-2005 A Longitudinal Study of Society in a Third World Megacity*, 4







2.21 Painting of the fall of Tipu Sultan by the British marking the beginning of major British invasion of India

2.22 Painting depicting the signing of the rights to taxation between Mughal Emperor and the British Army, and establishing East India Company as a military and commercial power

2.23 'The 1st Bengal Fusiliers Marching Down from Dugshai', after George F. Atkinson, 1857. Soldiers are depicted wearing campaign dress of grey shirts and white-covered forage caps

2.24 (Opposite top) The Tati (or Weaver's) Bridge was situated in the weavers' quarter close to Shakhari Bazar, and crossed a nullah, or watercourse. James Atkinson wrote: 'The navigation of the nulla is now so much impeded by the numerous aquatic weeds of this luxuriant climate, that even the smaller crafts pass along it with difficulty.'

2.25 (Opposite bottom) James Atkinson wrote: 'Dhaka is one of the most delightful stations in India, its climate being healthy and agreeable, its bazaars abundantly supplied ... and each commodity the most excellent of its kind.' This vignette, from a drawing by George Chinnery, makes a feature of the contrast between the elegance of an ancient ruined mosque and native rustic architecture. It is adapted from plate 1 of Charles D'Oyly's 'Antiquities of Dhaka'.





superimposed by the state have over-ridden the communal interests of the village system, on the other hand, Jimutavahana and others developed individualistic concepts of property which dealt a serious blow to communal notions in the joint family and the coparcenary village community."[24] With this lack of strong communal ties and a depleting economy, the craftsmen and traders turned their backs toward the city and headed for the villages to engage in agriculture.

The city looked almost deserted, its notable landmarks, such as the temples, were in a state of decay. By the 1830s, Dhaka's declining fortunes had reduced it to a noble ruin, with its Mughal palaces, gateways, bridges, tombs and mosques. Even Lalbagh Fort, one of the finest specimens of Mughal architecture, was near collapse for want of repairs, while the famous Dhakeswari Temple to the north-west was decaying amidst the encroaching jungle[25]. Ironically, as the population declined, the main parts of the city, particularly the Bazar streets, grew overcrowded as people looking for work migrated from the suburbs, building their make-shift houses on the sides of main roads. Like most Indian towns, it was built haphazardly, where the houses were closely packed and laid in narrow, crooked streets and lanes[26]. There were only two main streets, one running from east to west, and other south to north, meeting almost at right angles between Shakhari Bazar on the east and Sadarghat on the south. From these, a labyrinth of lanes branched off into a number of sections[27] (fig. 2.32). The houses in each of these sections were usually arranged in blocks separated from each other by narrow footpaths, patches of jungle and the deep pits from which earth had been dug out for construction[28]. The waterworks formally opened for public use in 1878, initially to a limited space of 4 miles in diameter of the city centre, which included the Bazar streets[29].

Bishop Reginal Heber observed in 1824, "Dhaka…is merely the wreck of its ancient

23. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development. London Studies on South Asia*, 120
24 Abul Khair Nazmul Karim, *The Dynamics of Bangladesh Society,* 8
25. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development. London Studies on South Asia*, 128
26. A. M. A. Muhith, *Bangladesh in the Twenty-first Century: Towards an Industrial Society,* (Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1999), 103
27. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development. London Studies on South Asia*, 130
28. ibid
29. ibid, 203







2.26 Painting of an official of the British East India Company riding on an elephant with an escort of foot soldiers and mounted Indian retainers.

2.27 Decay of Lalbaagh Kella, built during the Mughal period.

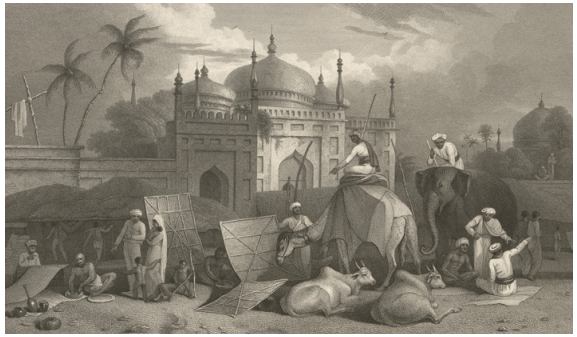
2.28 Dhakeshwari Temple stands isolated across the suburb and jungles of Dhaka

2.29 (Opposite top) Military surgeon James Atkinson wrote that this Dhaka mosque on the Buriganga reminded him of buildings in Venice, as it 'rises immediately from the margin of the river, with an effect at once stately and picturesque. Its neglected domes and arches are now shattered by accidents, and crumbling to decay; yet in the general proportions and character of its architecture, the principles of elegance and simplicity appear to be combined ... Time and vegetation, and storms and sunshine, have not only tinted it with rich variety, but so tempered the vividness of its hues, that a cool solemnity, suited to religious musing, still appears to prevail here.'

2.30 (Opposite middle) According to author James Atkinson, this souk or marketplace in Dhaka, 'is very ancient, and is situated in that quarter of the city which is now known by the name of the Old Neckaus. It was founded by Moorshed Ally Khan, and forms a square of about 200 yards; where fruits, vegetables, trinkets, toys, sweetmeats &c. &c. are exposed daily for sale. At sunset the inhabitants assemble here in crowds ... the stately Mosque [The Husseinee Delaun] which appears beyond the market ... was built in the year 1676.'

2.31 (Opposite bottom) William Prinsep and other Europeans being entertained by dancers and musicians in a splendid courtyard house in the Bengal during Durga puja.



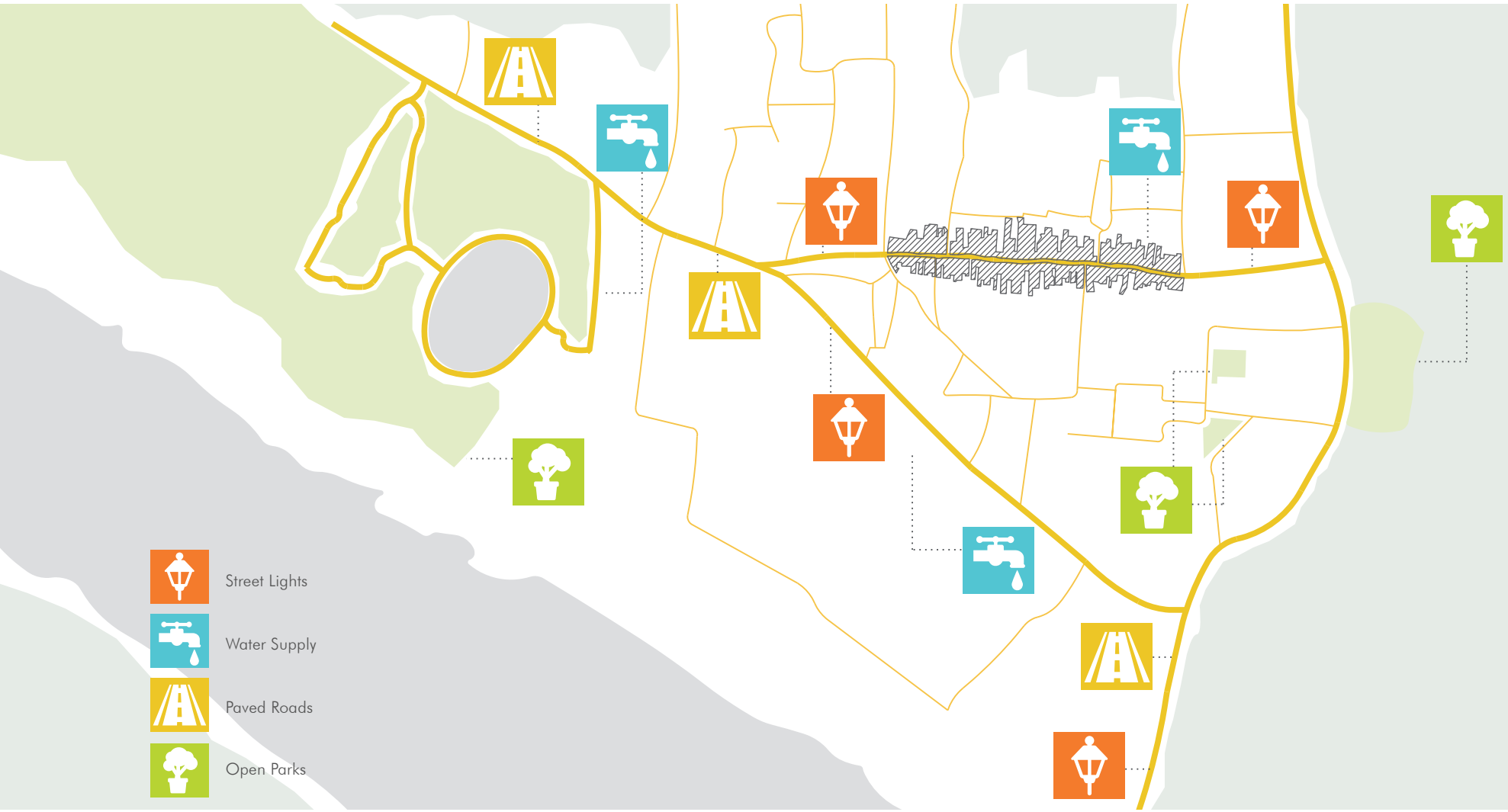




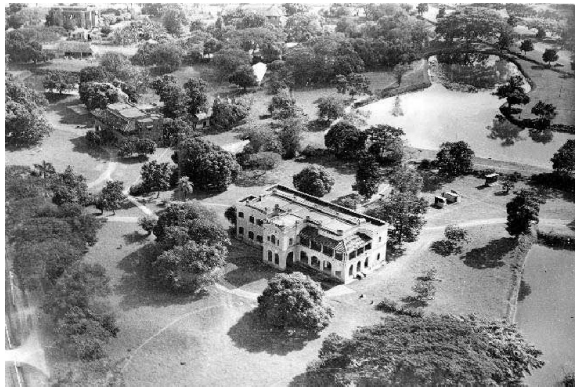
grandeur. Its trade is reduced to the sixteenth part of what it was, and all its splendid buildings, the castle of its founder…, the noble mosque he built, the palaces of the ancient Nawabs, the factories and churches of the Dutch, French and Portuguese nations are all sunk into ruin, and overgrown with jungle."[30]. When the city kept playing a vital role in the revenue administration of the country, the British realized how important Bengal was to the social life of India.

The assets of Dhaka's geographical location and the richness of its hinterland remained, and were responsible for providing the base for the forces of renewal in the period after 1840. In the mid-19th century, Dhaka started to emerge from the shadows of its post-Mughal decline to become the second city of Bengal under the British Empire. With a population of 68,000, it was still one of the most populous towns of Bengal[31]. Though the city limits did not alter much, the internal urban structure underwent vast changes. Medieval Dhaka was finally in the process of transforming into a modern city with paved roads, open parks and spaces, street lights, and piped water-supply (fig. 2.32). The British focused this expansion northwards to the higher ground which had been a favoured area under the Mughals. In 1825, Magistrate Charles Dawes cleared the Ramna jungles in order to lay out spacious green parks on the outskirts of the city, just north of Dhakeswari Temple[32]. The old road leading to the Ramna was renovated and widened. Eventually, rich foreign and local zamindars or landlords, started buying land around the Ramna race-course, to build residential bungalows and magnificent country houses with tasteful gardens. One such garden was built in Mughal style by Landlord Khwaja Abdul Ghani, and was named Shahbagh (fig. 2.34). Soon the whole area came to be known by this name[33]. Besides opening up Ramna, Migistrate Dawes had also cleared the area just beyond the Nawabpur and Thatari Bazar to the north-east of the city[34]. In 1853, the Army Cantonment was established to a refurbished Lalbagh Fort. This location was short-lived and soon after forced to move the Cantonment

30. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development. London Studies on South Asia*, 129
31. ibid, 133
32. ibid, 130
33. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development. London Studies on South Asia*, 131
34. ibid
35. ibid, 132



2.32 Map showing location of utilities on Shakhari Bazar and the surrounding streets



2.33 Picture of a British officer's house taken from a Wireless Tower



2.34 Picture from 1875 of Deer Park of the Nawab of Dhaka. It is now one of the busiest locations in Dhaka City called Shahbagh, after Landlord Shahbagh built his garden there.

further north[35].

This expansion of Dhaka invited more migrants, including the craftsmen, traders and manufacturers, from various parts of India and neighbouring countries to make Dhaka their home[36]. The city dwellers flourished and their lavish lifestyle reflected on their homes. Multi-storied buildings replaced some of the one-storey structures, using modern methods of construction. This new wealth also gave them the freedom to replicate architectural elements of luxurious bungalows and palaces. In general, ornamentation of facades were copied from historic and grand structures of the region.[37]

In 1885, further expansion took place north-east in an area called Phulbaria, which acted as the site for Dhaka's first railway station. 'About fifty acres of land were acquired for the station, staff quarters and railway workshop, around which a large colony soon developed'[38]. During the second half of 19th century, the city expanded east, but mostly to the west. Most of the building activity and expansion of the city took place without any planning. As Dr. William Henry Gregg said, "Within recent years the town has been extended westwards, and the new houses and streets, which have been constructed according to nineteenth century ideas, stand out in striking contrast to those of the old town which was built in middle ages"[39].

In 1864, the commissioner of Dhaka, C.T. Buckland, commissioned construction of a street along the Buriganga River, south of Shakhari Bazar.[40] With economic revival in later years, many of the vacant frontages of the bank were purchased, where the low grounds were filled and built over. Parts of the riverfront also developed wholesale markets where the rural population from south of the bank sold their vegetables, fruits, fish, and other commodities to the traders of Dhaka.

36. Abul Khair Nazmul Karim, *The Dynamics of Bangladesh Society,* 87
37. A. B. M. Husain, A*rchitecture: A History through the Ages. Asiatic Society of Bangladesh,* 341
38. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development. London Studies on South Asia*, 136
39. ibid, 142
40. ibid, 139

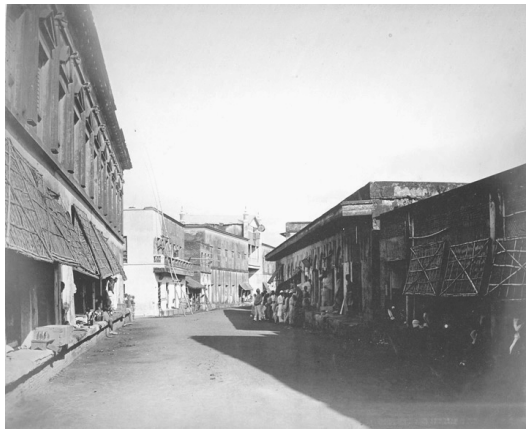












2.35 People bathing at Shadarghat, lining the Buriganga River. Photography by Munim Wasif.

2.36 Temporary markets started cropping up in Old Dhaka as trade improved and the city started becoming more populated. This Chowk Bazaar is at the seething heart of the old city of Dhaka, its narrow, twisted roads lined with old buildings, the ground floors of which house shops selling a multitude of things

2.37 Picture of Buriganga River before C.T. Buckland eventually started construction of the adjacent street.

2.38 This photograph presents a general view looking across the marketplace in Dhaka. In the centre of the image is an old brass cannon of native manufacture, found on the Buriganga riverbed. On the left is the chief mosque in the city.

2.39 River bank ready with passenger boats for daily transportation for trading and travel

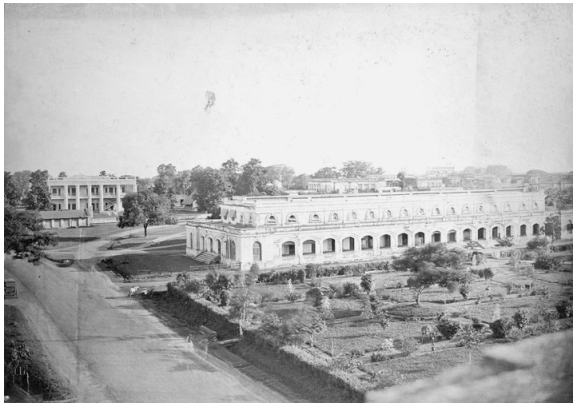
2.40 Unknown part of Old Dhaka, with mixed program, where there are stores on the ground floor and residences on the upper levels or behind the storefronts

2.41 (Opposite top) Photograph of Mitford Hospital built in 1904 in Old Dhaka on the west of Shakhari Bazar, bringing with it more population of intellectuals.

2.42 (Opposite middle) Photograph of a view the old Dhaka College to the left and the old Court Building to the right taken in the 1870s. Both buildings were demolished in 1985.

2.43 (Opposite bottom) Other buildings of Dhaka College situated just east of Shakhari Bazar





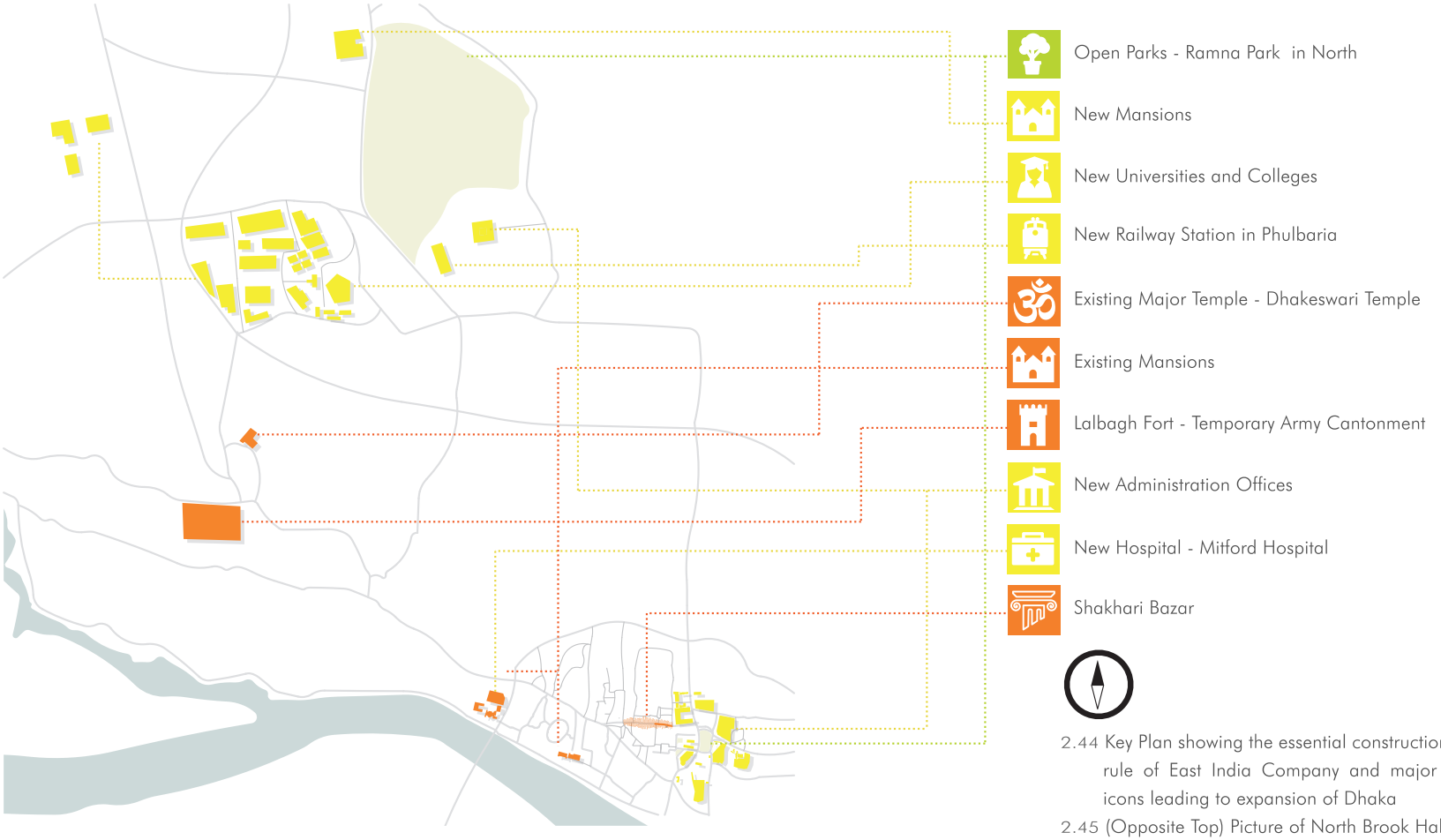


Shakhari Bazar Road continues as Islampur Road on the west, and houses two prominent historical residences. Mitford Hospital (fig. 2.41) was established beside one of the historical residences, and Dhaka College and University (fig. 2.42) was established just east of the city, which ultimately grew to be the 'Oxford of the East'[41]. Dhaka College introduced western ideas to those sections, as well as reinforced the centrality and prestige of the town by attracting outsiders to it. Therefore, the college added a new dimension to the cultural, social and intellectual character of the city, and gave it a new role to perform in the region. These two prominent sectors, along with the other government buildings established around the city, gave Dhaka its stepping stone to becoming one of the most powerful cities in South Asia.

By 1820s, all the government buildings were gradually moved eastwards, closer to the ship-building and timber factories[42]. This area soon became the new city centre with newly constructed office blocks. In 1866, public offices and courts were rebuilt in the northwest of the city, which brought about a fundamental change in the pattern of the city. This caused the city to grow northwards. With the rising population, migrants settled down wherever accommodation was available[43].

There were many unoccupied brick-built houses in old part of Dhaka, previously owned by Armenians and Greeks, and by Hindu 'zamindars' and merchants. The Bengali officials and other professionals would rent such houses when they migrated to the city, without being discriminating regarding the locality[44]. Similarly, migrants who were labourers settled down in areas that used to be the milkmen's or blacksmiths' quarters. Even the Europeans would rent houses in old part of Dhaka, near Sadarghat in the east. This pattern of new settlement greatly altered the former exclusiveness of the many castes and localities[45]. With the growth of population, the old part of the city became overcrowded, and this led to a move for

41. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development. London Studies on South Asia*, 59-66
42. ibid, 141
43. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development. London Studies on South Asia*, 147
44. ibid, 141
45. Abul Khair Nazmul Karim, *The Dynamics of Bangladesh Society*, 87



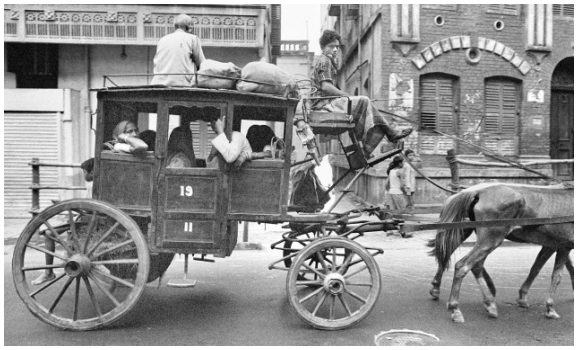
2.44 Key Plan showing the essential construction during rule of East India Company and major existing icons leading to expansion of Dhaka

2.45 (Opposite Top) Picture of North Brook Hall. Today the street it is located on is known as North Brook Hall Road

2.46 (Opposite Middle) Horse-drawn carriage running through the streets of Bengal.

2.47 (Opposite Bottom) Rose Garden was a pleasure lodge built by a Hindu zamindar in the late 19th century at K.M Das lane in the Narinda quarter of Old Dhaka and later purchased by Khan Bahadur Abdur Rashid.





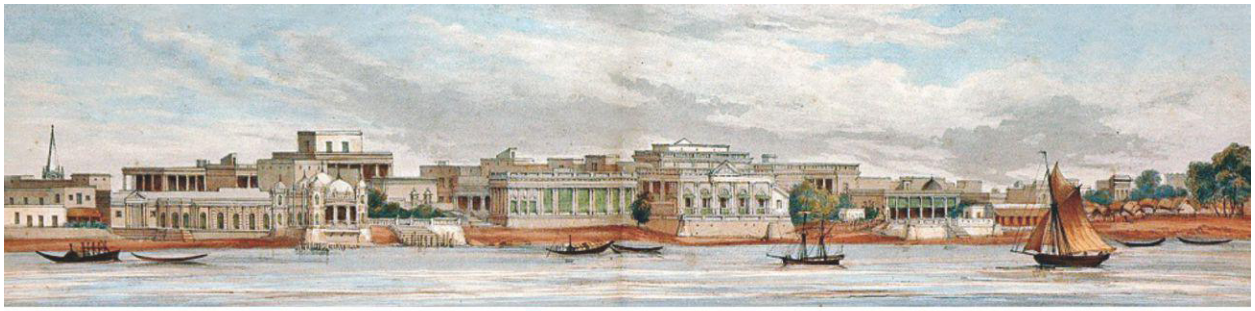


development to the city's outskirts, mostly because of the rising educated middle class[46]. This further reinstated the old tradition of extended families and friends sharing common spaces in the dense city multi-storey buildings. The shared courtyards along with various community spaces sprung up to make community living stronger among individuals of various backgrounds. Eventually, the introduction of wheeled carriages (fig. 2.47) and piped water supply facilitated the outward expansion and growth of new residential quarters[47], but by then, neither professions nor caste dictated their locations for living, as they kept up the practice of living together with blacksmiths, weavers and shakharis, or families of different cultural backgrounds.

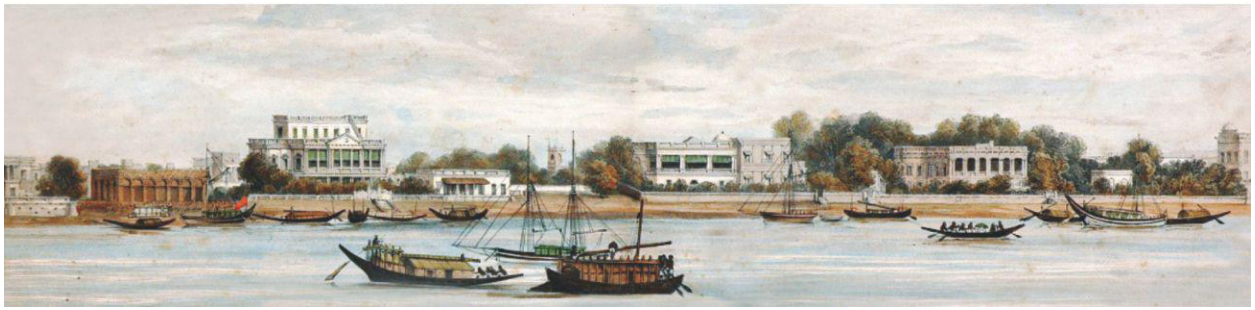
Among the contributions of some foreigners, one might say that the most striking contributions of the Armenian families in the development of the city is the introduction of 'ticca-garry' or horse-drawn carriage, or better known now as 'ghorar-gari'. G.M. Shircore, an Armenian investor, pioneered a transport revolution, and his horse-drawn carriage business became such a great success that his example was soon followed by other Armenians and local businessmen[48]. There were 60 ticca-garries plying for hire in Dhaka in 1867, but by 1874 there were about 300, while by 1889 the total number in the city had increased to nearly 600[49]. Instead of relying on only elephants, the ticca-garries rapidly became the chief form of land public transport until the invention of cycle-rickshaws in Dhaka and the inception of buses in the 20th century[50]. Needless to say, along with the expansive water transportation, the launching of horse-carriages played an important role in the expansion of Dhaka city.

So, continued a process, the culmination of which was the transformation of Dhaka into a modern, forward-thinking metropolis. Dhaka's architecture reflected the old and the new - Mughal architecture existing side-by-side with Anglo-Indian styles. Dhaka was no longer

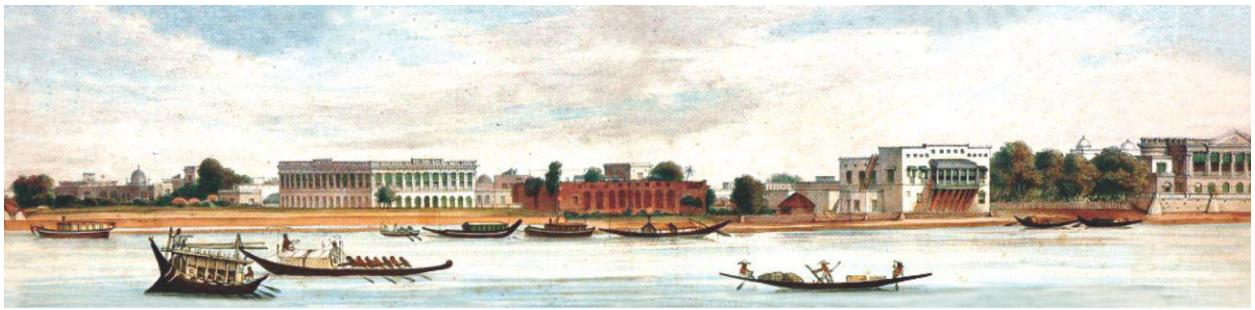
46. Abul Khair Nazmul Karim, *The Dynamics of Bangladesh Society,* 235
47. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development. London Studies on South Asia*, 104
48. ibid, 104
49. ibid, 105
50. ibid, 141



1950s



1800s



1700s



1600s



2.48 (Opposite) Paintings showing the changing panorama from the Buriganga River from the Mughal period (bottom) until the rule of East India Company (top)

2.49 Curzon Hall built by Lord Curzon of East India Company. Now it operates as part of Dhaka University.

as wealthy or as prosperous as it had been during the Mughal rule, but new forms of trade, commerce and manufacturers had laid the foundations for renewed economic life[51].

51. Kamal Siddiqui, *Social Formation in Dhaka, 1985-2005 A Longitudinal Study of Society in a Third World Megacity*, 6


PREVAILING RELIGIONS
English Miles
0 100 200 300 400
British Indian Empire 1909
NOTE TO COLOURING
HINDUS
SIKHS
MUHAMMADANS
BUDDHISTS
CHRISTIANS
ANIMISTS
ARABIAN SEA
BAY OF BENGAL
AFGHANISTAN
BALUCHISTAN AGENCY
KASHMIR
PUNJAB
NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROV.
RAJPUTANA AGENCY
UNITED PROVINCES
CENTRAL INDIA AGENCY
BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
CENTRAL PROVINCES
BENGAL
EASTERN BENGAL AND ASSAM
HYDERABAD
MYSORE
MADRAS PRESIDENCY
NEPAL
BHUTAN
TIBET
UPPER BURMA
LOWER BURMA
Andaman Islands
Nicobar Islands
Laccadive Islands
CEYLON
Longitude East 88 from Greenwich

1.1.3 East Pakistan

1947

In 1947, the East India Company divided India into Pakistan and India according to religious density, and declared them as independent countries. Bengal was divided into East and West Bengal.[52] East Bengal merged with Pakistan to form its own province of East Pakistan, with Dacca as the capital of East Pakistan. Due to massive cultural and geographical gaps, social and political unrest continued between West Pakistan and East Pakistan.[53]

The infrastructure and economy building came to an abrupt stop during the first 10 years and, with no maintenance, the existing buildings and infrastructure deteriorated with time. Inventiveness and creativity in design took a sudden drop in East Pakistan.[54] In the 1960s, architects started making their presence felt, and in search of a new identity for the new nation, they looked to foreign architects for inspiration. A.B.M. Husain explained, "At one end, western architects produced some outstanding architectural works. On the other, building professionals in Pakistan practised cheap Islamic clichés. However, a handful of Bengali architects played a pioneering role in the growth of modern architecture during this period. Thereby, two distinct phases are evident in the architecture of East Pakistan since 1947"[55].

In the first phase, there was no formal training given to architects, and therefore, city planning and construction became the responsibility of surveyors and engineers. This resulted in massive expansion of an ill-planned Dhaka City.[56] Some of the foreign architects initially hired, built large structures with monotonous arrays of rooms, no spatial harmony and were completely void of social and cultural context. This impersonal 'design' was replicated several times, and can be observed in various offices and multi-storied housing built in new Dhaka. Soon, new Dhaka became an ill-planned, non-coherent and unattractive city, lacking any visual organization[57].



2.50 (Opposite) Map made by the British to establish religious boundaries and divide the country.

2.51 Monotonous buildings were produced and replicated throughout the new part of Dhaka city.

52. Abul Khair Nazmul Karim, *The Dynamics of Bangladesh Society,* 235
53. Kamal Siddiqui, *Social Formation in Dhaka, 1985-2005 A Longitudinal Study of Society in a Third World Megacity*, 5
54. A. B. M. Husain, A*rchitecture: A History through the Ages. Asiatic Society of Bangladesh,* 505
55. ibid, 506
56. ibid, 511
57. ibid, 505







2.52 Parliament building commissioned by Pakistan to Louis I Kahn. It is still under construction

2.53 The Hotel Intercontinental acts as a perfect example of modern Bangladeshi architecture, which is a blend of past architecture and contemporary design

2.54 Teacher-Student Centre of Dhaka University is heavily influence by Le Corbusier

Finally in 1968, with the graduation of some brilliant local architects, the second phase started and the practice of original and true expression of architectural identity started.[58] The Intercontinental Hotel (fig. 2.53) and Medical College built north of the city are two examples of a culmination of Islamic and contemporary design. Soon, the use of brick became an essential expression of identity of Bengalis. Foreign architects such as Louis I Kahn (fig. 2.52) heavily influenced the design methods of Bengali architect. A.B.M. Husain explained, "Along with Louis I Kahn, the sincere efforts of some other foreign architects and the newly trained local architects in search for regional style tried to revive the lost nationalism and also paved the way in determining an architectural vocabulary in this region for the next generation"[59]. Unfortunately, this revival stopped abruptly with intense political and social disturbance in East Pakistan.

The mass genocide of 3 million[60] Hindus and intellectuals of East Pakistan by West Pakistan left most of the houses in Old Dhaka deserted.[61] These houses were then reoccupied by mostly migrant labourers, who would squat in the historic structures and modify the building materials with their scarce resources and amateur building workmanship, resulting in destruction of heritage properties.[62] These squatters, through kinship, attracted more squatters from the villages.[63] Political unrest coupled with a high density of untrained labourers, and ignorance of traditional crafts, led to a chaotic mix of informality and formality with a blurry division. A lot of what remained of the historical structures were further damaged as a revolution began in 1971, and Dhaka emerged as the capital of the newly independent country of Bangladesh.



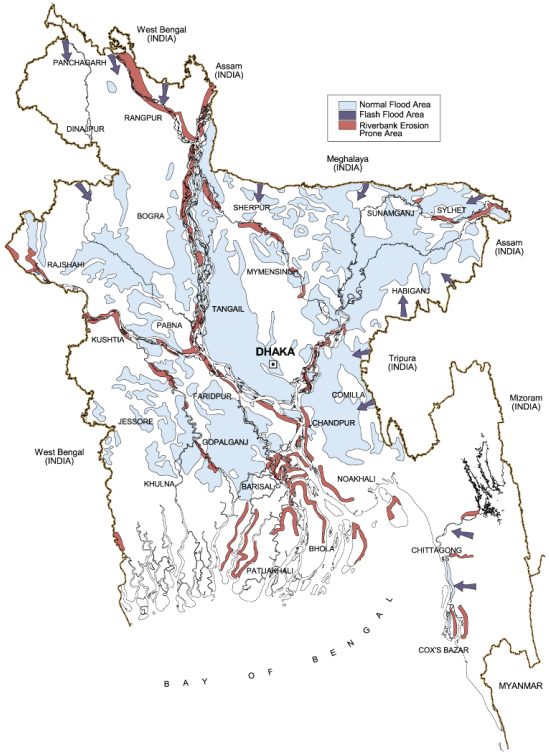
2.55 Deserted housing complex in the city from the revolution in 1971

58. A. B. M. Husain, A*rchitecture: A History through the Ages. Asiatic Society of Bangladesh,* 505
59. ibid, 518
60. "Bangladesh sets up war crimes court", Last modified March 25, 2010, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2010/03/2010325151839747356.html
61. Dr. Qazi Azizul Mowla, Redevelopment Strategy for Old Dhaka: An Analytical Debate, (2008) Accessed September 21, 2013.
62. Taimur Islam and HomairaZaman, "Conservation of Historic Mohalla", last modified April 21, 2006. http://archive.thedailystar.net/magazine/2006/04/03/cover.htm
63. Observations from site visit between May 2014 to August 2014.



1.1.4 Bangladesh

1971



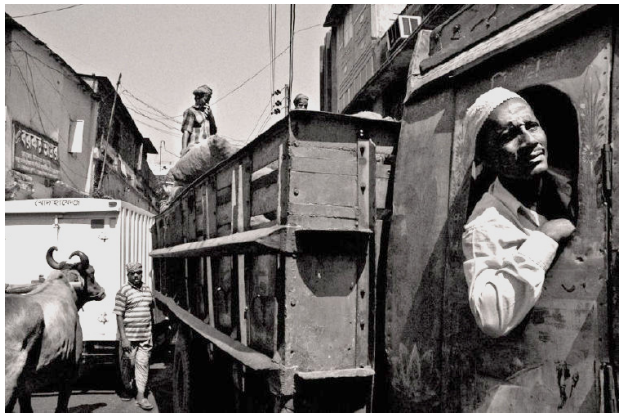
2.56 (Opposite) Bird's eye view of the City of Dhaka in 2013

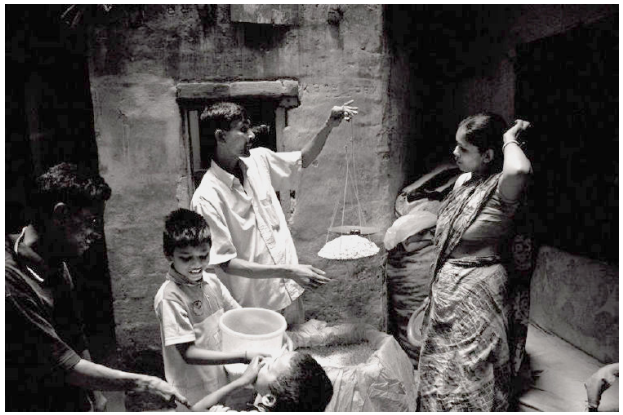
2.57 Map of flood-prone areas in Bangladesh shows Old Dhaka is prone to both riverbank erosion and normal flooding

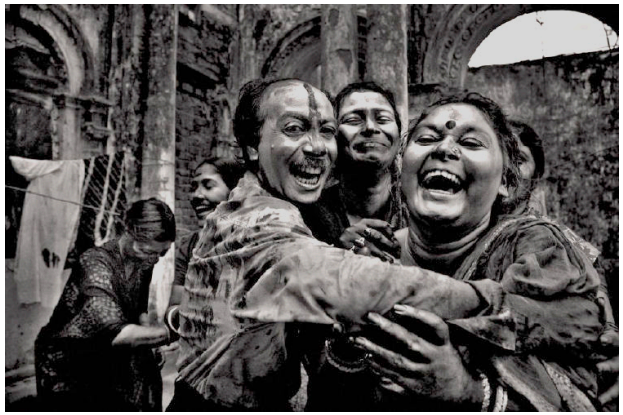
Since 1971, post-partition Dhaka rapidly grew beyond the bounds of Old Dhaka as the construction of government offices and new houses got underway and the city spread out to a new band of development towards the north away from the Buriganga River. (fig. 1.2) Around this time, a gradual process of industrialization began in the areas adjoining Old Dhaka, rather than in Old Dhaka itself. Jute and textile mills sprang up, as did fertilizer factories, power stations, light engineering works, food processing units, etc. However, the expansion of the city is ultimately constrained by physical barriers, the most important of which are the low-lying flood-prone areas.[64] The physical expansion in the decades since then was mainly due to rapid population growth. Bangladesh became a massive concentration of extreme poverty that defies comparison.[65] It seemed nowhere else on earth existed anything quite like the extremely low living conditions shared by such an enormous population (72 million) squeezed into a small geographical area of approx. 510 km^2. Indeed the highest rate of population growth and physical expansion took place during 1981-1991 when the population doubled and the city expanded to 1,353 km^2.[66] Compounding all these difficulties were the circumstances of the emergence of the nation, paralleled with damage to the economic status during the 9 month revolution and the massive claim on scarce resources for the rehabilitation of 10 million refugees.[67] This migration acted as a catalyst for informal economy, and put the urban labour market and the supply systems for housing, utilities and services under enormous pressure.

In those days, a mahalla (formal or informal neighbourhood) grew around a market place. Nowadays there is an unhealthy tendency to construct too many shopping centres in an unplanned manner.[68] Consequently, congestion and ugliness have replaced the city's former spacious urban fabric. Public properties, such as open community buildings and parks, have been turned into congested commercial and residential buildings.[69] Few infrastructures have been modified even with the drastic increase in population. Even with the expansion

64. A. A. Rahman, *Environment and Development in Bangladesh*, (Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1994), 24
65. A. M. A. Muhith, *Bangladesh in the Twenty-first Century: Towards an Industrial Society,* (Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1999), 111
66. Kamal Siddiqui, *Social Formation in Dhaka, 1985-2005 A Longitudinal Study of Society in a Third World Megacity*, 5
67. ibid.
68. ibid, 5
69. ibid, 6







2.58 Traffic congestion is a normal sight in the narrow streets of Old Dhaka. Photography by Munem Wasif

2.59 Street hawkers travel from house to house as they sell their produce using a traditional weighing balance. This traditional interaction has been lost in new Dhaka. Photography by Munem Wasif

2.60 Extended family members live together and participate in celebrations such as holi together in Old Dhaka. Photography by Munem Wasif

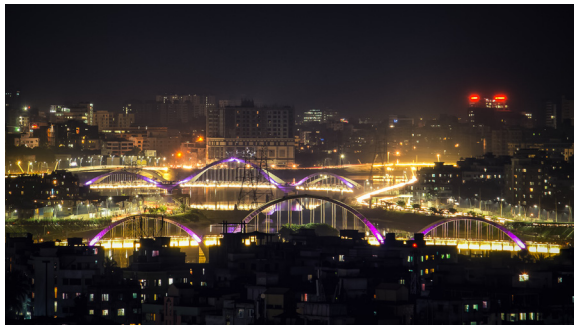
2.61 (Opposite top) One of the branches of Buriganga flows through the dense city of new Dhaka.

2.62 (Opposite middle) New Dhaka contains wider roads and is heavily dependent on road transportation

2.63 (Opposite bottom) New Dhaka possesses an urban structure that is in contrast to the tight-knit urban setting of Old Dhaka







of living quarters and public and commercial buildings, Old Dhaka was left behind as a 'city of the dead', where only devoted locals who own ancestral property still reside, along with the many squatters who have gained authority of some heritage buildings according to squatters' rights.[70] Regardless of these issues, Old Dhaka remains almost as a portal to the older centuries, where one can easily encounter horse-drawn carriages, elephants, and wedding bands using old-style brass instruments. Although some residential heritage structures have been moulded in time to adapt to the new dense living conditions of its residents - some beyond the point of recognition, there are still historical structures that act as landmark throughout Old Dhaka.

In 1985, despite its growing stratification, the city still maintained its community living conditions to some degree, where everyone either seem to have known or knew of everyone else through birth, marriage, association and/ or leisure community gatherings.[71] By 2015, the new part of Dhaka was no longer in that condition. In the last few decades, Dhaka has lost a great deal of its "social openness". Population has increased enormously (14.4 million in 2013) and spread over a much larger area, some of which were due to increased traffic congestions, rising transport costs and fear of becoming a victim during transit, soaring prices of essential commodities and political unrest.[72] In addition, the added pressure of trying to catch up with the rest of the world because of what was lost during the 25 years under Pakistan rule has left little spare time for wage-earners to enjoy leisure social gatherings with neighbours, friends and families. The nuclear family norm has increased among the informal sector and the poor.[73] While middle class city dwellers preferred small nuclear family apartments in the new parts of Dhaka, the poor and squatters made space in any hostile environment available. Even the squatters in Shakhari Bazar can be seen to board up the heritage properties so as to divide each floor into many small independent units for multiple families.[74] Although, it is a common sight in Old Dhaka to have one room

70. Matiura Rahamana, Globalisation, Environmental Crisis, and Social Change in Bangladesh, (Dhaka, 2003), 15
71. Interviews conducted between May 2014 to August 2014
72. A. M. A. Muhith, *Bangladesh in the Twenty-first Century: Towards an Industrial Society,* (Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1999), 111
73. ibid, 114
74. Observations from site visit between May 2014 to August 2014.



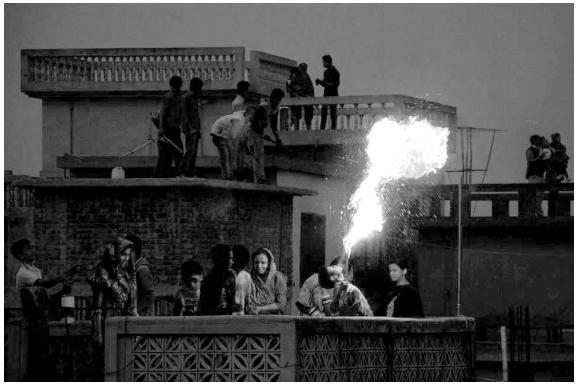




2.64 These sets of buildings are set for demolition, paving the way for new modern flats. The news does not rest well with Sumitra Debi, who has been an inhabitant of this locality for sixty years. She thinks that demolishing the buildings will not only cause a loss in the locality but also damage the whole neighbourly spirit that is prevalent at the moment. It is a sign of the changing culture and times. Photography by Munem Wasif

2.65 A girl hides her face in front of a historical structure in old Dhaka. Photography by Munem Wasif

2.66 A young mother cleans her daughter's hair of lice as they stand in the sunshine on what passes for their balcony. Such intricate relationships, a part and parcel of life in those parts, are fast becoming a thing of the forgotten past with the humdrum of daily life. Photography by Munem Wasif



2.67 The Kite Flying Festival in Shakhari Bazar carries with it many other traditions, including fire breathing and fire spinning.

that contains an electric stove and a family of 5 or 6, Old Dhaka has still maintained the communal gathering culture much better than the new part of Dhaka. It is here that one comes across families who have lived in Dhaka city for many generations[75]. There is a great craze for football and kite flying, and people still play board games on the streets with other community members. Unlike new Dhaka, there is great enthusiasm among the residents of Old Dhaka for most of the occasions of different religions, such as Puja, Holi, Eid, Shab-e-barat, Janmasthami, and Ramadan. Old Dhaka denotes peaceful coexistence and amity between Hindus and Muslims[76] which is one of the most important advantages Old Dhaka locals have over the residents of new Dhaka.

75. Taimur Islam and Homaira Zaman, "Conservation of Historic Mohalla", last updated April 21, 2006, http://archive.thedailystar.net/magazine/2006/04/03/cover.htm
76. ibid





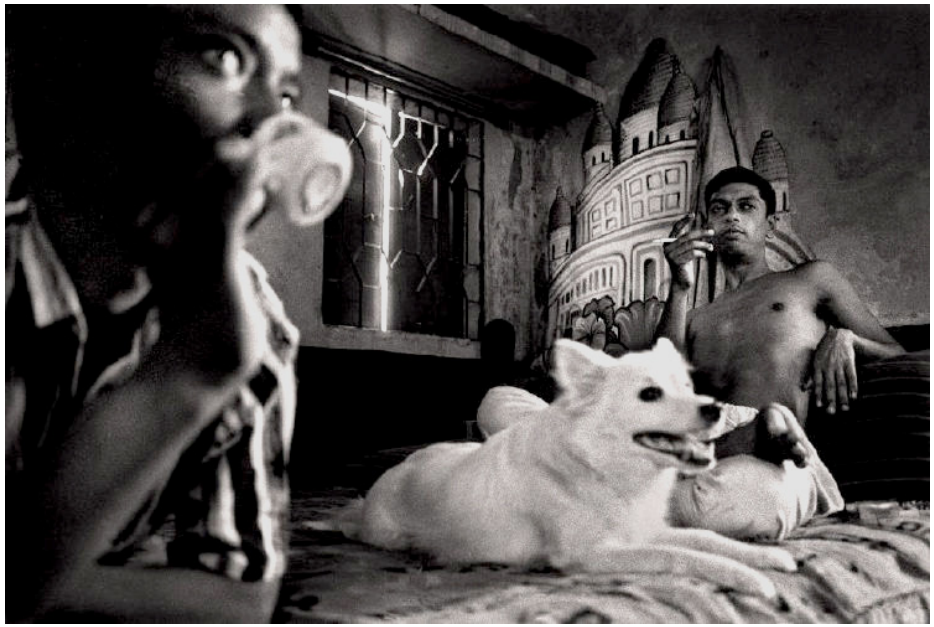


2.68 A man feeds his pigeon in one of the courtyards in Old Dhaka. Photography by Munem Wasif

2.69 A young girl skips in her neighbourhood in Old Dhaka early in the morning. Photography by Munem Wasif

2.70 Life is a wheel or so they say, and a grandmother helping her old husband to the bathroom while their grandchildren play by their side show this better than anything else. Photography by Munem Wasif





2.71 Typical interior of a residential room in Old Dhaka. Photography by Munem Wasif

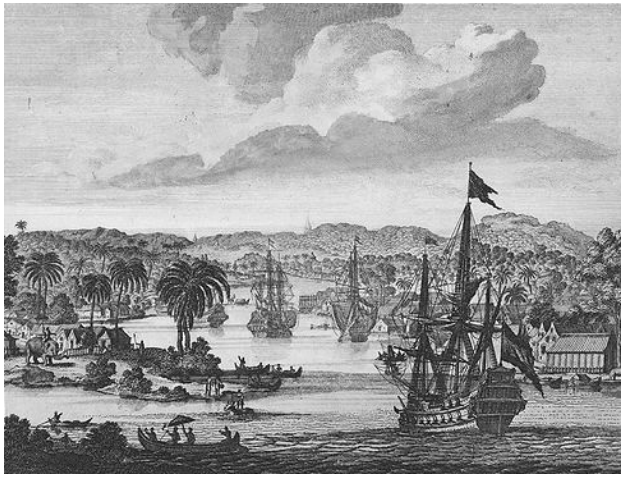
2.72 Young men relax in their rooms with tea after a hard day Photography by Munem Wasif

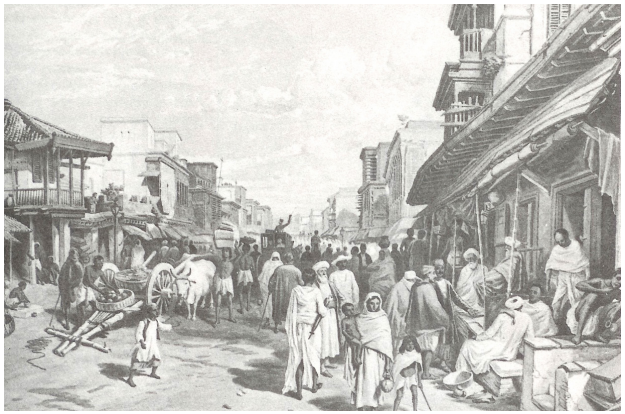


3.1 (Opposite) Sculptor apprentices on Shakhari Bazar prepare parts of a deity for an upcoming Hindu festival

1.2.0 Intangible Evolution







3.2 Depiction jewellery worn during the Mughal Period
3.3 Etching of Spice trade and Dutch and Portuguese trading ships
3.4 View of a bazaar during trading season in 1867



3.5 Artist portraying the exquisite refinement of features and of details of clothing and jewellery on ivory in early 19th century

Dhaka seems to have gone through a varied mix of identities that shaped its urban, cultural and political infrastructure since the 1600s. Another unique element that deeply affected the architecture and traditions of Dhaka is its intangible culture of craftsmanship. In order to understand the unusually strong relationship between craftsmanship and its tangible environment, it is important to comprehend its evolution since 1600s.

Dhaka was the centre of trading and commerce, and a vital manufacturing town of crafts and artistry since the 1600s under the Mughal reign[1]. As the centre of consumption of specialized handicrafts, it attracted more craftsmen, merchants and traders from both South Asia and foreign lands. Alongside them, the artisans and manufacturers produced some of the best luxury articles of ivory work, gold, silver, conch shell jewellery and perfumes that were marketed to regional Mughal grandees and other aristocrats, as well as exported worldwide, mostly to Southeast Asia and Europe[2]. The prime exports were cotton and silk as Dhaka had the best artisans renowned for their skill in producing the fine cotton cloth generally known as muslin. The Mughal rulers encouraged the craftsmen, artisans and manufacturers by providing rent-free lands for habitation[3]. Some craftsmen was provided with narrow 10 feet by 30 feet plots that encouraged maximum access for all the storefronts to the street[4]. Thus was born the various arteries of craft and trade in Old Dhaka, such as Shakhari Bazar and Tanti Bazar. The abrupt success and expansion of the city brought with it multiple social changes. According to M. N. Roy[5]:

Although industrial production was still based on hereditary craftsmanship according to the caste system, another class had developed (by the middle of the eighteenth century) which controlled the distribution of the commodities produced by the guilds. The hereditary artisans had ceased in many instances to be independent members of the autonomous village community. His production was no longer the property of the community to be exchanged by himself into

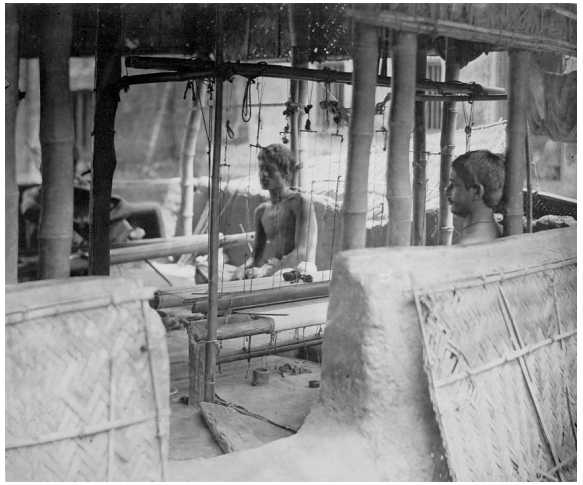
1. A. M. A. Muhith, *Bangladesh in the Twenty-first Century: Towards an Industrial Society*, (Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1999), 8
2. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development*. London Studies on South Asia, (London: Riverdale, 1986) 114
3. ibid, 11
4. Abul Khair and Nazmul Karim, *The Dynamics of Bangladesh Society,* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1980), 41
5. ibid, 9

other necessities produced by equally independent members of the community. Arts and crafts, which centuries ago had arisen as part of village economy within the bonds of caste, had long ceased to be the exclusive concern of the isolated villages, but was taken from one province to another in order to be sold and resold by a prosperous trading class with considerable capital accumulated in its hand. The principal industries had been commercialised and their base had been removed from the village confines to the towns, hundreds of which flourished all over the country. Still confined to the caste guilds in so far as labour is concerned, the social and economic control of the industrial products had gone out of hands of the artisan. Instead of completely controlling production and distribution as before the craftsman was supplied with raw materials by the trading middle-man, who took the finished products out of the former's hand, not to distribute according to the needs of the community, but to sell it for profit.

The craftsmen subdivided their locations so each street would contain a particular craft or group of crafts[6] (fig. 3.9). One might imagine it as the first shopping area where each street was specialized in a craft or group of crafts. The weavers, dyers, embroiders, etc. set up shop and made Tanti Bazar street their home[7]. The street was, therefore, named after the weavers. Similarly, the street of Shakhari Bazar was named after its inhabitants – the shakharis. Shakhari Bazar was also home to the goldsmiths and silversmiths, since these products were mostly used for jewellery and could be amalgamated to produce a conch shell (shakha) craft with gold and/or silver ornamentations[8]. This street also saw a rise in the number of temples, leading to an increase in the number of specialized Hindu deity sculptors that resided and worked on the street[9]. Unlike the other Bazar streets that developed during this time, Shakhari Bazar contained mostly Hindu residents due to the fact that most of the artisans' products were marketed to the Hindu population[10]. Even though there was a decrease in caste differentiation among each religious population, it was still not acceptable, for example, for a non-Hindu artisan to craft goods used for Hindu



3.6 A woman wearing muslin in a painting from 1789



3.7 Two weavers at work at a loom in an open-sided mud-walled house taken in the early 1860s

6. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development*, 11
7. ibid, 14
8. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development*, 94
9. Lala Rukh Selim, *Art and Crafts. Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, (Dhaka, 2007), 165
10. "Conservation of Historic Mohalla", last modified April 21, 2006, http://archive.thedailystar.net/magazine/2006/04/03/cover.htm

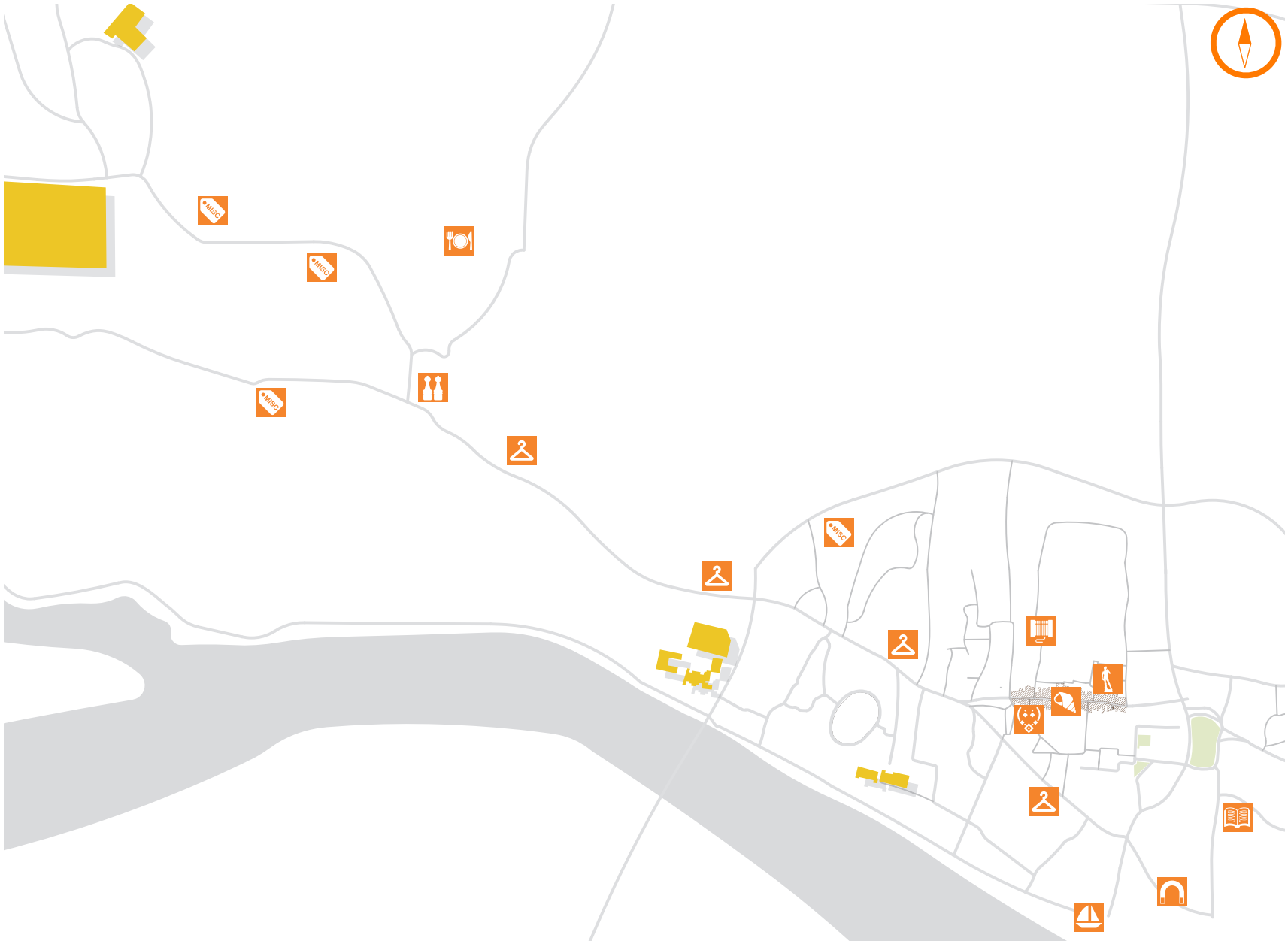


3.8 Picture taken in the 1860s shows a group of dancers and musicians. The man standing to the left of the central dancer is holding a 'sarangi' or fiddle. Many of the photographs from the album were taken in or around a temporary studio constructed from wicker panels with an open roof to admit light onto the subject. The studio can be seen in the background in this scene

religious rituals[13]. This social class was reflected in the residences and program distribution of Shakhari Bazar as it required larger and more social gathering spaces for the performance arts such as drama, singing, poetry, and other Hindu rituals that invited thousands of spectators from various parts of the country. Foreign traders, such as the Armenians and officials of the East India Company were also invited to these events. Due to the high prosperity and profits of the artisans and traders, they enjoyed many of the luxuries they had only seen the rich upper caste or Mughal representatives enjoy until then[11]. Most of the craftsmen's residences were still made out of clay and stone, which were later upgraded to brick and mortar as the residents achieved higher profits from their businesses[12]. Most of the musicians, dancers and singers of Dhaka were employed by rich 'zamindars' (landlords) and businessmen, and this support eventually led to the development of the modest manufacturing industry of musical instruments like the 'tabla' (drum), sitar, 'israj' and violins[13]. This mix of professionals of diverse religious and caste backgrounds led to some interesting architectural mix when constructing their shops and residences on the bazaars.

When the British took over the administration of the country in the mid 1700s, they ignored the local craftsmen and manufacturers[14]. As thousands of weavers and other craftsmen lost their livelihoods and moved to the countryside to work in agriculture, much of the heart and life went out of the city. K.M Ashraf says, "Economically speaking, the village is a self-sufficient unit with an organic as well as developed economic structure, if by organic life we mean the team work of the community to supply the needs and fulfil the desires of its members"[15]. Dhaka was a city shorn of noteworthy administrative and military functions, its trade and commerce stagnant, its textile manufacturer and traditional crafts, once the envy of the civilized world and the basis of its wealth, buried under the weight of cheap machine-made cloth from Britain[16]. But the pre-existing self-sufficient character of Dhaka, combined with the existing commercial development set this area apart from others.

11. Observations from site visit between May 2014 to August 2014.
12. Abul Khair and Nazmul Karim, *The Dynamics of Bangladesh Society,* 38
13. ibid, 69
14. A. B. M. Husain, *Architecture: A History through the Ages*, (Dhaka, 2007), 459
15. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development*, 114


MISC
MISC
MISC
MISC


Clothing


Spices


Shakha


Books


Food and Restaurants


Boat Building and River Terminal



Miscellaneous and Wholesale


Weaving


Blacksmiths


Gold and Silver Jewellery


Sculpting

3.9 (Opposite) Key plan of location of craftsmen and artisans in Old Dhaka

At the end of 18th century, the economic revival produced fundamental changes within Dhaka society. Owing both to natural increases and migration, Dhaka's Hindu population increased substantially[17]. A considerable English-educated middle class emerged[18]. This created a greater market for goods and crafts catering to an English-educated population. In addition to the settled craftsmen and other residents of the Bazar streets, the city also had a floating population of traders, labourers and villagers that continued the importance of Dhaka as a centre of consumption, and a market for traders, local craftsmen and producers in Shakhari Bazar, Bangla Bazar, Islampur and other such bazaars[19].

With Dhaka's position as major centre of regional administration, trade and commerce, the city's numbers swelled to about 80,210[26] by late 19th century. Old bazaars were restored to life as many new shops opened and business became diversified and brisk[20]. Old clay or mud buildings were transformed into brick buildings and 1 storey buildings were replaced by 3 or 4-storey buildings to accommodate the growing population, with the notion of economical joint families[21]. Dhaka became a distributing centre for western goods such as Lancashire textiles, Belgian glass, wines, spirits, etc. of which the new upper class families took advantage[22]. The availability of these western fashionable commodities enhanced the importance of the city as a chief emporium in East Bengal and also boosted the sale of the local goods. Regardless of competition from English yarn, the local textile industry remained the largest workforce of weavers, embroiders, darners, dyers, washermen, etc. in the city with 1,500 looms in production in 1846[23]. By 1840, the most worthy manufacturers were of violins, shakha ornaments and sculptures[24]. It was during this time that rings and bangles made from conch shells became a major product in Dhaka. There were about 500 'shakharis' in Shakhari Bazar using about 300,000 conch shells a year imported from Calcutta[25]. Ready-made shakhas (bangles) and rings, elaborately carved and painted, were sold in large quantities in the city and at all the great fairs in the district; they formed one of

16. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development*, 114
17. Abul Khair and Nazmul Karim, *The Dynamics of Bangladesh Society,* 131
18. ibid, 143
19. ibid, 162
20. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development*, 90
21. Matiura Rahamana, *Globalisation, Environmental Crisis, and Social Change in Bangladesh*, (Dhaka, 2003), 79

its principal exports. In addition, gold and silver craftsmen of Dhaka were also famous for their fine filigree designs for bracelets. There were about 300 goldsmiths and silversmiths in the city[26]. There were also some horn and ivory carving, soap and paper making, and ofcourse boat building, a major industry since the Mughal period[27].

As much as international imports encouraged some revival of traditional arts and crafts, miscellaneous fine goods such as muslin production decreased by the end of the century, unable to stand the competition of Lancashire in materials for shirts, dhutis, saris and shawls[28]. Materials such as expensive Jamdani saw an increase in production, reflecting the appearance of the new classes to replace the old Mughal and Hindu nobility as purchasers who like their predecessors, became patrons of luxurious indigenous products[29]. The same social and economic trends that supported the revival of these traditional luxury handicrafts also encouraged goldsmiths and silversmiths, who produced for both local and export markets. The industry was so profitable that it induced various Hindus from the upper class to take up the profession. Dhaka goldsmiths were particularly famous for their ability to make ornaments with small quantity of gold and light in weight. Silversmiths acquired a similar fame, though their specialities were 'singhasans' (thrones of deities) and 'taktanamas' (bedsteads) used for Hindu marriage and religious processions, as well as household articles such as betel leaf or paan boxes, and perfume boxes. Hridoy Nath Majumdar, a local writer, said, 'The European ladies preferred the beautifully ornamented bracelets, rings, brooches, safety-pins and flowers of gold and silver of Dhaka to those prepared by the Calcutta firms'[30].

The industry that was monopolized by the traditional manufacturers and which also expanded during the second half of the 19th century was the conch-shell industry. The



3.10 Photograph from 1860 of a group of three goldsmiths posing with the tools of their trade. It was taken in or around a temporary studio constructed from wicker panels with an open roof to admit light onto the subjects

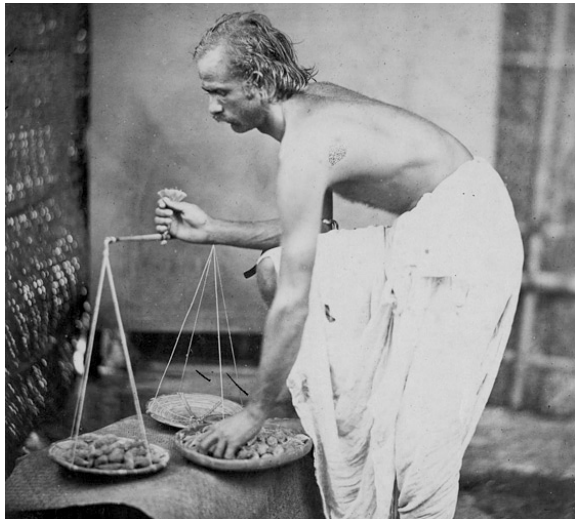


3.11 Photograph from 1860 of shakharis, members of the Hindu Sudra caste of shell-cutters, on Shakhari Bazar

22. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development*, 104
23. ibid, 103
24. ibid, 116
25. ibid
26. ibid
27. ibid, 109



3.12 Hooka-makers working using coconut and bamboo



3.13 Street-hawker using a balance to weigh food

shakharis had complete control over the production and the trade of shell ornaments, although shell manufacture remained a cottage industry[31]. They remained in their initial settlement at Shakhari Bazar. The residences of shakharis were multi-storied buildings, where the front room of the ground floor was the shop and the back rooms acted as production centres with shakharis working as mentors and apprentices[32]. The conch shells which were cut into slices and converted to ornaments were imported from the Maldives, Ceylon and South India through Calcutta. Some of the wealthy shakharis of Dhaka would personally import the raw shells and then retail them. This industry had maintained its stable economy since their first settlement in Shakhari Bazar, but it expanded further with the revival of Dhaka's commerce because there was an assured marketability for the shakhas or shell-bracelets. 'Every married Hindu female of Bengal puts on the shakhas which are indispensable to her so long as her husband is alive. Shakha is indispensable a necessity for a Hindu Sadhava (lady having a living husband), she breaks it off when her husband dies"[33]. It was this demand from almost all over Bengal that kept the industry alive. These shakharis of Dhaka also crafted beautiful and artistically designed rings and necklaces. Shakharis and goldsmiths enjoyed a lavish lifestyle within their multi storied limestone-constructed buildings. Unexpectedly, it was the jute-induced prosperity of the city that encouraged women to demand other more luxurious ornaments made out of gold or silver, and led to the fall in the demand of shakhas by the end of the 19th century[34]. The shakharis lost their lavish lifestyle eventually and were grouped with the bare minimum wage earners.

The revival of trade and commerce also led to a renewal of another traditional industry, boat-building. Even though boat-building had been a prominent craft in Dhaka since the Gupta Dynasty reign before the 1600s, from the late 1850s, the need for country-boats for shipping goods to Calcutta and other parts of the world steadily increased from the late 1850s[35]. The growth of railways and appearances of river steamers in Dhaka eventually slowed down the

28. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development*, 115
29. ibid, 117
30. ibid, 116
31. ibid
32. Md. Bahauddin, "Conservation and Management of Historic Buildings Advanced International Training Programme: Conservation of Shakhari Bazar" (2010)
33. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development*, 116







3.14 Photograph of a historical 'singhasan' crafted completely from gold

3.15 Shakha crafted from brass. This craft is still practised in some parts of India.

3.16 A shakha shell had just been cut into slices, before they are crafted into bangles

production of country-boats[36]. When the demand for specialist carpenters in the boatyards slackened, general carpentry took over as prosperity and population returned to the city. Most of the carpenters were situated one block south and east of Shakhari Bazar at the coast line of the Buriganga River, in the area called Sadarghat. Bengali businessmen turned their attention to trade in timber and wooden furniture, which later began developing along factory lines as demand increased. The drastic expansion of the city and building activity generated new economic activities within the city creating opportunities for contractors and suppliers as well as new jobs for the labour class[37].

By the end of the 19th century, occupationally, the city's population could be broadly divided into five categories: (1) zamindars or landlords, (2) traders, merchants and bankers, (3) service professionals and government officials, (4) manufacturers and artisans, and (5) labourers and other wage earners[38]. With the revival of trade and commerce, landlords, traders, merchants, businessmen, professionals and senior government officials enjoyed increased wealth and luxurious lifestyles, while lower-grade officials, artisans, labourers, small shopkeepers and traders and other smaller manufacturing classes received the bare minimum for living costs. There was a marked contrast between the incomes of the higher class and those of the lower class, even though the latter formed the bulk of the population. 'From the available information it appears beyond doubt that the great number of artisans, small traders, labourers, and other lower-class wage earners lived almost at substantial level'.[39] The remarkable growth of population in the second half of the 19th century led to an ever-increasing supply of cheap labour which effectively barred any significant increase in wages[40]. There was a substantial growth in the migrant labour force in Dhaka. In addition, a large number of people came to work in the city as day-labourers, shop and business assistants and even as ministerial and menial staff of various offices, drawn particularly from the south bank of the river Buriganga. "Thus the census of 1891 revealed that a total

34. Sharif Uddin Ahmed, *Dhaka : A Study in Urban History and Development*, 116
35. ibid, 117
36. ibid, 118
37. Abul Khair Nazmul Karim, *The Dynamics of Bangladesh Society,* 149
38. ibid, 118
39. ibid, 119

of 25,639 people from other districts of Bengal and even other provinces were then living in Dhaka.[41]

With the division of East Bengal as part of East Pakistan in 1947, the communal balance in Dhaka's population underwent a drastic change from Hindu to Muslim predominance.[42] This meant that the crafts catering to the Hindu population lost their market and the craftsmen were left with the only choice to retire early to take refuge in India.[43] These 25 years of lack of prominent craftsmanship and subsequent earnings set the Bengali economy behind its neighbouring countries, to the point it seemed that artisans and craftsmen lost their respect in the market altogether. While during the Mughal period, street trade was recognized as an integral part of the royal economic supply system, during the Pakistani reign onwards, craftsmanship and street trade was completely ignored and categorized as informal. Therefore, indigenous skill had been allowed to die out[44]. Limestone masons who used about 1.5 inch limestone bricks to construct some of the most magnificent heritage buildings of Dhaka were one of the professions that became extinct[45]. It had been rumoured that the British had brutally cut off the thumbs of the famous Bengali muslin cloth weavers before they left[46], so as to leave the economy crippled, while the same strategy was used by West Pakistan to kill Hindus, including the artisans[47]. It appeared that the artisans and craftsmen were systematically starved of raw materials while nothing was done to help them face the much more powerful marketing organization of large-scale producers belonging to West Pakistan[48]. Therefore, the Bengali traditional industries declined through deliberate neglect and negative policies.

After the war of 1971, and the independence of Bangladesh, Dhaka was almost like a new-born baby starting to take its first steps. Fortunately, even in such an unmaintained condition, a large number of craftsmen decided to come back to Old Dhaka after the liberation of



3.17 Near the boatyard in Sadarghat, the boats act as water taxis or for shipping goods and materials across the Buriganga River



3.18 Over-saturation of people in such a tight space as Dhaka leads to constant congestions all over the city

40. Abul Khair Nazmul Karim, *The Dynamics of Bangladesh Society,* 119
41. Abul Khair Nazmul Karim, *The Dynamics of Bangladesh Society,* 127
42. Nafis Ahmad, *An Economic Geography of East Pakistan,* (London, New York, 1968), 8
43. Henry Glassie and Firoz Mahmud, *Living Traditions*, (Dhaka, 2007), 402
44. Azizur Rahman Khan, *The Economy of Bangladesh*, (London, New York St., 1972), 21
45. "*Bangladesh: City Region Development Project*". ADB Technical Assistance Consultant's Report (September 2010) Accessed April 24, 2014.

Bangladesh, to continue their practices informally.[49] The Bengali dance and music, arts and literature, crafts and hard work bear the stamp of a high and sophisticated level of aesthetics and creativity. However, due to the initial exodus during the Pakistani reign, Dhaka has become more homogenized, destroying its rich linguistic, racial and religious diversity.[50] This increase in homogeneity and consequent loss of diversity has lead to a monoculture in new Dhaka, something not only monotonous and incestuous, but also a contradiction to the contemporary trends towards multi-culturalism.

For a long time, Dhaka seemed to be the only hope for any jobs or means of earning, which eventually led to large flow of migration from the villages to the city. The problems of landlessness, impoverishment and consequent rural out-migration were compounded by environmental hazards as well as environmental degradation, caused by economic and other development activities.[51] Natural-hazard-induced population displacement is endemic in Bangladesh. "It is estimated that natural hazards, on an average, displace more than a million people permanently in Bangladesh each year. In case of severe floods or cyclones, the figures are much higher…..In 2003 it is conservatively estimated that 40% of Dhaka's eight million people live as squatters and in slums."[52] By 2013, Dhaka city had a population of nearly 14.4 million people[53].

As interviews suggested during my visit in 2014, given this homogenous influx of skilled or unskilled labourers, some of the migrants took refuge in Shakhari Bazar or Old Dhaka through kinship, while working as apprentices under the master craftsmen who still occupy Old Dhaka. In exchange for learning traditional indigenous crafts, the apprentices, sometimes with their families, were allowed to reside with their masters in their ancestral homes of Shakhari Bazar. Unfortunately, due to lack of market and lack of government attention, these master craftsmen explained that they are still having trouble maintaining

46. William Bolts Merchant, "On India Affairs Considerations: Particularly Respecting The Present State Of Bengal And Its Dependencies", (Piccadilly; Strand, 1772), 194
47. "Bangladesh sets up war crimes court", last modified March 25, 2010, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2010/03/201032515183974735 6.html
48. James Taylor, *Sketch of the Topography and Statistics of Dhaka*, (Calcutta: G.H. Huttmann, 1840), 72
49. A. M. A. Muhith, *Bangladesh in the Twenty-first Century: Towards an Industrial Society*, 110
50. ibid.
51. A. M. A. Muhith, *Bangladesh in the Twenty-first Century: Towards an Industrial Society*, 115

3.19 Timeline of intangible heritage of Shakhari Bazar



3.20 Street hawker on Shakhari Bazar who has been living as a squatter for many years to provide basic needs for his family, who also live in similar conditions with him

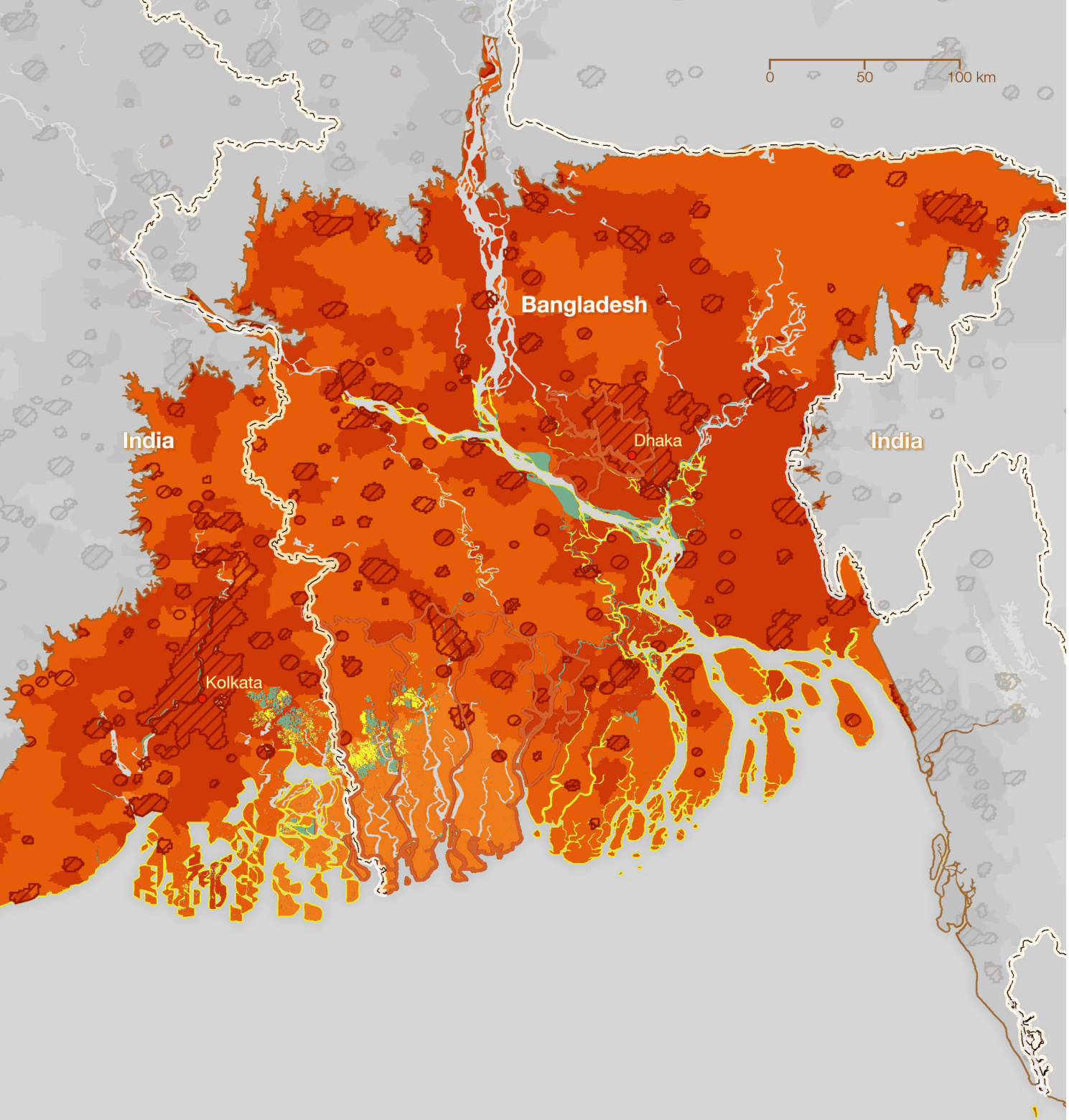
their living through their traditional crafts, while they live, work and celebrate traditional ceremonies in dilapidated heritage structures.

52. Matiura Rahamana, *Globalisation, Environmental Crisis, and Social Change in Bangladesh*, 15
53. "The World's Densest Megacities." last modified 2013, http://www.forbes.com/pictures/edgl45fdlj/no-1-dhaka-bangladesh/



4.1 (Opposite) Informal market spaces created along formal storefronts on Shakhari Bazar

1.3.0 Form From Informality

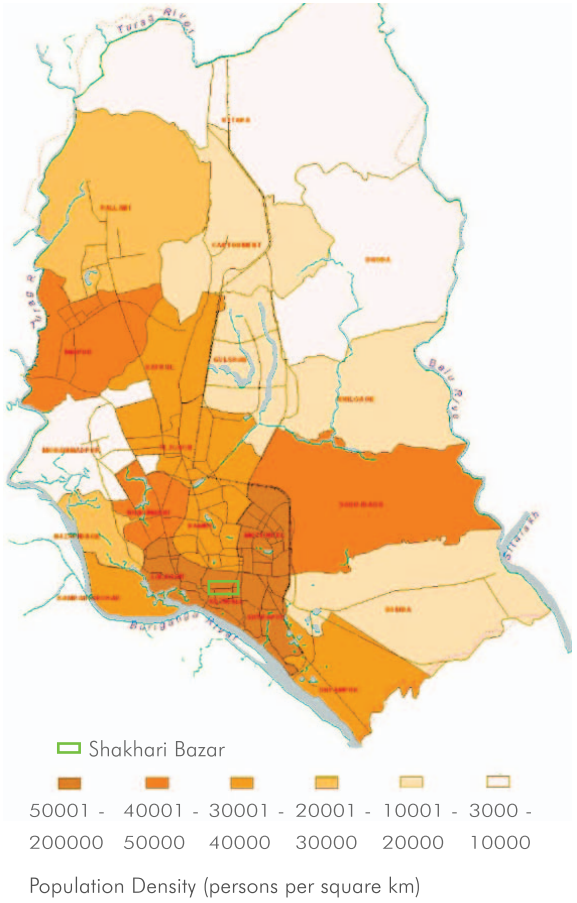


Population Density, 200 (persons per km²)

- 1000+
- 250 - 999
- 25 - 249
- 5 - 24
- 1 - 4
- 0

- Urban Extents
- Low Elevation Coast Zone - 1 meter
- Low Elevation Coast Zone - 2 meters
- Major Cities
- Country Boundary

4.2 Population Density of Bangladesh per square km.



4.3 Population density of Dhaka City in 2001

The spatial structure of Dhaka city is a function of many factors including history, natural and topographical features, the urban land market, housing and resettlement policies, transportation systems, and, to a lesser extent, industrial location policies[1]. Old Dhaka is now a high-density area where population has increased manifold over time, and contains a complex mixture of land uses and settlement patterns, either formal or informal. The roads are narrow and congested, and the historical physical infrastructures are overloaded and inadequately maintained.

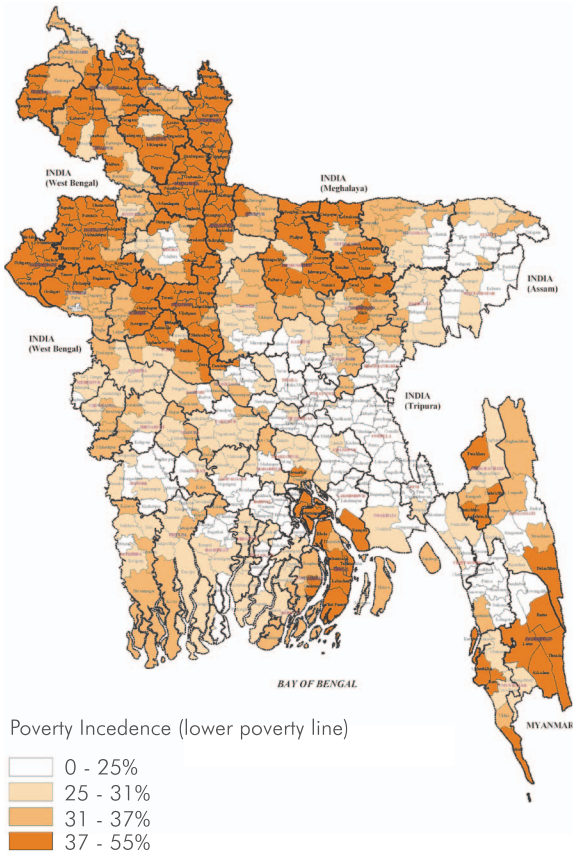
"The often observed erratic assaults of state organs in encroaching market stalls, annoying petty traders or informal settlements must not be mistaken for law and order actions of strong government, but should be understood as manifestations of scarce resources, ill-informed policies and incoherent strategies on the part of public authorities[2]." The dysfunction of the new government's steering capacity, resulted in an increased relevance of informal mechanisms, and, therefore, emerged a new form of self-organization in the society of Old Dhaka. Informality in this context can be understood as an expression of 'bazaar-like' practices operating in a system of common spaces, and as an opposition to the western invocation of 'public discipline'. "The informal sector was displayed as a kind of 'shadow economy', located somewhere 'outside' of the state[3]." The reason for this is that the deregulated private sector of artisans was considered a divergence from the formal economic system. Nowadays, it is tolerated by the government because it is soaking up a great amount of surplus labour[4]. This informality on streets such as Shakhari Bazar, seems to have brought about an alternate form of spatial and economic changes.

The rapidly growing city of Dhaka demonstrates that during the initial stage of this development, land management decisions in informal settlements were based on a

1. Kamal Siddiqui, *Social Formation in Dhaka, 1985-2005 A Longitudinal Study of Society in a Third World Megacity*, (Farnham, Surrey U.K., 2010), 6
2. Colin McFarlane and Michael Waibel, *Urban Informalities: Reflections on the Formal and Informal,* (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 150
3. ibid, 112
4. A. M. A. Muhith, *Bangladesh in the Twenty-first Century: Towards an Industrial Society*, (Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1999), 326



URBAN UPRISING



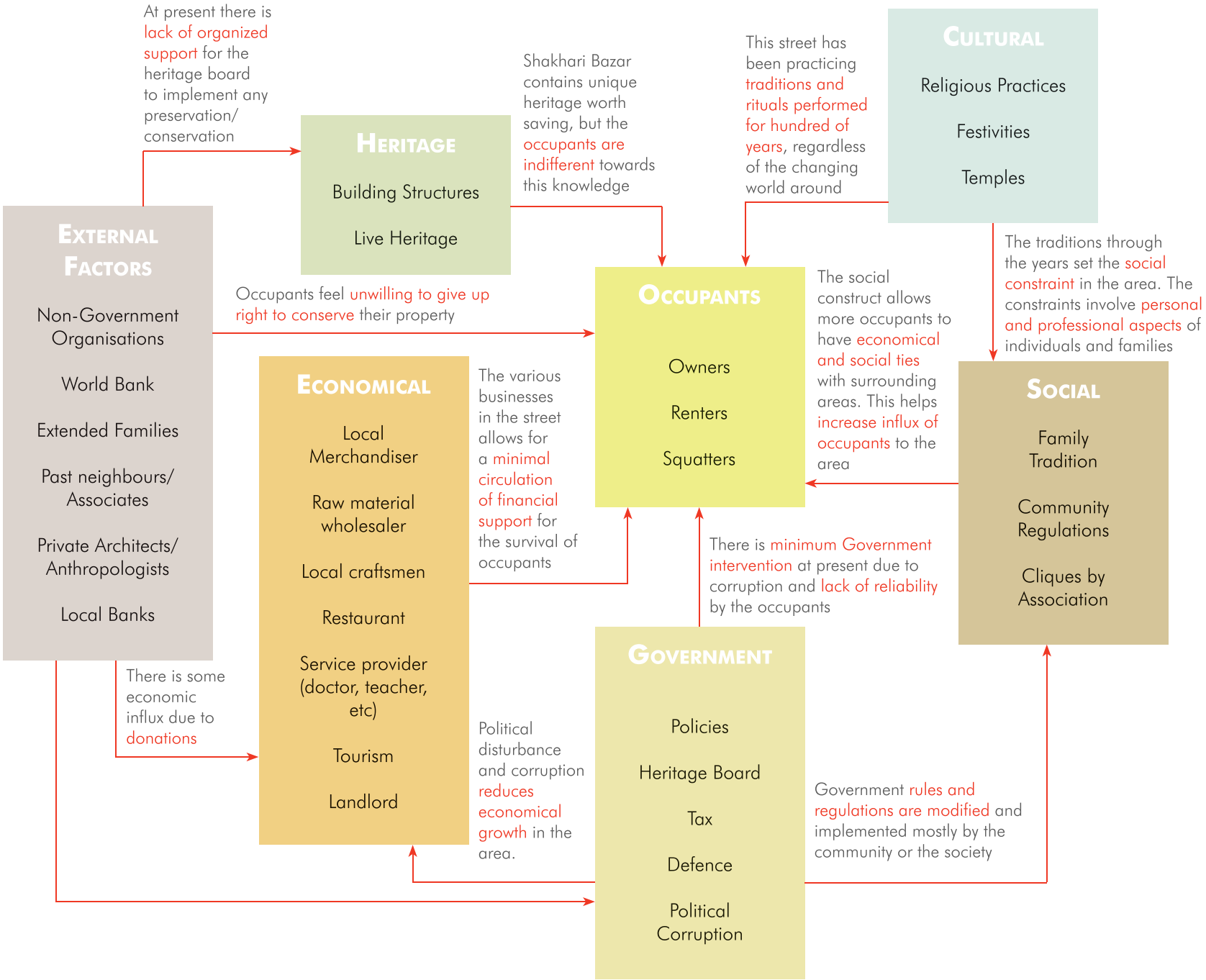
4.4 Map of Proportion of extreme Poor Population (below poverty line) from 2000

4.5 (Opposite) Typical globalization and civil society response[9]. This could act as a guide to understanding the effect on Shakhari Bazar's informal setting due to globalization.

dense network of social institutions, which in turn were mediating between individual and communal interests, largely without support from statutory institutions[5]. While Bangladesh was undergoing massive urban expansion, Old Dhaka streets such as Shakhari Bazar were left to their own devices, providing space for an informal setting. As Volker Kreibich mentioned, "Informality is a mode, especially in institutions of social regulation and regularisation, rests on stakeholder involvement, grassroots participation and self-help. Conventional urban planning concepts, atleast those which have found their way into planning legislation in Global South, are largely insensitive to the need. They ignore the tremendous potential for social learning and political formation embedded in initiatives to establish a functional settlement lay-out, to restore accessibility, to authenticate land transactions, or to improve water supply[6]."

The initial arrangements of the bazaars were lined with the housing plots in a spatially regular order which allowed for access, unobstructed circulation and easy provision of linear utilities. Later, through social institutions, the designation of land for public uses such as schools and offices were used to enhance both private and public interests and needs. "With increasing housing density land values rise to a level, which overrules the power of social institutions. The results are manifold and can be disastrous for the liveability of the settlement and the sustainability of urban development[7]". This further results in more informal settlements since the poor are not able to afford to rent or buy property, and they sometimes resolve to squat in any space available through kinship, no matter how hostile the environment may be. The intricate relationships between deregulation, social regulation and private control of the dynamics of urban growth in poverty seem to blur the boundaries between formal and informal[8]. The heritage structures of Shakhari Bazar now fall in this blurred area.

5. Kamal Siddiqui, *Social Formation in Dhaka, 1985-2005 A Longitudinal Study of Society in a Third World Megacity*, 6
6. Colin McFarlane and Michael Waibel, *Urban Informalities: Reflections on the Formal and Informal*, 166
7. ibid, 157
8. Observations from site visit between May 2014 to August 2014


At present there is lack of organized support for the heritage board to implement any preservation/ conservation
HERITAGE
Building Structures
Live Heritage
Shakhari Bazar contains unique heritage worth saving, but the occupants are indifferent towards this knowledge
This street has been practicing traditions and rituals performed for hundred of years, regardless of the changing world around
CULTURAL
Religious Practices
Festivities
Temples
EXTERNAL FACTORS
Non-Government Organisations
World Bank
Extended Families
Past neighbours/ Associates
Private Architects/ Anthropologists
Local Banks
Occupants feel unwilling to give up right to conserve their property
OCCUPANTS
Owners
Renters
Squatters
The traditions through the years set the social constraint in the area. The constraints involve personal and professional aspects of individuals and families
The social construct allows more occupants to have economical and social ties with surrounding areas. This helps increase influx of occupants to the area
SOCIAL
Family Tradition
Community Regulations
Cliques by Association
ECONOMICAL
Local Merchandiser
Raw material wholesaler
Local craftsmen
Restaurant
Service provider (doctor, teacher, etc)
Tourism
Landlord
The various businesses in the street allows for a minimal circulation of financial support for the survival of occupants
There is some economic influx due to donations
There is minimum Government intervention at present due to corruption and lack of reliability by the occupants
GOVERNMENT
Policies
Heritage Board
Tax
Defence
Political Corruption
Political disturbance and corruption reduces economical growth in the area.
Government rules and regulations are modified and implemented mostly by the community or the society

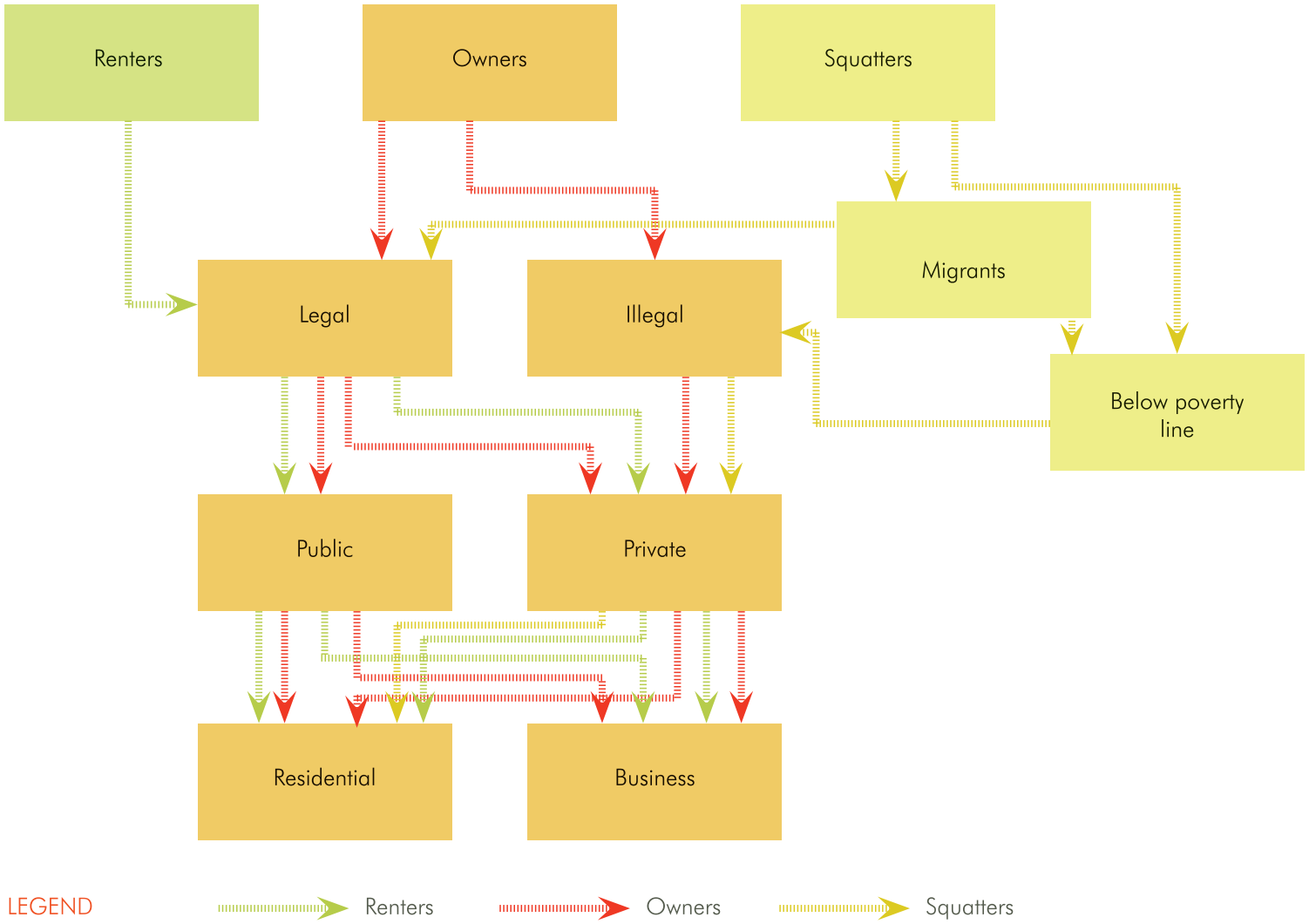
If the government gets involved with the site, the area will automatically fall under the by-laws of Dhaka Corporation[9]. It is that fear, and the fear of losing their ancestral properties to the 145/175 most corrupted public sector in the world that raised the political friction in this street.[10] Reporter Ashik Hossain explained "Under an Asian Development Bank (ADB) funded project a decision was taken to build this area as an archaeological site in 2009. According to the project proposal, the government will renovate the risky buildings and modernize the sanitation and drainage system. But to date the project has not been implemented."[11] In a land where informality played the mightier role in urban reformation, it was hard for the government to step in and take control.

On September 1st 2013, with the help of NGOs, Architect Taimur Islam was finally able to convince Sirjaul Islam, the Chief Town Planner, to declare Shakhari Bazar a heritage site.[12] This was followed with the backlash from the locals of the street who were not involved with the process. Owners of these 142 buildings understand that they are neither able to pull down the old, dilapidated structures to construct new buildings nor renovate their ancestral houses as they wish. Reporter Hossain explains "taking advantage of this indecisiveness of the government, an official of the Public Works Department (PWD) alleged that some real estate firms were even spreading rumours about possible eviction of the locals from their ancestral homes"[13]. Some, as the convener of Shakhari Bazar pointed out, even feel the government wants to 'evict them' as they are the 'minority'.[14]

In case of Shakhari Bazar, it is important to track the different ways in which informality and formality are put to work as resource, disposition, practice, or classification in the production of urban equalities, and in processes that contest and exceed those forms of production. For example, informality understood as a negotiable value can be seen in its operation as a tool of flexibility, testing and learning. As Volker Kreibich mentioned, "the

4.6 (Opposite) Actors and Attractors of Shakhari Bazar

9. "Shakhari Bazar residents to boycott Durga Puja". Last modified September 5, 2013, http://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2013/09/05/shakhari-bazar-residents-to-boycott durga-pujav
10. "Corruption by Country: Bangladesh". *Transparency International*. Last modified 2014. https://www.transparency.org/country/#BGD
11. "Shakhari Bazar residents to boycott Durga Puja"
12. ibid
13. "Shakhari Bazar residents to boycott Durga Puja"


Renters
Owners
Squatters
Migrants
Legal
Illegal
Below poverty line
Public
Private
Residential
Business
LEGEND
Renters
Owners
Squatters

"Government declared the area as heritage site without discussing it with the residents. Numbers of occupants in these buildings are growing. It has become hazardous for living, but government will not allow us tom renovate these structures. What will we do? We all have decided not to take part in Durga puja this year. What is the use of the celebration when we are going to lose our properties? Instead, we will stage hunger strikes on the puja stages. We have been residing at Shakhari Bazar for several generations. The way our properties have been declared heritage made me feel like a caged animal in a zoo."

- The convener of Shakhari Bazar Land protection committee in 2013[22]

4.7 (Opposite) Occupant System in Shakhari Bazar

option for an integration of grassroots institutions of informal urban governance into statutory institutions assumes the priority, dominance and superior performance of the latter, while the option for reconciliation of the informal with the formal sector institutions and organisations recognises the potential and achievements of the former and remains open for adaptation and improvement of statutory institutions."[15] For example, the Baan Mankong programme launched by the Thai government in 2003 "banks on the specific needs and resources of the urban poor, accepts poor community organisations and their network as the main actors, is demand driven by communities, comprises and mobilisation and networking component, and integrates the local housing development plans worked out by communities within city planning and city development strategies."[16] Therefore, this example can work as a precedent for the Bangladesh government to strategize on the potential of hybrid regulation, while recognizing the blurred boundary between the formal and informal.

In addition to building trust with Shakhari Bazar locals, the government had another obstacle to overcome at this point – there was no funding for heritage preservation or renovation. When asked about the amount of money required, Architect Islam stated in 2010, "For the courtyard we are probably looking at something like 5,000 dollars, but if we tried to do the whole building, it would be 20,000 to 25,000 dollars."[17] Given there are 90 buildings[18] on the street that might need around that budget, the final cost could be as high as 2.25 million US dollars. For a country of 158.5 million, where 26% of the population live below the national poverty line of 2 US dollar per day[19], spending 2.25 million US dollars on renovating buildings on one street of the country seems almost unrealistic.

Therefore, in order to promote healthy and informed dialogue between the informal representatives of Shakhari Bazar and the formal bodies of the government, financial

14. "Shakhari Bazar residents to boycott Durga Puja"
15. Colin McFarlane and Michael Waibel, *Urban Informalities: Reflections on the Formal and Informal,* 166
16. Tanvi Bhatkal and Paula Lucci, "Community Driven Development in the Slums: Thailand's experience', Development Progress", last updated June 2015
17. Taimur Islam and Homaira Zaman, "Conservation of Historic Mohalla", last updated April 21, 2006. http://archive.thedailystar.net/magazine/2006/04/03/cover.htm
18. Observations from site visit between May 2014 to August 2014.





4.8 A woman having difficulty walking on the street because of garbage on one side and vehicular traffic on the other

4.9 A historical building was demolished by the owner for fear of losing ownership of the land with the declaration of Shakhari Bazar as a heritage site

"I want to redevelop my house and make a better place to live. The people of Shakhari Bazaar already live in difficult, crowded conditions. If my house is declared a heritage site, I will not agree. I think it is illegal for them to tell the owners of the houses what to do. It's my house and my source of income. If you can provide me compensation then you can call it heritage. Why do you call it heritage? Otherwise I cannot provide for myself and my family. If it is declared then I deserve benefits."

- Owner of 80 year old building in 2009[20]

aid and foreign support may play a key role. Elimination of this problem would help the government focus primarily on bridging the gap with the informal bodies of Shakhari Bazar.

19. "After Much Heartbreak, Some Good News at Last for Bangladesh". Last updated July 18, 2013. http://world.time.com/2013/07/18/after-much-heartbreak-some-good-news-at-last-for-bangladesh/
20. "Shakhari Bazar residents to boycott Durga Puja"





0.7 This plant has grown into a full-grown tree, crumbling the bricks with its roots

0.8 Documenting the structural integrity and evolution of a heritage structure

Journal
Parasitic or Symbiotic

4th June 2014

My walk through this historic wonderland of Shakhari Bazar led me to one particular three storey building, housing a temple on the ground floor. I noticed the crumbling limestone bricks barely holding on to the existing historic structure. Above the building I could see a full grown tree with lush green leaves providing plenty of shade for the host building. When I looked closer, I was quite astonished to see that the tree grew out of the building, as the roots tangled around and inside the bricks and cement. It held firmly to the building for years as it grew to a beautiful healthy guest to its host building, receiving nourishment throughout the years. I wondered then, is that plant responsible for the depletion of the building, or is it simply trying to survive and is possibly using its roots to hold the structure together? Does the plant act as a parasite or is it a symbiotic relationship? Is it any different from the squatters who are possibly living in that building right now? As someone practicing architecture, what is my role in their existence? If they are still here after all these years, there must be a reason why the locals have allowed them to be integrated as part of their family.

The squatters in the building were living in dangerous situations in the structurally unstable heritage property. An elderly lady of the building revealed, "I am facing multiple hardships in this place. My daughter and I share a small living space, which is not even in decent shape. When it rains, the roof leaks, and in addition, I have no electricity or running water". Squatters like her had moved to Dhaka city in the hope of a better and healthier life, but find themselves struggling to survive without basic amenities. She explained that regardless of these issues, she felt safe here with people she can relate to, and the locals have accepted her as part of their own. Just like many of the locals, she believed that the culture and values of Shakhari Bazar will always survive due to the strong empathy and affinity among its occupants. It is also this culture, the traditions and their beliefs that bind them together as a united informal body.

Most of the ancestral traditions of Shakhari Bazar were still practised and proudly exhibited in the storefronts by the local craftsmen. The pride in their profession and the humility of





0.09 Plants growing from the edge of a courtyard in a heritage building

0.10 Communal religious celebrations promote inclusion and bonding among the community. This event took place in the middle of a road in Old Dhaka for everyone to attend

their workmanship was humbling to observe. I approached one such craftsman, a shakhari, to teach me to make a shakha bangle. He found this proposal extremely amusing and asked me, “Will you be able to adopt our lifestyle?” Being a specialized craftsman requires extreme dedication that seeps into a certain lifestyle where all the apprentices live together and in close proximity to the master. Like many of the squatters in Shakhari Bazar, his family migrated to Shakhari Bazar when he was only 14 years old in search of better living in the city. Since then, he had been training under his Shakhari master. In 2014, after about nineteen years of training and practise, he still shies away from labelling himself as the master. “There is still a long way to go”, he explains. When I spoke to him, he was happily married and thought he had a satisfying life on this street.

I sat back and watched him and many of the other craftsmen of Shakhari Bazar completely immerse themselves in their practice, sometimes unaware of their chaotic surrounding, with always a look of curiosity in their eyes and hands. I realized that even though these traditional practices were initially only passed down from father to the children according to books I have read, it has now changed to incorporate the next generations of any background, as long as they can adapt to the specialised lifestyle. This inclusion was mostly adopted due to the disinterest of their immediate children who did not find this profession lucrative enough. Most of the squatters, it seemed, were either directly or indirectly related to a craftsman on the street. Shakhari Bazar has a unique treasure running its economy – its many unique craftsmen.

2.0.0 Heritage and Craft



5.1 (Opposite) Wedding crowns, made from styrofoam thrown away after being used to package large appliances. The styrofoam is cleaned, cut, painted and turned into crowns. The crowns are a part of traditional Hindu wedding attire for both the bride and groom. Shakhari Bazar is one of the main areas that sell such crowns of excellent workmanship

2.1.0 Terminology



Heritage

Heritage is a powerful word that is ideologically charged and immensely suggestive, while indistinct enough to be applied to nearly anything and everything across space and time. Heritage signifies a wide range of meanings from various viewpoints constituting political, economical, architectural, cultural, social, spiritual and legal complexities. "It is a word whose significance changes with its myriad of invocations, designations or legislations. Depending on its usage, heritage can determine personal property, explicate unknown qualities, foster patriotism among disparate peoples, become a tourist destination, exacerbate geopolitical tensions, or call for help in the form of preservation, among other usages"[1]. For the purpose of this research, there will be particular focus on the architectural, cultural and spiritual heritage of Shakhari Bazar, while keeping in mind the political and social intricacies.

One word that goes hand-in-hand with heritage is 'tradition'. It is that tradition that has been practised and taught through generations that puts value in our cultural and physical heritage. The physical heritage acts as a sanctuary to the traditions and age-old customs and culture that have been savoured as a means of passing down values. As described in Urban Uprising, the Gupta Dynasty, Mughal architecture and the British influence, followed by Pakistani rule meant a mix of and transition from Hinduism, to Islam, to Christianity, and back to Islam, formed a unique spatial and cultural identity. This fusion of traditional values and architecture demanded its own spatial speculations. It conveys a sense of life that has been lived in a linear time in a life history, while carrying with it the symbols that have both built life, as well as destroyed parts of it, only to grow into a branch that is unique to each society. As a result, the heritage and society that have been fostered for a millennium and half in the Bengal region need to be treated as a unique species, just like every other heritage sites declared by World Heritage Boards could be.

5.2 (Opposite) One of the heritage properties on Shakhari Bazar in desperate need of structural and facade renovations for the safety of its occupants

1. Di Giovine, Michael, *A. The Heritage-scape: UNESCO, World Heritage, and Tourism,* (Lanham, Md, 2009), 91

UNESCO has been one of the major organizations that promote heritage and its preservations across the world. Therefore, it is important to understand the definition of heritage according to UNESCO. UNESCO considers the following as "cultural heritage":

monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;

groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;

sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.[2]

Preservation and Reconstruction

The above brief definition caters to the 'tangible' cultural heritage, and is precise about categorizing 'heritage' as belonging to the past or historical timeline. The words 'historic' or 'past' are vague terms that are quite flexible as the object moves through space and time. Another controversial term is 'preservation'. Some influential organisations, such as UNESCO stated that 'the World Heritage Convention and the Operational Guidelines do not specifically define preservation'[3]. At the same time, UNESCO states "The aim of preservation is to obviate damage liable to be caused by environmental or accidental

2. UNESCO, "*Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*", The General Conference of UNESCO adopted on 16 November 1972, http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/
3. UNESCO, "*Information Document Glossary of World Heritage Terms*", last modified June 1996, http://whc.unesco.org/archive/gloss96.htm
4. UNESCO, Traditional Restoration Techniques: A RAMP Study, 1988
5. UNESCO, "*Information Document Glossary of World Heritage Terms*"

factors, which pose a threat in the immediate surroundings of the object to be conserved. Accordingly, preventive methods and measures are not usually applied directly but are designed to control the microclimatic conditions of the environment with the aim of eradicating harmful agents or elements, which may have a temporary or permanent influence on the deterioration of the object"[4]. This organisation recognises that 'preservation is used interchangeably with conservation, safeguarding and protection in the Operational Guidelines'.[5] Dr. Luna Khirfan stated that, "preservation impedes future deterioration by maintaining the current conditions through minimal interference"[6]. It is certainly essential to conserve objects and cultures from the present for the future, in order to validate existing ideas or milestones. UNESCO defines conservation as "The measures taken to extend the life of cultural heritage while strengthening transmission of its significant heritage messages and values. In the domain of cultural property, the aim of conservation is to maintain the physical and cultural characteristics of the object to ensure that its value is not diminished and that it will outlive our limited time span"[7]. Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, the term conservation will act as an umbrella term under which terms such as preservation, restoration, maintenance, reconstruction and adaptive reuse fall.

It is essential to recognise the past though physical milestones and innovations, in order to learn and validate the stories of human history. Rem Koolhaus, in his exhibition at Venice Biennalle, using Shanghai as an example, focused on this global issue, 'Is preservation overtaking us?' As Nicolai Ouroussoff explains, Rem Koolhaus painted a picture of 'an army of well-meaning but clueless preservationists who in their zeal to protect the world's architectural legacies, end up debasing them by creating tasteless sceneries for docile customers while airbrushing out the most difficult chapters of history'[8]. It cannot be denied that this controversial architect have brought up some important issues that need to be addressed, one of which is the modernist approach and concept of preservation. Due to the

6. Luna Khirfan, "World Heritage, Urban Design and Tourism: Three Cities in the Middle East", (Furnham, Surray, England), 62
7. International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), Risk Preparedness: A Management Manual for World Cultural Heritage, 1998 and; UNESCO, Traditional Restoration Techniques: A RAMP Study, 1988
8. Di Giovine, Michael, *A. The Heritage-scape: UNESCO, World Heritage, and Tourism,* (Lanham, Md, 2009), 91
9. Francesco Bandarin and Ron van Oers, "Reconnecting the City: The Historic Urban Landscape Approach and the Future of Urban Heritage", (West Sussex, United Kingdom, 2014), 13

various interpretations of its definitions, preservation, that sometimes almost resembles 'disneyfication' of architecture, has been quite prominent in most of the heritage sites, leading to the destruction of the basic culture that helped build that structure or site. Venice, itself, is a true example of such a site. Venice is at the brink of 'losing its soul' to this 'disneyfication' and to the unusually large number of visitors it receives per day[9]. This has created a hostile environment for the tourist due to the overwhelming numbers, leading to an unnatural friction between the visitors and the locals[10].

Since Shakhari Bazar was turned into a heritage site without the consultation of the locals, UNESCO regulations are stripping the land off all residential zoning, although it is a slow process because of the unwillingness of the locals[11].'The active participation of locals is especially important when considering the *heritage-scape*'s goal of creating a universal sentiment of ownership across cultures, not simply within one culture.'[12] Therefore, it could benefit all parties involved to conserve Shakhari Bazar as a 'living site' with the aim to 'maintain the physical and cultural characteristics to ensure that its value is not diminished and that it will outlive our limited time span' if the locals are as involved in the decision-making as the authorities who declared Shakhari Bazar as a heritage site are. As Di Giovine observed in Vietnam and Cambodia, "These countries attest to locals' desire to participate as well; regulations to the sidelines seems only to exacerbate social tensions. At the worst, alienated locals, having lost ownership of the sites, could contribute to their destruction through symbolic acts of black market looting"[13]. Shakhari Bazar is facing similar situations right now, where the squatters and owners are stripping off valuable parts of the buildings to sell to private high bidders[14].

In addition, involving the locals in the decision-making and design process could result in a more efficient outcome. In *Heritage-scape*, John Sanday, former head of World Monuments

10. Dennis R. Judd and Susan S. Fainstein, The Tourist City, (New Haven, CT, 1999), 31
11. Wolfgang Scheppe, Università Iuav di Venezia, and Opera Bevilacqua La Masa, Migropolis: Venice: Atlas of a Global Situation, (Ostfildern, Hatje/Cantz,1955), 10
12. Ashik Hossain, "Shakhari Bazar residents to boycott Durga Puja" last modified September 5, 2013, http://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2013/09/05/shakhari-bazar-residents-to-boycott-durga-pujav
13. Di Giovine, Michael, *A. The Heritage-scape: UNESCO, World Heritage, and Tourism,* 363
14. Observed during site visit between May 2014 and August 2014.

Fund Siem Reap stated, "when you are dealing with historic buildings, you have no right to decide what period you should return to; history began yesterday," Here Di Giovine explains, "the concept of 'historic preservation' takes the site back to an idealised, historicized period which never really existed[15]. Denying the monument's total life history, 'preservation' can only conserve one set of many narratives embodied in the structure in a point in time". Therefore, this is an important conversation to have with the locals involved, since they will eventually be occupying these structures and keeping the heritage 'alive'.

Due to the complexities of Shakhari Bazar, it is essential to consider the multi-disciplinary definitions of conservations and to recognise the view that could help conserve the intangible and tangible heritage of Shakhari Bazar, where the local participation is required for fundamental implementation. Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, I choose to refrain from the method of preservation, and align with the procedures of reconstruction and adaptive reuse. "Reconstruction endeavours to return the existing fabric of a place to a known earlier condition, while introducing new materials when needed"[16] and adaptive reuse "entails reversible interventions that modify the historic fabric to suit contemporary uses"[17].

UNESCO considers 'tangible heritage' as "buildings and historic places, monuments, artifacts, etc., which are considered worthy of preservation for the future"[18]. Since, an object or culture is carried through time and space, it is natural for any object or culture to mould itself according to the needs and requirements of its changing society in order to keep 'living'. In order for the 'heritage' to carry on its existence, it needs to either be physically passed on from person to person, or have people pass 'through' it and accept it. Like any biological entity, it is transient and will eventually either perish or adapt according to the changing environment.[19] The tangible heritage structures of Shakhari Bazar could also

15. Di Giovine, Michael, *A. The Heritage-scape: UNESCO, World Heritage, and Tourism, 359*
16. Luna Khirfan, "World Heritage, Urban Design and Tourism: Three Cities in the Middle East", 62
17. ibid
18. "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage". http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/
19. Di Giovine, Michael, *A. The Heritage-scape: UNESCO, World Heritage, and Tourism,* 27


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undergo 'adaptive re-use' that 'allows the structures to be modified to suit contemporary uses' of the occupants. Therefore, it can be accepted that efficient design, reconstruction and regular maintenance with the help of the locals, may result in a 'sustainable life' of its culture.

Identity

Finally, one must not lose sight of the reason architecture was born – to function as shelter or to render an environment hospitable to its inhabitants. It is this function that gives the structure or environment its purpose, and therefore its identity. This identity may change with time and space, but it is more important to hold on to the essence of its space, that may carry the stories of the lives and the traditions from which it housed to date[20]. It is the ability of the physical object to act as a placeholder for the memories and traditions that helps one travel to the past and reminds one of the roots and traditions from which this structure was erected. The limestone bricks of Shakhari Bazar told me about the fine craftsmanship and the attention to detail that was given to every aspect of the culture. The carefully carved floral motifs on the walls told the story of how nature was when it was built. The grand interior and exterior courtyards revealed the importance of the home for showing off the statuses of the inhabitants. In Shakhari Bazar, the shared courtyards are still used as a shared semi-public space for adjacent neighbours and invited guests, showing the culture of community spaces that has survived for hundreds of years. The shared stairs show the trust and affinity among neighbours that are still seen after about 400 years.

Tangible architecture is a means of understanding the identity of the culture that it was built upon. Therefore, in order to truly render authenticity of a heritage object or site, one must bring to life the culture that is directly tied to its identity and essence or, as UNESCO labels

5.3 (Opposite) Informal setting of a market against a formal market backdrop that runs under local informal rules

20. Michael Guggenheim, "Building memory: Architecture, networks and users", (University of Zürich, Switzerland, 2009)

it, 'intangible' cultural heritage[21]. This explains how the essential need to conserve tangible heritage stems from the need to remind ourselves, and to convey to future generations, the roots and origins of the cultures that have shaped humankind. They also act as stepping stones of the scientific and cultural achievements of societies that one may learn from in order to advance to the future. Therefore, the vital role of organizations such as Aga Khan Foundation and UNESCO could, therefore, focus on the survival of the culture and traditions that has built the tangible heritage or, sometimes, other intangible heritage.

Intangible

"The intangible cultural heritage is transmitted from generation to generation, and is constantly recreated by communities and groups, in response to their environment, their interaction with nature, and their history. It provides people with a sense of identity and continuity, and promotes respect for cultural diversity and human creativity".

-UNESCO[22]

This recent initiative to preserve 'intangible cultural heritage' came very late in 2003 and was only implemented in 2006 in some parts of the world[23]. In Bangladesh, these talks started in 2013 and they are still in the process of collecting information for implementation[24]. As part of 'developing and safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of Bangladesh', the National Workshop titled 'Implementation of the UNESCO Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Bangladesh' was held in July 2013. But the report published afterward admitted that 'Bangladesh has no strategic plan for implementing policies pertaining to the ICH'[25]. Given the ancient civilization and territory of Bangladesh, there are many invaluable tangible and intangible heritages that have lived through hundreds of years. UNESCO and other concerned local organizations are aware that 'for

21. Marie Renault, Tell me about Living Heritage, (Paris, 2008), 12
22. "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage". http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/
23. ibid
24. UNESCO. "National Workshop on Implementation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Bangladesh", last modified July 20, 2013, Dhaka Bangladesh,
25. ibid

lack of government policy and awareness of the people many of the ICH are on the verge of extinction'.[26] Unfortunately, the delay in understanding and recognizing the value of tradition and culture by both UNESCO, and the local government seems to have played a big role in the extinction of some intangible cultural heritage of Bangladesh.

UNESCO stated that Intangible Cultural Heritage 'are the elements of our living cultural heritage, the part of our world heritage that is called 'intangible' because it is not associated with any monument or site in particular'[27]. This thesis suggests that the lack of understanding of the essential role of the site with human creativity is a basic misunderstanding that has acted as a barrier for accurate implementation of reconstruction and survival of cultural heritage. As explained in the chapter 'Made in Hand', the real creativity of the locals is expressed fully in the context of local environment, while crafting common objects. It is this incredible versatility in imagination and local resources that has given rise to each unique craft all over the world. Traditions such as construction of mud houses or the limestone brick due to warm humid climate, and crafting gold jewellery to depict nature's blooming flowers, convey the cultural traditions that survived and flourished due to the existence of the unique architecture or tangible environment that have inhabited these crafts. It can then be concluded that this inter-dependence of intangible cultural heritage and tangible cultural heritage may hold the key to the survival of either of them. The craft objects or heritage that are produced, therefore, demonstrate the ability of tradition to evolve and change with new challenges and evolved tangible heritage.

Authenticity

The uniqueness of a heritage could be determined by the infinite probabilities of tradition, culture, economy, architecture, etc. that has combined to produce this particular heritage

26. "National Workshop on Implementation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Bangladesh"
27. "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage". http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/

of the time, and it proceeds to evolve further in time and space. The authenticity of a heritage, on the other hand, is a highly contested subject, which, like the term heritage, may have various meanings. Walter Benjamin mentions, "The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced". Benjamin continues, "Authenticity animates objects, making them as real an actor as any other social being; it conveys the sense that the monument not only has a life history, but a life – a life which follows a biological conception of linear time, and subject to the same constructive and destructive forces of history and society"[28]. The object itself is born out of the subconscious and conscious of the artist, which is then modified in time and space with use and through transfer[29]. Authenticity of a heritage is, therefore, the aura or the soul of the object that has been documented and passed on from generation to generation.

'Authenticity' has been the focus of many discussions in various literatures and publications regarding heritage conservation. "These debates culminated in the drafting of the Nara Document on Authenticity in 1994 according to which 'The understanding of authenticity plays a fundamental role in all scientific studies of the cultural heritage, in conservation and restoration planning, as well as within the inscription procedures used in World Heritage Convention and other cultural heritage inventories".[30] 'Authenticity' seems to have a versatile understanding depending on the organisation or inventories involved. For the purpose of this thesis and in understanding the need for multi-disciplinary views, 'authenticity' of a tangible or intangible culture will be considered as Walter Benjamin has described as being the 'aura' or soul' of the object with appreciation for the historical cultures of the occupants or locals.

Rendering this authenticity could then bring the heritage back to its space and time of

28. Di Giovine, Michael, *A. The Heritage-scape: UNESCO, World Heritage, and Tourism,* 26
29. ibid, 30
30. Luna Khirfan, "World Heritage, Urban Design and Tourism: Three Cities in the Middle East", 62

conception. It is then essential to understand the history and unique aura of each heritage site, and reconstruct it accordingly, instead of implementing standardized conservation strategies and policies. Therefore, Shakhari Bazar's remarkable mix of tangible and intangible heritages requires unusual mix of strategies to achieve and retain reconstruction of its heritages.

All cultures create their own traditions, which can then be manipulated by foreign elements, and subsequently, reinvent their cultures. Therefore, in general, all culture is 'staged authenticity'. But it is important to achieve and retain the culture of the heritage site without resorting to 'standardized'[31] authenticity, which could result from 'staged authenticity'[32]. Standardized authenticity refers to the 'disneyfication' of local culture so it would be more attractive to a foreign market or audience. This could result in the false fabrication of its 'exotic' cultures and traditions. Therefore authentic reconstruction and its sustainability can also be achieved by removing the need to profit from superficial generation to attract foreign revenue streams.

It is important to understand that the definitions and descriptions are few of the many definitions or views about the terms. Given the diversity of views or definitions on these terms, for the purpose of this thesis, it is important to consider different views before allocating the essential cultural and social interpretations of the terms required to suit a distinct heritage area such as Shakhari Bazar.

31. Dennis R. Judd, and Susan S. Fainstein, *The Tourist City,* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 23
32. ibid, 204



6.1 (Opposite) Temple on Shakhari Bazar which has been reconstructed and maintained by the locals. This is one of the major heritage properties on Shakhari Bazar

2.2.0 Contemporary Tradition



Often traditional design or outlook is seen as the opposing end of 'contemporary', which means 'belonging to or occurring in the present'[1]. The celebrated pedagogue, K. G. Subramanyam, terms 'tradition' as the continuity structure into which each man is born[2]. Since traditional design and culture is a continuation to the present, it can easily be accepted that tradition can, in fact, be contemporary. Therefore, reconstruction of heritage is simply a tool to savour the traditions that have crafted the architectural and cultural aspects of a society.

The global human rights movement during the 1970s led to the idea that words such as 'tradition' were too taboo and opposed future growth[3]. This movement promised to change the 'old ways' with a vision for a culture that included more 'inclusion' and 'one love'. It was the drastic changes and progressions brought on by the liberal minds that almost fuelled the separation of the term 'tradition' from 'contemporary'. Although liberals and radicals have qualms about 'tradition' as being conservative and acting as a barrier to one's 'bright future' due to the common urge to 'conserve and recover', tradition can only 're-enchant' for a brief moment before the aim for 'infinite plasticity and perfectibility' by the western man ploughs through to the inevitable future[4]. As a result, the idea of `tradition' being a pre-dated custom followed by 'pre-dated societies' is one of the biggest obstacle it has to face to infiltrate the mindsets of modern or present individuals.

Understanding that tradition is 'a long-established custom or belief that has been passed on from one generation to another[5] and recognizing that tradition is a 'trend' that has been carried from the past, and is living and evolving with space and time, will be crucial for the purpose of this thesis. It will be important to accept tradition as a consistent aura driving society and culture forward given its established milestones. It is tradition that keeps in check the 'shifting baseline' or 'sliding baseline', as landscape architect Ian McHarg described

6.2 (Opposite) Temple in Old Dhaka still operating as one according to traditions, but has questionable structural integrity. In contrast, new buildings are being constructed around it in modern style

1. Oxford Dictionary
2. Dr. Krishen K. Kak, "Some Thoughts on the Future of Tradition", (New Delhi, February 7, 2003)
3. Muneyoshi Yanagi and Bernard Leach, "*The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight Into Beauty*", (Kodansha USA, 2013), 446-451
4. ibid
5. Oxford dictionary

in his manifesto 'Design With Nature'. [6]

Shifting Baseline Syndrome refers to a gradual change in our accepted norm for systems. The phrase describes an incremental lowering of standards that result with each new generation lacking knowledge of the historical, and presumably more natural, condition of the environment. Therefore, each generation defines what is 'natural' or 'normal' according to current conditions and their personal experiences. With each new generation, the expectations of various systems shift. The result is that our standards are lowered almost imperceptibly.

In our rapidly changing world, and especially in a country like Bangladesh, which has faced drastic physiological, political, cultural and economical changes in a short span of time, it is important to understand the various traditions and milestones that depict each era or culture and architecture to ensure further development. These traditions gave rise to cultures and crafts that in turn gave rise to architecture, objects and other cultural activities that act as placeholders or milestones of each of the cultural baselines. This tradition, therefore, became the responsibility of the 'living', to pass on from one generation to the next, so the roots of the cultures can be understood and built upon[7]. Craftsmen and artisans of Shakhari Bazar have borne this responsibility for decades as they passed on the traditional skills needed to depict the social, natural, and economical aspects of history and consciousness in everyday objects. The hereditary and cultural skills that are transported through generations carry with them the continuity of technological, grammatical, and historical details and the environment of the 'makers'. The vehicle to carry these values is both physical and psychological[8]. Therefore, it is the crafted object, the traditional folk dance, or the grandeur of the Turkish-crafted tiles in Shakhari Bazar's houses which act as a medium to convey the tradition to future generations. It is these physical and abstract heritages that connect the past to the present and possibly the future. For the purpose of this

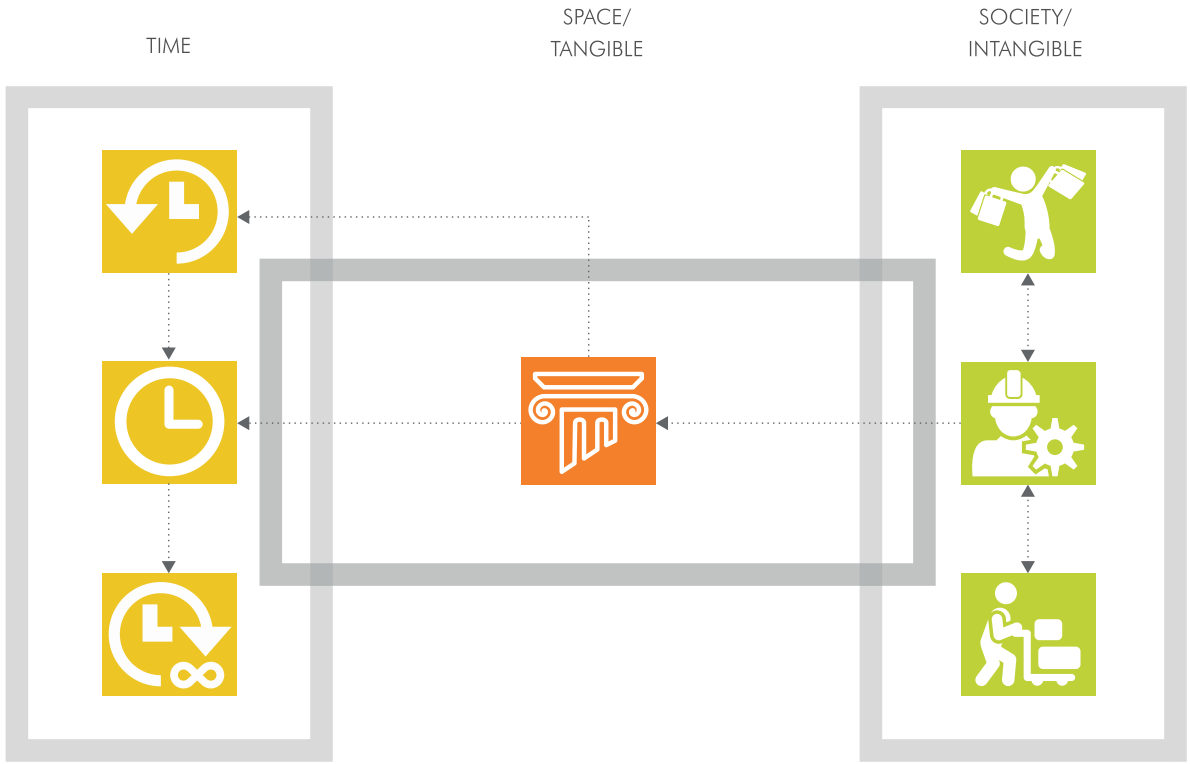
6. "Shifting Baseline Syndrome". Remote Footprints, http://remotefootprints.org/take-action/issues
7. Uzramma. "The Spirit of Craft". Convocation Address delivered at Indian Institute of Craft and Design, (Jaipur, February 2014)
8. ibid

thesis, it is essential to understand that these heritage crafts connect the 'maker' with the 'user', and help spread as well as educate the community about the traditions and cultures.

Traditionally, the 'makers' and 'users' form a semiotic bond, and the 'object' produced emerges from a dialogue between the two, where both are respectful and aware of the symbolism that the product represents[9]. Any crafted object or abstract product thereafter is essentially an evolution of the meanings, symbols and dialogues between the generations of 'makers' and 'users'[10]. Due to a lack of documentation, it is hard to determine the first product that was crafted from a conch shell, but even in my lifetime, I have observed a small evolution in shakha bangles, where it went from being cut and filed with motifs, to metal reinforcements being added along the interiors of the brittle bangles, to including gold or gold-plated ornamentations on the exteriors in order to make them more marketable to the upper-class Hindu population. This is a simple example of the evolution of a traditionally-crafted heritage product: shakha bangles that have evolved and modified with the changing society and culture, through generations of dialogue between the 'makers' and the 'users'.

Nowadays, it is a common for an NGO to send a designated 'designer' to a group of craftsmen, who then ask these craftsmen to produce as advised directly by the designer. Organizations such as BRAC or Aarong in Bangladesh follow this direction to be able to produce objects that might cater to a larger market[11]. In this process, the direct interaction between the craftsmen (maker) and the consumer (user) is completely eliminated, which leaves the commercial market statistics as the only indication of the types of crafts to be produced[12]. Here, the dialogue between the maker and the user has been replaced with the dictation of the designer to the 'craftsmen'. It is inevitable that this process will lead to the elimination of craftsmen, who can be easily replaced by effective machines[13]. Weaving in history of Old Dhaka is a perfect example of such a case, where industrialization destroyed

9. "Some Thoughts on the Future of Tradition"
10. ibid
11. "About Aarong". Aarong. Last modified 2015. Accessed January 13, 2015. http://www.aarong.com/about-aarong/
12. "Some Thoughts on the Future of Tradition"
13. ibid



6.3 Simplified illustration showing the importances of historical landmarks



Produced Object/ Tangible Heritage



Past



Present



Future



Consumer/ User



Craftsman/ Maker



Supplier

a vast majority of the handmade delicate muslin and silk industry whose products were exported from the Bengal region to the rest of the world. In this world of mass production of designer-led 'crafts', creativity is no longer designated to the craftsmen, and the copyright excludes the traditional artisan's creative claim in the finished product[14]. These crafted products, at this point, lose their abilities to evolve with changing society and are reduced to petty 'meaningless' products where the 'traditional' patterns are re-arranged in studios by 'designers' who are inspired by the past ideas of crafts[15].

In a craft industry, it is a familiar scene for the specialized craftsmen to practise alongside other craftsmen or artisans who help produce the raw materials needed to develop the final product[16]. This web of relationships among various craftsmen helps to dictate a close-knit society and therefore its abode. Sometimes, this process may even combine various communities to work as a creative system, fuelled by creativity and tradition. This direct and indirect relationship among the maker, the maker's community, and the users helps bind a society together[17]. The greater the distance between these communities, the greater the chance of alienation and misunderstanding in a society. The use of the internet and websites such as Etsy might have helped reduce the gap between the maker and the user, but the authenticity and tradition of the evolution of a product through the dialogue between these different communities is quite easily lost. The face-to-face communication among these groups is not just a monetary relationship but an essential element for rendering authenticity to a craft[18].

14. "Some Thoughts on the Future of Tradition"
15. ibid
16. Jongeward, Carolyn, "Cultural Investing: Artisans, Livelihoods, and the Indian Context", (Montreal, Quebec. June 10 and 11, 1999)
17. Uzramma. "The Spirit of Craft". Convocation Address delivered at Indian Institute of Craft and Design, (Jaipur, February 2014)
18. ibid


এম.ভি.টিপু-৩
বরিশাল-ঢাকা-বরিশাল
বরিশাল-ঢাকা-বরিশাল

7.1 (Opposite) The boats are waiting in Sadarghat to be filled up by hand made products to be transported all over the city and the suburbs.





7.2 Employees of Aarong mass producing clothes to be sold in stores

7.3 Weavers at their hut in the suburbs of Dhaka; they are employed by Aarong

A handful of NGO recognized the potential in craftsmanship that had been the primary source of income for most of the lifetime of Bengal[1]. NGOs such as Grameen Udyog, BRAC and Grameen Bank initiated by Nobel Peace Prize Winner Prof. Yunus, represented some of the major investors in this sector[2]. Most of their areas of focus remained on the female craftsmen of villages and suburbs. They utilized the handful of master artisans that decided to stay in the village after the war, to teach amateurs, so they could make a living. BRAC started their operation in 1976, where they engaged a small number of women to produce simple crafts[3]. It was a slow start since there was no established marketplace to sell or even display the products. Since then BRAC have established an ethical not-for-profit brand and storefronts, Aarong, that retails in Bangladesh and England, and now supports about 65,000 artisans across the country[4]. They have a large number of permanent artists that work according to the designs provided in the villages and also consistently commissioned various independent artisans who have their own workshops or work as family-based groups in Dhaka city and the suburbs. Through the decades, Aarong has crafted itself as a brand that produces fair handmade products under the supervision of official designers, and attracted the attention of high-profile investors[5]. They have brought about the appreciation for a craft that had disappeared during the 25 years of Pakistan reign. Under the guidance of qualified designers from BRAC, the craftsmen are able to produce objects that cater to the modern day to day living in a home, and even act as perfect tourist gifts.

During my site visit in 2014, I met Savitri, one such craftsman in Shakhari Bazar who makes paper mache stationary, wall mirrors and masks that are then hand painted in bright colours of the traditional Bengali street art style. Her husband and daughters work alongside her as a family business and they sometimes hire local help in case there is a big order during any festivals. Her husband graduated from one of the most prestigious Art Universities in Bangladesh, the Charukola Institute of Dhaka University, and found contempt in making

1. A. M. A. Muhith, *Bangladesh in the Twenty-first Century: Towards an Industrial Society*, (Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1999), 339
2. ibid, 349
3. "About Aarong", Last modified 2015, http://www.aarong.com/about-aarong/
4. ibid
5. ibid





7.4 Courtyard on the roof of Savitri's historical ancestral house on Shakhari Bazar

7.5 Busy putting finishing touches onto the masks that need to be delivered that day

these uniquely-crafted products with his hands while also mentoring at various poem and drama gatherings in the local Community group. They live in their ancestral 3-storey home, which based on the grand architecture of the roof and lost art of limestone masonry, was definitely one of the most popular buildings built in the early 1700s. They sell their crafted products in stores such as Aarong and during various community fairs and street festivals, where they are sold for much lower prices. As Savitri told me about these commissions, her eyes lit up with pride. As I interacted with her and her family, I could see the efficiency in her hands as she kept working away on the next big commission. They had warmly welcomed me into their home and offered me refreshing drinks on the hot summer day. I keenly observed how both instincts and prior experience guide each stroke of their hands, the parents helping their children when needed. Savitri would carefully organize while giving final touches, and her husband acted as the master designer as he would carefully place beads and accessories onto the mirror products. This beautiful process inspired me to participate and learn, and their humbleness in their creativity made me appreciate their craft even more.

It is amazing how our senses can guide our body to create a physical object without understanding the end goal of the process. It is the journey from our subconscious mind to manifesting it into a physical object that makes an artisan evolve when creating pieces - each one better than the one before[6]. This sacred path between our conscious (ego) and subconscious may only be learned through practice and physical guidance. The craft acts as a vehicle to make the journey from the unconscious as it breaks the barrier using the ego of creation[7]. The hands seem to move instinctively without the need to understand the process completely. The pace of the hands knows no boundaries implemented by the mechanical world. They move at their own rhythm bypassing any logic and simply 'doing it'. As Yanagi explains, 'They did not do it for beauty, they merely did it. And yet, "merely

6. Muneyoshi Yanagi and Bernard Leach, "*The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight Into Beauty*", (Kodansha USA; June 21, 2013), 217
7. ibid

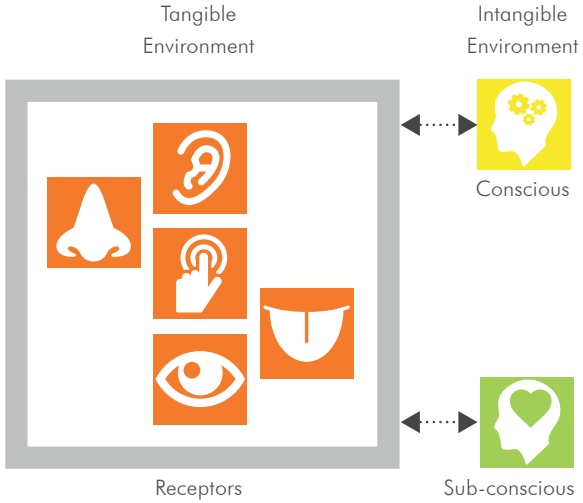
doing" something is in itself a great source of beauty, implying as it does a state of freedom not bound by concepts of beauty, much less fear of the ugly[8]' Mastering this process and accepting that the object is merely a reflection of our inner self creates its own character, bringing the objects to life.[9]

Often the hands will solve a mystery
that the intellect has struggled with in vain

- Carl Jung

On Shakhari Bazar, the craftsmen sit in the dark corners of their stores working with their hands on each craft; the stone carving, the sculpting of the deities, or Savitri painting the masks and stationary, they seem to be completely immune to the 'outside' world that passes them by on the streets. It is one of the densest streets in the world and the vehicles honk loudly. The owners of the shops carry out perfectly audible conversations across the street while trying to drown out the noise of the vehicles. The pedestrians would walk with their families and friends on the streets as they plan their day. But the craftsman in the corner of the store remain oblivious to his/her surroundings, as I observed in 2014. It seems that their own senses have amplified within them to an extent that it overtakes their hands and movements that give the objects their shapes and patterns.

The craftsmen 'play' with the materials, enjoying their qualities and feeling them through the senses – touch, sound, the way they shine in the light, and the way they smell. Touch tells us how to handle the materials, smell explain where they came from, sound as we move our hands across the material, tell us what it wants to be, and the sight of the objects helps us imagine all the potentials of the materials. It seems each of the senses is utilized thoroughly as the craftsman goes through this fearless journey without any destination. The craftsman enjoys the passage as he/she rediscovers and learns something new each time[5].



7.6 Simplified illustration of the connection between the physical and intangible worlds

8. Muneyoshi Yanagi and Bernard Leach, "*The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight Into Beauty*", 173
9. ibid, 187

Each time there is a self discovery which helps them connect deeper to their senses and to their unconsciousness. Therefore, each object created is more beautiful and natural than the one before[10].

The Craftsmen may be unlettered, uneducated and lacking any particular force of personality, but it is not from these causes that beauty is produced. He rests in the protecting hand of nature. The beauty of folk-craft is the kind that comes from dependence on the Other Power (Tariki). Natural material, natural process and an accepting heart - these are the ingredients necessary at the birth of folk-crafts'.

- Soetsu Yanagi, The Unknown Craftsman[11]

Beauty does not necessarily mean that every person who sees the object will perceive it as beautiful. It is the intuitive process through which the senses combine to form a physical object that makes it beautiful. This process cannot necessarily be taught through studying or reading; reading might produce an intellectual product. It is the inclusion of our senses that gives it the pattern of beauty[12]. Similarly, machinery and modern amenities may create large numbers of objects quickly and precisely, but the object loses its uniqueness, creativity and freedom. One must, therefore, have a complete understanding of the process of an artisan's work before one can incorporate machines and modern tools to facilitate the process. The 'natural' process that allows the artisans inner self to flourish should remain, as it is the key aspects that make the object an artifact[13].

During my site visit in 2014, I observed that the craftsmen of Shakhari Bazar still employed most of the traditional means of producing objects used since 1608. Unfortunately, the capitalist market is decreasing the value of their products by comparing them to generic mass-produced ones. The artisans mentioned that some are succumbing to the pressure to

10. Muneyoshi Yanagi and Bernard Leach, "*The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight Into Beauty*", 101
11. ibid
12. ibid, 167
13. ibid, 201







7.7 On Shakhari Bazar, a masonry apprentice is chiselling a very thin and narrow piece which will eventually be added to a larger piece

7.8 This apprentice is manually chiselling marble signage

7.9 Gopi has been working for 19 years as a shakhari under his master (guru) on Shakhari Bazar. In 2014 he still saw himself as an apprentice. Both him and his master prefer using traditional tools.

produce faster. This attraction towards lucrative profit for the sake of a prosperous family life could lead to bland homogeneity of the objects produced, which in turn, could result in loss of pride and love for their crafted objects. There is also a possibility that the artisans might be forced to focus more on the shallow perfection of the objects, rather than the exhibition of their handiwork, resulting in destruction of the culture, tradition and identity of the street that is tied to the authenticity of these crafts.

One should not consider that the freedom exists in the human being; one should seek freedom, rather, in the work that emerges spontaneously when one entrusts oneself to the materials and the tools. The same, inevitable process is seen in all true craft work. It is not accidental, yet neither is it artificial. It is governed by the same kind of laws that make water run downhill and clouds rise.

- Soetsu Yanagi, The Unknown Craftsman[14]

What differentiates these crafts from 'art' is simply that these crafts have 'functions'.[15] Unfortunately, it is because they have functions that they are valued less than an art piece might be. The shakha-crafted objects are beautiful pure white shells that have been crafted by hand by the artisans to create jewellery and accessories and are adorned by the Hindu community. The goldsmith creates artifacts and jewellery that have gained popularity in the country for their uniqueness. The sculptors work with their hands as they mould special clay into life-sized Hindu sculptures that are worshipped during Hindu ceremonies. Each artisan will create each piece with care and in their own unique style that they have mastered throughout the years, and possibly generations. Yet it is ironic how adding a function reduces, rather than increase the value of the articles. Despite the fact that these objects are scrutinized for beauty and then bought to be utilized, these nameless craftsmen need to struggle financially to provide for their families.

14. Muneyoshi Yanagi and Bernard Leach, "*The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight Into Beauty*", 175
15. Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi and Daniel Levy, The Collective Memory Reader, (New York, 2011), 158
16. The traditions and crafts represent the 'heart' of the Shakhari Bazar

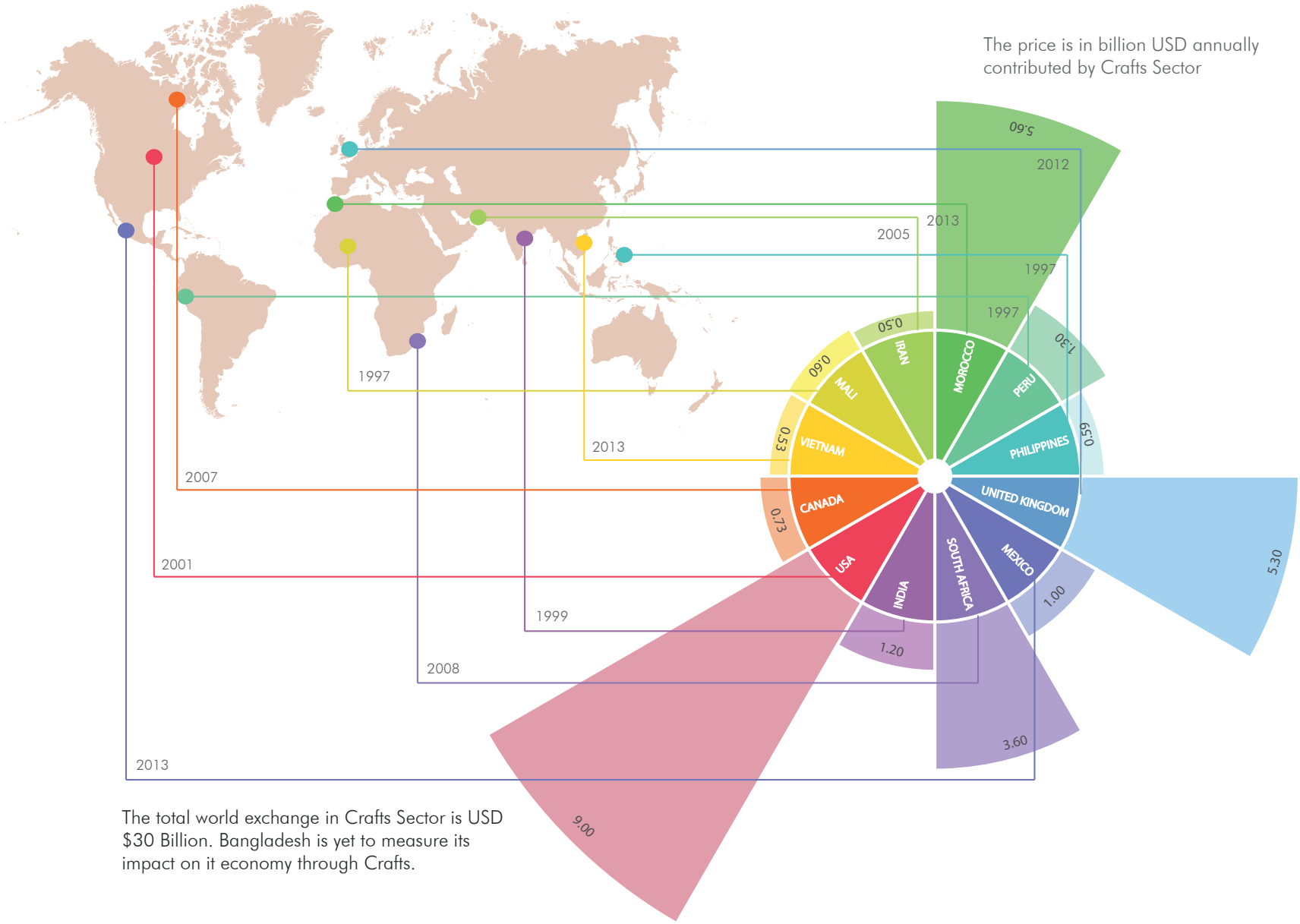


7.10 Typical early morning sight on Shakhari Bazar. The mason is busy laying out his traditional mortar and pestle on the footsteps of his store. Friends and consumers visit the storeowners

The craftsmen have been able to channel their inner beauty to the physical world. This entitles the craftsman to be responsible for upholding the authentic tradition and beauty, and therefore the heart, of the street. If the craftsmen think of themselves as a whole rather than an individual, they may have the power to keep the heart[16] pumping for the longevity of an authentic craft street. Therefore, it is essential for the craftsmen to organise their decentralised skills under a rational and organised umbrella, to promote awareness of the importance of traditional craftsmanship of Shakhari Bazar.

The artisans' love and dedication for their crafts could be passed on to younger generation just as their fathers and fore fathers have done. The master artisan would be a valuable part of the street and act as a mentor to the new generation who could uphold the authenticity and identity of the street. Unfortunately, present day Shakhari Bazar seems to have lost its pride and value in its crafts.

The NGOs have fulfilled their goal of bringing back some of the awareness of the traditional crafts by manipulating the designs to accommodate daily uses by locals and visiting foreigners. This thesis therefore recognises that the next inevitable step would be to bring back the personal interaction between the artisans and the customers to create a truly personalized crafted product, which could help instill the importance of craftsmanship in the economy and, therefore, empower the artisans. The artisans may be able to weave their inner beauty into the reality of the street as they pass on their practice to the next generation. This will channel towards the architecture that has traditionally always acted as a sign of prosperity in Old Dhaka. Just as 'shakha' is a lucky omen in the Hindu script as a symbol of fame, longevity and prosperity, the Shakharis and other artisans may be able to sustain the 'life' of the street through their perseverance.



The total world exchange in Crafts Sector is USD $30 Billion. Bangladesh is yet to measure its impact on it economy through Crafts.

8.1 (Opposite) Simplified illustration showing annual GDP contributions of the Crafts Sector to their respective economies in billions of US dollars. Types of products and crafts included as part of Craft Industry vary with each economy.

Handcrafted everyday products still have a widespread demand in countries such as Bangladesh. The handcrafted pestle and mortar, which has made its place in the 'History of the World in 100 Objects'[1] collection in the British Museum, is still being sold everyday for 5 US dollars, and remains in use in nearly every house in Bangladesh[2]. The elegantly designed and sculpted products from conch shell are still used as jewellery to represent Hindu culture and traditions while the by-products (such as conch shell sand) are still used in beauty regimes. The elegantly crafted wood used to produce traditional musical instruments such as harmonium or ektara are still being sold at minimal prices that can be afforded by lower middle-class wage earners. The craftsmen who have learned for generations the art of crafting structural ornamentations using specialized materials are still being paid as much as a common labourer[3]. Regardless of the age of their origins, since these traditional practices are still in use and easily available in the local market, the term 'heritage' is not commonly used to describe them.

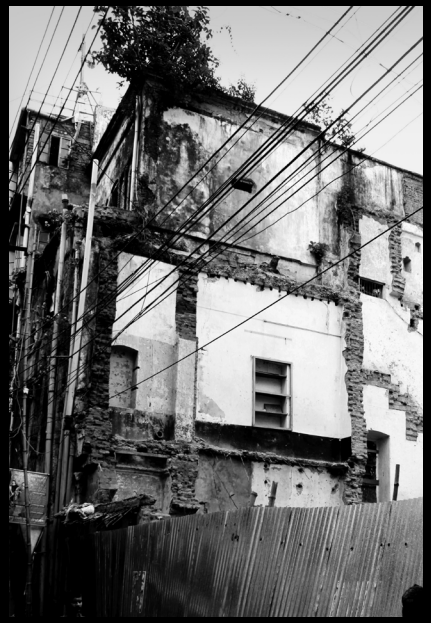
The persistent familiarity or tradition in a society has compelled many of the priceless heritage to be taken for granted. Perhaps it is this familiarity that has turned into contempt, not just for the crafts, but also for the low value of the indigenous knowledge and wisdom[4]. Since the heritage craftsmanship is seen as a contemporary daily labour, the craftsmen are unable to find their place in society. It seems that equity can only be promoted in a society by putting the ownership of the craft business under the direct mentorship of actual makers. These artisans have the lowest social and economic status, regardless of the vital role they play in traditional upkeep. They are usually exploited by traders and middlemen, leaving the artisans in debt for an indefinite period of time[5]. This, combined with a lack of official education, illiteracy, and restrictive caste barriers give many artisans their fatal acceptance of their low social and economic status[6]. In addition, the Bangladeshi government has not identified the specific role of the craftsman in economy and architecture. As a consequence,

1. "Pestle and mortar". British Museum. http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/pestle_and_mortar.aspx
2. Observation from site survey between May 2014 and August 2014
3. ibid
4. Ashoke Chatterjee, "The Future is Handmade", (Kolkata, 27-28 October 2014)
5. "The Future is Handmade"
6. Jongeward, Carolyn, "Cultural Investing: Artisans, Livelihoods, and the Indian Context", (Montreal, Quebec. June 10 and 11, 1999)

"artisans have been viewed as part of the welfare sector, propped up by subsidies and grants, rather than as part of the core economic sector"[7]. In the modern world, an artisan needs to compete with large manufacturers in small scale. They are often seen as backward, or not 'contemporary', and not being able to keep up with the 'trend' of the developing world. This results in a loss of the artisan's livelihood, erosion of cultural diversity, and extinction of heritage[8].

Western countries such as the UK have recognized the importance of craft and heritage (fig. 8.1). Craft industries in the UK are estimated to generate a staggering eight million pounds per hour for the country's economy[9]. China also identified crafts as one of their major profitable sectors while the European Union echoes the phrase 'future is handmade'. Kanazawa in Japan is now registered as a 'City of Crafts' in recognition of 'the spirit of artistic production that made possible Kanazawa's own industrial revolution and made it the home of top engineering companies'[10]. Other European countries such as Switzerland, Scandinavia, Germany and Italy also recognize their craft heritages in the success of their 'precision and engineering industries as well as in design leadership'[11]. Unfortunately, Bangladesh has yet to recognize the intangible cultural heritage and recall its economic value that drove the country for hundreds of years[12]. Without this appreciation for craft, it may be nearly impossible to render authenticity to the rich heritage that the Bengal region was built upon.

7. "Cultural Investing: Artisans, Livelihoods, and the Indian Context"
8. Dr. Krishen K. Kak, "Some Thoughts on the Future of Tradition", (New Delhi, Feb 7, 2003)
9. "The Future is Handmade"
10. ibid
11. ibid
12. UNESCO. "National Workshop on Implementation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Bangladesh", (Dhaka Bangladesh, July 2013)





0.11 One of the heritage properties demolished on Shakhari Bazar

0.12 An amalgamation of a building from the past with newly constructed floors on top

Journal
Fighting for the Memory

2nd July 2014

Since the 17th century, Shakhari Bazar has had various identities, but the specific functions within each heritage property have basically remained the same as they passed down from generation to generation. Various modern demands for things such as electricity, water supply, and other amenities, have had a disorganized addition and added to the layers that caused more congestion and traffic. Now, Shakhari Bazar is at a crossroads of having to decide between upholding the existing culture of the street, and preserving the physical structures to incorporate the modern needs of the society. It was declared a National Heritage site in February 2009 by Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha, but exclusion of the locals' input have caused indifference towards the formal authorities concerned, and as a result, to the wrecking of heritage structures. Talking about this particular topic with the locals revealed that it was a sensitive issue that generated negative feelings towards the government. It was clear, however, that the locals genuinely would like to renovate their ancestral structures, but with the owners as the primary decision-makers for design.

As we approach the future, we have a strong urge to remember and obsessively conserve every object of the past. This is where Michael Guggenheim, a present day sociologist, brings up one of the relationships between building and time, where 'buildings represent time' itself. It is important to understand the role of memory in this context. Memory has the ability to 'recreate or re-enact former states' from the various objects or elements that are present at the current time and space[1]. Personal memory can be instigated by an object, while collective memory acts as a link to the past. Therefore, we are almost dependant on objects to justify and validate a memory. When I look at the heritage structures that still stand in Shakhari Bazar, I can only imagine the memories trapped inside and how they speak to the occupants that base their existence on what they have learned from their ancestors.

Michael further claims, 'an object's memory can be controlled both through isolation and

1. Michael Guggenheim, "Building memory: Architecture, networks and users" (University of Zürich, Switzerland. 2009)
2. ibid





0.13 Safety net to catch debris when demolishing a building on Shakhari Bazar

0.14 A historical building sits side by side with a new one

multiplication of its functions'.[2] Although isolation is generally seen as 'death of objects', Michael believes that isolation stabilizes the object and controls further formation of memories, as in the case of an object displayed in a museum. Therefore, if the heritage structures of this street were to be preserved and isolated, it would end the formation of new memories. Even though the building itself does not change, the change in environment with time and the functions it carries out, can influence the buildings existence. What also makes buildings different is their ability to carry out various functions by various individuals at the same time, therefore creating a network of various memories at the same time. But if conversion of the building, in terms of function, takes place, it ceases to act as the catalyst for past memory and starts serving as 'stabilization for contemporary meaning and use'. If we suddenly 'freeze' the activities of the occupants of the building and preserve the structures by excluding the existing occupants, the building will no longer be identified as an authentic workplace and home for the historic craftsman. The memory and authenticity of the structure would be more concrete and vivid if the function of that building, which appeals to our various senses, remains the same. Therefore, in order for the street to implement conservation of the heritage structures it is important that the occupants and craftsmen continue to practise their culture and traditions that shaped the buildings in the first place.

In reality, formal policies and lack of coordination among different authorities with the locals have stalled preservation of Shakhari Bazar. It was their drastic exclusion that fuelled the locals to go on regular strikes against the government as they are deeply against this decision of giving up rights to their ancestral properties as part of a government-owned historic site. An occupant who shared his building with 12 other families voiced, "The whole area has been declared as heritage site, but where will we go now? What are our rights here?" To the locals, preserving their ancestral memory is important, but it certainly does not take precedence over ownership of their ancestral land, in a country of scarce resources. The locals have started to panic and demolish the historical buildings before the government can take over their property. I have noticed two major demolitions since I first came to Shakhari Bazar in May of 2014. The eight years of tension between the government and Shakhari Bazar locals seems to be only growing stronger with time.

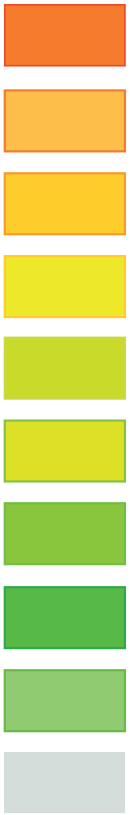
3.0.0 Design


মিষ্টান ভান্ডার

9.1 (Opposite) Shakhari Bazar on a holiday with less vehicular traffic and mainly pedestrian and rickshaw traffic

3.1.0 Shakhari Bazar





9.2 (Opposite) Key plan of existing main elements surrounding the Shakhari Bazar street. Most of the other structures are a mix of storefronts and residences, or multi-storied malls

Empty mountain devoid of people
But words of ancestors echo
Light breathes through the deep forest
Illuminating patina-colored moss above

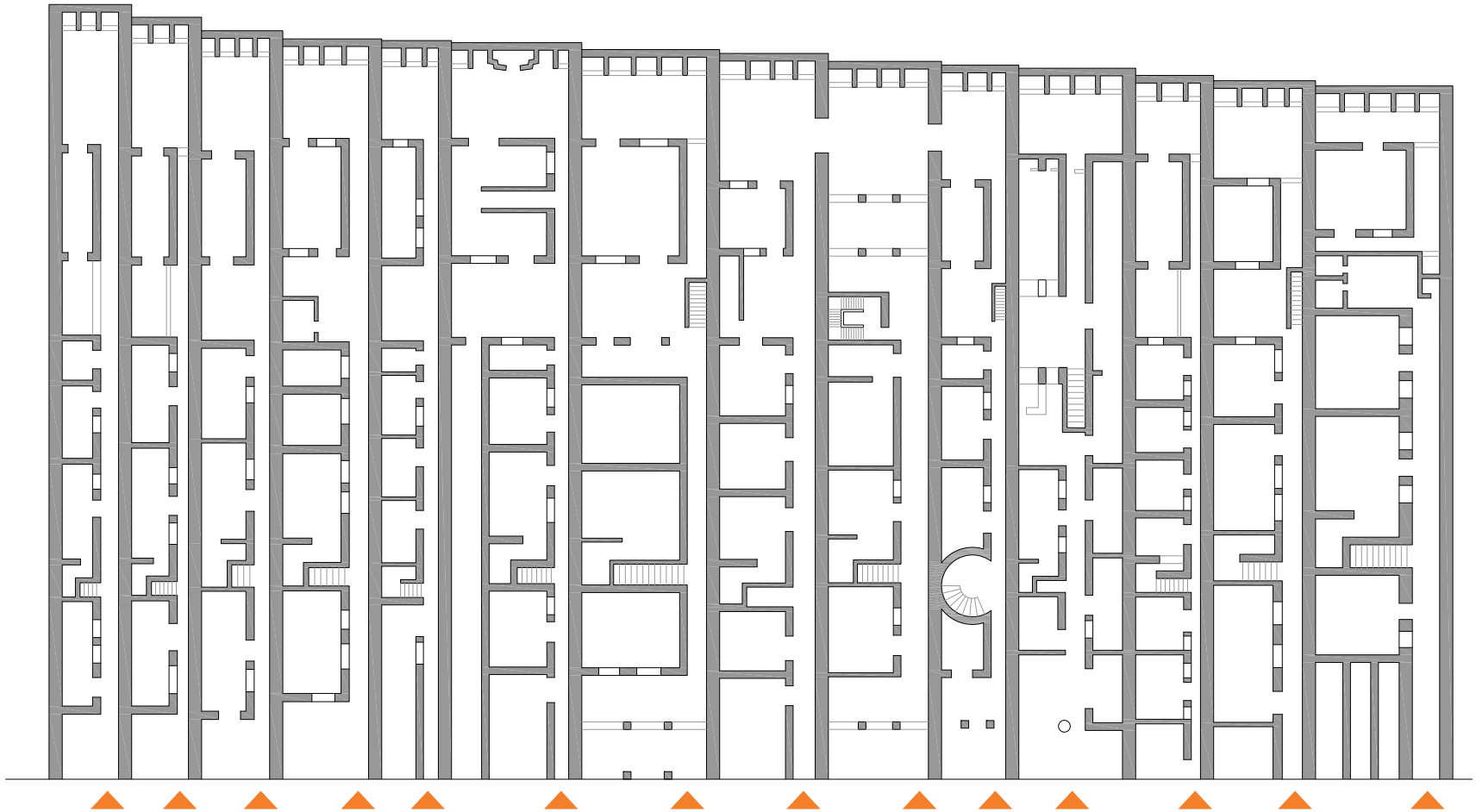
-Wang Wei[1]

This brief poem perfectly describes the relationship between architecture and its people. The author describes the echo of nature in the memories of its ancestors that have left and have become one with nature. Wang Wei seems to be able to tangibly sense their presence that still exists in the landscape. Just like a successful heritage site, this forest holds within it the culture that gave birth to the traditions, and has the ability to communicate this with the future generations[2]. Similarly, as history dictates, Shakhari Bazar's culture, pioneered by the craftsmen, has brought to life the historical structures, and these structures are still alive due to its persevering traditions.

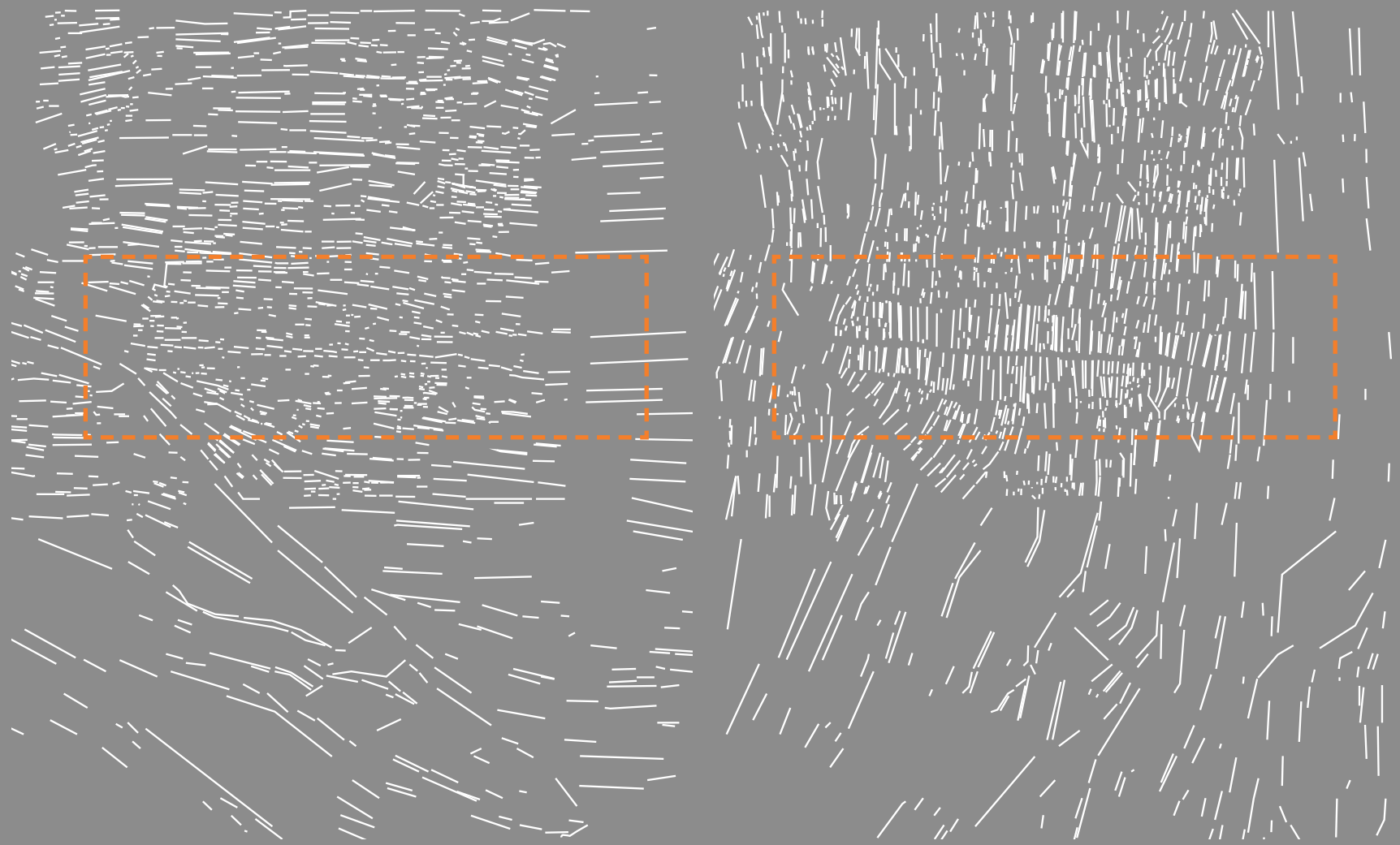
Shakhari Bazar, with all its history, culture and traditions, has given rise to a unique urban plan, catering to both the natives and the mobile population of the metropolitan city, making it one of the densest streets in the world[3]. Its ability to be moulded and adopted by its inhabitants has been the only constant since the 1600s. As observed during my visit in 2014, physically the urban plan is composed of the following elements:

1. Shared courtyards that are utilized by all the neighbours in its nearest vicinity. These courtyards can only be accessed by going through one of the houses through a narrow alleyway which leads to the back of the plots. This acts as a barrier to keep unfamiliar people away, unless invited. As mentioned in the chapter, Urban Uprising, this idea evolved from the Gupta Dynasty architecture that played a heavy role in the culture of

1. Michael A. Di Giovine, The Heritage-scape: UNESCO, World Heritage, and Tourism. (Lanham, Md, Lexington Books, 2009), 52
2. ibid, 53
3. Taimur Islam and Homaira Zaman, "Conservation of Historic Mohalla", last modified April 21, 2006. Accessed April 24, 2014. http://archive.thedailystar.net/magazine/2006/04/03/cover.htm



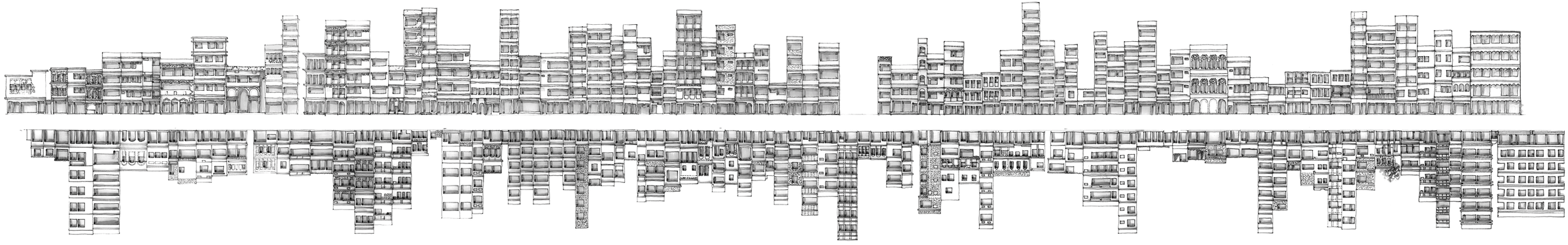
9.3 Typical plan of adjacent buildings on Shakhari Bazar. Some show connections between adjacent plots.



9.4 Vertical and horizontal grains of the structures in Old Dhaka reveal the unique density and spatial formation of Shakhari Bazar from the rest of its neighbourhood.



9.5 Delayered spatial elements of Shakhari Bazar

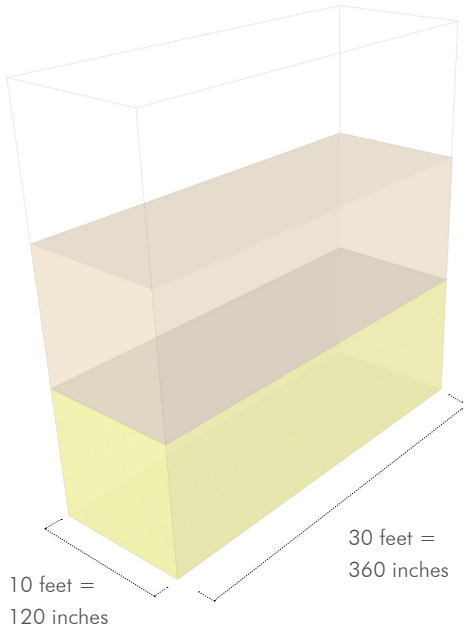


9.6 Elevations of Shakhari Bazar in a straightened line, facing each other. The north side of the street is on the top while the bottom represents the south side

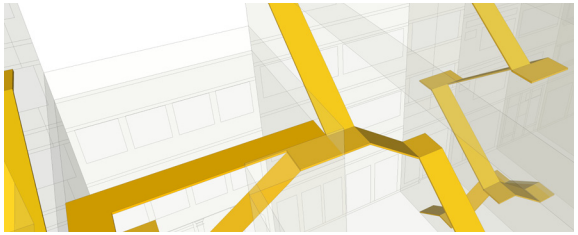
Bengal before the 1600s. This idea also came from the culture when joint families, or close neighbours, were a norm in the society, leading to shared ceremonies, customs, traditions and celebrations. This need to have an open space for celebration comes from the rituals of Hindu traditions which involved the use of fire to invite the 'fire deities' for protection and well being.

2. Typical 10 feet by 30 feet plots were assigned to each shakhari and craftsman during the early 1600s by the Mughal system, since artisans and craftsmen were seen as one of the major producers in the economy (fig. 9.6). The typical linear form of the plots created a direct relationship among the craftsmen, their homes, and the 'users' of the products (fig. 9.3). The craftsmen, therefore, built 2- or 3-storey houses to separate their work areas from their extended families. This divide eventually blurred to create a strong bond between the master artisans and the next generations of apprentices. The apprentices, who were not related by blood or their families, were considered part of the extended family. The dialogue among these communities tied them together and helped develop the products with time, as the ancient skills were being passed through generations.

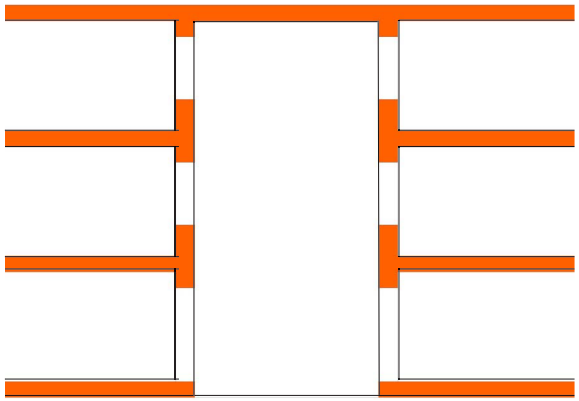
3. It is important to repeat from the chapter, Crafting Cities, that the Mughal authorities had subsidized the production costs and living costs of the artisans and craftsmen in order to sustain the healthy survival of the crafts. The artisans were given the responsibility of analyzing and understanding any problems, giving them a sense of belonging and patriotism. The recognition of craftsmanship and artisanship as a key to cultural and economic development led to an accelerated economic growth during the Mughal period, which in turn led to the beautifully crafted heritage structures in Old Dhaka.



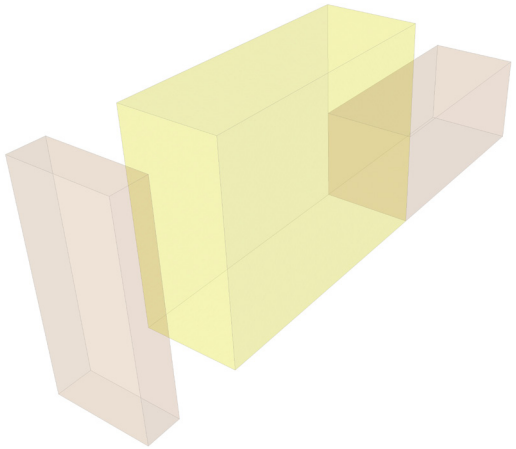
9.7 Typical building plots of Shakhari Bazar



9.8 Typical interconnected stairs between neighbouring buildings in Shakhari Bazar



9.9 Typical courtyard with double/ triple height space

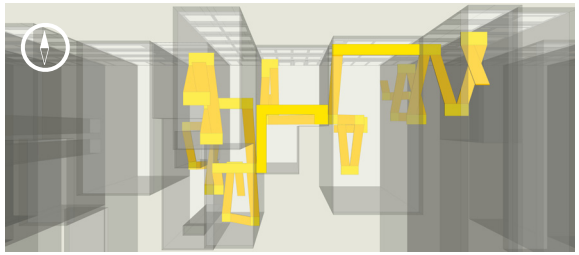


9.10 Typical areas of manipulation by locals is the facade and addition to the extent of the plot

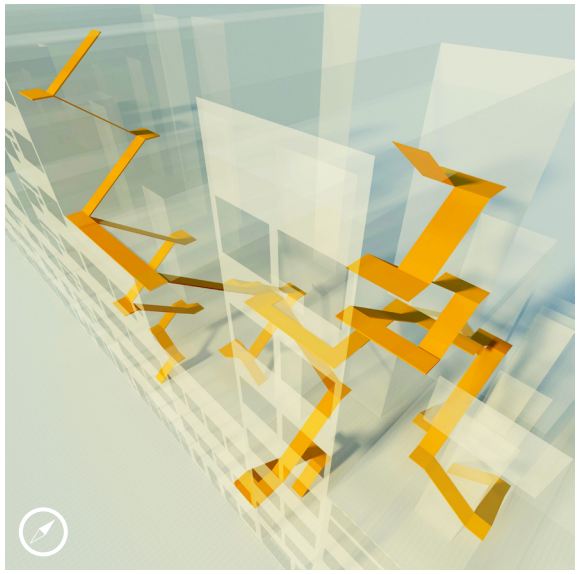
4. The narrow plots and the need to connect with neighbours, gave rise to shared stairways (fig. 9.7), which might have played a key role in urban rehabilitation. The complex geometry of the staircases still seems to baffle many architects now. As I walked through the heritage structures in Shakhari Bazar, I observed that the intricate network among the neighbouring houses may connect 5 plots in a row together. These stairs are used to climb to the main roof ceremonial area or to each of their individual roofs. Fig 9.10 and 9.11 shows a schematic idea of one such instance I observed in 2014. This blurred division among the neighbours in order to facilitate greater numbers of neighbours and community members to enjoy large ceremonies and celebrations, brought people of various statuses and religions together. This culture of inclusive ceremonies was also seen in the past during Mughal period. Now, as I had observed, the interconnected stairways act as architectural element that undoubtedly play an essential role in producing a tight-knit community of craftsmen and families, and sustaining the authenticity of the ancestral culture in Shakhari Bazar.

5. Double- or triple-height central rooms were prominent in most of the heritage houses in Old Dhaka (fig. 9.8). As described in the chapter, Urban Uprising, the 'Diwan Khana', or main reception room, acted as an entertainment area for large gatherings even as a stage for singers and performers. As observed, this type of room could either be covered or open, depending on the size of the space. In larger houses, the courtyard would typically be covered, while narrower buildings, as most of the historical structures of Shakhari Bazar, seem to have open courtyards. During Mughal period and as part of East India Company, people of various statuses enjoyed these shows, where the women and children would watch from the 2nd storey down into the reception room. The appreciation of art and culture and the practical need to increase audience surface area, led to this architectural element, which also played a key role in the ventilation of the





9.11 Schematic plan of physical network among adjacent buildings on Shakhari Bazar.



9.12 (Opposite) Bird's eye of the shared stair case from the rear of the buildings looking towards Shakhari Bazar street

9.13 Physical network among adjacent buildings of Shakhari Bazar.

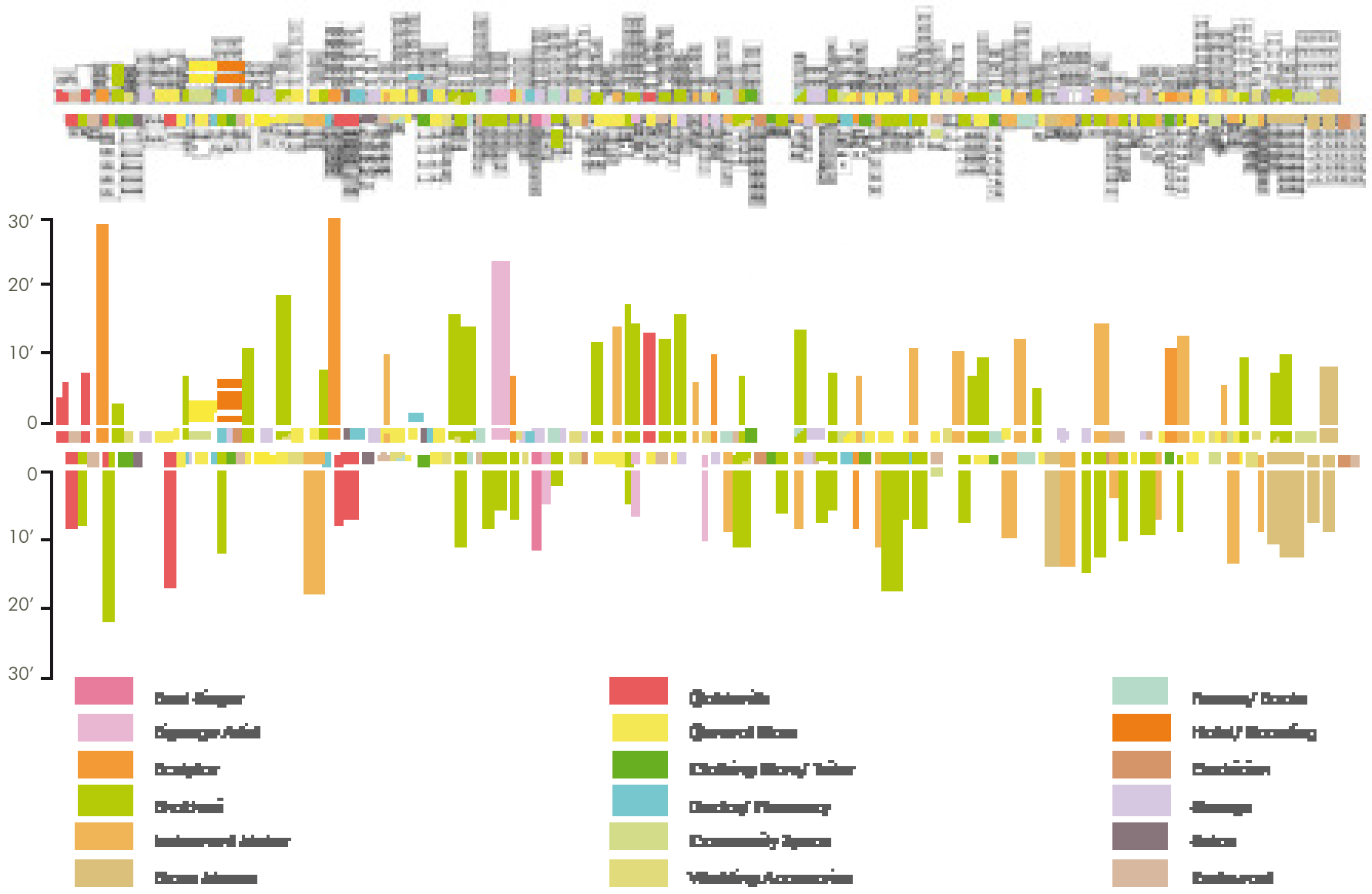
structures of Shakhari Bazar.

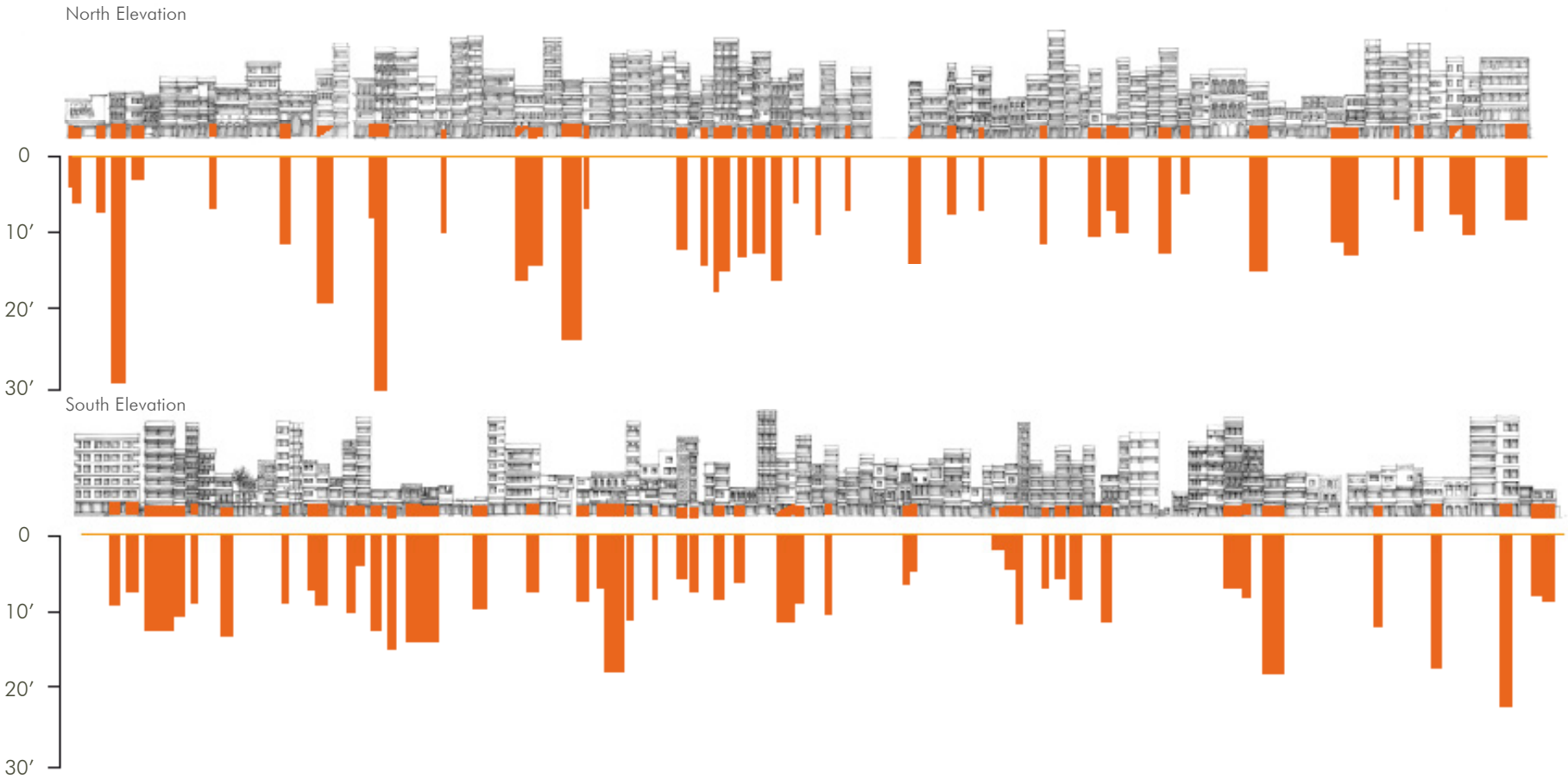
6. As understood from the chapter, Crafting Cities, since the drastic increase in population and change in socio-political climate of the country after its independence in 1971, Shakhari Bazar has played an essential role in acting as a sanctuary to many of the migrants who have either lost their own homes, or travelled to earn a better living. The ability of these historical structures to be reconstructed and renovated and manipulated to accommodate a larger number of inhabitants was quite visible during my site visit (fig. 9.9) The structures have been kept alive, but unfortunately, due to a lack of understanding of the basic elements and culture by the new migrants, these heritage structures are losing their 'authenticity' one limestone at a time. In many cases, as the elevation suggests, the heritage structures were torn down to create new multi-storey buildings that do not resemble adjacent heritage properties.

It can be understood that the radical growth of the city of Dhaka has left the street of Shakhari Bazar undisturbed and ignored by the government (fig. 9.4), which led to an informal urban growth in the area. This has helped sustain the authenticity of the culture, but, as described in the chapter, 'Form from Informality', 'globalization' has successfully infiltrated the 'informal' economic cultures, which are reflected in the buildings that are replacing the old heritage structures.

Globalization, has somehow managed to strip off the pride and confidence in Bangladesh's artisans, and dismissed them as obsolete and their culture as defeated[4]. This has left millions of Bangladeshi lives nearly at stake. They are no longer recognized as an integrated part of the nation's economy. The citizens of new part of Dhaka have adopted the western globalised culture as their own, and lost their authentic connection to the culture and traditions that

4. Matiura Rahamana, Globalisation, Environmental Crisis, and Social Change in Bangladesh, (Dhaka, 2003), 147
5. David Harvey, The Condition of Postmodernity: An enquiry into the origins of cultural change, (Basil Blackwell, 1990), 63
6. Ashoke. Chatterjee, "The Future is Handmade". Cultural Heritage of India Vol VII, (Kolkata, 27-28 October 2014)

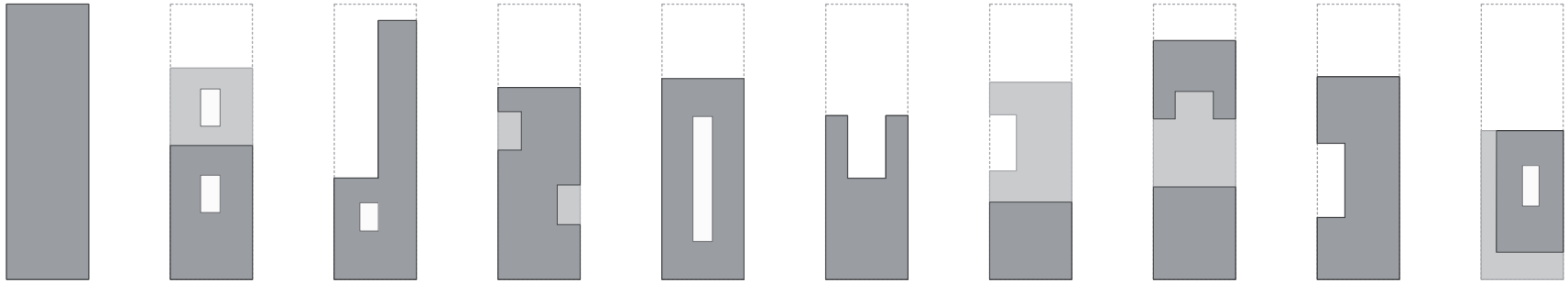

30′
20′
10′
0
0
10′
20′
30′



9.14 (Opposite) Distribution of existing programs in each building. Some stores carry mixed crafts. The bars represent the proportionate space required for each store

9.15 Distribution of craft stores on Shakhari Bazar and the proportionate area of each





9.16 Roof-top view of some of the buildings of Shakhari Bazar

9.17 Typical building typologies of Shakhari Bazar structures. They usually fill the extent of the plots on their sides to connect with their neighbours, but there are still quite a few structures that did not fill up the back extent of the plots

9.18 (Opposite) Occupational Population Proportion of Shakhari Bazar in 2014.



SHAKHARI BAZAR

are still visible in Shakhari Bazar[5]. This massive difference has caused friction between the existing government and the locals of Old Dhaka. Furthermore, in 2014 I noticed the lack of interaction between the two communities induced a lack of understanding and respect for the importance of the culture and traditions that guide Old Dhaka. Therefore, the craftsmen that used to be respected and valued as an integral part of the community are now considered as outcasts of the country.

As seen during my site visit in 2014, the traditional cultural diversity in Shakhari Bazar is still quite evident among the craftsmen and artisans of the street. Kamaldevi Chattopaddhay describes craftsmanship as "an expression of the human spirit in material form…There is no hiatus between serviceability and aesthetics…In good craftsmanship the two are identical… and represent a continuous outflow of creativeness". Unfortunately, the nationwide rejection of their importance is reflected in the value imposed on the articles and services provided by the artisans. This stripping off of any economic responsibility, in turn resulted in lack of confidence in their crafts, and a migration to other commercial occupations. The physical heritage that these artisans reside on reflects the deficiency in financial support received by the craftsman and their families. As history explains, these artisans and craftsmen have been an agent to the tradition and culture that has shaped the prosperous economy of the Bengal until the British reign. Unfortunately, if the present condition is allowed to continue, there may not be any authenticity of heritage left to render or reconstruct.

The site survey from 2014 showed that the craftsmen still constitute about 61% of the workforce on Shakhari Bazar. Shakharis total up to about 45, which is larger than any other occupation on the street, with general store keepers and owners being the second highest (fig. 9.15). The locals understand that due to the recent political and economical issues, a significant number of craftsmen have either moved to the suburbs to pursue agriculture

or changed professions to a more commercial one, such as owner of a general store. A comprehensive field research conducted in 2014 revealed various such spatial characteristics about each of the crafts. The following are my observations and the information gathered through interviews in 2014, backed by the information gathered from various literatures.

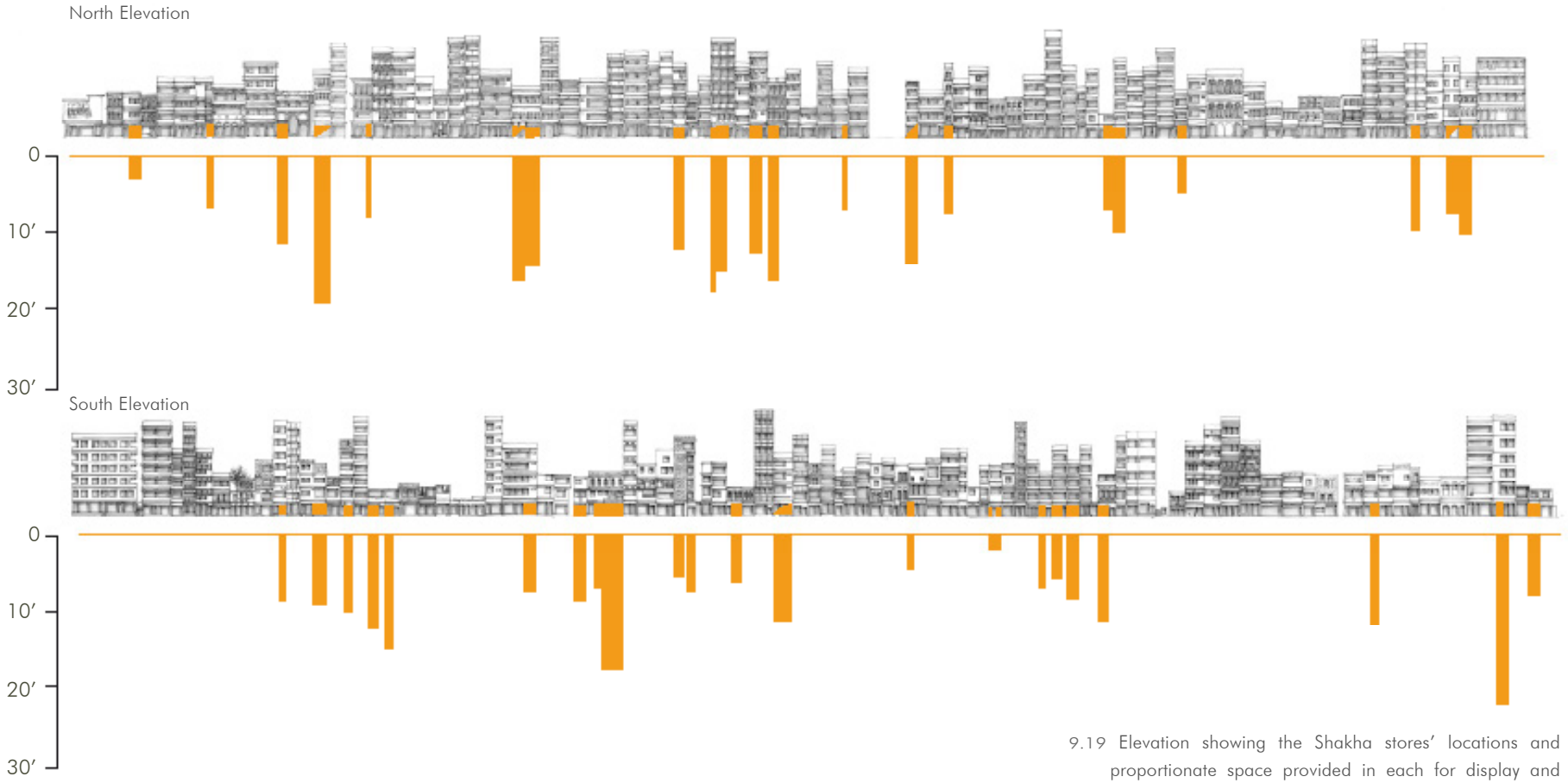
Shakha

The craft of shakha-making is the oldest established 'intangible' heritage to date, and the profession responsible for giving the street its identity and name. The raw material, the conch shell, is imported from India or Sri Lanka as it is a specialized type of shell that is only available in the ocean near these countries. Since the partition of India, this import has been especially hard for the shakharis to obtain, where traders of such shells are successful in making higher profits than the craftsmen themselves. The shakharis are at a disadvantage when making any negotiations with the Indian or Sri Lankan exporters, and even the merchants who supply the conch shells.

In this craft, it is important to the shakharis that each part of the conch-shell is used. The middle of the shell is usually sliced into bangles, resulting in various sizes for users of a wide range. The edges of the shell are crafted into rings or earrings. The by-product, or the 'powder', is sold as one of the ingredients for facial packs. It is also normal for these conch-shells, also called shakha, to be left as is when crafting religious motifs on the exterior. These are used as instruments during Hindu rituals as a ceremonial 'trumpet' to drive away evil spirits. During the Mughal and Gupta reigns, bigger conch shells were blown on to announce a battle.

This tradition of designing to utilize every part of the material efficiently teaches the

7. Uzramma. "The Spirit of Craft". Convocation Address delivered at Indian Institute of Craft and Design, Jaipur, Febuary 2014. Accessed June 10, 2014.



9.19 Elevation showing the Shakha stores' locations and proportionate space provided in each for display and making

9.20 (Opposite top) Shakharis working under limited light in a tight space

9.21 (Opposite bottom) Shakharis still use traditional tools to create motifs and to file the shakha products

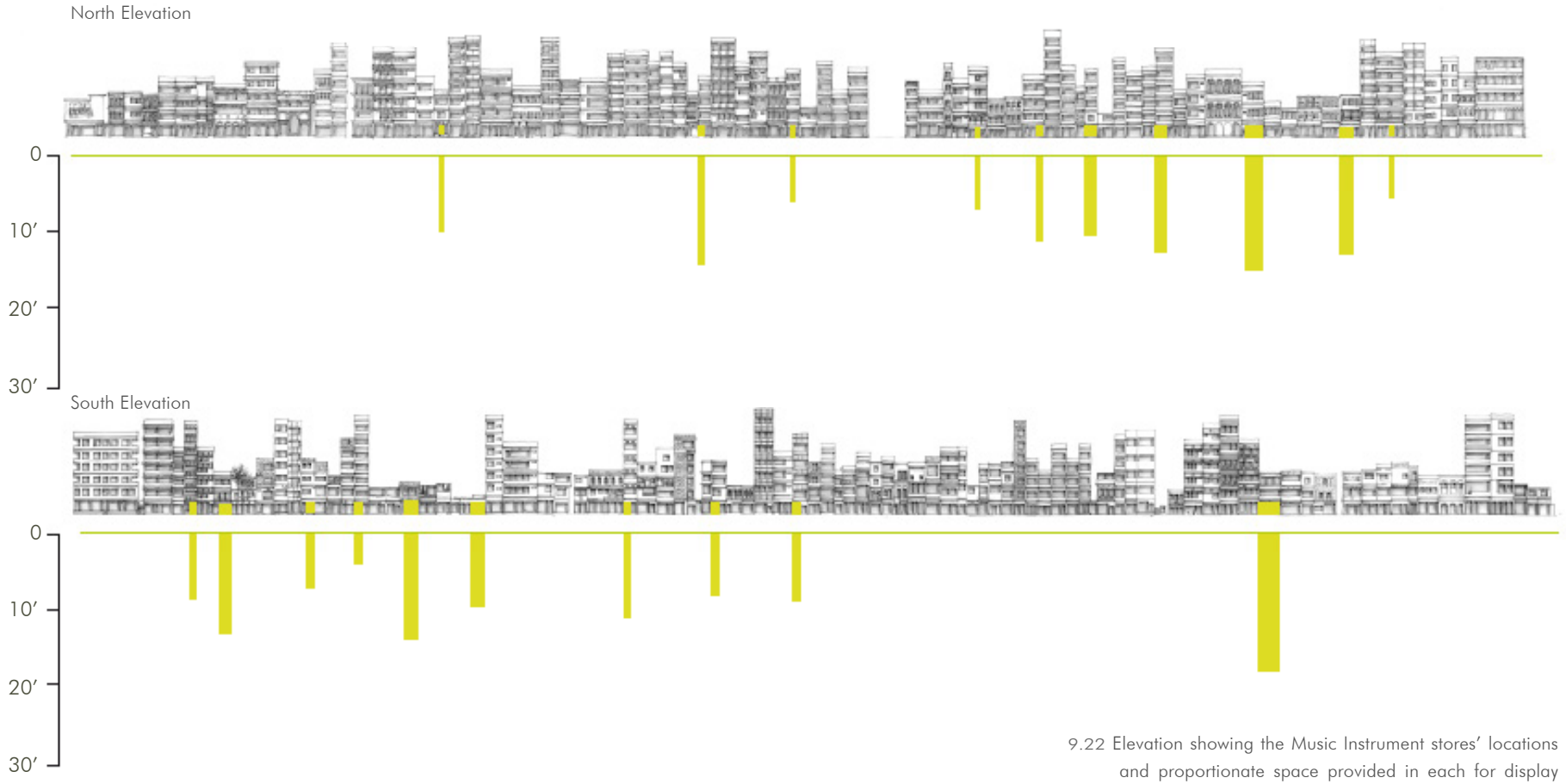




shakharis to be creative, efficient and environmentally-friendly in their profession as well as their personal lives[7]. These traditional methods seem to have had little development in the past few decades due to the lack of a direct relationship between the artisans and a large number of the users, mostly from the new part of Dhaka. Increased traffic jams and lack of space for interaction have been a major factor in discouraging this face-to-face connection between the makers and the users. Nowadays, not many of the blood relatives seem to have taken up the craftsmanship profession, and instead act as managers to the stores, that hire a master craftsman.

The prominent presence of master-apprentice relationship among shakharis is also evident, both in practice and spatially. Apprentices, either blood related or through kinship, live with or in close proximity to their master's work and dwelling areas. Therefore, the master's building will house the apprentices in small quarters at the back of the workshop and store, closer to the open shared courtyards. The master and managers will usually take up one of the floors of the building, while the other floors are rented out. It is a requirement for the apprentice to work under the constant guidance of the master for at least three years before the apprentice is allowed to work without constant supervision.

Spatially it can be observed that the shakharis have upheld their tradition of trying to connect with the users as much as possible. The craftsmen can be seen working in various shakha stores along the display areas so they are easily accessible for conversation along the street. They are also mostly located on the roadside close to the main intersection, where there is more foot traffic. During the research, the stores were seen to be scattered throughout the street, indicating that there may have been higher number of shakha stores before that have been converted into other types of stores through the years.



9.22 Elevation showing the Music Instrument stores' locations and proportionate space provided in each for display and making

9.23 (Opposite top) Traditional violin of Bangladesh handmade with wood on Shakhari Bazar

9.24 (Opposite bottom) Display of traditional musical instruments in a store on Shakhari Bazar



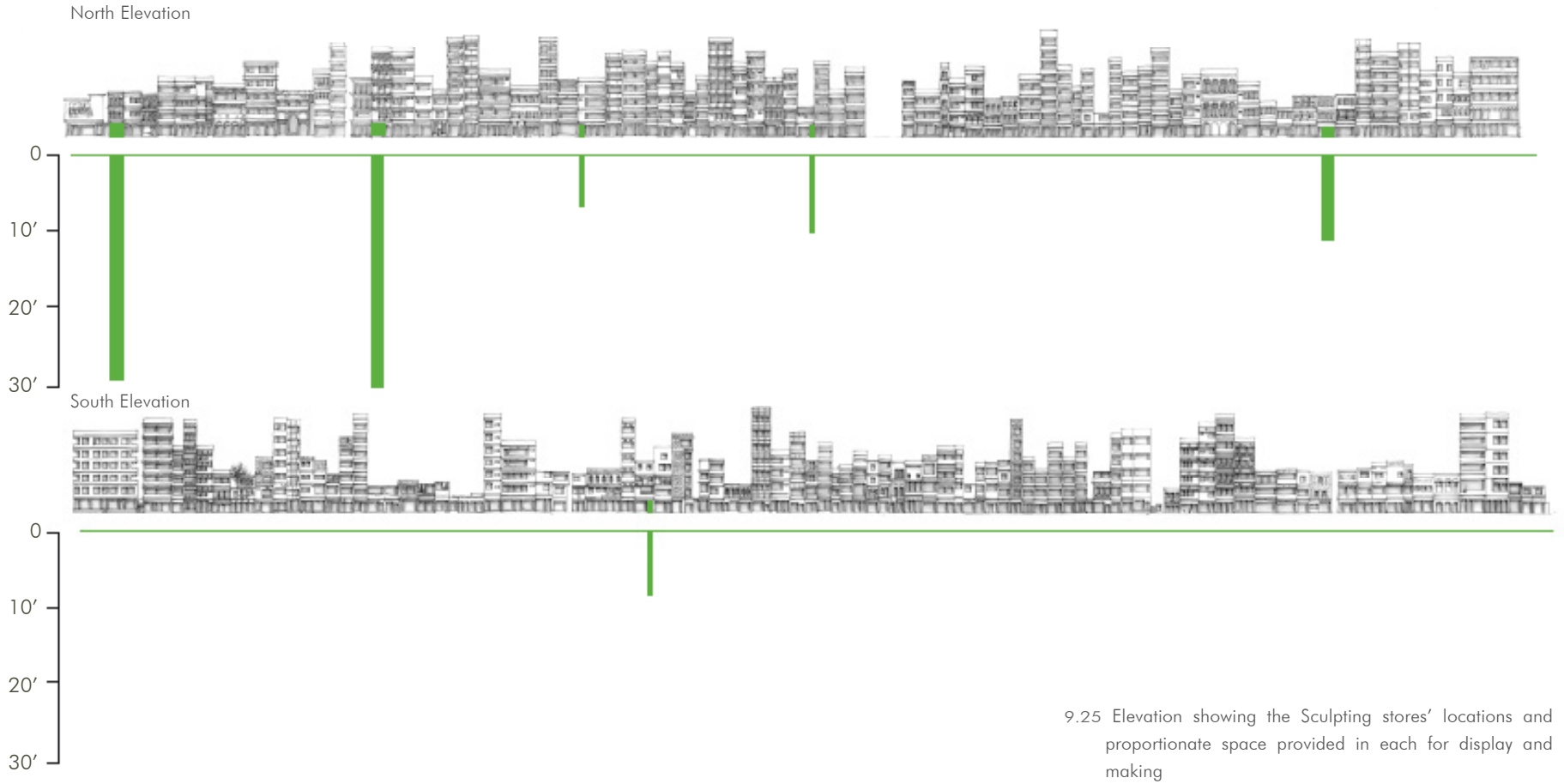


The workplaces and homes are usually not maintained properly, which reflects the financial and economic issues the masters are facing. The deteriorating structures are in danger of collapsing due to minimal maintenance for decades and the high number of inhabitants. These are usually some of the oldest structures dating back to the 1600s.

Musical Instrument

Stores selling musical instruments in Shakhari Bazar are also some of the most prestigious stores in Bangladesh according to classical musicians of Bangladesh, some of whom I met in Bangladesh. These stores are known for their craftsmanship, and because they have remained active since the 1800s. These stores have been managed by generations of musical instrument makers. The first of these generations used to make these instruments and own the store and house, but recently, it can be seen that the latest generations have decided to only manage the stores while hiring carpenters and artisans that specialize in making musical instruments. Fortunately, there are still quite a few stores that are owned by the craftsmen themselves, resulting in a successful holistic environment for the makers and users to interact.

Since the stores import ivory keys and massive amounts of wood, most of these stores are located closer to the main intersection of the street, where it is wider, and therefore, more convenient to transport materials to the stores. The master craftsmen usually begin and end a particular project, while he/ she may hire temporary carpenters to do most of the wood-work. These particular stores have been owned by these craftsmen for more than three generations. It is important to create interest in such craftsmanship among the younger generations in order to sustain the authenticity of the tradition through awareness of the value of their products.



9.25 Elevation showing the Sculpting stores' locations and proportionate space provided in each for display and making

9.26 (Opposite top) An apprentice mixes clay with coconut fiber. It is the same process as mixing dough, except one needs to use one's whole body

9.27 (Opposite bottom) Apprentices making smaller parts of a larger sculpture to be assembled together later



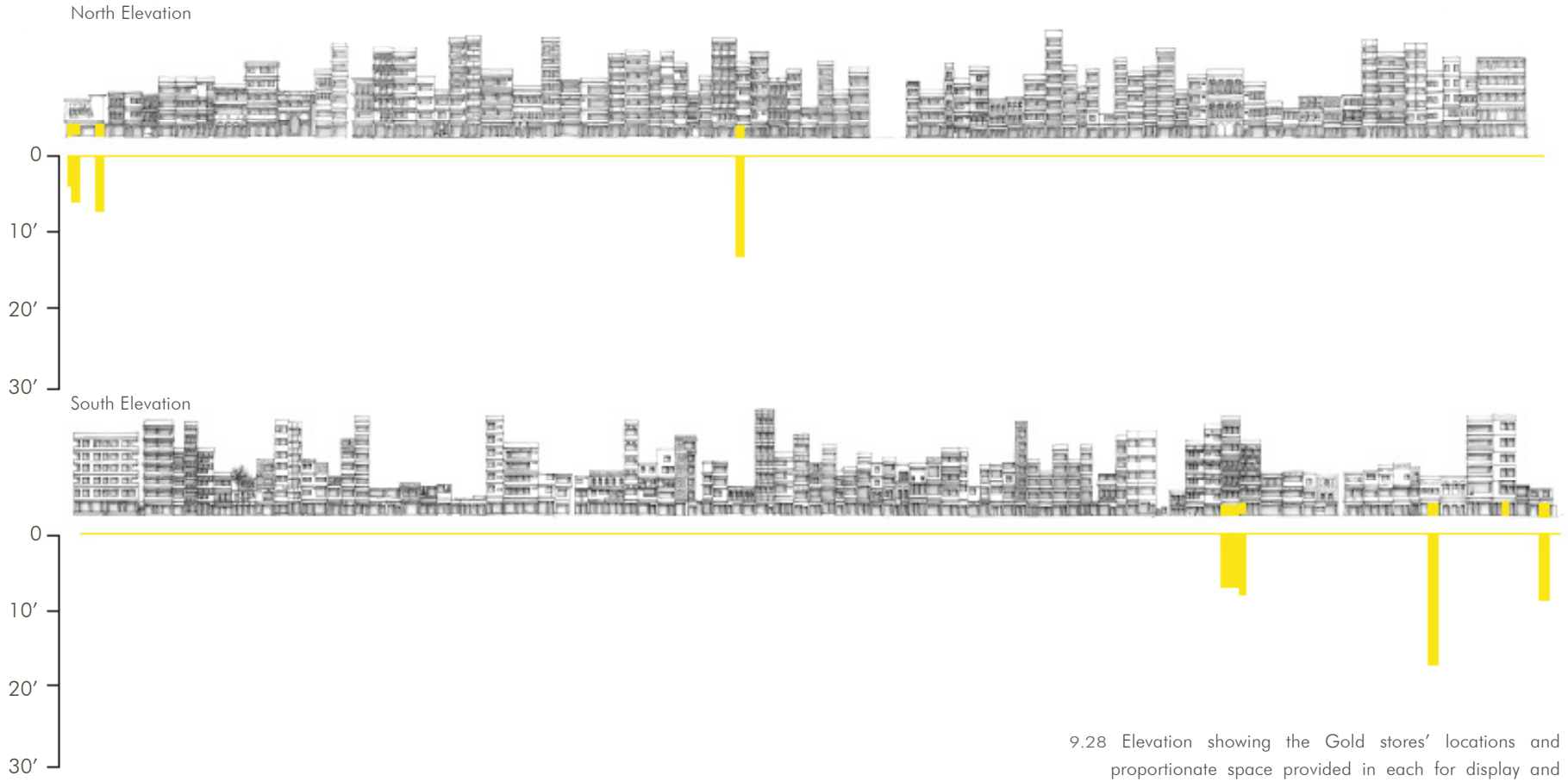


Sculptor

Being a Hindu-based street with quite a large number of Hindu temples, it seems essential and quite natural for the street to host sculptors of deities. The master sculptors, or 'gurus', usually design and supervise the initial stages of each statue. Since there are three main Hindu festivals in Bangladesh that require a large number of sculptors, the work is very much seasonal, and therefore do not require a constant number of apprentices. Most of the apprentices are usually migrants that have moved from villages and contacted the gurus through kinship ties. Just like the other apprentices on the street, the sculptor apprentices also live under the care of their master, who usually owns the building in which they work and live. These buildings are also underappreciated and not well maintained, although their structural systems did not seem to show as much of an issue compared with the other craftsmen's buildings. This is mostly due to the available clay and iron rods that are sometimes used to 'mould' the walls of the buildings for a 'quick fix'.

Since the deities are sculpted at a larger scale than the human figure, the workshop needs to be fairly large, where various apprentices may work on different parts of one statue before they are joined together. Since lighting is important for the precision of the art, the stores have exposed surfaces or the pieces are moulded and prepared during the day in the courtyard. Sometimes a mature apprentice of five years may work by himself in a small corner or in the courtyard where he does not need to be directly supervised by his guru.

Materials such as clay, coconut husk fiber, hay and iron rods are easily transported through narrow spaces, and so the stores are usually located farther away from the main intersection, where they are not directly exposed to the general public. The guru will exhibit their finished work until it is delivered to the 'user'. Unfortunately, due to lack of space, or rather the need



9.28 Elevation showing the Gold stores' locations and proportionate space provided in each for display and making

9.29 (Opposite top) An apprentice uses his mouth to heat metal and mould gold

9.30 (Opposite bottom) Apprentices arranging smaller pieces of gold together before attaching them





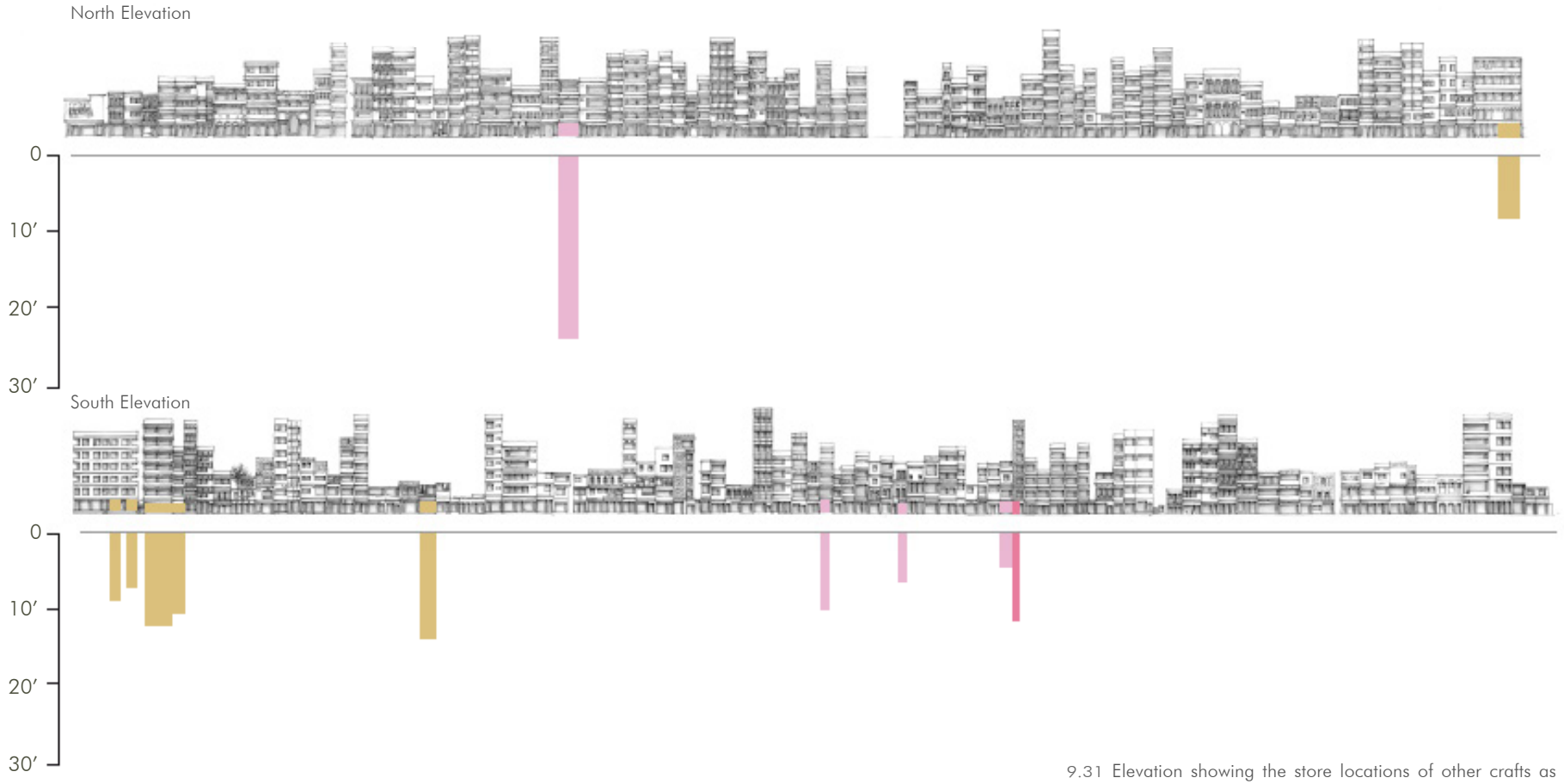
for massive space and high ceilings, no sculptures are exhibited for longer than a day. The need for daylight also discourages exhibition of any statues since they block the natural light from entering the store.

Gold and Silver Jewellery

Gold and silver have increased in price in the last few decades, resulting in extra caution in the handling and storing of these products. Unlike other crafted items on the street of Shakhari Bazar, gold and silver jewellery have not had to deal with reduced value, but the goldsmiths and silversmiths are still being paid minimally. They come from the generations of goldsmiths and silversmiths who were popular region-wide and their popularity remained intact even during the British reign.

Due to security concerns, the goldsmiths and silversmiths usually work in dark rooms at the back of the stores with limited access to the consumers. The goldsmiths are usually hired by the managers and owners of the jewellery stores, but they still make higher wages than most of the other craftsmen in the region.

These stores are also located farthest away from the main intersection and away from the general public. One of the main reasons for this is that the west end, where the street narrows and branches into other streets, houses the regional police station. Being at close proximity to the police station provides additional security to the gold and silver jewellery stores and their craftsmen.



9.31 Elevation showing the store locations of other crafts as well as the proportionate space provided

9.32 (Opposite top) Baul performers sing along Shakhari Bazar to welcome the birth of a new member of Shakhari Bazar

9.33 (Opposite bottom) An aspiring singer shows off his talent in a music store on Shakhari Bazar





Baul perfomance

There was only one store dedicated to the baul performers. Unlike during the 1800s or even up until the mid 1900s, it is no longer common to employ performers for entertainment. They are mostly hired to 'announce' any good news and ask for 'blessings' from locals and neighbours. These could range from anything such as weddings or religious events to the announcement of a new baby. Therefore, due to a lack of demand, even the one store remains closed to the public most of the time, leaving only a contact number for any client who might be interested in hiring them. These performers do not need a space for permanent use, but they do require a space to store their costumes and instruments. The manager of this type of group does not necessarily own any property in this region.

Other crafts

There are other artisans that specialize in handmade home décor objects made from wood, brass, stone, marble, clay, jute, etc., as well as weavers and embroiders. These artisans are usually located in a wide range of areas on the street, forming no connections among themselves. Some even work from home, where their direct and extended families help in the production of the crafts. These artisans are sometimes hired by organizations such as Aarong to supply specific design items. The conditions of these artisans' homes and workspaces completely depend on their type of craft and their reach in the market. Some artisans that supply to large organizations such as Aarong have a comfortable life given they own the ancestral heritage house. It will be typical to see the extended family living with them in that building as well, while some of the rooms and floors are rented out. Some artisans, on the other hand, market their products to people of lower wages, resulting in low earnings themselves. These artisans usually do not own any property and sometimes hire a

small temporary shed to market their products.

Regardless of their profession, it is quite common to see the craftsmen and the artisans come together in community spaces where they practise and learn poetry speaking, drama, etc. for various community celebrations. The artisans come from a wide range of educational backgrounds, from formal education in one of the most prestigious art institutions in Bangladesh to migrants with absolutely no formal education. It is these craftsmen, regardless of their financial statuses, that come together to promote a close-knit community that celebrates art and literature. Therefore, the community spaces, either designated ones or ones rented from religious institutions, are important components of their culture and the architecture of the street.





It was evident that the lack of direct communication between the maker and the user has created several misunderstandings between these groups. Appreciation and acknowledgement of the work, while having a stimulating design conversation, are some of the key elements that are missing in conserving of the intangible and tangible heritages.

Today, this issue is a complex combination of historical, economic, cultural, architectural, political and social elements. In order to render authenticity to Shakhari Bazar, it is important to address these multi-disciplinary issues. Therefore, this thesis proposes two types of methods – an informal method that forms a framework in an elemental level to encourage sustainability of intangible heritage and practising skills through new construction of schools, and a formal method that highlights the schemes that can be implemented by formal bodies, such as the government, with heavy involvement in design and craftsmanship of the artisans and locals, to ensure sustainable reconstruction of the tangible heritage. The formal method requires subsidization by the government in order to give financial assistance to the

craftsman and inhabitants of Shakhari Bazar, and inclusion of the artisans on the national economy board. The informal method relies mostly guidance of the master craftsmen guild, artisans and their families to induce awareness of their role in an economy and tradition, and their essential responsibility in the upkeep of the heritage. Therefore, in order to determine a well-rounded solution to the complex issues that Shakhari Bazar is facing, it is important to propose a multi-faceted solution. Both these methods are proposed as schematic ideas that aim to encourage conversation and discussion among various groups for a consolidated effort to authentically reconstruct and conserve heritage of Shakhari Bazar.

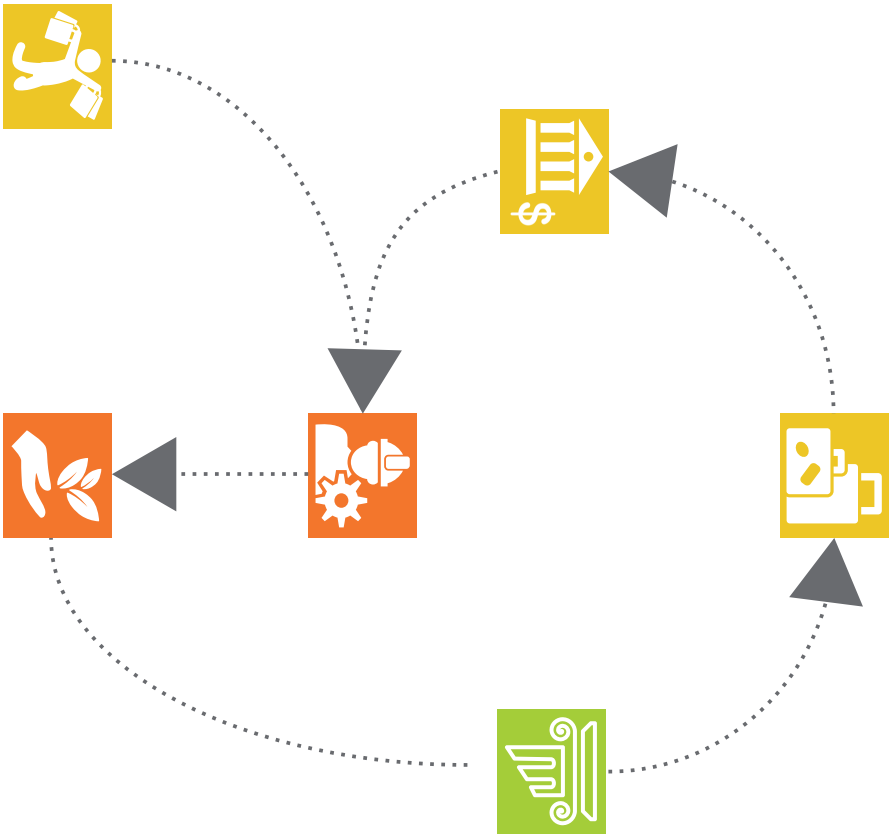
9.34 (Opposite top) Traditional mortar and pestle sold on the sidewalks of Shakhari Bazar. The masons lay them out very carefully so they do not break

9.35 (Opposite bottom) Paper mache product made inside the homes of Shakhari Bazar residents



10.1 (Opposite) He keeps the tea ready in his make-shift stall, in front of a restaurant on Shakhari Bazar, from morning until dusk to attract any passersby

3.2.0 Informal Method





Craftsman



Craftsmanship/ Tradition



Subsidy from Government



Consumer / User



Tourism



Heritage Renovation

10.2 Optimistic scenario showing the effect of government subsidy and the consequent renovation of heritage properties belonging to craftsmen, and the potential increased earnings through tourism

This chapter proposes an 'informal' method to conserve tangible heritage through intangible heritage. Shakhari Bazar in Old Dhaka is a treasure of intangible cultural heritage. To date, Old Dhaka has already lost its muslin weavers and limestone masons due to a lack of practice, facilities and organization. With its current financial, economic and political conditions, as well as a decentralized form of craft stores, it will not be long before the rest of the intangible heritage and its tangible heritage are extinct. As seen from the chapter 'Urban Uprising', this diminution of financial and economic stability of the artisans directly correlates with the depletion of the heritage buildings, as accelerating economy had encouraged innovative architecture on Shakhari Bazar in the past. Therefore, conserving authenticity of the intangible heritage is the first step to instigating the sustainable conservation of tangible heritage. Since the culture and economic conditions of the craftsmen and artisans directly translate to the culture of the street, and therefore, the respect of heritage structures, the informal method focuses on the base of the issue - the craftsmen. The informal method is a grass-roots strategy where it acts as a spatial facilitator and focuses on 'institutionalizing' and, therefore, rationalizing the existing decentralized tradition of mentorship in crafts, and promotes dialogue among the artisans to ensure sustainability of the intangible heritage.

DIALOGUE

The absence of direct communication between the makers and users in Shakhari Bazar has rendered the products by the artisans outdated or 'dead'. As discussed in the chapter 'Crafting City', promoting 'dialogue' among the craftsmen, the users and the suppliers is one of the core elements that has enabled the longevity and innovation of products and design. Shakhari Bazar used to be a street of storefronts, where the craftsmen would invite the consumers to sit and discuss designs, based on the consumer's needs and the artisan's understanding of the materials and techniques. The spatial and program model of the

storefronts played an essential role in physically gathering the groups together to promote a healthy environment for discussion.

METI School house

Case Study

Anna Heringer and Eike Roswag's METI Schoolhouse is one example of such powerful dialogue. The integrated experiments and knowledge of the local designers, potential users, and Anna and Eike, have brought to life a school made completely of local materials.





"This joyous and elegant two-storey primary school in rural Bangladesh has emerged from a deep understanding of local materials and a heart-felt connection to the local community. Its innovation lies in the adaptation of traditional methods and materials of construction to create light-filled celebratory spaces as well as informal spaces for children. Earthbound materials such as loam and straw are combined with lighter elements like bamboo sticks and nylon lashing to shape a built form that addresses sustainability in construction in an exemplary manner. The design solution may not be replicable in other parts of the Islamic world, as local conditions vary, but the approach – which allows new design solutions to emerge from an in-depth knowledge of the local context and ways of building - clearly provides a fresh and hopeful model for sustainable building globally. The final result of this heroic volunteer effort is a building that creates beautiful, meaningful and humane collective spaces for learning, so enriching the lives of the children it serves."

-Jury of The Aga Khan Award for Architecture 10th Circle[1]

The success of this structure depended mostly on the locals and their participation. The locals were enthusiastic about giving their own valuable input, both in terms of

1. "METI – Handmade School in Rudrapur, Bangladesh". Architect Anna Accessed January 13, 2014. Heringer. http://www.anna-heringer.com/index.php?id=31.

providing traditional knowledge of materials such as mud and of the traditional passive cooling techniques, as well as working with their own hands to build their local school. The supervising architects recognized the importance of low-budget construction and maintenance, and of local participation, in addition to their role in the future upkeep of the structure and its 'life'. The mutual respect and appreciation for each other's knowledge and tradition has given rise to the sustainable 'life' of the METI School in this village in Bangladesh[2].

Shakhari Bazar would benefit from such teamwork, which involves both the occupants or users, and the designers or craftsmen, by creating a designated spatial network of craftsmen and users. The designs would evolve with time and space, as mutual respect for each other's relative understandings would amalgamate into superior products. Therefore, this chapter proposes the rationalized allocation of Shakhari Bazar craftsmen to facilitate creative dialogue among the craftsmen and the consumers.

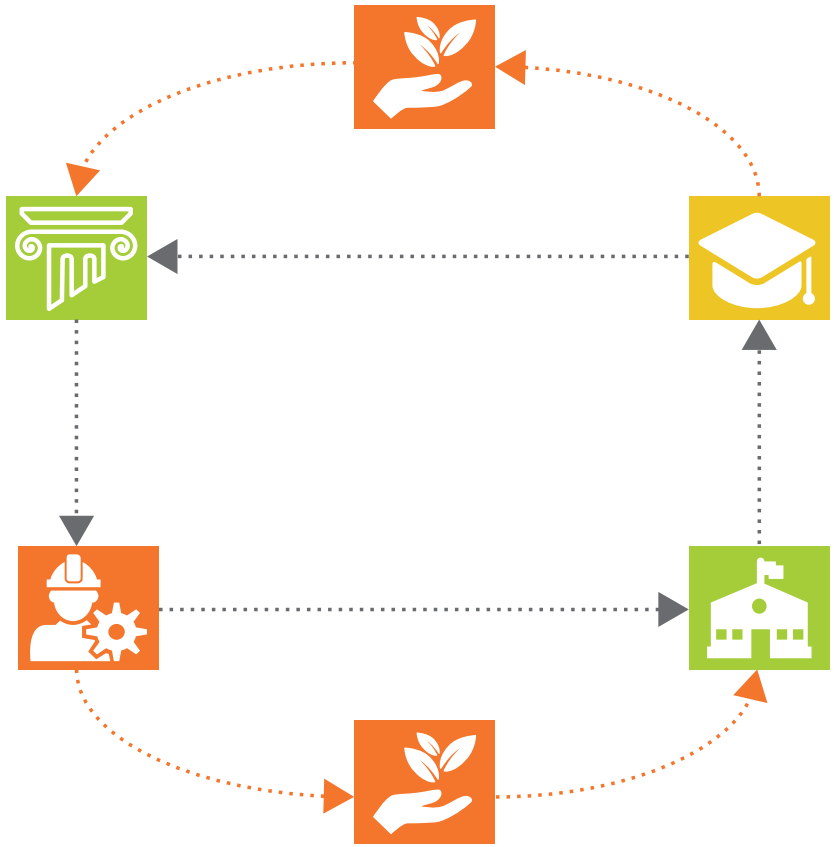
The informal strategy proposes that the local craftsmen help build the Craft Schools. These schools will be new construction, using recycled or traditional materials, and the construction will be a mix of traditional methods and new methods, depending on the type of materials and construction. This could also help the craftsmen to innovate and experiment with materials and type of construction through dialogue with designated designer and engineer. The outcome of these dialogues and blend of various intangible knowledge and skills could result in exemplary prototypes for Craft Schools that could be replicated in various parts of Shakhari Bazar.

10.3 (Opposite top) Traditional methods of constructing bamboo screens create a surreal spatial environment

10.4 (Opposite bottom) Concrete footing act as the base for the two-storey structure, but most of the material used is mud and bamboo, and the locals are familiar with the properties of these materials

2. "METI – Handmade School in Rudrapur, Bangladesh"

3. Uzramma. "The Spirit of Craft". Convocation Address delivered at Indian Institute of Craft and Design, Jaipur, February 2014. Accessed June 10, 2014.





Master Craftsman



Provides Mentorship



Apprentice Graduates from Craft School to qualify to work in reconstruction



Craft School



Reconstruct Heritage Properties, and finally graduates to Master Craftsman

10.5 (Opposite) Scenario of Institution, showing the use of Craft Schools to create a complete loop to eventually help conserve heritage properties with the knowledge passed on from masters to apprentices

INSTITUTION

Artisans and craftsmen have been successful at keeping their craft alive, by 'learning' with each object they produce and from every touch of a material, and they have developed structures and objects that have been placeholders of our culture and traditions[3]. With every motion of their tools and equipment, they have learned to adapt and produce infinite versions from the same material. They understand the need to evolve the structures both aesthetically and functionally for changing needs. Therefore, if they are given the opportunity to delve further into problem-solving, designing and managing, new leaders and innovators are bound to emerge from various communities.

The artisans themselves represent a great educational advantage as they are "unmatched in their ability to communicate an understanding of materials, technology, function, tradition and aesthetics"[4]. If power is given to the craftsmen to educate other communities about the tradition and culture that has given rise to the historical structures, it may be possible to teach the importance of maintaining the structures and artifacts, and rendering authenticity to the street (fig. 10.7). Therefore, the implementation of this method would require the full cooperation of the master craftsmen who work and inhabit the street of Shakhari Bazar. In this strategy, they will be given full responsibility for educating the younger generations about the traditions and 'placeholders' that mark the various steps of the adaptation and evolution of design. They will act as formal educators and encourage the younger generations to collaborate, design and experiment with variations of the materials and techniques. This thesis proposes that this education to be offered to the interested apprentices of the artisans, with an option of the hereditary profession by choice, encouraging the younger generation is one of the basic steps to achieving the tradition of evolution and attaining contemporary design to generate a larger demand.

4. Ashoke Chatterjee, "The Future is Handmade". National Seminar on the Arts in the Cultural Heritage of India: Revisiting Themes in the "Cultural Heritage of India Vol VII". Kolkata, 27-28 October 2014. Accessed June 21, 2015.



Ise Jingu

Case Study

Five thousand five hundred hectares of land make up an iconic space in Ise City of Mie, Japan, where sustainability of intangible heritage has been maintained since 640 AD[5]. Ise Jingu still stands proudly, holding all its traditions and cultures close to its core, with the help of its inhabitants, especially the artisans and local residents. Ise Jingu is one such example of successful conservation of life on intangible heritage. The Shinto shrine is one of the most ancient shrines of Ise Jingu, while also being one of the newest constructed ones. This dual representation is possible because of the ritual that has been practised for the past 1,300 years, every 20 years, drawing more than 10,000 visitors every year[6].

The ceremonial transfer of deities had been a ritual initiated by Emperor Tenmu, but it has been an icon because of its unique traditions, celebrating its 62nd celebration in October of 2013. This ceremony involves rebuilding an exact replica of the two main shrines and their 14 adjacent ones across from each other every 20 years, rendering these sanctuaries eternal and immortal[8]. More than 90% of this immortal 'spirit of nature', or shrine, is covered by forest, while the rest is agricultural land and shrines of deities, such as of food, clothing, shelter, etc. Most of the trees in this forest had been planted more than 300 years ago so that they could be used as timber for future buildings for the ceremony[9]. The shrines are made exclusively of wood to preserve its permanence, contrary to the popular belief of using robust materials such as stone, concrete, etc. for sustainability. This method of permanence leads to the preservation of the shrines and their customs, while also preserving the craftsmanship that has been passed on from generation to generation. With every tree used as timber for the shrines, a new tree is planted in its place[10].

Ise Jingu is divided into two main parts – Neiku (the inner shrine) dedicated to Amaterasu Omikami, the ancestral deity of the Imperial family, and Geku (the outer shrine) dedicated to the deity of food, clothing, shelter and industry. These shrines are made of bare cypress

10.6 (Opposite) One of the handmade temples of Ise Jingu

5. "Rebuilding Every 20 Years Renders Sanctuaries Eternal: The Sengu Ceremony at Jingu Shrine in Ise". Japan for Sustainability, last modified September 10, 2013. http://www.japanfs.org/en/news/archives/news_id034293.html
6. ibid
7. John D., "Ise Renewal (Shikinen Sengu)". Green Shinto. last modified September 25, 2013. http://www.greenshinto.com/wp/2013/09/25/ise-renewal-shikinen-sengu/
8. "Rebuilding Every 20 Years Renders Sanctuaries Eternal: The Sengu Ceremony at Jingu Shrine in Ise"
9. ibid

wood in a distinct and simple ancient architectural style called 'Yuiitsu shinmei-zukuri'[11]. The roof is thatched with miscanthus grass and 'Chigi' (forked finials) at both ends, while the entire structure is raised on wooden pillars. These pillars are not set on a foundation, but set directly into the ground (japan for sustainability). This symmetrical architectural style is also constructed almost entirely of skillful joinery instead of nails, a tradition that is still used today.

The building materials are simple, limited to cypress, miscanthus reeds and gold and copper hardware, and with the ritual installation of a "sacred central post" beneath the two main sanctuaries' floor. The immaculate craftsmanship can be understood when one might notice an intentional gap between these wooden pillars and wallboards, and the thatched roof. This is because of the understanding of the exact amount of moisture that is collected during the rainy season to close the gap. As the early-summer monsoon brings with it heavy rainfall, the thatched roof absorbs this rainwater and tends to become much heavier. This massive roof then presses down onto the wallboards and pillars, closing the gaps and therefore keeping the food inside dry. Later in the dry summer, the roof dries out and loses its weight, lifting itself up to recreate the small air gap between the roof and the walls, allowing ventilation to maintain the dry atmosphere inside. The wooden pillars and walls act as living organisms that function simultaneously to allow the food to remain dry and pest free[12]. This ancient method of understanding materials and the power of craftsmanship to store rice, or 'life', has been passed on for more than a thousand years in Japan. This living tradition is a reminder to the locals about the need to incorporate environment and nature to live peacefully with it[13]. These shrines have become a symbol of buildings that protect 'life', and act a basis of nation-building.

The simplicity that is the feature of this architectural style inevitably leads to decay and



10.7 Two identical sites to replicate the temples



10.8 Most of the wood is taken from the forest that was planted 300 years ago for just this purpose

10. "Rebuilding Every 20 Years Renders Sanctuaries Eternal: The Sengu Ceremony at Jingu Shrine in Ise"
11. ibid
12. ibid
13. John D., "Ise Renewal (Shikinen Sengu)"



10.9 The gate is made from repurposed wood from the temple once it has been disassembled

dilapidation, providing a rationale for periodic renewal. The bare cypress wood used to build these shrines is meant to be temporary, as it is understood that this wood would rot quickly. The two identical sites for the sanctuaries sit side by side, as the main dwelling of the deities alternate between left and right every 20 years. This includes crafting exact replicas of the 'treasures' that the shrines house, so even this craftsmanship remains 'alive' through this tradition[14]. Once the deities have been transferred to the new replica of the existing dwelling, the old dwelling is disassembled. The timbers that are disassembled are distributed to other shrines all over Japan, particularly in disaster- or earthquake-stricken regions[15]. The two main 11 meter pairs of timbers used to hold up the roofs of the two main shrines are used to replace the timbers of the two torri gates that guard the Jingu shrine. This culture of re-using and recycling materials is respected as a practical and effective way of building in Japan[16]. This authentic tradition of understanding materials and recycling possessions seem to instill a sustainable and environmentally-friendly culture and tradition among the craftsmen and locals. Therefore, the Sengu system plays an important role in preserving and handing down traditional crafts to the next generation, and conveying the roots of Japanese culture, while maintaining a strong relationship with communities all over Japan.

Building the exact replicas is an eight-year process and therefore requires constant craftsmanship and guidance in the sanctuary. This massive project requires '14,000 pieces of timber, 25,000 sheaves of miscanthus reeds, and 122,000 shrine carpenters'[17] to reconstruct over 60 structures. The offerings, sacred treasures, furnishings, ritual artifacts and room fittings, amounting to 1,576 articles made of alloy, tin, gold, weaving, etc., in these shrines are also replicated and replaced in the new shrines. The sacred treasures include "spinning and weaving tools, military weapons and wear, horse equipment, musical instruments, writing implements and daily goods"[18]. The constant reproduction of these articles, and

14. John D., "Ise Renewal (Shikinen Sengu)"
15. "Rebuilding Every 20 Years Renders Sanctuaries Eternal: The Sengu Ceremony at Jingu Shrine in Ise"
16. ibid
17. John D., "Ise Renewal (Shikinen Sengu)"

therefore its required precise craftsmanship skills, preserves the authenticity of the Japanese traditional style, materials and techniques. The finest artisans are appointed to make these invaluable items. These artisans might have worked on previous ceremonies or might even be newly skilled craftsmen, but the artisans for the treasures are supervised by a veteran of previous ceremonies. These artifacts embody the treasures of intangible heritage that have been passed down for generations, and are housed in authentic architectural-styled buildings[19]. The blueprints are also carefully copied by hand, and scratched if there is the slightest mistake. It is understood that precise and carefully crafted blueprints conveys a message to the artisans to inspire them and promote working as a community to produce something worthy of its sacred purpose.

The materials used to build the shrines are left true and not painted. This may be one of the earliest examples of exposed architecture. The wood is cut for an ancient technique, which does not use nails, but rather the wood is crafted precisely to fit perfectly with other pieces, like a puzzle. The structure is then built one piece of wood at a time. This type of construction was especially developed due to Japan's humid climate[20]. Its moisture corrodes metal and, therefore, using nails and other such metals were not an option, in order to ensure the integrity of a building. Therefore, this ceremony ensures that the life of the 1,300-year-old construction technique and craftsmanship is carried into the infinite future.

The day of the ceremony brings with it yet another intangible heritage – the joyous festivity. The entire region gathers white pebbles from the Miya River, to wash and pile them at the new site for rebuilding. The ready and cut timbers are placed in beautifully crafted two-wheel carts, and almost all residents of all ages participate in the event of transferring the new timbers to its new site as they sing the traditional song. This festival of tradition and music brings with it several traditional games, while the cart-pullers enjoy hospitality from



10.10 All the materials and construction methods used work with the environment to create an efficient passive system

18. John D., "Ise Renewal (Shikinen Sengu)"
19. ibid
20. "Rebuilding Every 20 Years Renders Sanctuaries Eternal: The Sengu Ceremony at Jingu Shrine in Ise"

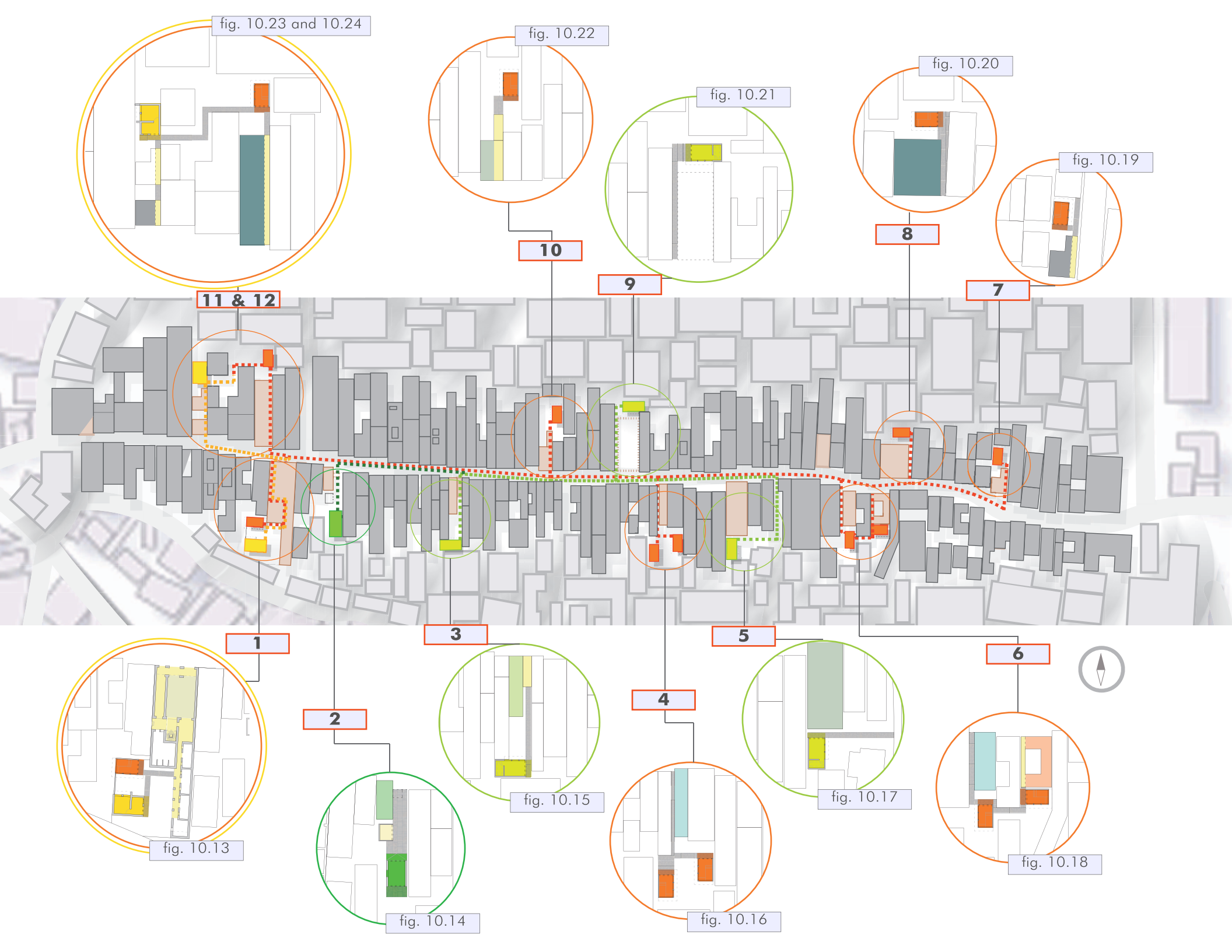


10.11 Each craft is replicated exactly as it was made decades before under the guidance of a master

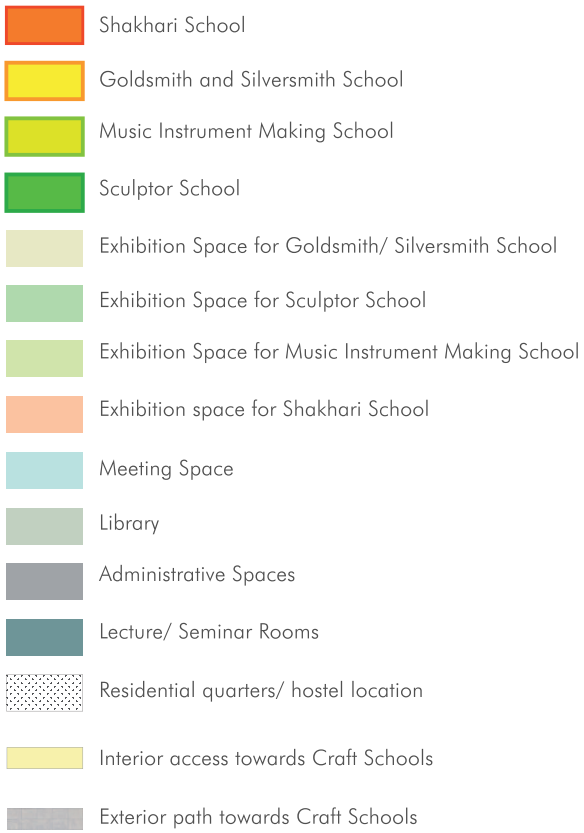
all the residents as they are cheered on[21]. This occasion helps bring the inhabitants together as they work with their friends and families to establish their sanctuary. This establishes a sense of belonging and pride in the town. The older generations remind the young people about their duty to carry on this tradition in the future.

Ise Jingu acts as an excellent example of preservation of tradition and culture, and thereby rendering authenticity to the craftsmanship that produces artifacts and buildings. It is quite interesting how the objects are given the highest importance for 20 years, after which it is acceptable to repurpose and reuse them for the benefit of other communities, developing a strong bond among these communities. This detachment from objects and deep connection to the spirit or aura of the objects, and dedication to learning and teaching craftsmanship, play essential roles in understanding the culture and traditions of Japan that have been passed on for generations. This process of learning and teaching ensures the infinite life of the spirit of the articles and buildings, while rendering authenticity to the ancient architecture and their meanings.

21. "Rebuilding Every 20 Years Renders Sanctuaries Eternal: The Sengu Ceremony at Jingu Shrine in Ise"


fig. 10.23 and 10.24
fig. 10.22
fig. 10.21
fig. 10.20
fig. 10.19
11 & 12
10
9
8
7
1
2
3
4
5
6
fig. 10.13
fig. 10.14
fig. 10.15
fig. 10.16
fig. 10.17
fig. 10.18

Proposal for informal method: Craft Schools



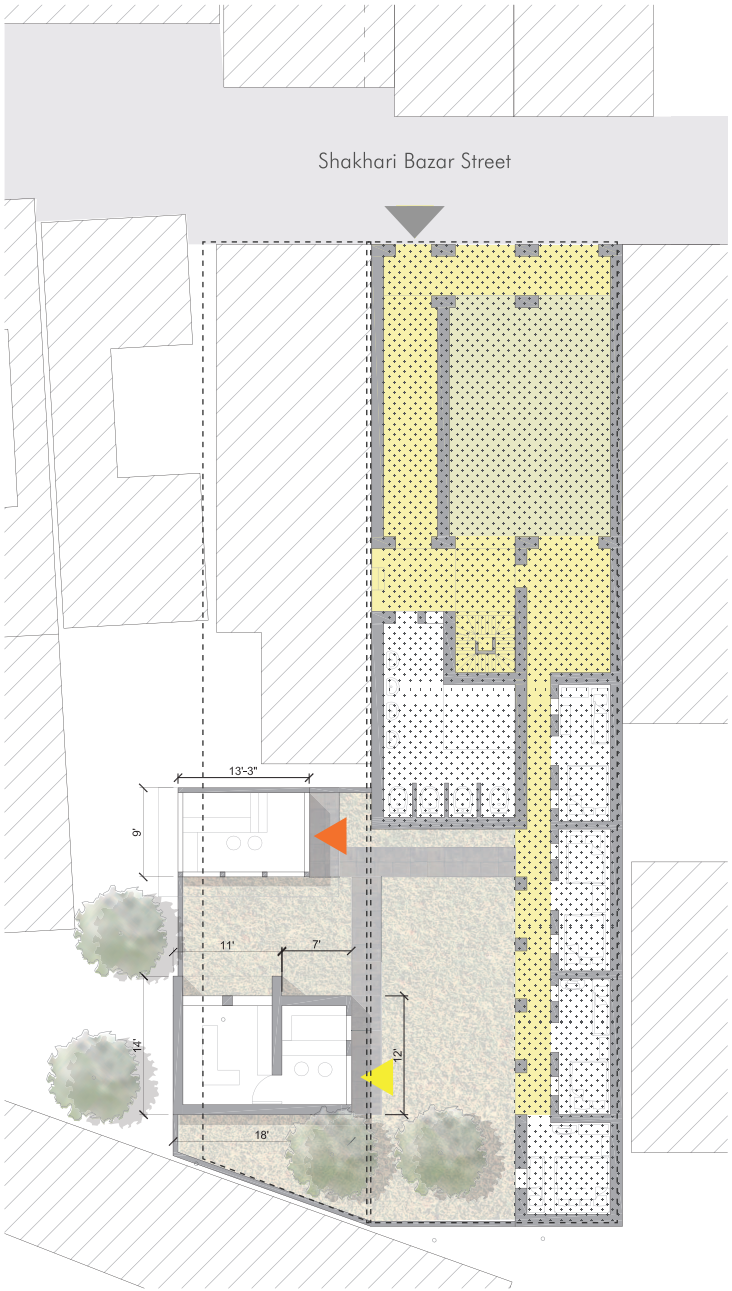
10.12 (Opposite) Key plan of Shakhari Bazar showing the proposed spatial network of Craft Schools

Rationalizing and institutionalizing the decentralized informal education of craftsmanship in Shakhari Bazar will reinforce its importance in the economy. This design strategy will look at these pockets as opportunities for the pragmatic placement of Craft Schools to encourage 'dialogue' and 'institution' of intangible heritage, using METI Schoolhouse and Ise Jingu as two of the case studies to validate its possibility. My site survey of 2014 indicated the existence of visual and physical 'pockets' or unused courtyards on the street. If taken advantage of these pockets, a pragmatic network of institutions can be formed to promote learning and organization of the intangible heritage.

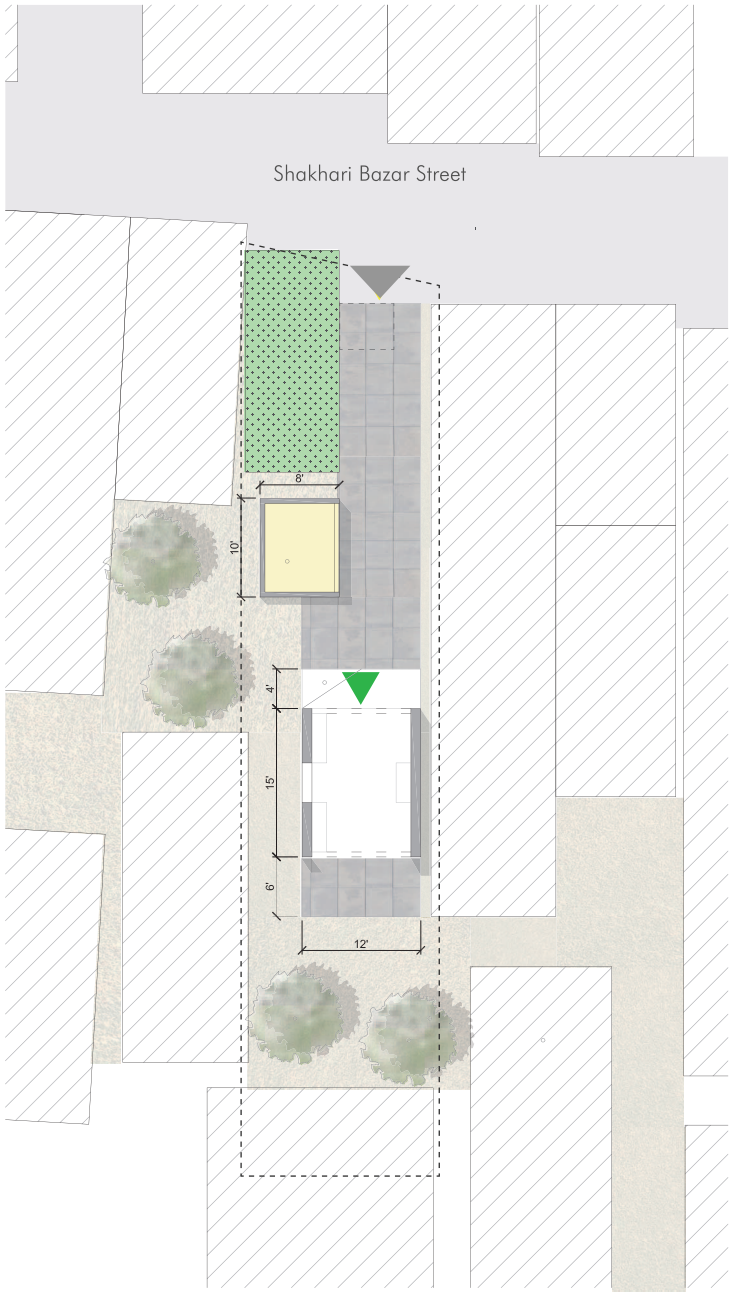
My site survey from 2014 also indicated that the street contains the following major craft industries: Shakha, Gold and Silver Jewellery, Musical Instrument, and Sculpting. The informal method of this thesis will provide a framework to encourage essential collaboration between the craftsman, the local artisans, and other professionals to construct Craft Schools, appropriately designed to represent the crafts they house. Educational facilities, keeping in mind economic and local materials, for each of the major industries is proposed to be located in each of the 'pockets'. These schools could help create dialogue among the professionals, craftsmen and locals to construct Craft Schools with collaboration of traditional and new methods of construction. This new construction could be the first step in ensuring the innovation and sustainability of intangible heritage of the craftsmen.

The following plans outline the 'pockets' that these schools could be introduced in. In instances such as pockets 1, 3, 9 and 10, adjacent properties could be rented to achieve efficient placement of the schools at the rear of these properties. Pockets such as 1, 11 and 12 show the possibility of constructing Shakhari Schools and Goldsmith/ Silversmith Schools in close proximity to encourage collaborative design. Pocket 2 shows a unique condition where there is currently a temporary shed that sells variety items. This shed could be relocated as a concrete structure to house the storefront, giving enough space for transportation of sculptors.

1


Shakhari Bazar Street
13'-3"
9'
11'
7'
14'
12'
18'

2


Shakhari Bazar Street
8'
10'
4'
15'
6'
12'

Entrance from the main Street

Entrance to Shakhari School

Entrance to Goldsmith and Silversmith School

Entrance to Music Instrument Making School

Entrance to Sculptor School

Existing property line

Exhibition Space for Goldsmith/ Silversmith School

Exhibition Space for Sculptor School

Exhibition Space for Music Instrument Making School

Exhibition space for Shakhari School

Meeting Space

Library

Administrative Spaces

Lecture/ Seminar Rooms

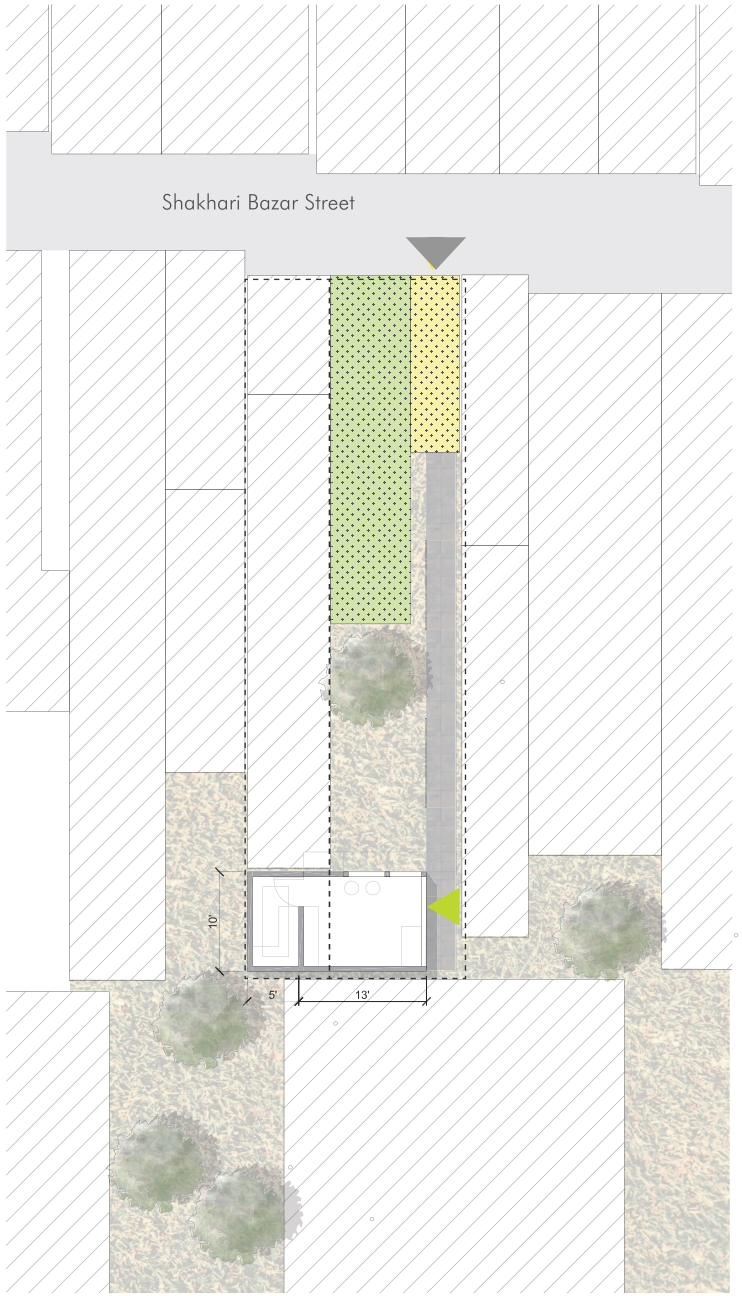
Residential quarters/ hostel location

Interior access towards Craft Schools

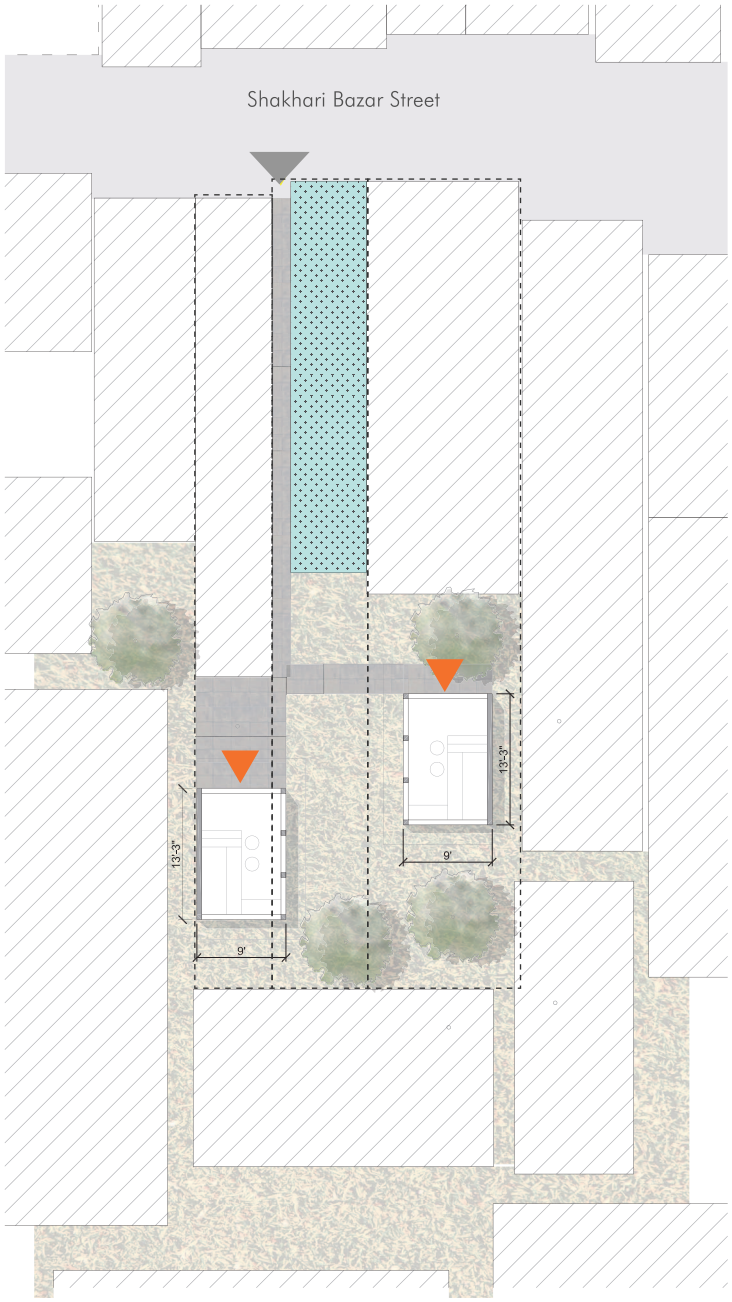
Exterior path towards Craft Schools

10.13 (Opposite left) Plan 1. Scale 1/16″=1′-0″
10.14 (Opposite right) Plan 2. Scale 1/16″=1′-0″
10.15 Plan 3. Scale 1/16″=1′-0″

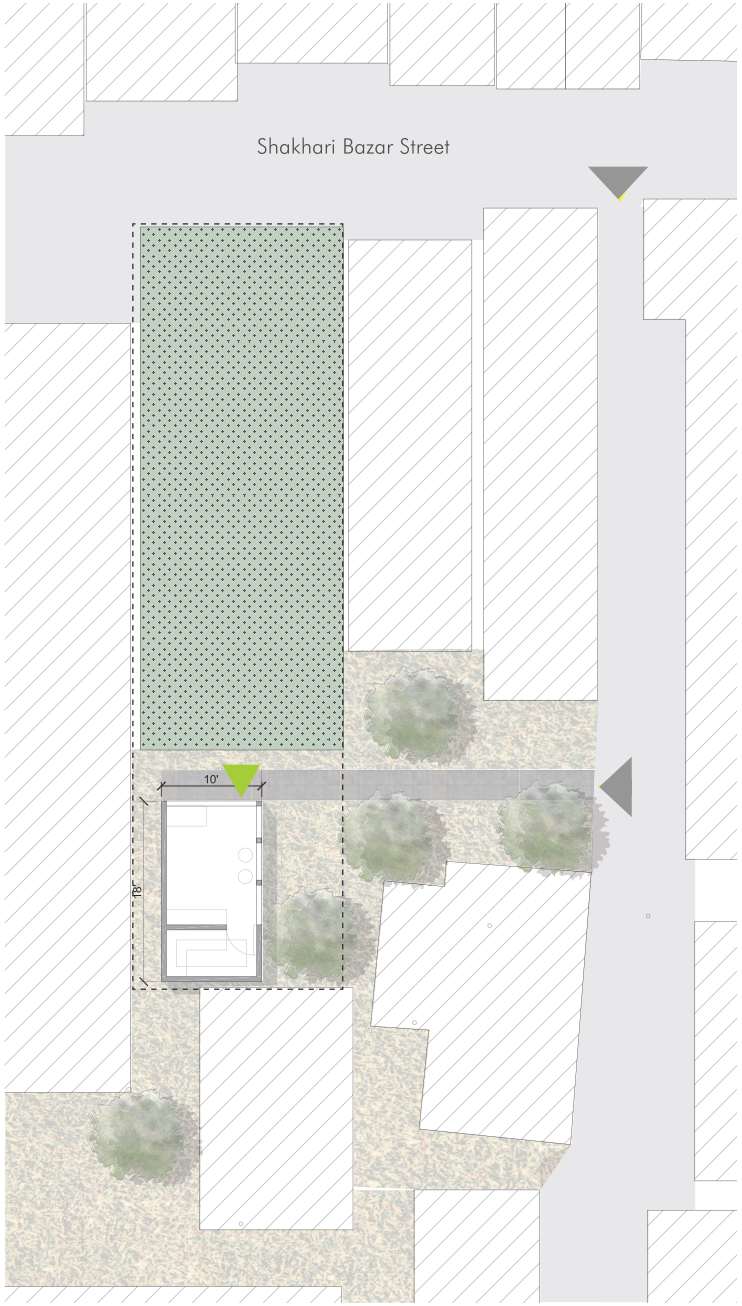
3



4


Shakhari Bazar Street
13'-3"
9'
13'-3"
9'

5


Shakhari Bazar Street
10'
19'

Entrance from the main Street

Entrance to Shakhari School

Entrance to Goldsmith and Silversmith School

Entrance to Music Instrument Making School

Entrance to Sculptor School

Existing property line

Exhibition Space for Goldsmith/ Silversmith School

Exhibition Space for Sculptor School

Exhibition Space for Music Instrument Making School

Exhibition space for Shakhari School

Meeting Space

Library

Administrative Spaces

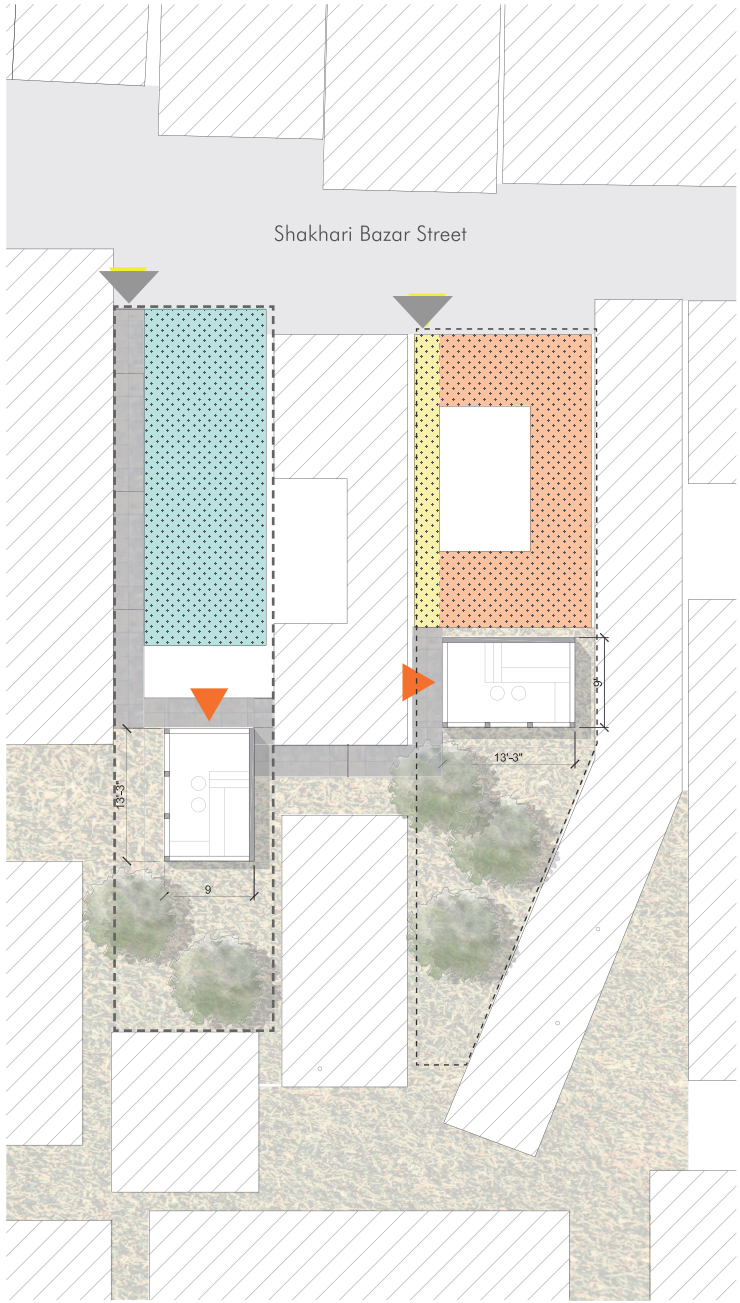
Lecture/ Seminar Rooms

Residential quarters/ hostel location

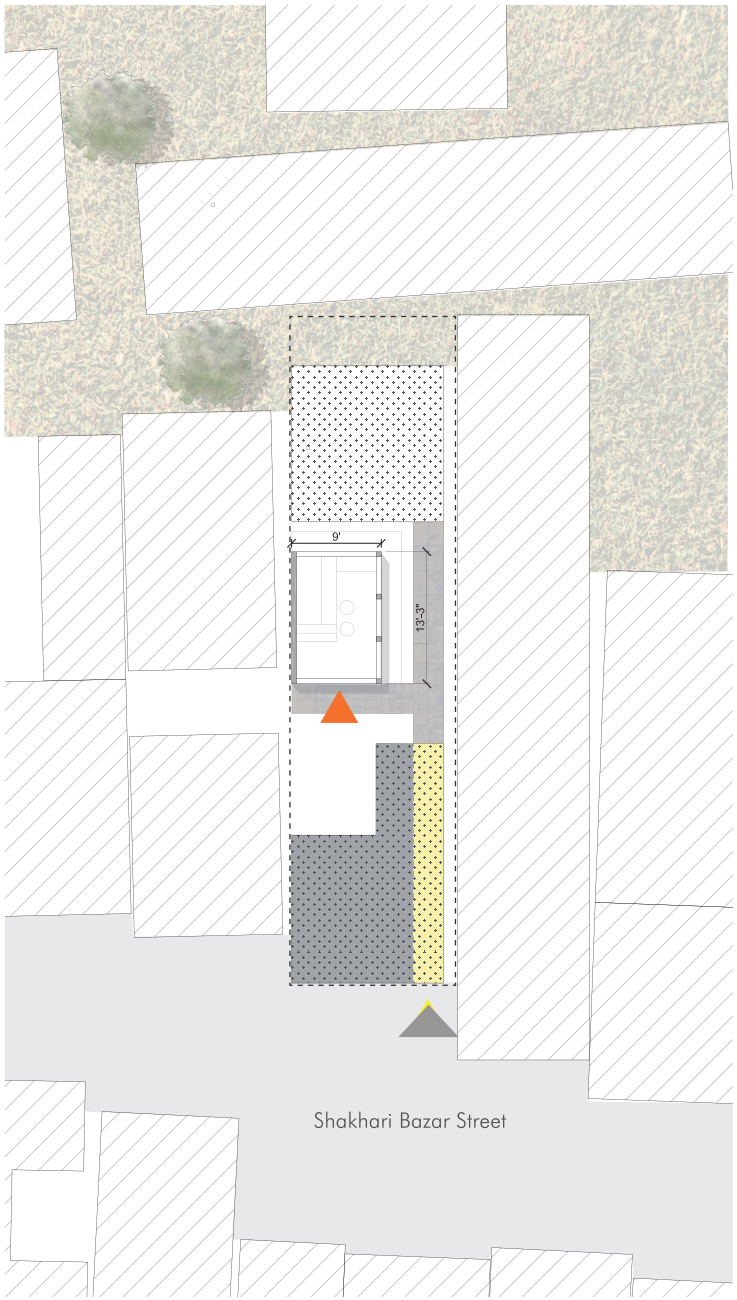
Interior access towards Craft Schools

Exterior path towards Craft Schools

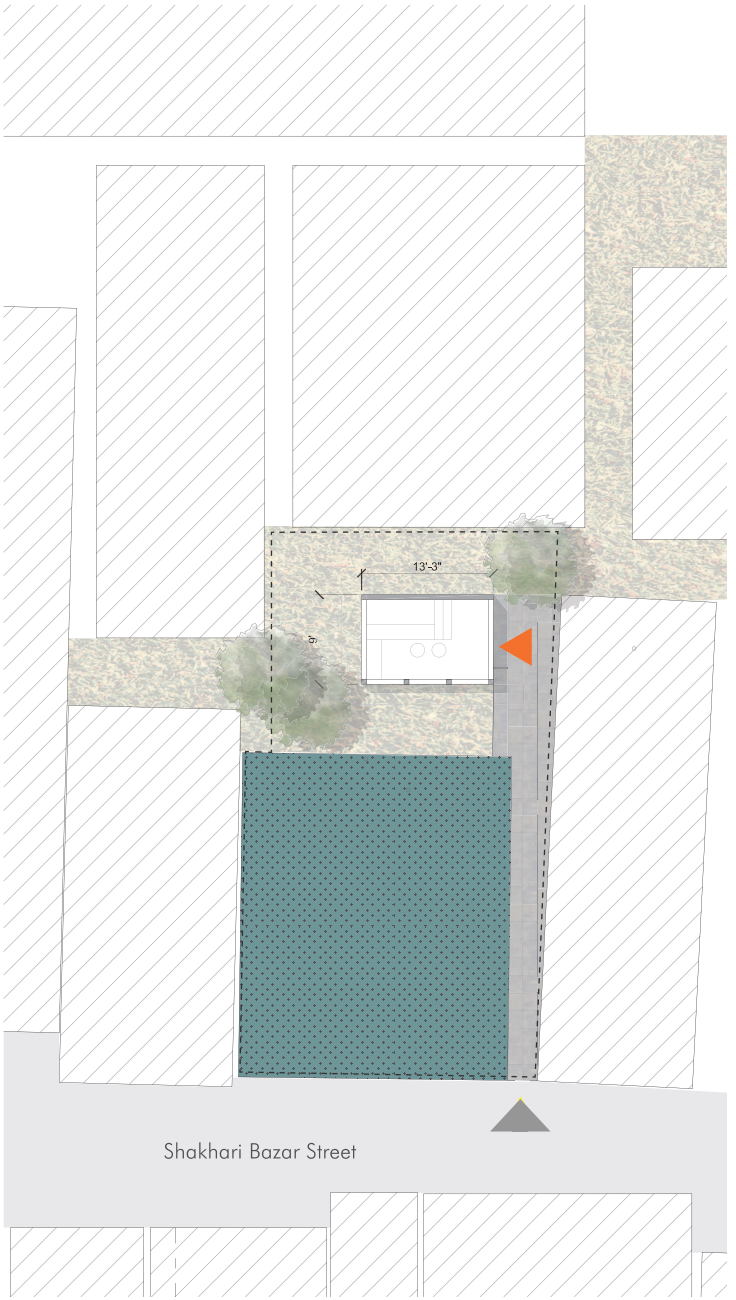
10.16 (Opposite left) Plan 4. Scale 1/16″=1′-0″
10.17 (Opposite right) Plan 5. Scale 1/16″=1′-0″
10.18 Plan 6. Scale 1/16″=1′-0″



7



8



Entrance from the main Street

Entrance to Shakhari School

Entrance to Goldsmith and Silversmith School

Entrance to Music Instrument Making School

Entrance to Sculptor School

Existing property line

Exhibition Space for Goldsmith/ Silversmith School

Exhibition Space for Sculptor School

Exhibition Space for Music Instrument Making School

Exhibition space for Shakhari School

Meeting Space

Library

Administrative Spaces

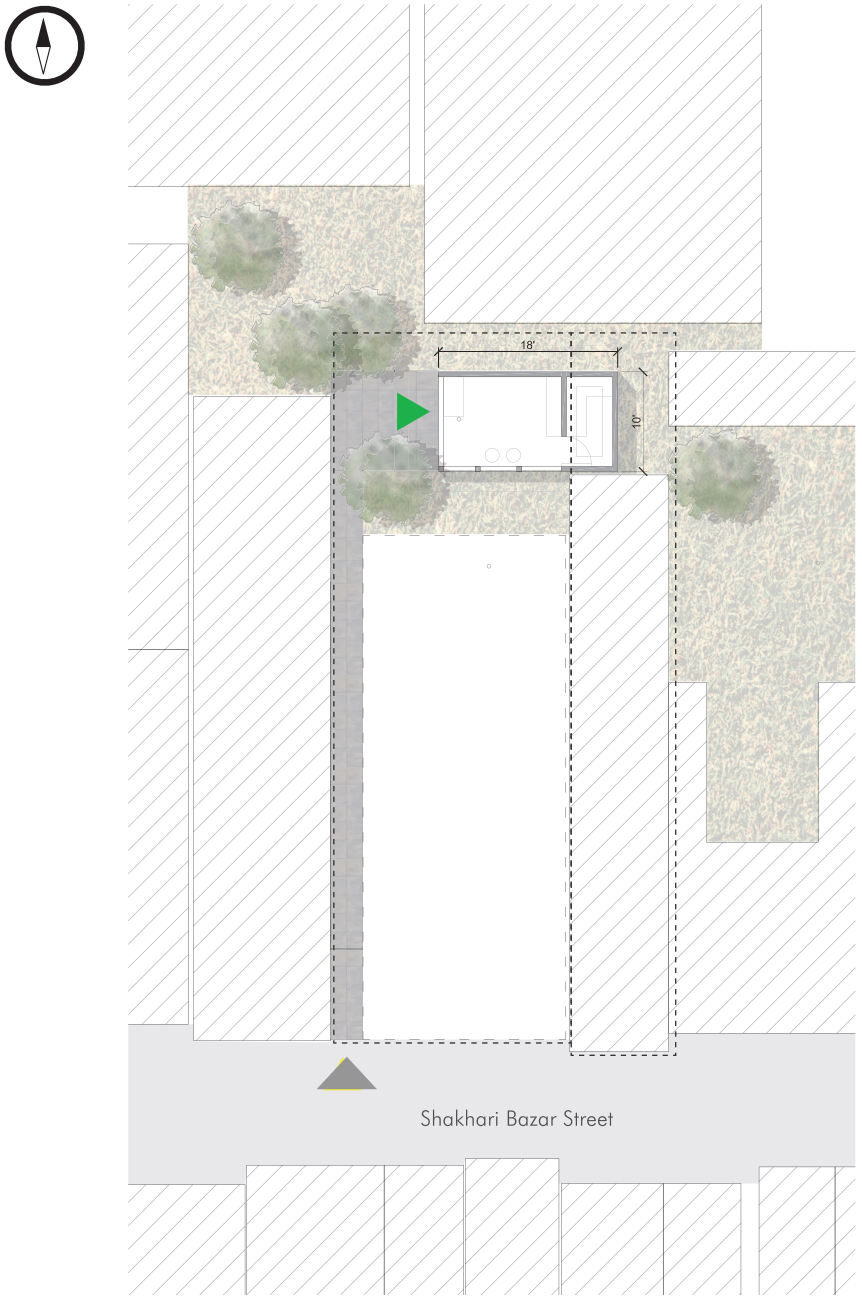
Lecture/ Seminar Rooms

Residential quarters/ hostel location

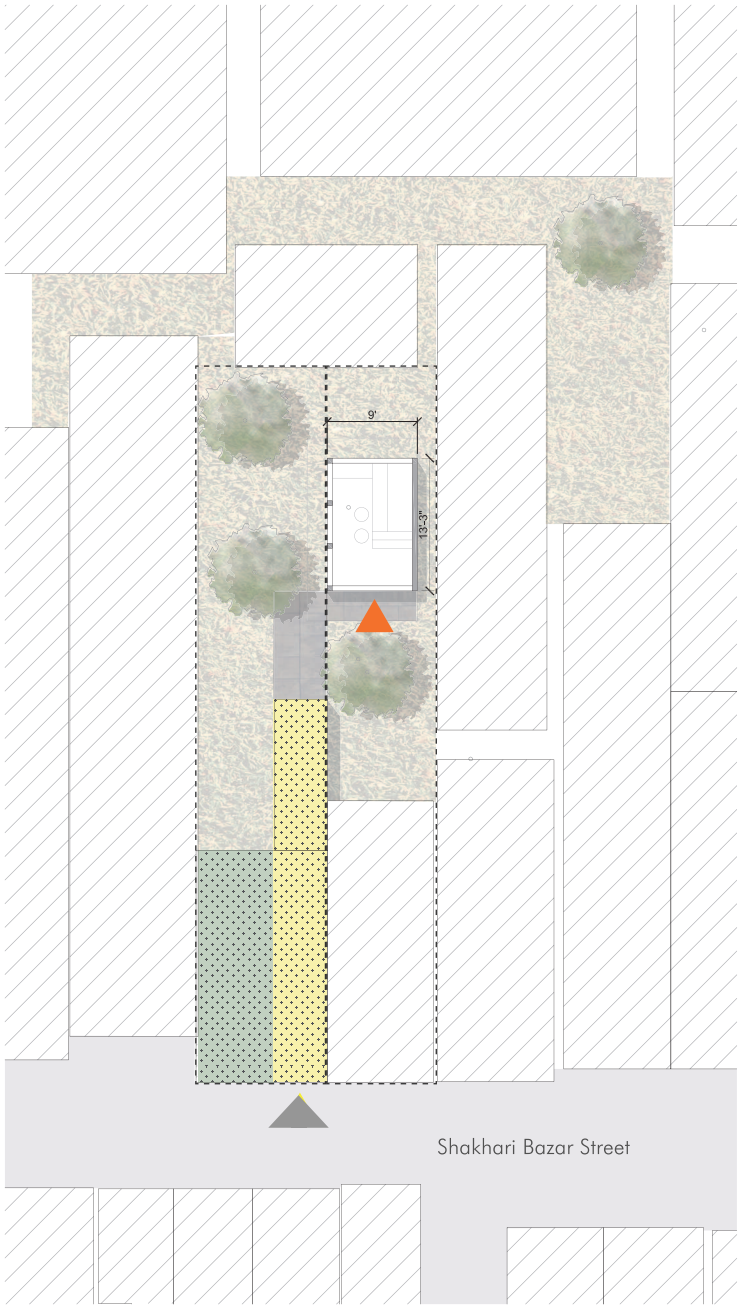
Interior access towards Craft Schools

Exterior path towards Craft Schools

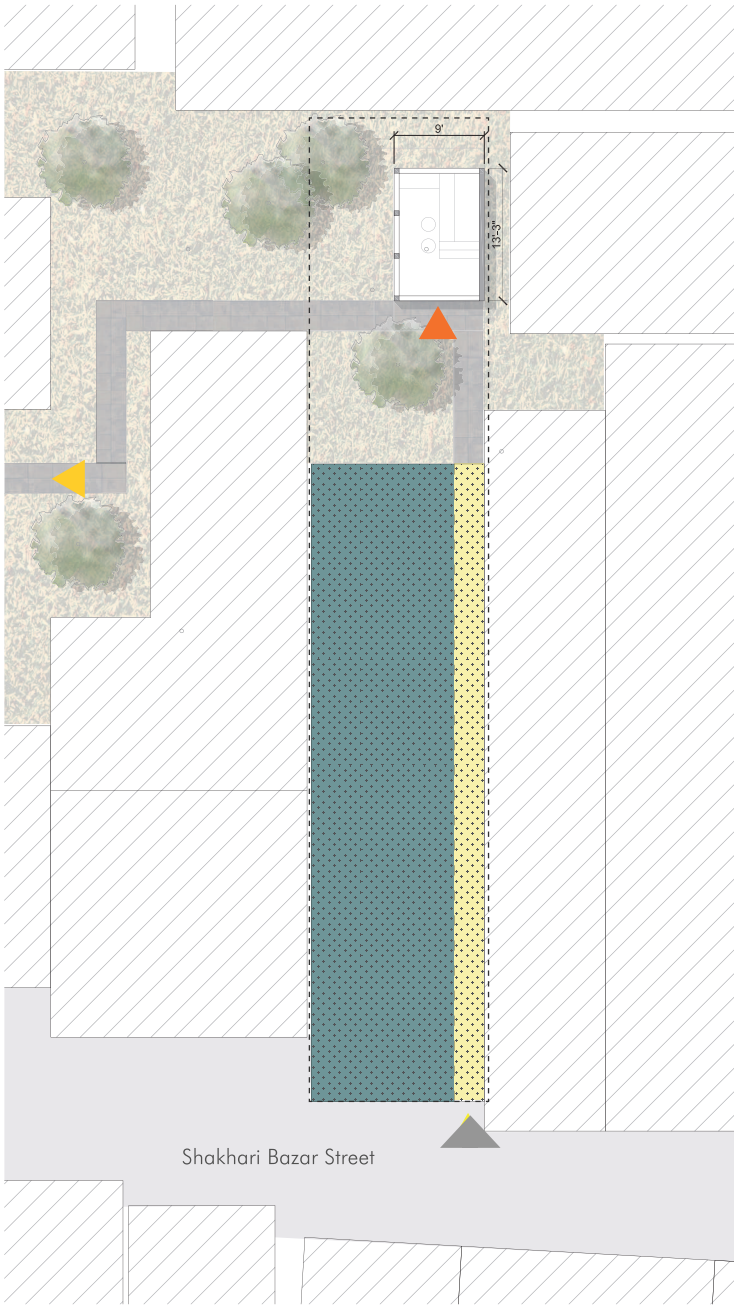
10.19 (Opposite left) Plan 7. Scale 1/16″=1′-0″
10.20 (Opposite right) Plan 8. Scale 1/16″=1′-0″
10.21 Plan 9. Scale 1/16″=1′-0″



10

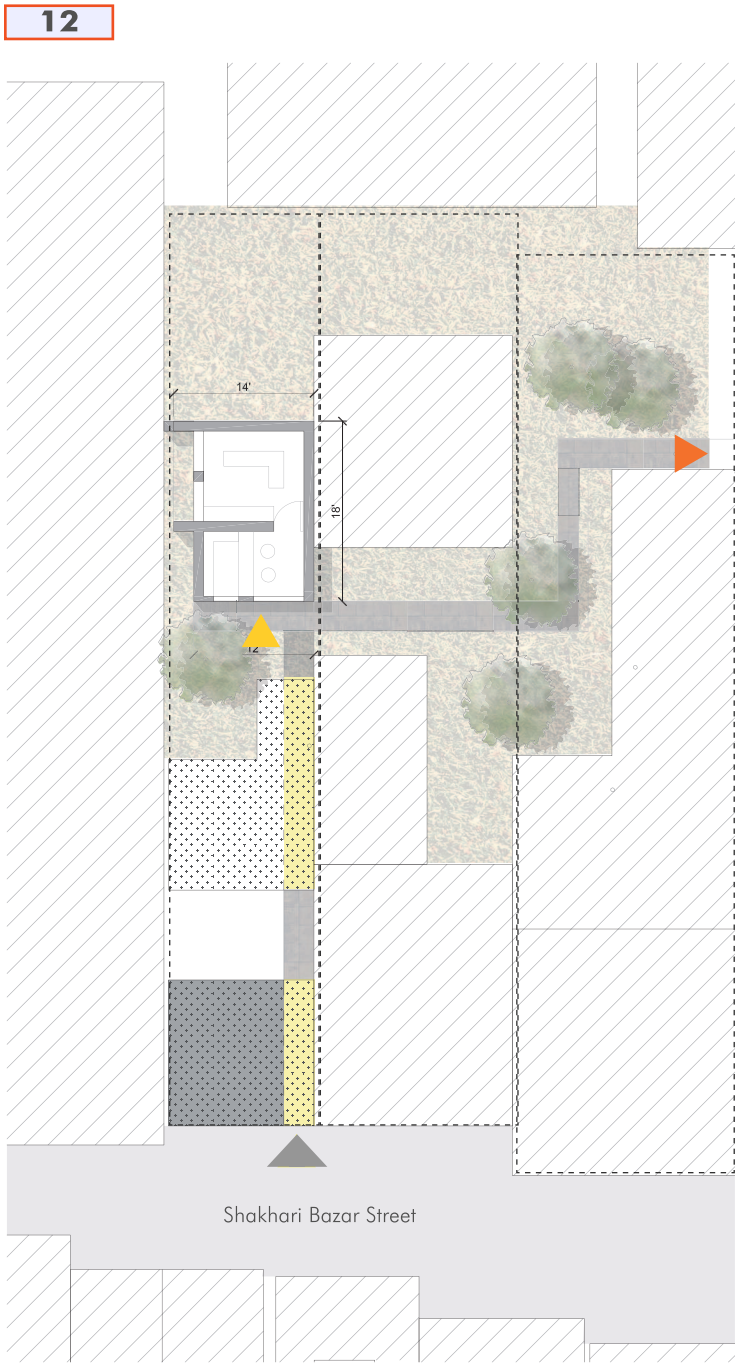


11



- Entrance from the main Street
- Entrance to Shakhari School
- Entrance to Goldsmith and Silversmith School
- Entrance to Music Instrument Making School
- Entrance to Sculptor School
- Existing property line
- Exhibition Space for Goldsmith/ Silversmith School
- Exhibition Space for Sculptor School
- Exhibition Space for Music Instrument Making School
- Exhibition space for Shakhari School
- Meeting Space
- Library
- Administrative Spaces
- Lecture/ Seminar Rooms
- Residential quarters/ hostel location
- Interior access towards Craft Schools
- Exterior path towards Craft Schools

10.22 (Opposite left) Plan 10. Scale 1/16″=1′-0″
10.23 (Opposite right) Plan 11. Scale 1/16″=1′-0″
10.24 Plan 12. Scale 1/16″=1′-0″



Perforated Bamboo and wood roof



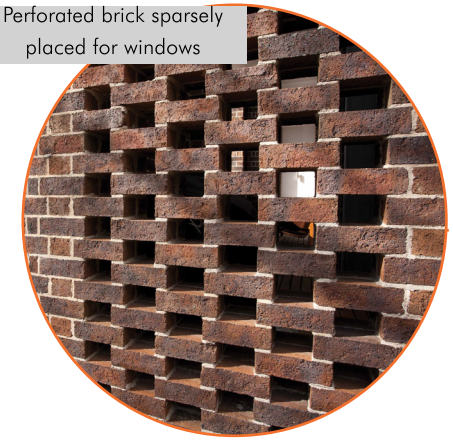
Seat

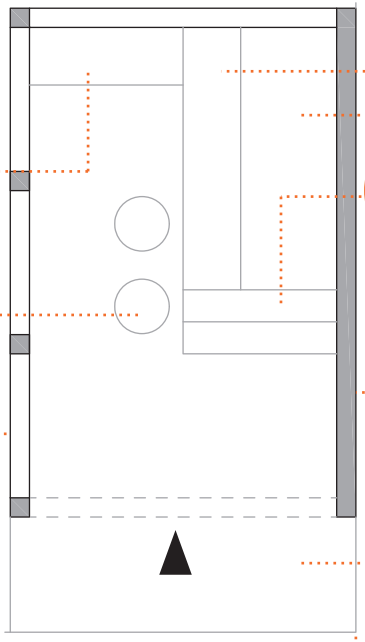


Stool



Perforated brick sparsely placed for windows





Shakhari Work and Display Table. The bottom can be used as storage



Shakhari Work Area



Motif stairs



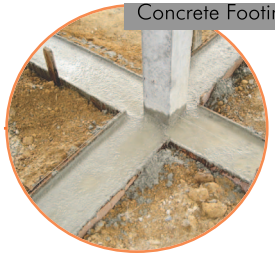
Perforated brick walls

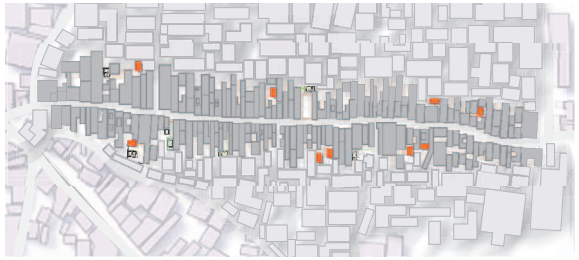


Concrete Slab

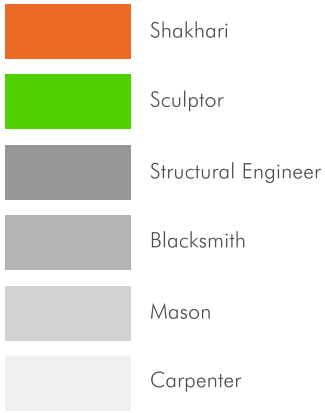


Concrete Footing





Key Plan of suggested locations of Shakhari School



10.25 (Opposite) Plan of proposed model workshop for shakharis and the materials and type of craftsmen required for its construction. Scale 1/5″=1′-0″

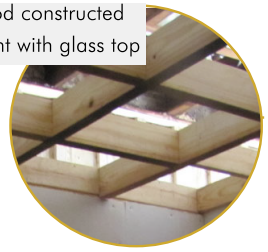
Shakhari School Construction

Given the spatial spread of the shakha stores on the street, the need for direct exposure to the clients and the need to have personal communication between the makers and the users, the Shakha Schools are proposed to be located in pockets with easy access to the street, so the consumers may visit the craftsmen at ease as they work in their workshop. This will encourage direct communication between the makers and the users, and therefore lead to evolution and adaptation of the products.

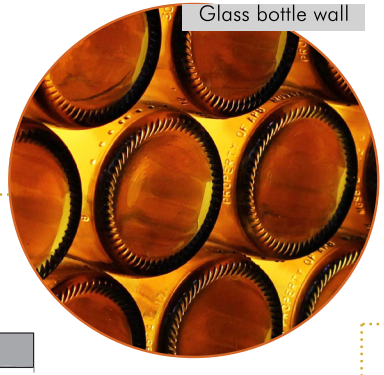
The schematic proposal of the new construction of model workshop for Shakharis, therefore, would provide three spaces for the apprentices. A fourth space may be provided as an experimental area, where an apprentice may collaborate with designers and the master to produce prototypes of various objects that may be crafted with the conch shell. The tools used for each of these products are ancient that do not take up much space.

The proposed structure would sit on concrete floor or brick-filled rising. Lighting is also an important element to help in the crafting process. Therefore, the school would provide various windows and a traditional translucent skylight system with perforated bricks, similar in construction to those of existing historical structures. This will act as a representation of the origin of the shakha craft centre made with economical products that can be constructed and manufactured with the help of local craftsmen. In this case, the craftsmen required would be masons, brick layers, carpenters, blacksmiths, and sculptors with design guidance from a structural engineer and shakharis. Extra aesthetic clay motifs can be crafted on the facades and interior by the sculptors in a similar style as the shakha motifs. This workshop could be an amalgamation of other craft communities and the shakharis. The schools could be located as shown in figure 10.14, where plans 1,4,6,7,8,10 and 11 are.

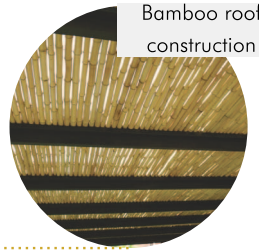
Wood constructed skylight with glass top



Glass bottle wall



Bamboo roof construction



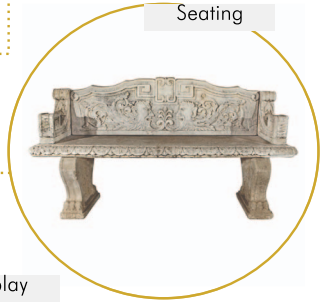
Work area

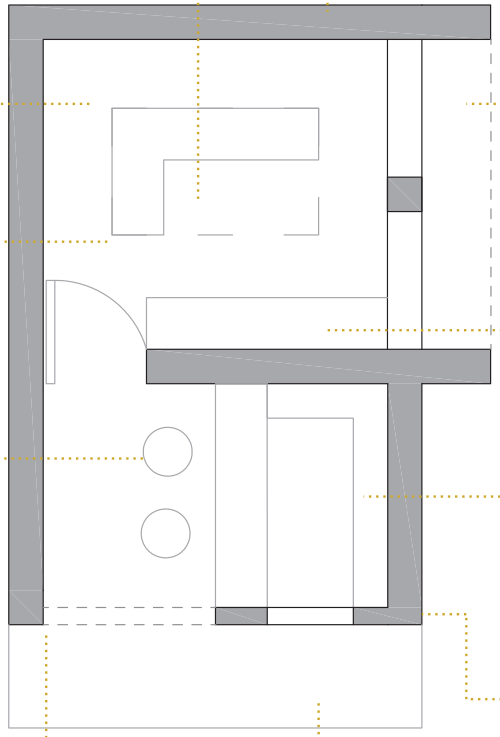


Work table



Seating





Stool



Front Display



Glass bottle and steel construction

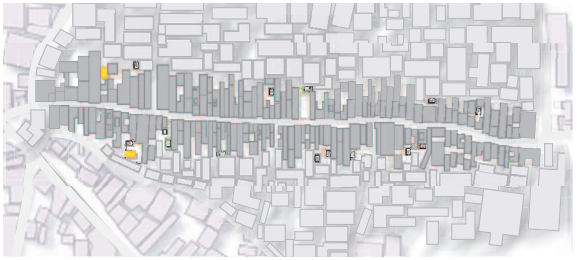


Concrete Footing



Concrete Slab





Key Plan of suggested locations of Goldsmith and Silversmith School

Goldsmith

Structural Engineer

Blacksmith

Glass worker

Carpenter

10.26 (Opposite) Plan of proposed model workshop for goldsmiths and silversmiths, and the materials and type of craftsmen required for its construction. Scale 1/5″=1′-0″

Goldsmith and Silversmith School Construction

As observed during the site survey of 2014, goldsmiths and silversmiths prefer to be located away from the main intersection and closer to the police station at the west end of the street. The craftsmen work with delicate objects as they melt and craft them under a magnifying glass under focused light.

The schematic proposal of the model workshop for Goldsmith and Silversmith, therefore, would provide three spaces for the work area, and may be used to collaborate with designers and the master to produce prototypes of various objects that may be crafted with gold and/or silver. The tools used for each of these products are ancient and do not take up much space, but require the use of fire. Therefore, the worktable recommended would be made of tempered wood. This room is proposed to be kept separate for security reasons

Lighting is also an important element to help in the crafting process. Therefore, the school would provide various windows and a skylight system, with recycled glass bottles used for the construction of the walls. This craft centre is proposed to use economical products that can be constructed and manufactured with the help of local craftsmen. In this case, the craftsmen required would be masons, glassworkers, carpenters, and blacksmiths with design guidance from a structural engineer, goldsmiths and silversmiths. This workshop could be an amalgamation of other craft communities and the gold and silversmiths and could be located near shakhari craft schools as shown in figure 10.14.

Goldsmith and Silversmith Craft Schools could also be located close to one of the reconstructed buildings closer to the police station. This will help promote security and a clean space for such delicate work.

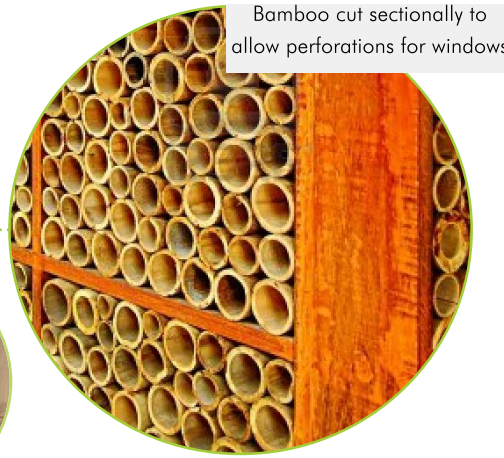
Storage wooden shelving



Wooden ceiling frame

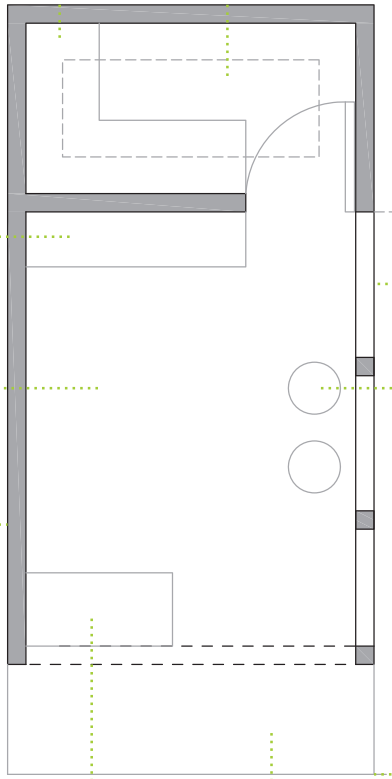


Bamboo cut sectionally to allow perforations for windows



Seat

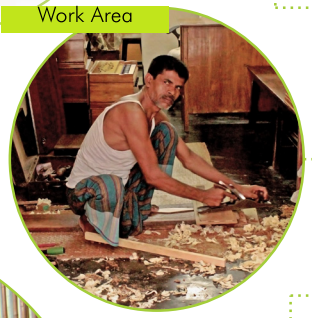




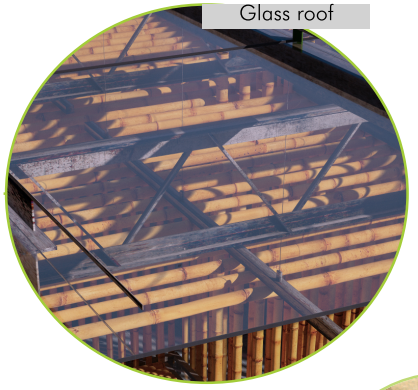
Stool



Work Area



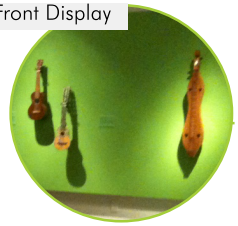
Glass roof



Bamboo wooden screened wall



Front Display

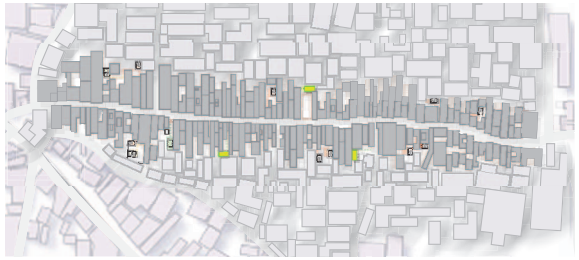


Concrete Footing



Concrete Slab





Key Plan of suggested locations of Music Instrument Maker School

Musical Instrument Maker

Structural Engineer

Glass worker

Carpenter

10.27 (Opposite) Plan of proposed model workshop for music instrument makers, and the materials and type of craftsmen required for its construction. Scale 1/5"=1'-

Musical Instrument Maker School Construction

There are various types of musical instruments crafted in Shakhari Bazar, three of which are the harmonium, the table and the sitar. Each of these requires the use of wood and therefore collaboration with carpenters. These stores are also involved with the maintenance of the instruments once sold. Therefore, space is required to store and display various types of instrument. Since wood and metal are two of the main materials used for crafting the instruments, they need to stored and displayed in a well-ventilated area, and avoid excess moisture. It is also very important for the instrument maker who specializes in the addition of ivory keys and the fine-tuning of the instruments to be in an acoustically sound and well-lit area.

The school could be constructed out of wood and propose inclusions of skylights and a perforated construction of a bamboo wall for sunlight. The carpenters associated with the instrument makers would be perfect for helping to build this structure, along with the help of glasscutters and a structural engineer.

Like the other Craft School constructions, this new construction could use a collaboration of various intangible heritage along with traditional and modern techniques to build an archetypal for Music Instrument Maker Schools that could be located in various 'pockets' of the street.

The schools could be located as shown in figure 10.14, where plans 3,5 and 9 are.

2

Outdoor mixing area with access to water



Bamboo Roof construction

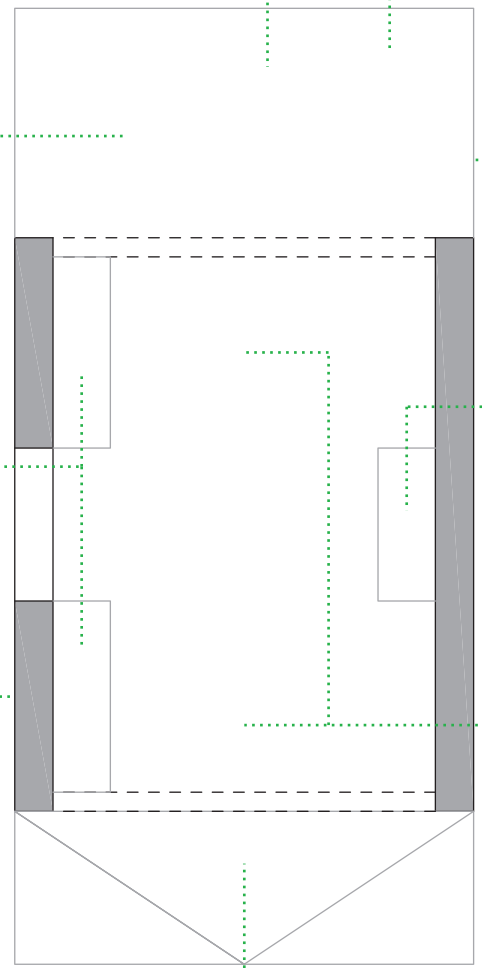


Concrete Slab



Concrete Footing

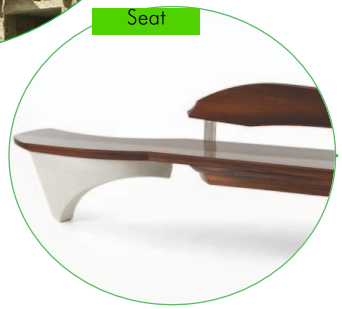




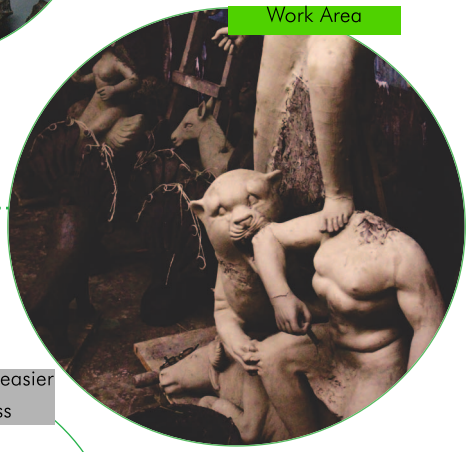
Display and storage shelving



Seat



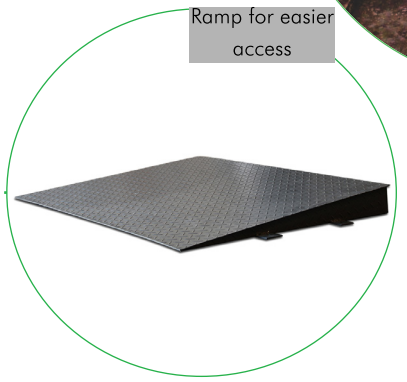
Work Area

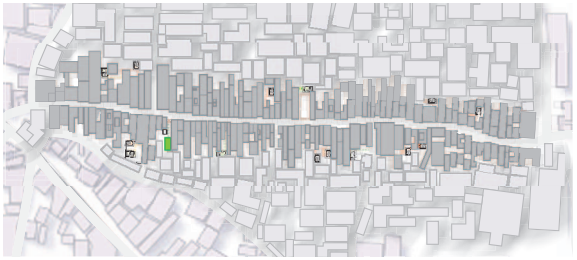


Mud and clay wall



Ramp for easier access





Key Plan of suggested location of Sculptor School

Sculptor

Structural Engineer

Blacksmith

Carpenter

10.28 (Opposite) Plan of proposed model workshop for sculptor, and the materials and type of craftsmen required for its construction. Scale 1/5″=1′-0″

Sculptor School Construction

Sculpting requires a unique environment. It needs to be executed in a large area while receiving plenty of natural daylight. It also requires a large area for display, but the sculptures need to be kept at the right level of moisture to avoid cracking while drying before applying the finishing.

This could be an area similar in design to a garage, with multiple large openings that can be closed when needed. The construction could be of a similar style and methods as the METI School, which is made of mud, bamboo and tin, and using both traditional and new methods of construction. Just like crafting a sculpture, the mud can be added with straw, giving it reinforcement. The thickness of the walls needs to be at least 12 inches wide, quite similar to the thickness of the surrounding historical structures, and similar to the method used in most of the traditional mud houses in the Bengali villages. This would allow for passive cooling of the space, keeping the moisture at a steady level. The foundations would be constructed out of brick to minimize the effects of moisture on the earthen walls, unlike the typical mud houses built in Bangladesh. The doors, windows and shades would be designed out of bamboo, which is also a cheap and easily available construction material. Bamboo would also be used as beams and columns in this structure.

This will allow for the intangible heritage of sculptors to be practised in other forms besides sculpting deities. Allowing the craftsmen to experiment with the materials for other uses could result in innovative methods of construction and sustain intangible heritage through practise.

The schools could be located as shown in figure 10.14, where plan 2 is.

IMPLEMENTATION

General Guidelines:

In order to implement the above and sustain 'intangible' heritage while promoting 'tangible' heritage, the following is proposed:

1. A board of 'gurus', or a guild of Masters Craftsmen will be formed representing each of the craft. This will encourage knowledge distribution, collaboration and innovation through dialogue.

2. Crafts Days to be celebrated annually, with restaurant owners and performers, where a building requiring renovation will be chosen and paired with a specialized architect to create a plan for reconstructing the structure with the help of the artisans. This building might belong to an individual or a family, and therefore the owner's vision of the design for the reconstruction will be taken into consideration. The building may be built by the apprentices of the schools as part of their credit, under the supervision of the specialized architect and the masters of the crafts community. It is important that the designers do not alienate or conflict with the artisans' authentic social, cultural, and traditional roots.

3. The value of each product sold could be set by the craftsmen to a fixed price that is agreed upon by the masters of the different communities. The specialized and customized products may be priced at a premium based on the hours spent and the level of the apprentice working on the project. This will ensure the craftsmen's economic and financial stability and confidence to be able to save for the cost of reconstructing their buildings.

4. To ensure the viability/sustainability of ICH, the government could assist in ensuring that no organization (including NGOs) or persons appropriates any ICH without the consent of the communities, groups or individuals concerned. It is extremely important to control commercial misappropriation, to find a proper balance between the parties involved in commerce and trade, and the practitioners of any element, and to ensure that the commercial use of any element does not distort its meaning or purpose for any community, group or individual concerned[22].

5. It is quite essential to create or provide cultural spaces where the communities, groups or individuals concerned can display their works for sale and can organize exhibitions, lectures, seminars, and demonstrations of their performances and skills. Therefore, this method proposes that the government have a program to protect the cultural spaces where communities currently practise their 'intangible' heritage, and to maintain continued access to such spaces. This idea was already proposed by the ICH committee of Bangladesh in 2013, but has not yet been implemented in 2015[23].

Incentive

The following could act as incentive to sustain and promote the Craft Schools:

1. It could act as a nuclear space so other craftsmen and beneficiaries may connect with in order to form a network of artisans from across the country, or even globally. It is, therefore, extremely important to create and build upon an organised directory of all craftsmen and artisans interested. This could be achieved through an intense and thorough research.

22. UNESCO. "National Workshop on Implementation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Bangladesh". 17-20 July 2013, Dhaka Bangladesh. Accessed March 25, 2014.
23. ibid.

2. It could act as a spatial facilitator that cumulates and attracts individuals and agencies with common interest in raising awareness and interest for traditional craftsmanship. Unlike individual craftsman, this organised guild could attract more donations from large agencies and corporations.

3. The direct accessibility of the consumers with the masters and apprentices could promote dialogue for innovative design and humanise the consumer experience. This would promote better understanding and respect for the skills and traditions between the makers and the users.

4. The guild of masters could have equal claim in implementing the methods needed to innovate, sustain and market the traditional skills. This collective initiative would result in healthy dialogue and understanding among the craftsmen, and therefore, have an understanding of the fair value of the crafts. This could also result in creative methods that amalgamate two or more types of crafts and skills.

5. The apprentices would be able to receive lodging, fixed amount of stipend for partaking in this program and any profit made from selling of his/ her crafted product. In return, the masters could benefit from making a percentage of profit from each object sold from the school. The percentage could change according to the level of the student who made a particular product. For example, an apprentice with 6 months or less experience would retain only 30% of the profit from his/ her product sold, while the master would enjoy 70% of the profit. Similarly, an apprentice with 6 months to 1 year of experience would retain 50% of the profit from his/ her product, and apprentice with 1 year to 3 years of experience would enjoy 80% profit of his/ her product sold, while the master would retain the rest. This process would also ensure portfolio building for each apprentice.

Curriculum

The following act as general guidelines for the curriculum of the Crafts Schools. The Master Craftsmen would be able to modify and add on to them collectively as a guild.

1. 3 types of programs may be offered: Beginner, Amateur and Professional. The Beginner course could last 5 months, while the Amateur one is 1 year, and the Professional one is 5 years. These numbers only act as a guideline and maybe be modified by the master craftsmen that form the guild.

2. The classes could be run for 5 days, to allow for personal time for both masters and apprentices.

3. The classes could be segmented every 5 months. Therefore, every course would last 5 months.

4. It is important to provide 1 theory class each week that focus on the origin of the particular craft. This class would be open to all. This would involve the master delivering an informal lecture, and may be open to discussions after.

5. 4 classes of the week would be hands-on teaching by the masters, and may be organised according to the level of skill of each apprentice.

6. Two shifts of classes may be run per day to promote flexibility of schedules.

7. Keeping a small number of apprentices to master ratio would encourage in-depth

learning and teaching.

8. Apprentices with more than 3 years of experience may qualify to be Master's assistant, for which he/ she could receive higher stipend. As a Master's assistant, the apprentice will be give the responsibility of maintaining one of the Craft Schools.

9. Every 6 months, a competition may be held among the apprentices that will look for the most innovate way of applying their skills with one or more materials. This event could take place after the completion of each course, and could run for two weeks. These competitions will be judged by the guild of Master craftsmen, and only 1 winner will be awarded for each competition. This could result in a community event, and may be located on the street, similarly to some of the other community events that take place in Shakhari Bazar. Each product produced could be displayed in the exhibition space in one of the reconstructed heritage structures.

Number of students

Shakhari School: As understood during site visit, shakharis make up most of the workforce employed in Shakhari Bazar. Therefore, this strategy proposes more number of shakhari schools, then the other types of schools. There is potential space for 9 shakhari schools in the 'pockets' of Shakhari Bazar. Each school could teach 3 students and would require 1 master for each. Therefore, the 9 schools can collectively accommodate 27 shakhari apprentices and 9 masters at a time. With two shifts of classes, these schools could accommodate a total of 54 apprentices and 18 masters.

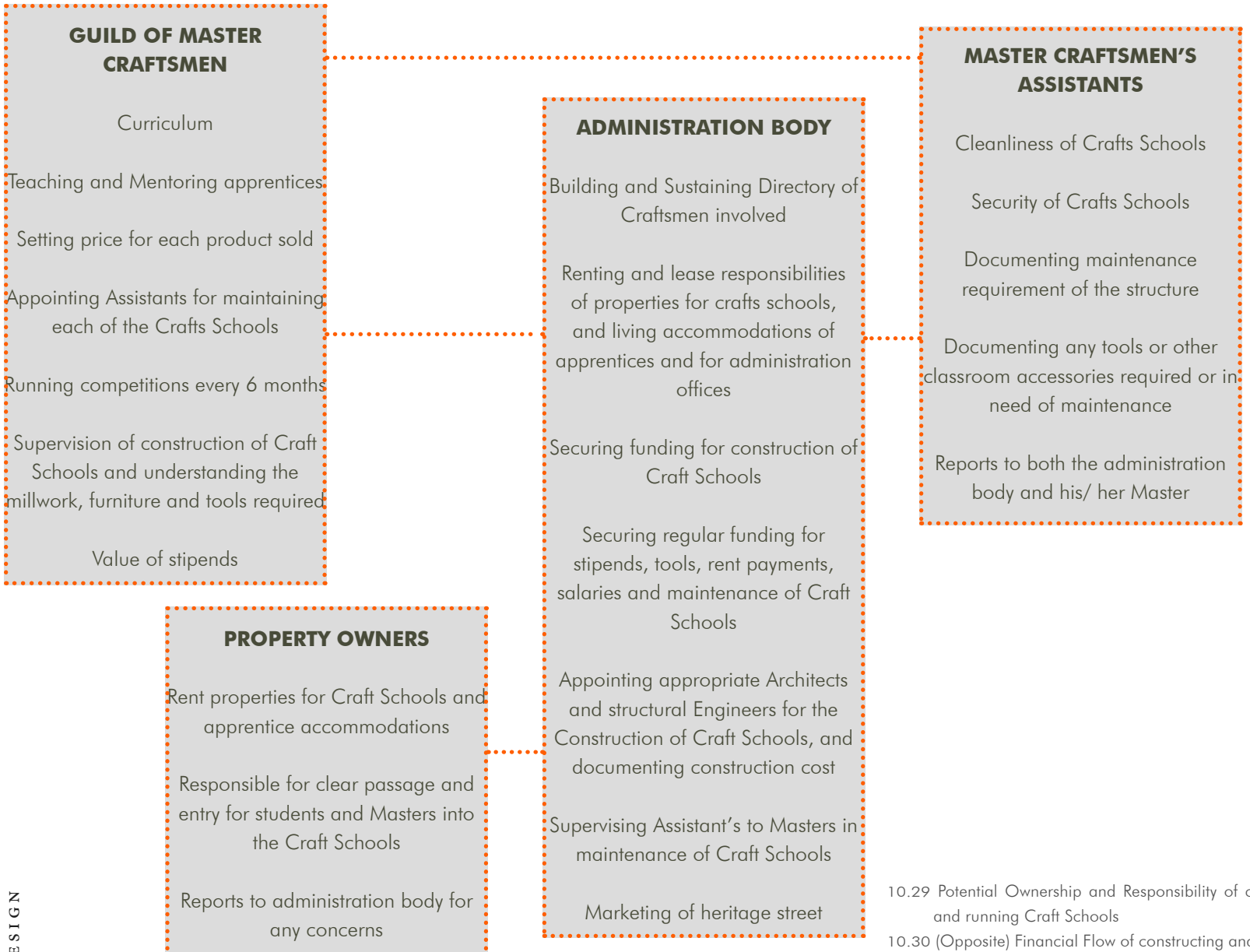
Goldsmith and Silversmith School: Goldsmiths and silversmiths are located in close

proximity to two of the Shakhari Schools, since they also produce jewellery that is a combination of the two materials. There is potential space for 2 of these schools in the 'pockets' of Shakhari Bazar. Each school could teach 3 students and would require 1 master for each. Therefore, the 2 schools can collectively accommodate 6 apprentices and 2 masters at a time. With two shifts of classes, these schools could accommodate a total of 12 apprentices and 4 masters.

Music Instrument Maker School: Due to the spatial dimension required to accommodate a Music Instrument Maker School and need for space to transport wood, 3 spaces in Shakhari Bazar seem to work efficiently for their locations. Each school could teach 3 students and would require 1 master for each. Therefore, the 3 schools can collectively accommodate 9 apprentices and 3 masters at a time. With two shifts of classes, these schools could accommodate a total of 18 apprentices and 6 masters.

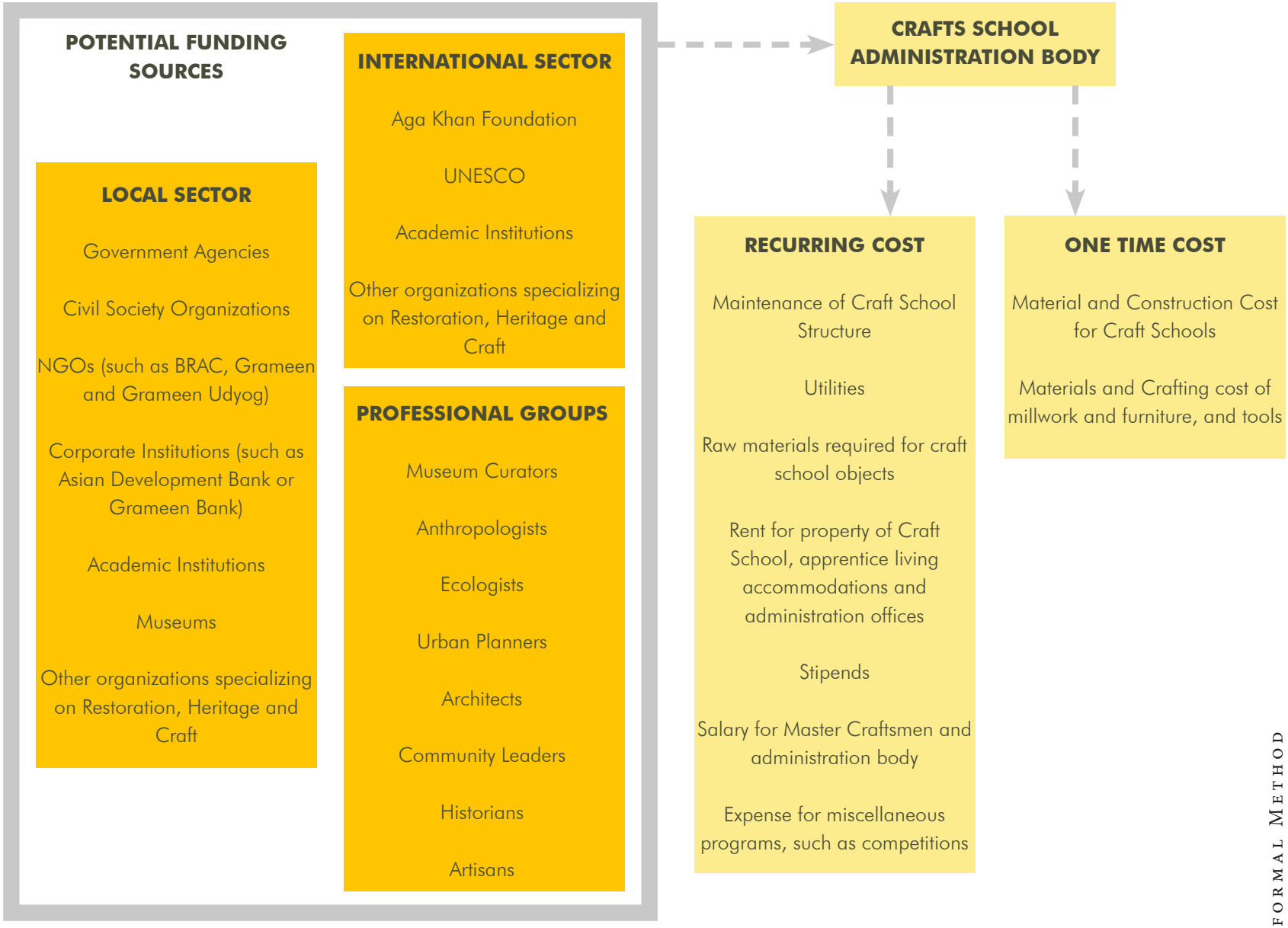
Sculpture: Sculpture Schools would require a large space for the transportation of statues and open space for the preparation of the clay. Therefore, 1 space had potential to serve as a location for a Sculpture School in Shakhari Bazar. This school could teach 4-6 students and would require 1 master. With two shifts of classes, these schools could accommodate a total of 8-12 apprentices and 2 masters.

Meetings: Monthly meetings and gatherings organized by the guild of Master Craftsmen could take place in one of the reconstructed structures on Shakhari Bazar.



10.29 Potential Ownership and Responsibility of constructing and running Craft Schools

10.30 (Opposite) Financial Flow of constructing and sustaining craft schools


POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
LOCAL SECTOR
Government Agencies
Civil Society Organizations
NGOs (such as BRAC, Grameen and Grameen Udyog)
Corporate Institutions (such as Asian Development Bank or Grameen Bank)
Academic Institutions
Museums
Other organizations specializing on Restoration, Heritage and Craft
INTERNATIONAL SECTOR
Aga Khan Foundation
UNESCO
Academic Institutions
Other organizations specializing on Restoration, Heritage and Craft
PROFESSIONAL GROUPS
Museum Curators
Anthropologists
Ecologists
Urban Planners
Architects
Community Leaders
Historians
Artisans
CRAFTS SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION BODY
RECURRING COST
Maintenance of Craft School Structure
Utilities
Raw materials required for craft school objects
Rent for property of Craft School, apprentice living accommodations and administration offices
Stipends
Salary for Master Craftsmen and administration body
Expense for miscellaneous programs, such as competitions
ONE TIME COST
Material and Construction Cost for Craft Schools
Materials and Crafting cost of millwork and furniture, and tools



11.1 (Opposite) Children play on the rooftop courtyard that connects neighbouring houses together. This is one of the most well kept historic building in Shakhari Bazar

3.3.0 Formal Method



Under-utilised backyard, leaving it under-maintained growing weeds

Additional floors constructed with existing footings creating a dangerous living condition

Original facade of a historical structure hidden behind the new facade

Typical addition to facade to extend the building closer to the street

Since the liberation war of 1971, Bangladesh has been scrambling to conserve and manage its tangible cultural heritage[1]. As seen in the chapter 'Urban Uprising', Shakhari Bazar is a perfect example of one such street with a diverse evolution of architectural heritage structures. The formal method of this thesis outlines the guidelines for reconstructing two examples of heritage structures on this street, through government intervention and funding as well as with the help of locals and existing craftsmen in Old Dhaka. This process may initiate positive relationships among the various groups involved in the complex task of reconstructing Shakhari Bazar through collaboration.

As I observed the street of Shakhari Bazar in July 2014, among the 142 buildings, about 90 of them needed to be repaired and renovated to ensure safety of the inhabitants. Throughout the years, most of the buildings of Shakhari Bazar have been modified and renovated by the inhabitants. Some of the craftsmen and the artisans of this street are still practising their traditional skills within the buildings that range from 10 to 300 years old. It is normal for 10 families to live in 10 rooms, resulting in an unusually high number of occupants. Some of these buildings lack proper sanitation or a drainage system. The inhabitants enter through narrow alleyways, besides trash that had piled up near small drains filled with human wastes, plastic bags and mosses. One would then reach a dark staircase of 12 to14 inches rise and 25-36 inches wide, where the interior has been plastered, and the whitewash on the walls comes off when touched. In June 2014, I noticed that a caretaker of one of the temples of Shakhari Bazar lived in a dark, cramped space behind another Hindu temple in the city with her daughter, not unlike many of the squatters and apprentices of the street.

Observations during the site survey also revealed that the original allocation of linear plots was established to encourage each plot to have their own store-frontage, where shakharis may live and work in the same lot. One of the speculated reasons for constructing closely

11.2 (Opposite) Typical uneducated addition and manipulation of a historical building on Shakhari Bazar. The locals first camouflage the face by adding a new facade to repel attention from authorities who have declared Shakhari Bazar a heritage site. Behind these facades, the internal structures are mostly still the same as originally built. Sometimes extra floors are added on top without proper foundation, making it more dangerous to occupy

1. Taimur Islam and Homaira Zaman, "Conservation of Historic Mohalla", last modified April 21, 2006. Accessed April 24, 2014. http://archive.thedailystar.net/magazine/2006/04/03/cover.htm
2. Md. Bahauddin, "Conservation and Management of Historic Buildings Advanced International Training Programme: Conservation of Shakhari Bazar". Lund University, March 11 2010
3. Due to restricted entry I was not able to access other such examples in Shakhari Bazar, but this information was confirmed by the locals who lives in Shakhari Bazar.



11.3 Original facade of a heritage structure in Shakhari Bazar seen from roof-top of the opposite building

packed houses is to discourage theft or burglary, with easy access to neighbours on either side, if necessary[2]. As observed in 2014, some typical spatial features of each house are listed below:

1. The houses are divided up into three main programs: the storefront on the ground floor facing the street, residential units upstairs through narrow corridors and stairs, and backyard shared by the neighbours.
2. The inner stairs lead to the interior of the building into various common rooms, and to the roof of the building. In some cases, the stairs also connect to adjacent buildings in various floors as show in the sub-chapter 'Shakhari Bazar'[3].
3. The upper two storeys containing residential quarters contain one shared common room for dining and cooking, so all the residents cook and dine together.
4. Some bedrooms can be accessed through other bedrooms.
5. It is common to have an open courtyard in the middle which is supposed to provide natural light and ventilation
6. In general clay or limestone brick sizes of 1.5 x 4 x 6 inch indicate Mughal period of construction, 2 x 4 x 8 inch sizes indicate construction during East India Company reign and 3 x 5 x 10 inch sizes indicate the contemporary period of construction[3].

Due to corruption, and many other social, economic, political, and climatic issues, restoring heritage has not been an urgent issue for the government[4]. This method proposes that the government fund the projects in instalments to reduce the need for a large amount of funding at once. This type of conservation has been implemented in areas such as El-Darb El-Ahmar in Cairo, that had faced similar issues, by the Aga Khan Foundation. This program started at 2004, to conserve 200 structures by 2009.

3. Asian Development Bank. "Bangladesh: City Region Development Project". ADB Technical Assistance Consultant's Report. September 2010. Accessed April 24, 2014.
4. Taimur Islam and Homaira Zaman, "Conservation of Historic Mohalla"
5. "EL Cairo in Egypt rehabilitates the 'el darb el ahmar' neighbourhood in favour of 285 families". July 30, 2014. Accessed September 10, 2014. http://www.uclg-cisdp.org/en/news/latest-news/el-cairo-egypt-rehabilitates-%E2%80%98el-darb-el-ahmar%E2%80%99-neighbourhood-favour-285-families.
6. ibid



El-Darb El-Ahmar

Case Study

El-Darb El-Ahmar is a historical site located in the district of Cairo, and was facing issues similar to those of Shakhari Bazar, as it had also been an urban slum for many years. A project initiated by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture made use of the existing local craftsmen and had a holistic view on bringing it to the attention of others. Among various historical landmarks, the Foundation first focused on prominent structures such as the 16th century 'Khayrbek Mosque with the adjacent sabil kuttab and an attached 18th century house, the 14th century Alin Aq Palace, the Umm al-Sultan Shaaban Mosque and madrasa and Aslam Square'.[5] These areas showed signs of decay and a lack of management of the public open spaces. There was a historical wall that bordered El-Darb El-Ahmar, which was also under a process of decay. This area faced similar issues of 100,000 poverty-stricken owners and numerous under-appreciated craftsmen[6].

With the help of authorities, a new strategy was devised to help bring 'life' back to this heritage site. El-Darb-El-Ahmar suffered from a lack of maintenance of the infrastructure, and most of the structures even lacked basic necessities such as private lavatories, water sources, and ventilated rooms. The strategy emphasized keeping the historical urban fabric in mind and establishing structurally sound structures, while maintaining the original architectural features. "The El-Darb El-Ahmar Housing Rehabilitation Programme (ADAA HRP) was started in 2004 with a target of 200 houses by the deadline of the end of 2009[7]." From early on, it was evident that it was crucial to involve the local communities, with a strong support from donors and contributors, to ensure sustainability of this project. HRP first tackled these initial issues[8]:

1. Revise the institutional mechanisms to bridge the gap between legislative policies and residents' needs;

11.4 (Opposite) Part of the historical town of El-Darb El-Ahmar that had just completed renovation

7. "EL Cairo in Egypt rehabilitates the 'el darb el ahmar' neighbourhood in favour of 285 families"
8. ibid

2. Facilitate access to housing grants and affordable loans for the residents;

3. Improve security of tenure through resolution of legal conflicts between owners, tenants, and institutional organizations; and

4. Promote higher conservation standards through advice, training, and monitoring of construction activities

It was understood that the inhabitants needed to be heavily involved in the decisions and the work, since they would be the beneficiaries of the renovation project. Numerous meetings were held with the inhabitants to establish the priorities of this project through numerous negotiations with the residents[9]. Accordingly, Cairo's District Plan was revised and retrofitted according to the negotiations with the inhabitants. This was especially made difficult due to the "weak sense of ownership and community participation, primarily due to insecurity of tenure and planning constrains[10]" very much like the ownership conditions of the squatters in Shakhari Bazar who have gained rights to parts of the historical structures based on squatter's rights.[11]

An extensive research on the morphology of the historic urban form was recorded, analyzed and finally interpreted to gain insight into the contemporary living needs of the inhabitants, including essential repairs and renovations[12]. This project was pursued based on the direct involvement of the craftsmen and locals of El-Darb El-Ahmar. The residents, community groups and local institutions were directly involved in the rehabilitation of the existing residential and commercial properties[13]. The project was phased: starting with the essential structures and making them examples for other structures that could benefit similarly. With active management of the inhabitants' capacities or direct intervention and strong



11.5 Local workers learn from professionals about the craft of construction during renovations



11.6 Local craftsmen help rebuild the historical area of El-Darb El-Ahmar

9. Aga Khan Foundation. "The Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme". June 13, 2007. Accessed October 3, 2013.
10. "EL Cairo in Egypt rehabilitates the 'el darb el ahmar' neighbourhood in favour of 285 families"
11. Taimur Islam and Homaira Zaman, "Conservation of Historic Mohalla"
12. ibid
13. Aga Khan Foundation. "The Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme"



11.7 Street hawker and a local on the side of the historical town of El-Darb El-Ahmar, carrying on with an informal activity for the day

government and institutional support, this became a model for further reconstruction and maintenance[14]. This acted as an engine to achieve highest community involvement, and therefore, ensuring sustainable reconstruction. This method of phasing the projects and having heavy involvement of the local inhabitants, proved to be far less costly and, in the process, avoided radically disrupting the lives of the social structure or even alienating them[15]. This process helped educate the various communities about the importance of heritage, and that heavy renovation, reconstruction and rehabilitation is achievable with the help of the craftsmen and locals of the communities. Similarly, Shakhari Bazar could benefit from such inclusive reconstruction to promote team-building, belonging and a sense of responsibility for the heritage structures.

14. Taimur Islam and Homaira Zaman, "Conservation of Historic Mohalla"
15. "EL Cairo in Egypt rehabilitates the 'el darb el ahmar' neighbourhood in favour of 285 families"

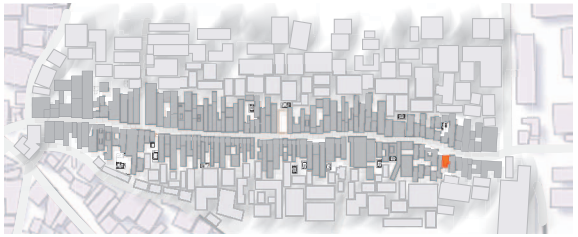

শ্রীশ্রী মহাকাল শিব বিগ্রহ
এবং
শ্রীশ্রী কালী বিগ্রহ

Proposal for Formal Method: Restoration

At present, there are about 10,000 people occupying the street in a 4.6-acre area, making it one of the densest streets in the world[16]. This street is in dire need of contemporary renovation and reconstruction, while trying to render authentic design and tradition. Therefore, this method proposes ideas for the reconstruction of some key tangible heritages on Shakhari Bazar that are in urgent need of renovation and reconstruction. Two main buildings were selected and measured during the site survey of 2014 to determine the programs and design that could act as examples for other such heritage buildings on Shakhari Bazar. These examples, Plot 7 and 61, could show the feasibility of restoring such buildings and could instill inclusive intentions of the government, erasing some of the friction between the locals and the government.

EXAMPLE 1 of 2: PLOT 7

This heritage building is located close to the main intersection on the east end of the street; seventh building from the east and on the south side of the street. This building is sandwiched between a music store with a community centre to the east and a newly built residential building to the west. The building housing the music store and the community centre is also a heritage building. The particular building under consideration does not have any legal owners and are mostly occupied by squatters.



11.8 Key Plan showing location of Plot 7

The building stands at street level, indicating that it was built before the water drainage system was implemented. The ornamentation and window dressings, and the arched openings over the doors and windows, indicate that the building was influenced by Mughal architecture. The rich motifs are almost fading now with the lack of maintenance. Columns with ornate capitals were used to decorate the facade. This 3-storey historical structure is one of the few authentic heritage buildings left on this street. It has received the least amount of

11.9 (Opposite) Depleting facade of Plot 7 on Shakhari Bazar

16. Taimur Islam and Homaira Zaman, "Conservation of Historic Mohalla"

manipulations from the locals and occupants, which also means it was the least maintained for centuries. Weeds have grown into full-grown plants on the front elevation (fig. 11.8). This plant is as a living organism that has destroyed many of the original limestone bricks and the structural integrity of the load bearing walls. These limestone bricks are about 1.5 inches, indicating that it was one of the first permanent structures to be constructed on this street. The narrow doorways and windows of about 24 inch wide suggest the lack of modern architectural guidelines of construction. The approx. 10 feet width building suggests that it followed the layout that was given to the shakharis during the 1600s. The building length still seem to remain at its original size of 25 feet, but the facade width has been extended to include a gate to block public entrance.

This particular building consists of mostly load bearing walls, which is consistent with the understanding that it was built during the 1600s. The walls of the old buildings are about 12 inches thick and are built with brick, limestone and mortar. The interior is covered with plaster, with signs that the paint had come off many decades ago. Like most of the structures built during the early and middle period[17], niches were recessed inside the walls to create storage spaces as well as to keep deities and other objects. In contrast to the decorative building front, the interiors of the rooms are relatively simple and unadorned. Only the niches or recesses in the thick walls contain elaborate carvings. It is easily seen that the original decorative wooden doors have been replaced with cheaper low quality wood. Unlike the delicate finishes of the facade, the back to the courtyard remains unfinished.

This building faces a number of issues including lack of ventilation and natural light, and a dilapidated structure due to lack of funding for renovation. During my site visit, I understood that this building used to belong to a single family, probably to a family of shakhari, till liberation war of Bangladesh broke out in 1971. In 2014, squatters lived in this



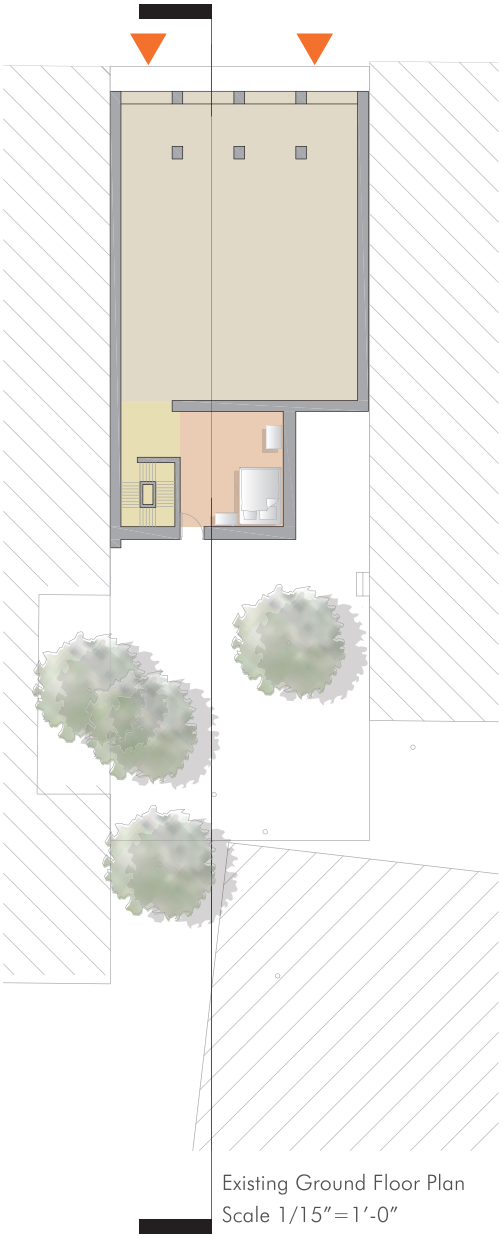
11.10 One of the circulation spaces of Plot 7 on the second floor

17. Md. Bahauddin, "Conservation and Management of Historic Buildings Advanced International Training Programme: Conservation of Shakhari Bazar". Lund University, March 11 2010

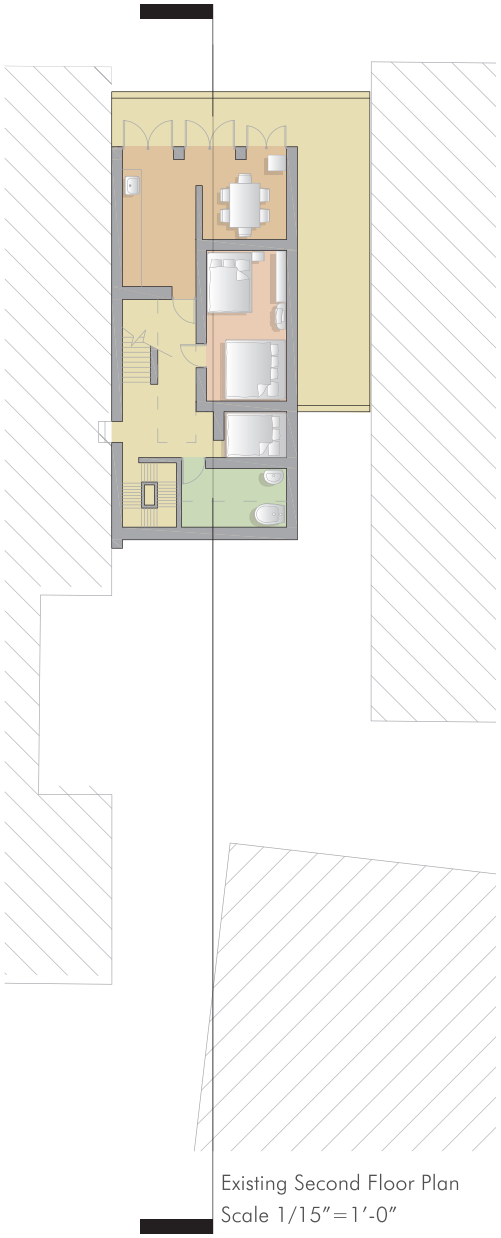
heritage structure, where each family occupied one or two rooms. The ground floor is used as a temple, which remains mostly closed to the public, with a small space at the back for the caretaker and her daughter to sleep in.

This method proposes that the interior be completely retrofitted while reconstructing the facade to reflect the architectural elements present during its original construction, and the motifs retouched with the help of local sculptors and artisans on Shakhari Bazar. This practise of reconstructing the architectural elements in the exterior walls of the tangible heritage could also help sustain the intangible heritage of Shakhari Bazar. The shutters would be replaced with Mughal-inspired doors that will represent the era of its original construction. This would require the skills of the local craftsmen and, therefore, help sustain that skill. For the retrofit, the building would still incorporate the following programs: a temple and a living quarter for the caretaker and her family on the ground floor, and living quarters or hostel for the apprentices on the second and third floors. The floor plan of the existing building will remain almost completely intact, as most of the walls are load-bearing. Most of the work done will be on the reconstruction of the facades and on the structural stability of the building. Slight modifications such as increasing the sizes of the door and window areas, and installing sliding doors to save space, will also be executed. The kitchen and bathroom may also be renovated.

This 'formal' method could also promote direct dialogue between the maker community and the user community, as proposed in the informal method strategy, as the reconstruction of the tangible heritage will require collaboration of design and methods with the occupants and the designated designers and craftsmen.



Existing Ground Floor Plan
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″



Existing Second Floor Plan
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″

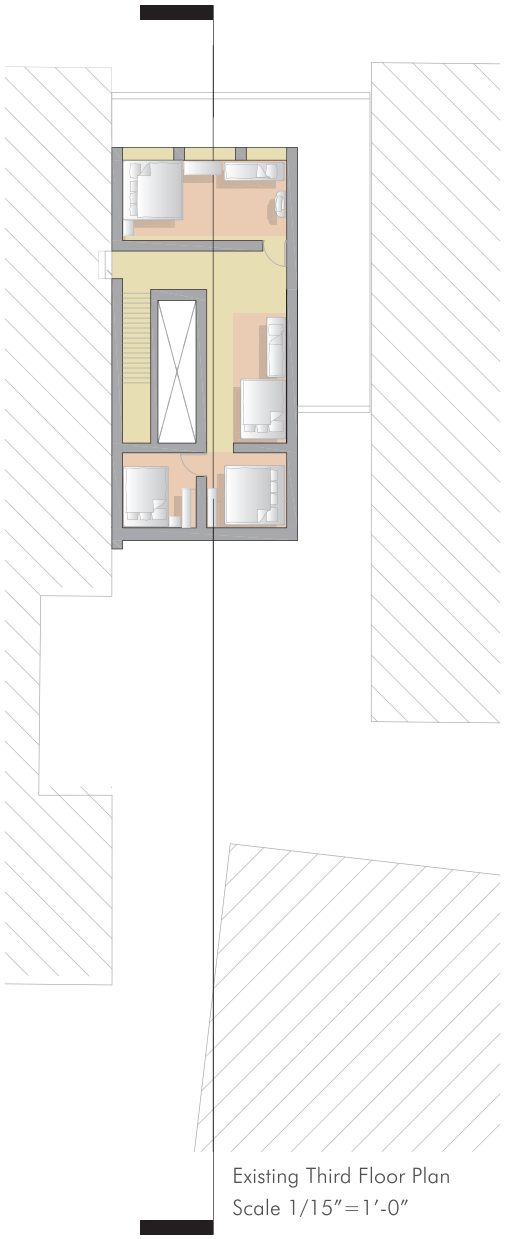
Circulation

Temple

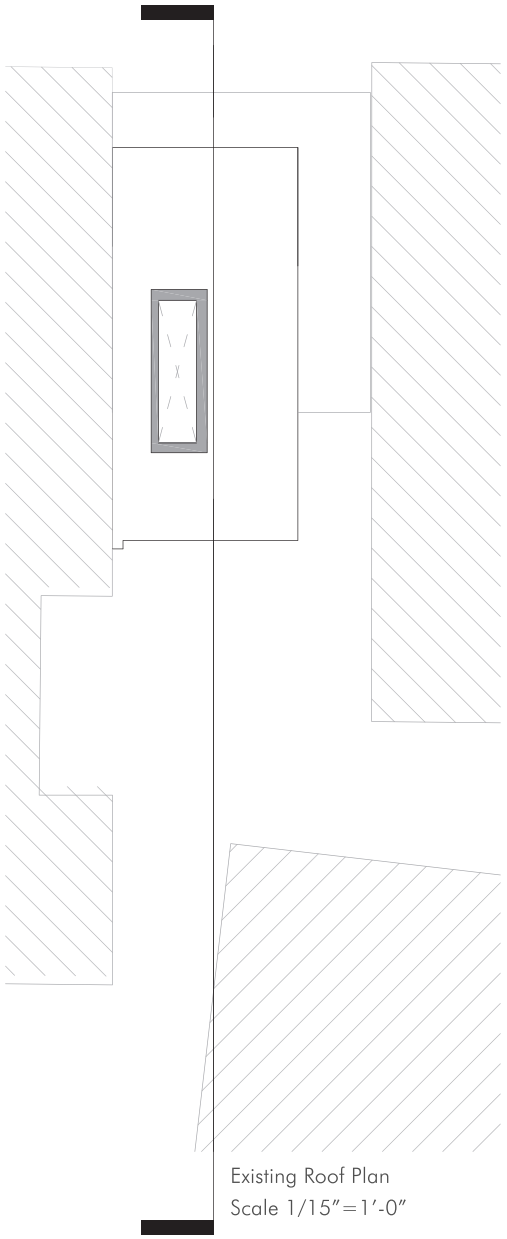
Communal Bathroom

Bedroom

Communal Kitchen



Existing Third Floor Plan
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″



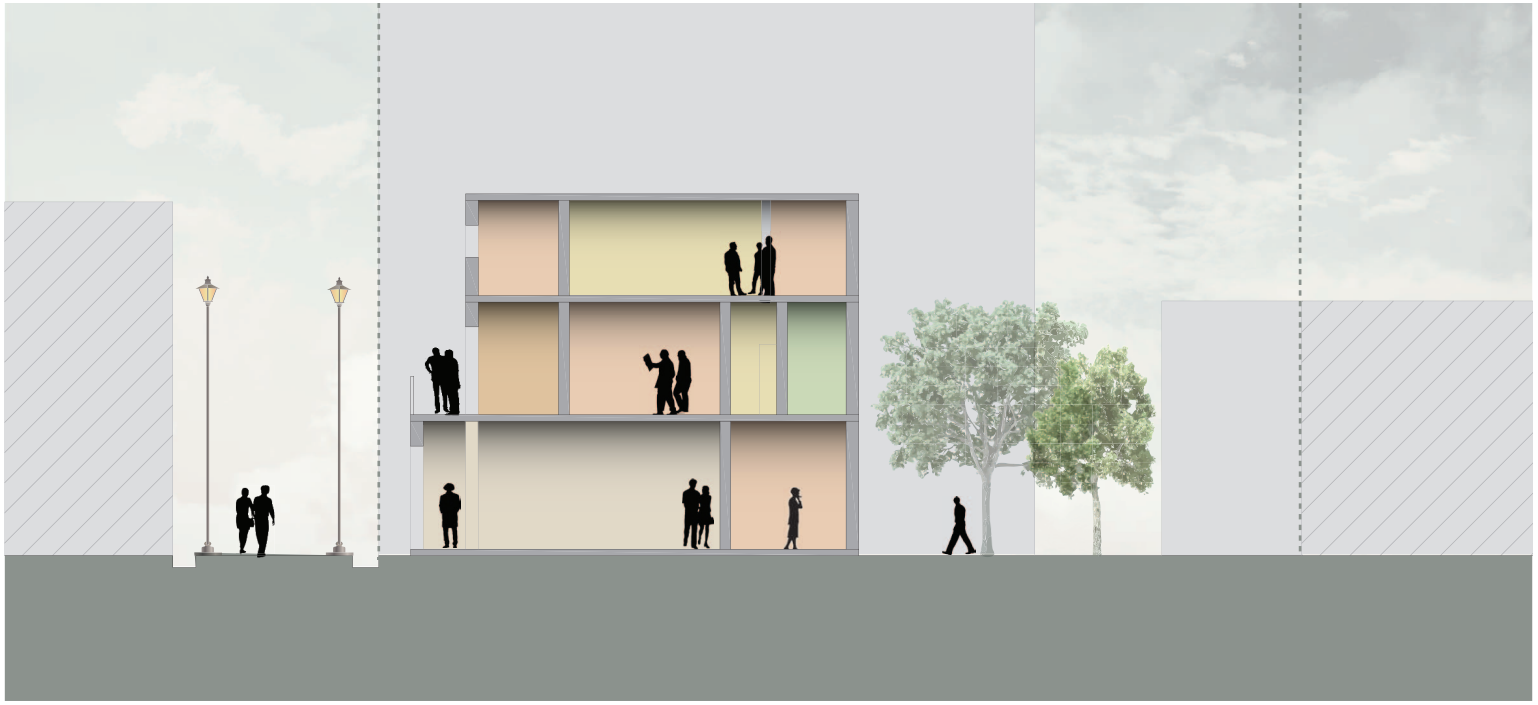
Existing Roof Plan
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″

11.11 (Opposite Left) Existing Ground Floor Plan of Plot 7. Scale 1/15″=1′-0″

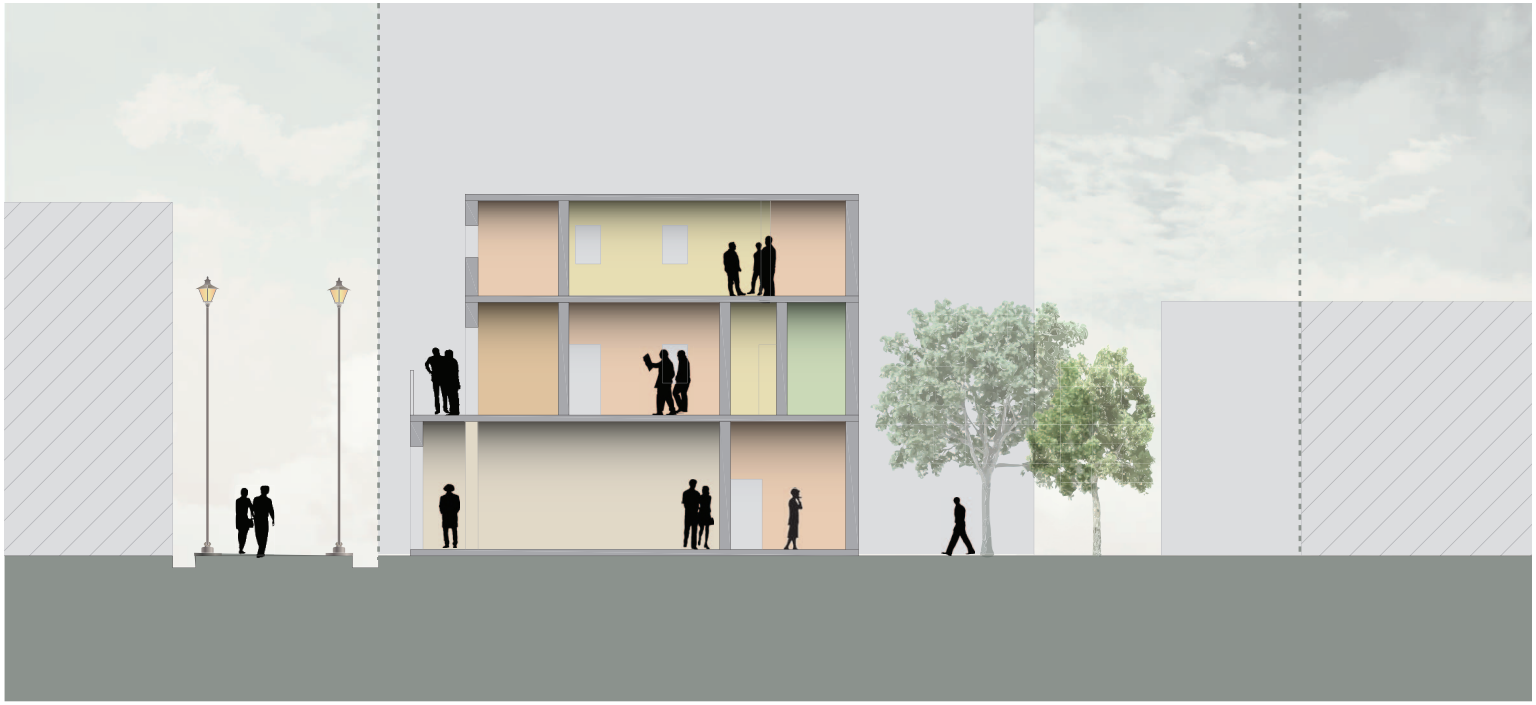
11.12 (Opposite Right) Existing Second Floor Plan of Plot 7. Scale 1/15″=1′-0″

11.13 (Left) Existing Third Floor Plan of Plot 7 Scale 1/15″=1′-0″

11.14 (Right) Existing Roof Plan of Plot 7 Scale 1/15″=1′-0″



Existing Section through Plot 7 looking East
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″



Proposed Section through Plot 7 looking East
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″

Circulation

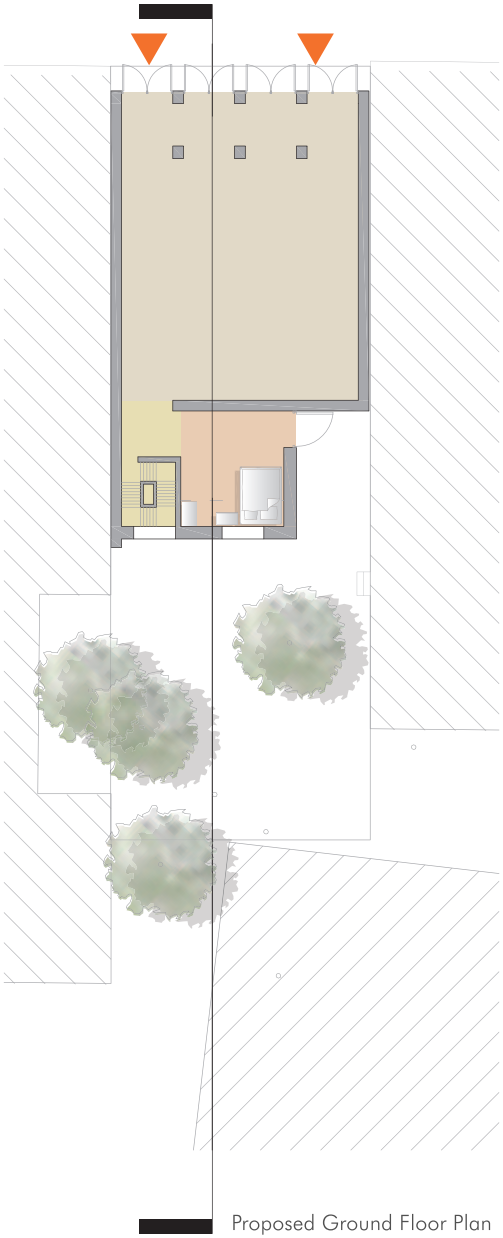
Temple

Communal Bathroom

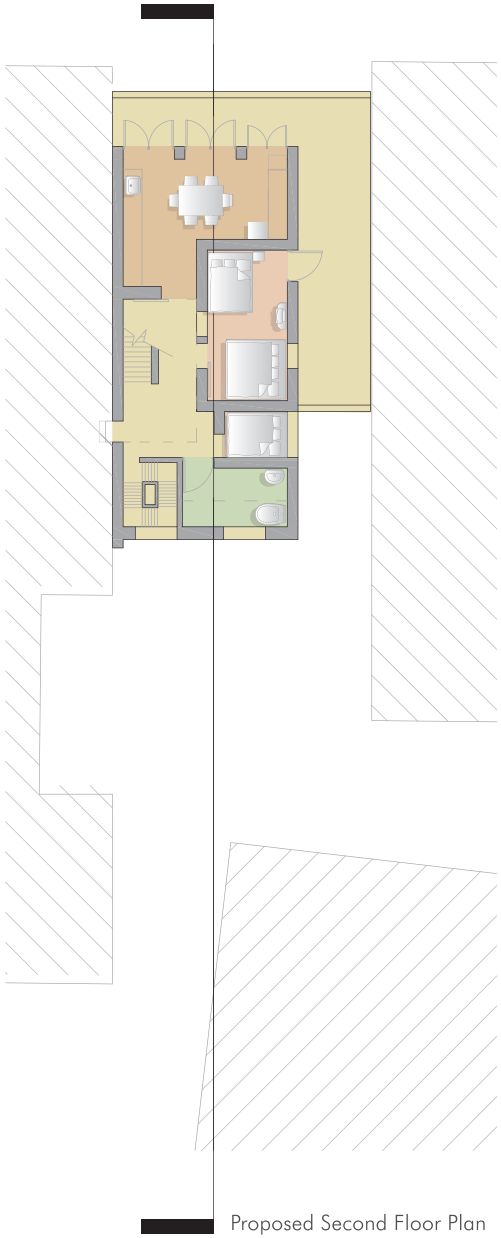
Bedroom for Apprentices

Communal Kitchen

11.15 (Opposite) Existing Section through Plot 7 looking East
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″
11.16 Proposed Section through Plot 7 looking East
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″



Proposed Ground Floor Plan
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″



Proposed Second Floor Plan
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″

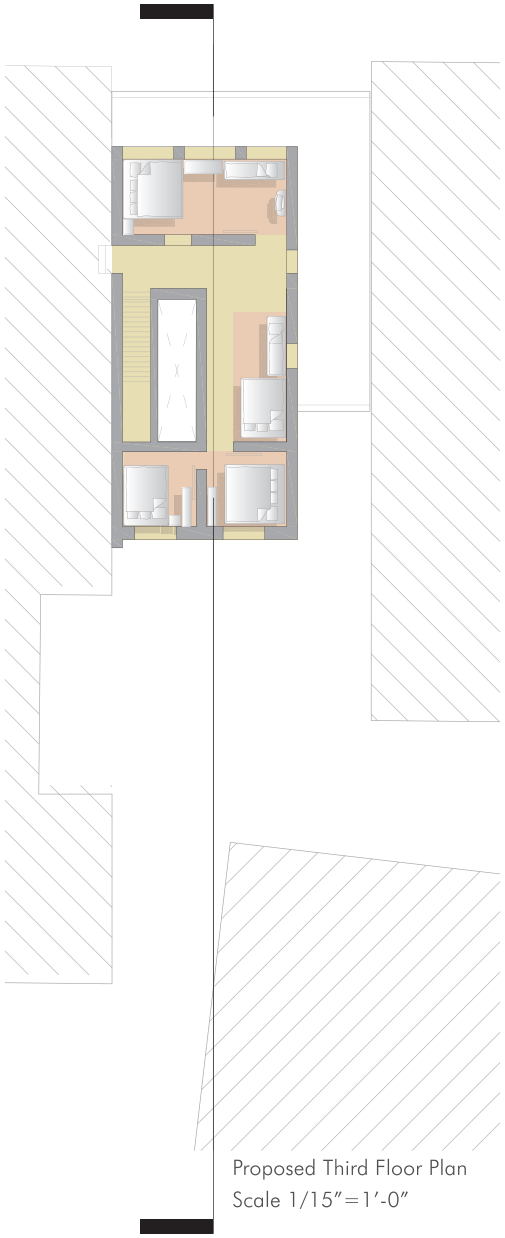
Circulation

Temple

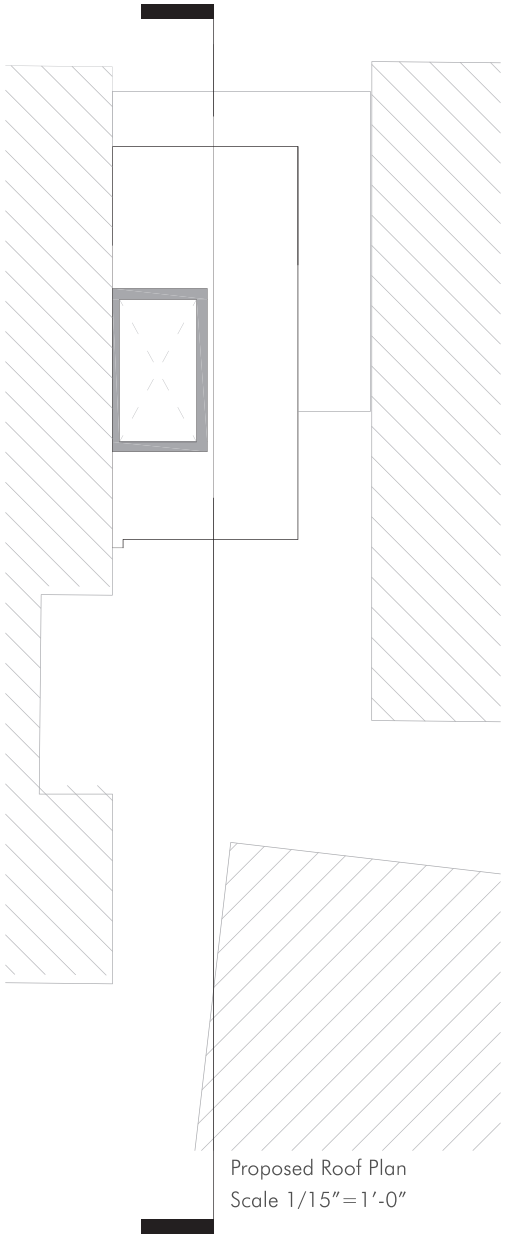
Communal Bathroom

Bedroom for Apprentices

Communal Kitchen



Proposed Third Floor Plan
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″



Proposed Roof Plan
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″

11.17 (Opposite Left) Proposed Ground Floor Plan of Plot 7
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″

11.18 (Opposite Right) Proposed Second Floor Plan of Plot 7. Scale 1/15″=1′-0″

11.19 (Left) Proposed Third Floor Plan of Plot 7
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″

11.20 (Right) Proposed Roof Plan of Plot 7
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″



At present, the columns have gone through severe wear and tear, resulting in absence of typical motifs. This method suggests use of typical Mughal Corinthian motif during restoration.

Existing elevation shows presence of typical 'pishtaq' or ogee arches used on top of entrances or windows.



Existing doors also follow similar pattern to ones constructed when Dhaka was known as East Pakistan. These wooden doors show signs of being added in the past few decades, and is in a state of decay.

A concrete 'railing' was recently built, and signage also act as railing for the balcony. The 'tin' roof, the free standing brick wall and the collapsible gate could be taken down during restoration, to increase spatial and visual congestion, and to increase surface area of existing balcony that wraps around on the side. Screens or 'jali' can be used as railing.



11.21 Existing Elevation of Plot 7 and typical architectural elements present. Not to Scale.

11.22 (Opposite) Proposed Elevation of Plot 7 of the street facade, using existing design and incorporating typical Mughal façade design. The iron gates in the ground floor and the railing both contain the same Islamic pattern.



These arches could be reconstructed and further Mughal decorative motifs can be added during reconstruction.

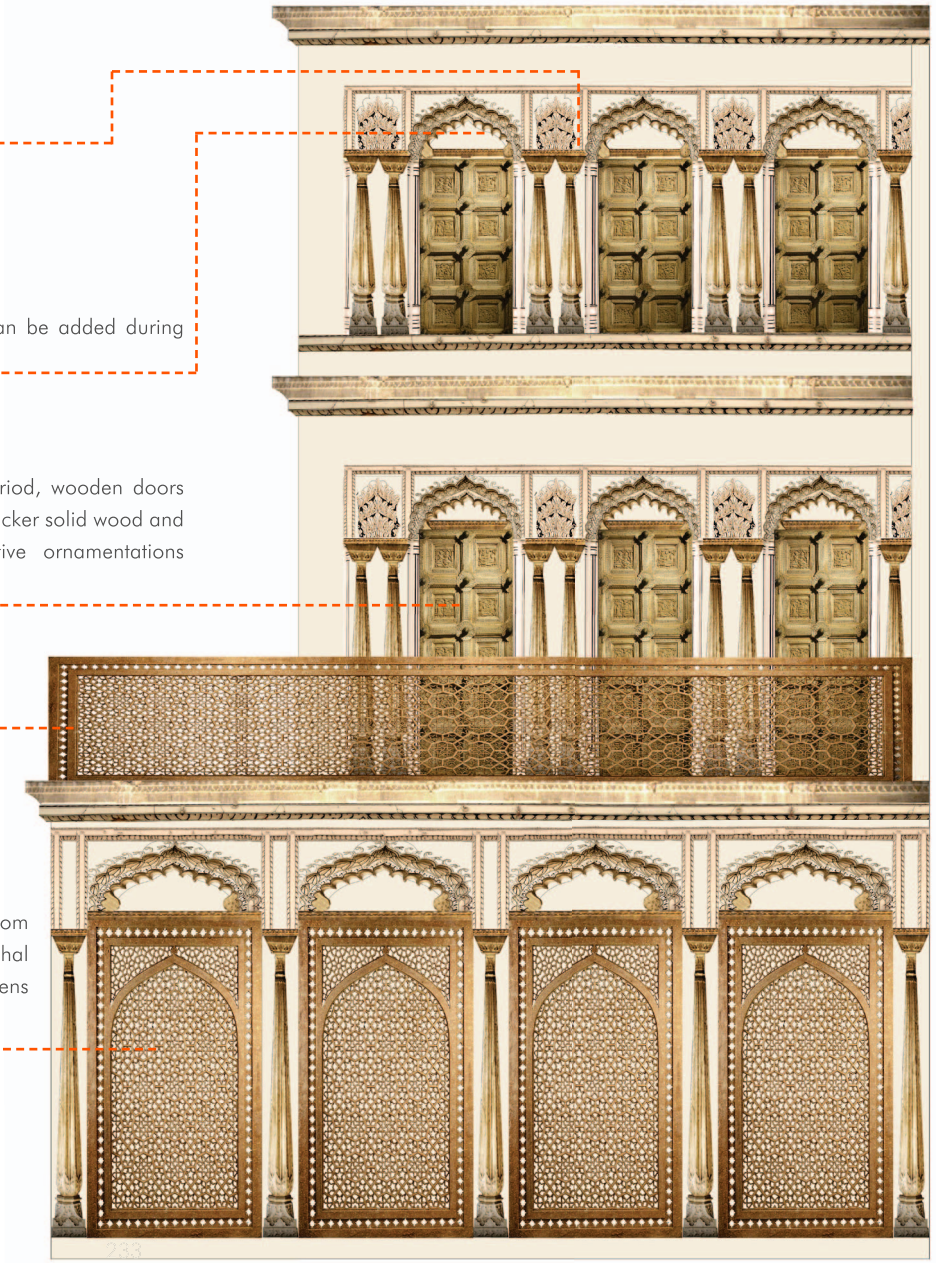


During Mughal period, wooden doors were made from thicker solid wood and contained decorative ornamentations carved.

The screens can be produced according to the Mughal geometric patterns. Similar pattern and material could be used for the doors.



Pattern is a design element take from nature and mathematics. Mughal master craftsmen produced screens perforated with geometric designs.







11.23 (Opposite) Proposed Elevation of Plot 7 on the back, using existing design and incorporating typical Mughal design.

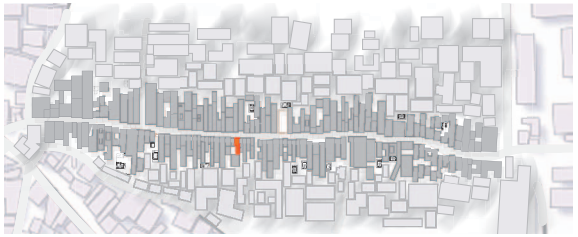
11.24 Proposed Elevation of Plot 7 in relations to its simplified surrounding buildings. The Mughal-styled iron gates could stay open during Crafts School hours and when the Temple is in service


Complan
23 Vital Nutrients
ডিপার্টমেন্টাল ষ্টোর
শিবানী জুয়েলারী হাউজ
শিবানী
জুয়েলারী হাউস

EXAMPLE 2 of 2: PLOT 61

This building is closer to the west end of the street and therefore, closer to the police station. This is a newer building constructed during the 1800s as indicated by the approximately 3 inch limestone bricks. It follows the similar pattern of Mughal architecture: an arched facade bracketing the windows on the second and third floors. This could mean that during its original construction during the reign of East India Company, the owner was inspired by various architectural elements that preceded its construction from Mughal architecture, and tried to incorporate those elements on the facade.

The adjacent building to the west is also a heritage building with better maintenance and various visible modifications throughout the years. The facade shows presence of both 19th century column treatment as well as inspiration from Mughal screen design. The ground floor does not show any visible motifs, only a simple wall, like other simple interior walls built during the time. It is likely that the original facade was covered by this new construction to extend outward towards the street. The building is situated on higher plinths indicating that it was built after the implementation of the drainage system. The interior of the building is still intact, with a light shaft or courtyard situated in the middle. This allows for ventilation and light in all the adjacent rooms. The house is mostly occupied by migrants and apprentices of the street, making it a perfect opportunity for acting as a living quarter or hostel for the craftsmen from the Crafts School and their families.



11.25 (Opposite) Street view of the existing structure of Plot 61 in 2014





11.26 View of the interior courtyard of Plot 61 from the ground floor looking up. Load-bearing brick walls are in need of fast repair

11.27 Stairs in the courtyard of Plot 61. The stairs are supported by the load-bearing wall adjacent to it

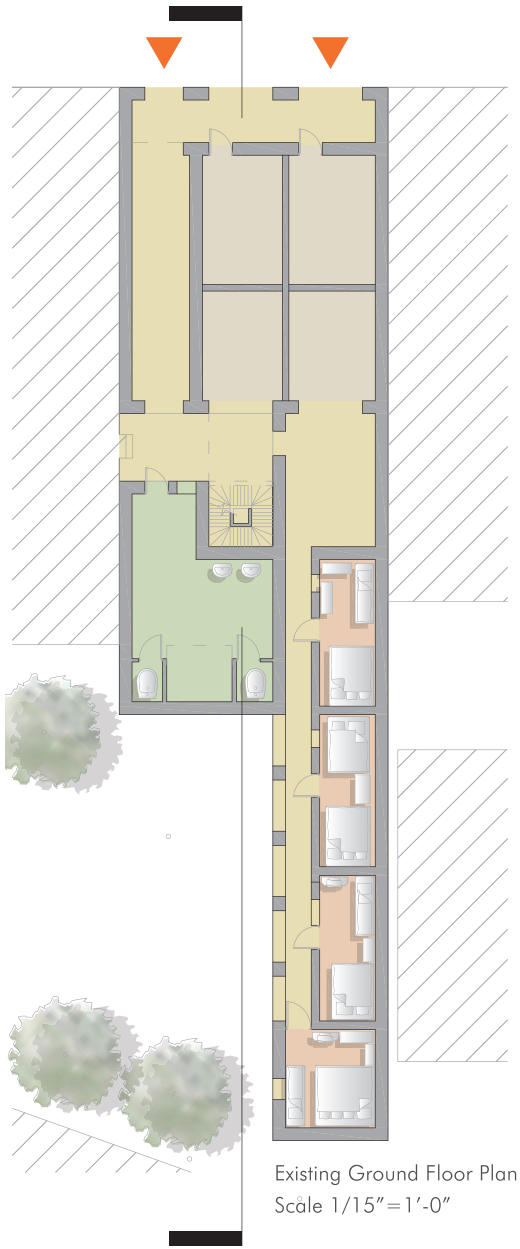
According to scholar Md. Bahauddin, when asked for an estimate for renovating this building, it was estimated to be US $9,700 in 2010[18]. This thesis proposes renovation and reconstruction of this tangible heritage structure incorporating the existing program to work with the historical structural layout.

One of the major changes would be to take down some of the interior walls, to allow for a larger open space on the ground floor of the building. This area could act as a meeting space for Craft School network. This meeting room would be 1 of the 2 meeting rooms shared by the Craft School community and the administrative bodies. Another change proposed is to tear down the corridor wall at the rear of the building, bringing to the back the columns that adorn the front facade of the building. This will help create visual homogeneity throughout the building. It will also allow for ventilation and lighting inside the narrow quarters in the corridor. In addition, the kitchen and washroom can be renovated to allow for modern amenities, the door sizes increased and windows added to allow for more visual porosity and ventilation. Similar to Plot 7, the interior doors will be replaced with sliding doors to allow for a better fit in a tight space.

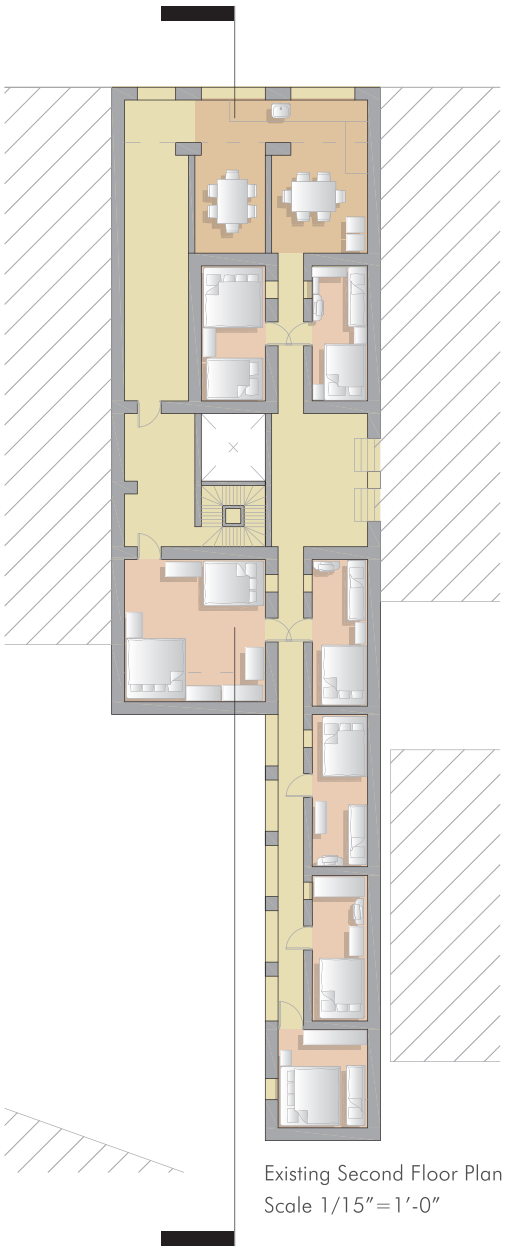
The facade will be reconstructed according to Mughal style as intended when it was originally built. It could act as a canvas for the craftsmen to experiment and practise carving Mughal ornamentation.

The circulation space in the ground floor leads to the shared courtyard or 'pocket' at the rear of the building where a Craft School can be constructed. This newly constructed Craft School that conserve intangible heritage, the reconstructed tangible structure acting as a living quarter for apprentices and the service space (meeting room) together start to form an example of the potential of pragmatic craft network that can be created to sustain both tangible and intangible heritage of Shakhari Bazar.

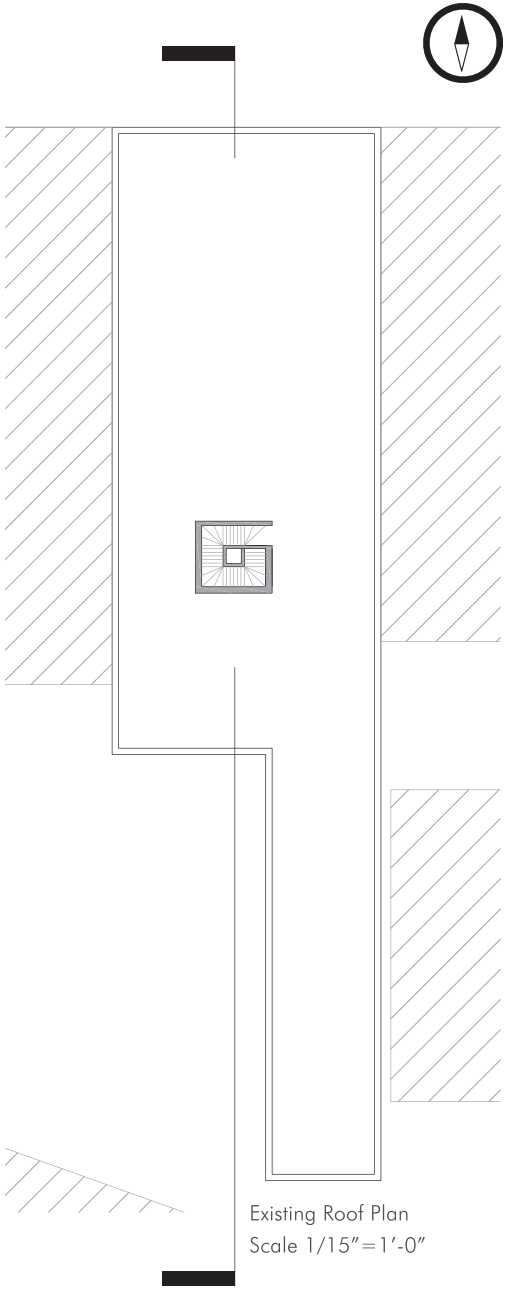
17. Md. Bahauddin, "Conservation and Management of Historic Buildings Advanced International Training Programme: Conservation of Shakhari Bazar"



Existing Ground Floor Plan
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″



Existing Second Floor Plan
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″



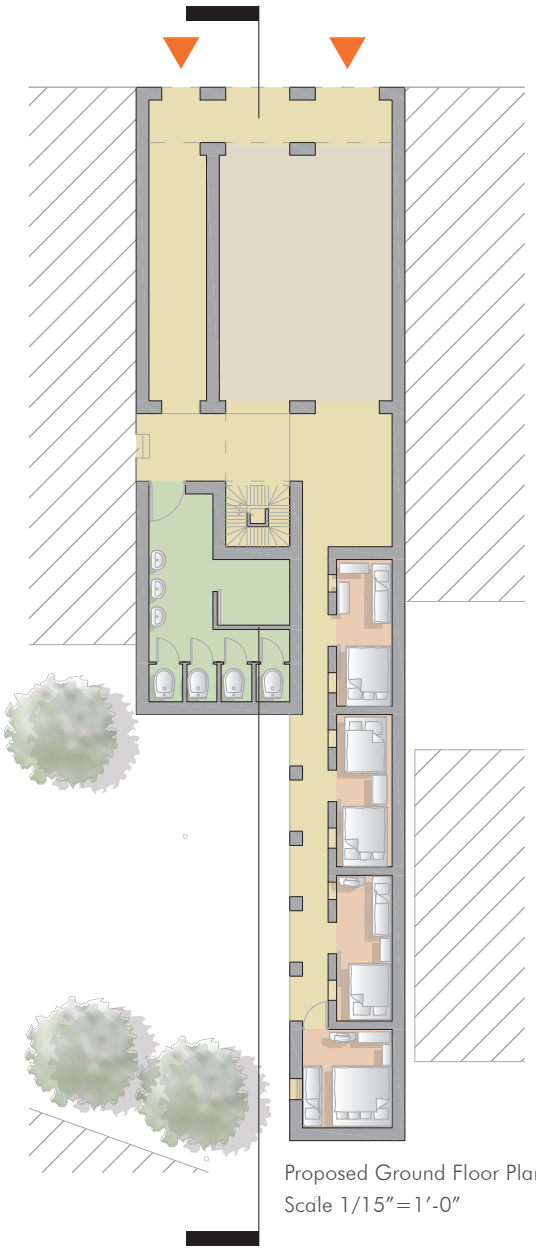
Existing Roof Plan
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″



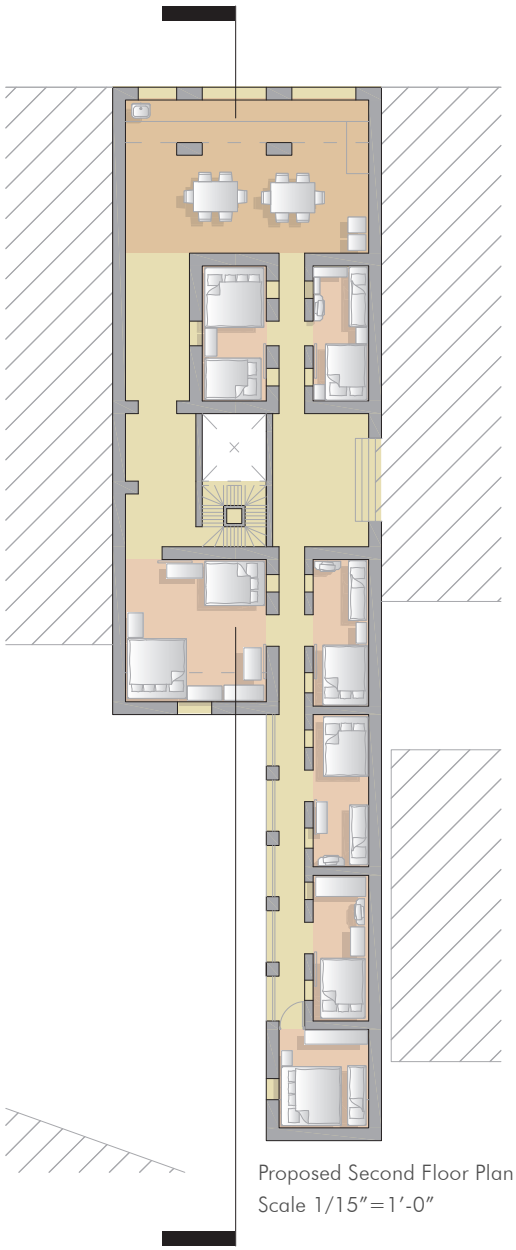
Existing Section through Plot 61
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″



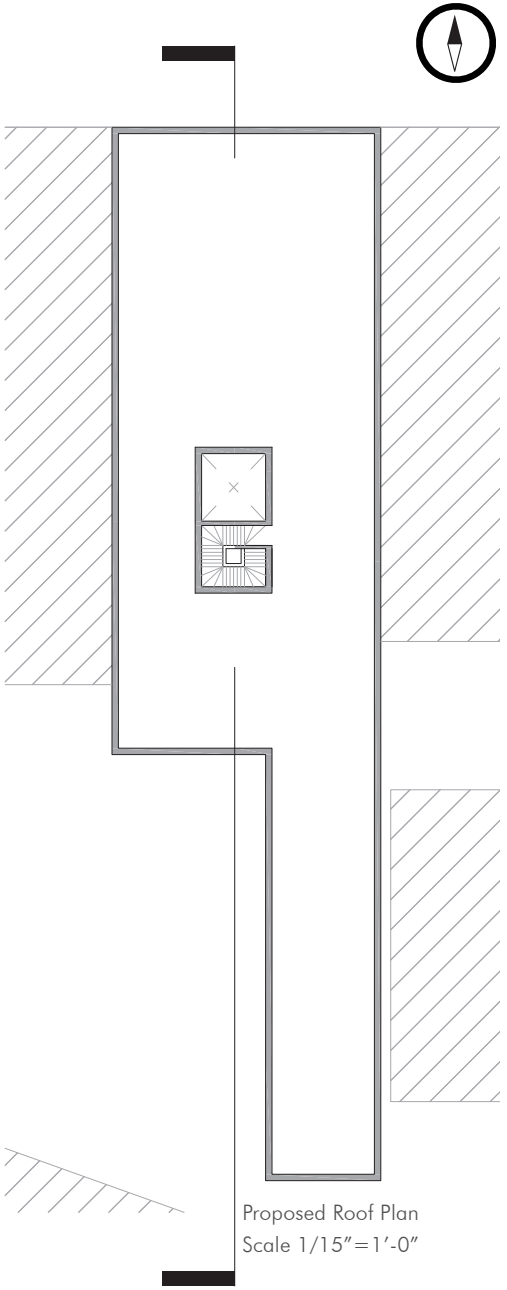
11.28 (Opposite left) Existing Ground Floor Plan of Plot 61
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″
11.29 (Opposite middle) Existing Second Floor Plan of Plot 61
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″
11.30 (Opposite right) Existing Roof Plan of Plot 61
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″
11.31 Existing Section through Plot 61
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″



Proposed Ground Floor Plan
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″



Proposed Second Floor Plan
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″



Proposed Roof Plan
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″



Proposed Section through Plot 61
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″

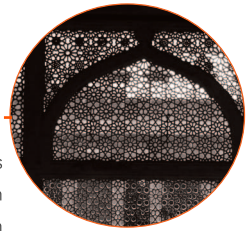


11.32 (Opposite left) Proposed Ground Floor Plan of Plot 61
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″
11.33 (Opposite middle) Proposed Second Floor Plan of Plot 61
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″
11.34 (Opposite right) Proposed Roof Plan of Plot 61
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″
11.35 Proposed Section through Plot 61
Scale 1/15″=1′-0″



The specimens of architecture created under the Mughals have become the common heritage of both the Hindus and the Muslims. One of the important distinguishing features of the Mughal buildings is their ornamentation

The windows form a typical Mughal arched window opening.



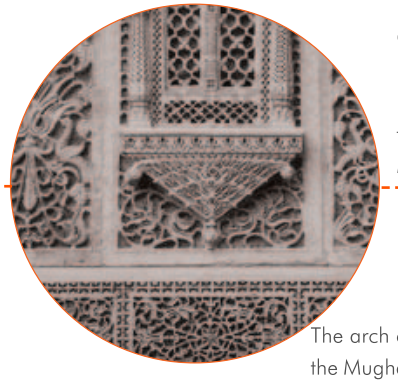
The existing wooden windows show signs of being added in the past few decades, and is in a state of decay.



There is again absence of original ornamentation near the entrances

11.36 Existing Elevation that appears to have been heavily modified, leaving the facade quite bland, with minimal Mughal architectural elements visible.

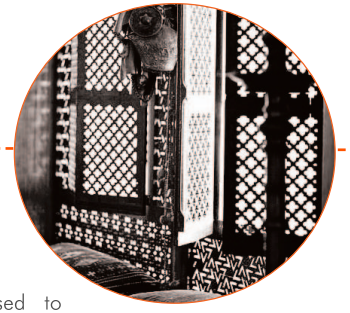
11.37 Proposed Elevation of the street facing facade, using similar characteristics as the existing building, and making use of typical Mughal and Jor-Bangla terracotta style.



Clay motifs can be used to reconstruct the overhangs. These motifs could follow the traditional terracotta style engraved during Mughal reign.

The arch could be ornamented similar to the Mughal style this structure was aiming for when first constructed.

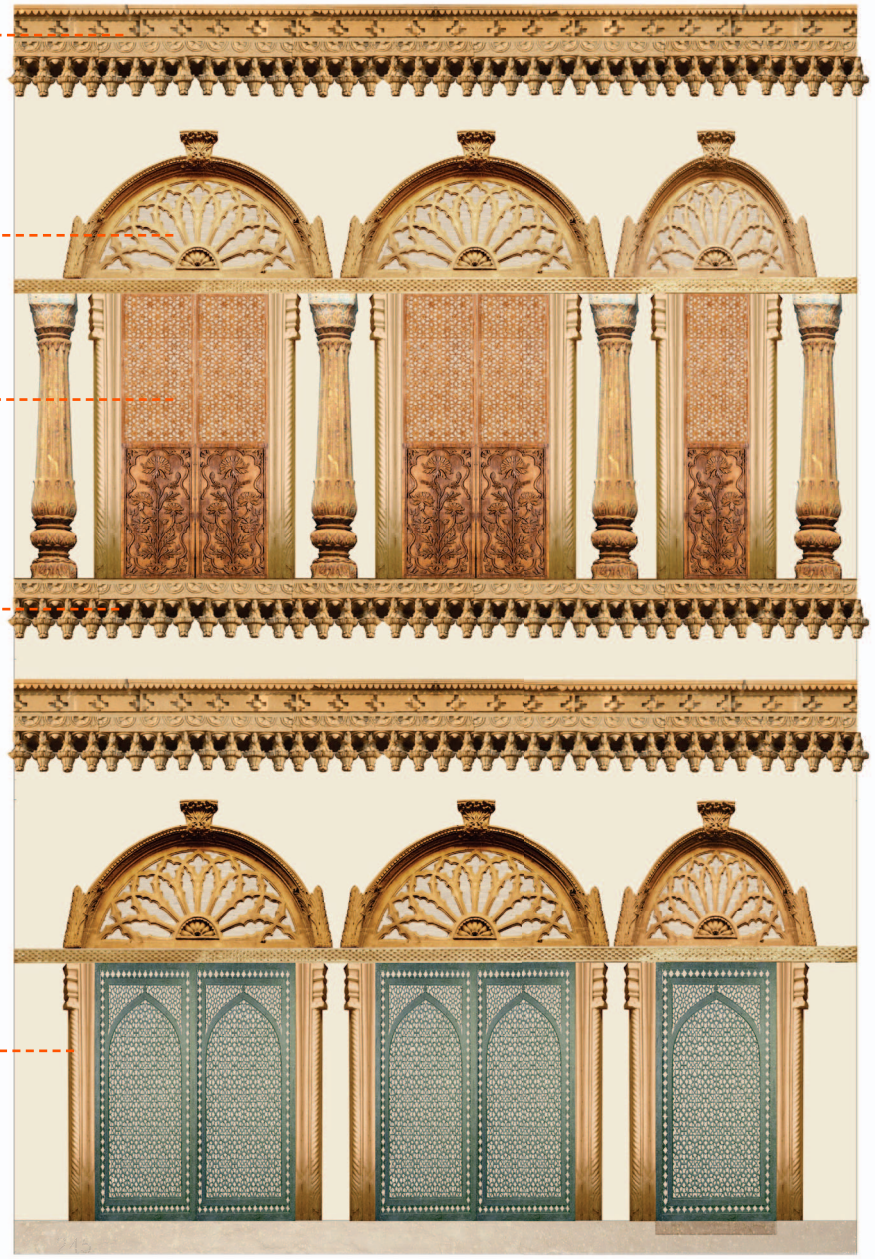
'Jali' or screens of mughal pattern could form the windows when reconstructed



Clay motifs can be used to reconstruct the overhangs.



Mughal Corinthian inlays are proposed to reconstruct the entrances





11.38 Proposed view at the back of Plot 61 using similar style as proposed in the front of the building to maintain design and visual consistency. The newly constructed Craft School could be accessed through the circulation space in the ground floor of the structure.



11.39 Proposed Elevation of Plot 61 in relations to its simplified surrounding buildings. The Mughal styled iron gates could stay open during Craft School hours. The reconstruction of the facade could be designed in collaboration with the local craftsmen and inhabitants.

COMMUNITY



Report structural issues thats requires attention

Community president involved in advertising community events throughout the country, inculding internet

Have certain percentage of money to be gathered for social and community events

Want them to do what they are doing

Have community cleaning parties (people who volunteer will have minimal percentage of daily earning from existing business owners)

INTERNATIONAL



Act as a big brother to enable government intervention

Finance heritage site which is in danger of complete destruction due to the existing rule that nothing can be changed

GOVERNMENT



Have a emergency heritage structural maintenance department that will involve structural engineers as well as heritage specialist architects

Sponsor events

Subsidize taxes for the craftsman

Advertise and brand the area to international visitors

11.40 Simplified illustration of the method and hierarchy of administrative implementation for the authentic render of Shakhari Bazar's heritage

IMPLEMENTATION

Strengthening the economic viability of craft communities is important to the sustainability of the artisans' livelihoods and homes, and for the preservation of the world cultural diversity. A more inclusive and holistic framework, aligned with an emerging archetype of sustainable development, has the potential to support the dignity and autonomy of artisans, the continuity of authentic indigenous knowledge and cultural diversity, and the sustainability of local economies and communities. These actions can be further divided up into two types: architectural and administrative.

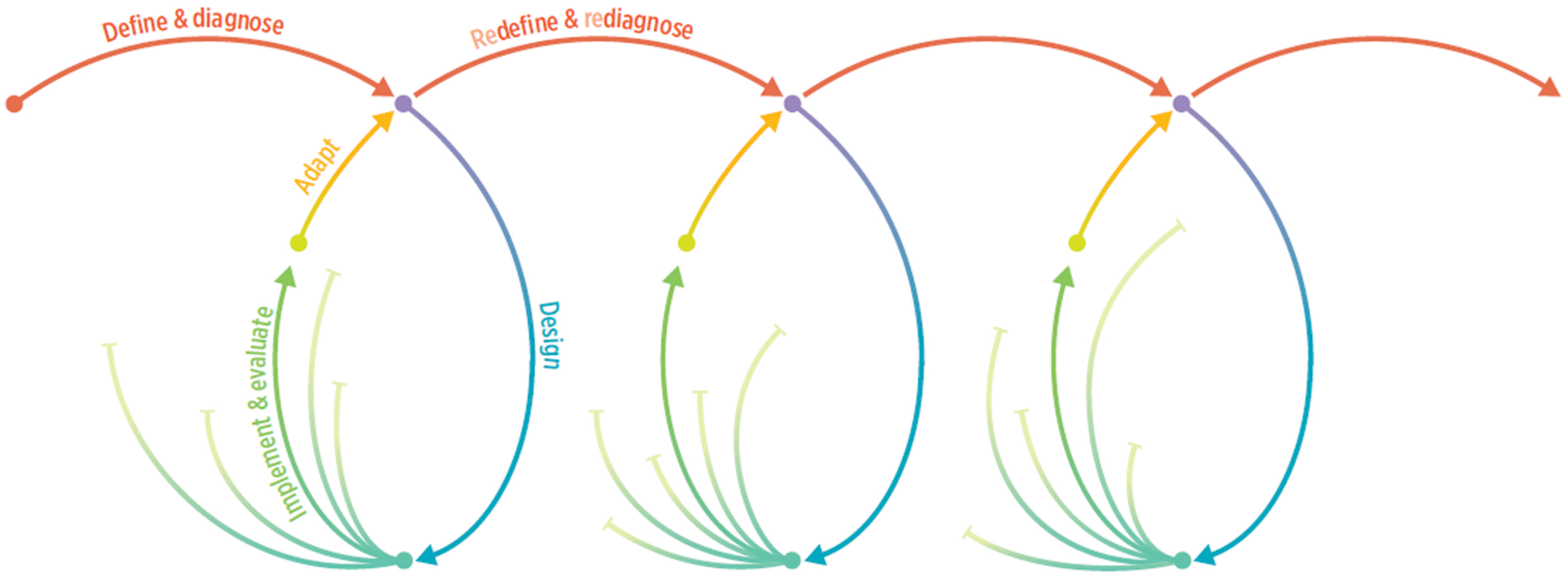
Architectural

1. In Shakhari Bazar, the government could impose a law that no motor vehicle may pass through the street. The walk way would therefore, mostly be pedestrian. The street may be constructed of cobblestones to discourage motor vehicles and encourage pedestrians. Cobblestones would also be easy to replace and therefore easily maintained by the locals.

2. Proposal of regular maintenance of drainage and sewage lines, and implementation of proper garbage disposal areas and systems.

3. Proposal of electrical lines to be run underground for safety reasons and to avoid unwanted aesthetic obstacles.

4. Proposal to appoint a specialized structural engineer, or a group of engineers and designers, to specially look at the structural maintenance of the buildings on behalf of the local owners.



11.41 World Bank's simplified illustration of how 'understanding behavior and identifying effective interventions are complex and iterative processes'[19]

Administrative

1. Tangible Heritage Administration Body may be formed. They will be responsible for securing funding for reconstruction and maintenance of heritage properties, supervising design and structural changes with the help of designated Architects and Engineers, securing funding for on-going expanses such as salaries and rents, documenting and filing reconstruction process and implementation. They act as the mediator among the property owners, occupants, architects, engineers and funding agencies and corporations (fig. 11.41). They would also be responsible for the marketing the heritage site to other communities and agencies to attract donations (fig. 11.42).

2. Proposal for the Administration Body to document data on craftsmen and include craftsmen and artisans in the National Economic Census.

3. In the World Bank document on *Mind, Society and Behaviour*, 'choice architecture' is described as "someone who organizes the context in which people make decisions… Choice architecture influences decision making by simplifying the presentation of options, by automatically evoking particular associations, or by making one option more salient or easier to choose than the alternatives…A component of choice architecture is simplicity. Too many options or too much complexity may lead individuals to avoid thinking through a decision, to postpone indefinitely making an active decision, or to make error-ridden decisions".[20] Therefore, running educational programs with choice architecture in mind could evoke the importance of 'tangible' and 'intangible' heritages, as well as their reconstruction and conservation, among the locals.

19. World Bank. 2015. "World Development Report 2015: Mind, Society, and Behavior." Washington, DC: World Bank. DOI: 10.1596/978-1-4648-0342-0.
20. ibid

4. Proposal for the Bangladeshi government to incorporate World Bank's ideology in the reconstruction of the heritage sites. World Bank understands that "recognizing that individuals think automatically, think socially, and think with mental models expands the set of assumptions policy makers can use to analyse a given policy problem and suggests a few ways for improving the intervention cycle and development effectiveness.

   First, concentrating more on the definition and diagnosis of problems, and expending more cognitive and financial investments at that stage, can lead to better-designed interventions.

   Second, an experimental approach that incorporates testing during the implementation phase and tolerates failure can help identify cost-effective interventions (*Glennerster and Takavarasha 2013; Duflo and Kremer 2005*). As many of the studies cited throughout this Report indicate, the process of delivering products matters as much as the product that is being delivered and it can be difficult to predict what will matter in which context and for which population."[21]

5. To instill economic and financial independence to the craftsmen and locals, the government could advocate the importance of heritage. Therefore, this method proposes the government to have a 'heritage day' that will celebrate both the 'intangible' and 'tangible' heritage. This will also increase awareness and encourage the locals to better maintain their heritage properties.

6. Proposal for the government to develop a policy for the provision of financial support, intellectual property rights protection, and other supports to communities for the safeguarding of their heritage. This could include the development of a fund providing

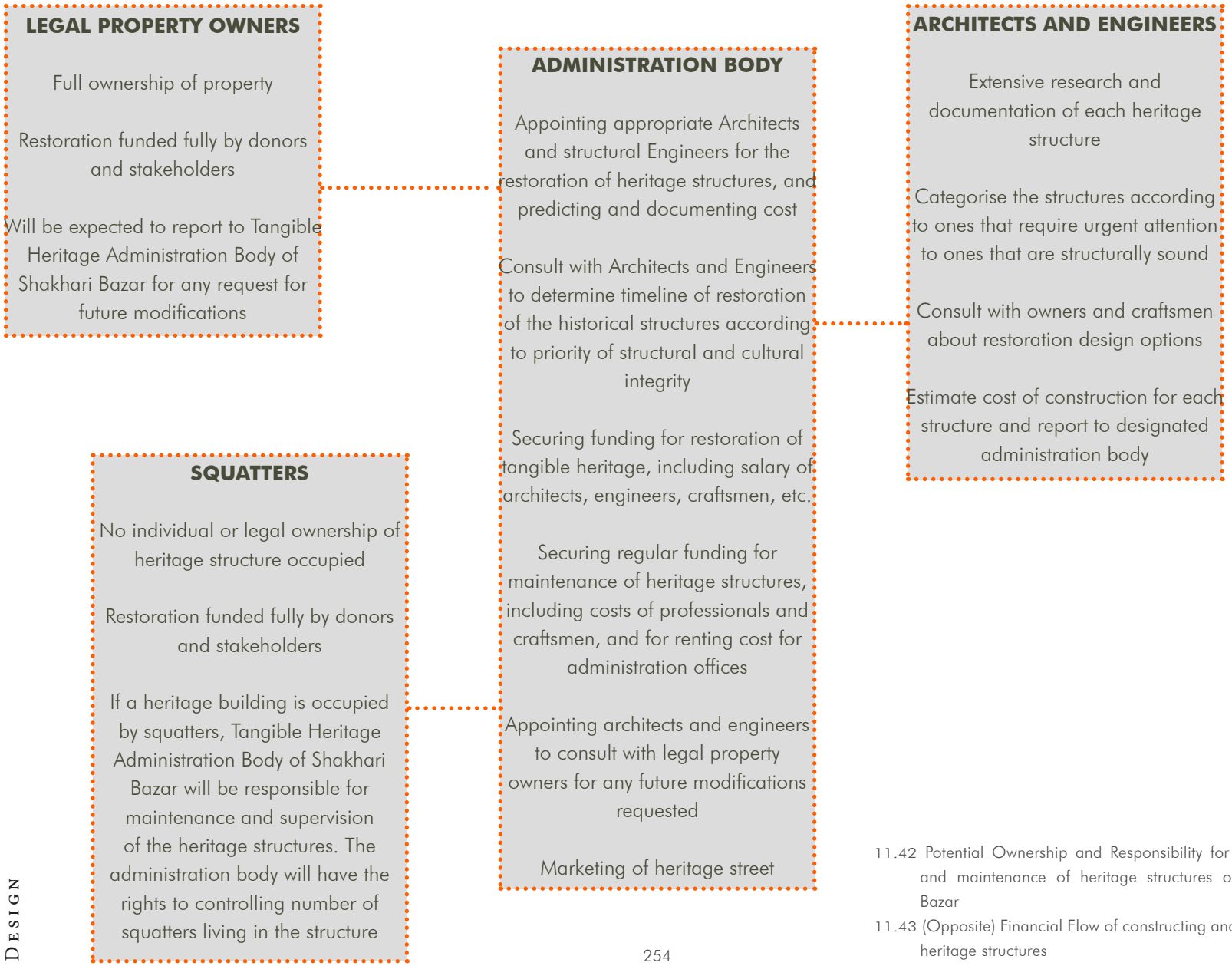
21. World Bank. 2015. "World Development Report 2015: Mind, Society, and Behavior."

subsidies to artisans, advisory services, and access to natural resources for their practices and the maintenance of their properties.

7. In order to instill respect and awareness of both 'tangible' and 'intangible' heritage, it is important to induce this idea starting from primary school. Such skills could be promoted as part of the school curriculum. 'Awareness begins with education. This education needs to sensitise the child and tomorrow's consumer to her craft heritage and it relevance to her own well-being'.[22]

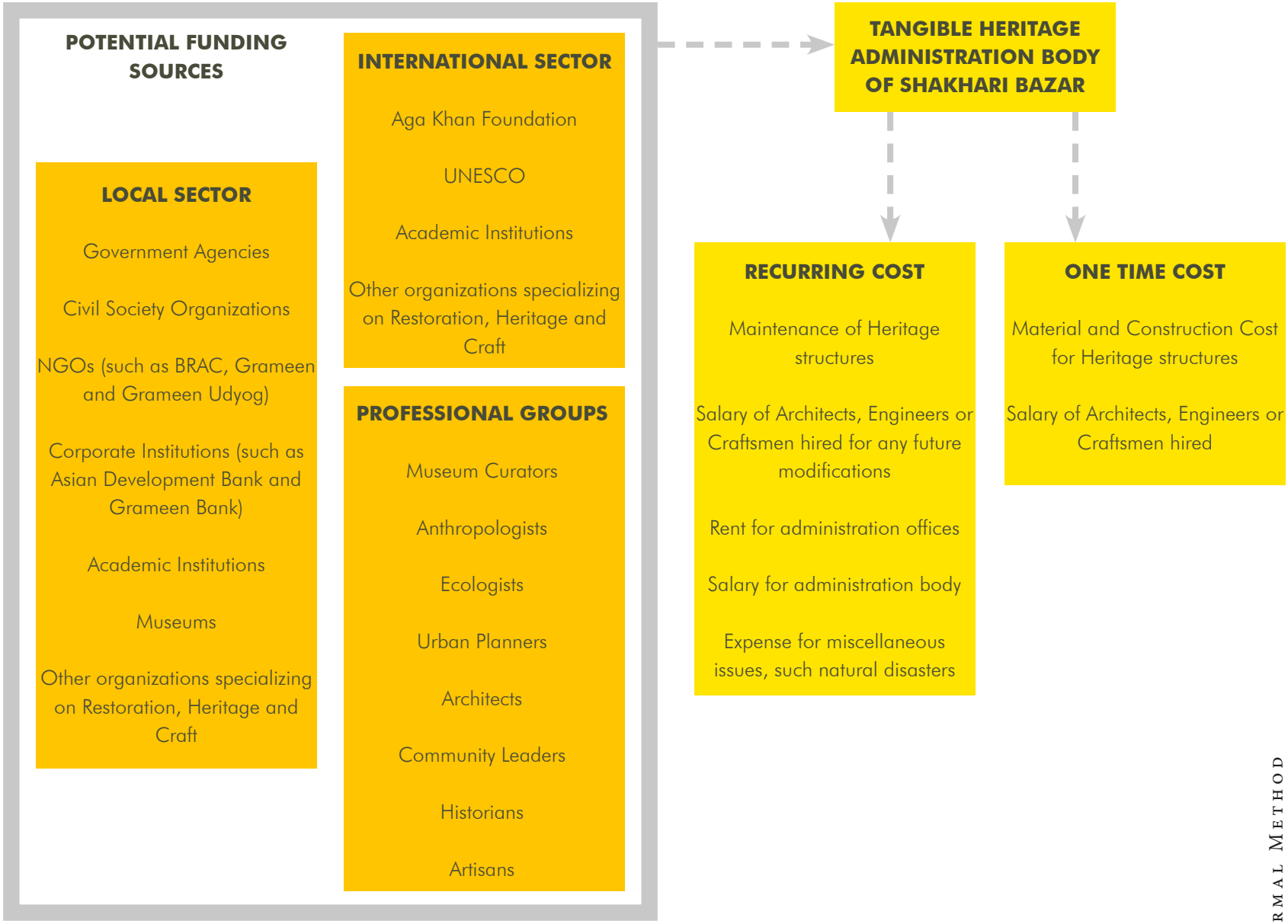
8. The craftsmen and artisans could be trusted to play and implement significant solutions to problems. Encouraging decision-making during reconstruction and building process, and fostering responsibilities may help them gain confidence in following their craft tradition for renovation of their homes and other traditional structures.

22. Ashoke Chatterjee, "The Future is Handmade". National Seminar on the Arts in the Cultural Heritage of India: Revisiting Themes in the "Cultural Heritage of India Vol VII". Kolkata, 27-28 October 2014. Accessed June 21, 2015.



11.42 Potential Ownership and Responsibility for renovation and maintenance of heritage structures on Shakhari Bazar

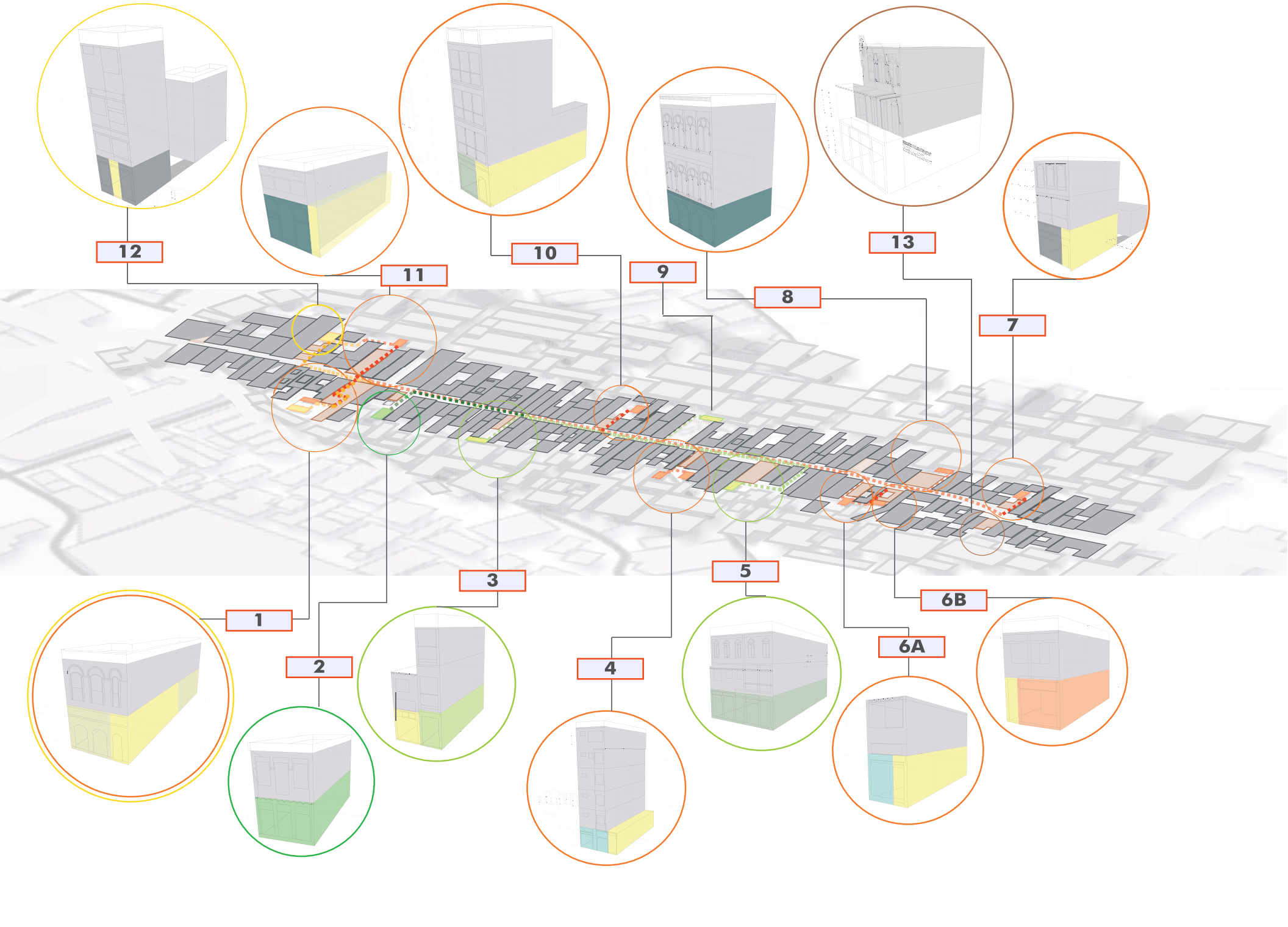
11.43 (Opposite) Financial Flow of constructing and sustaining heritage structures

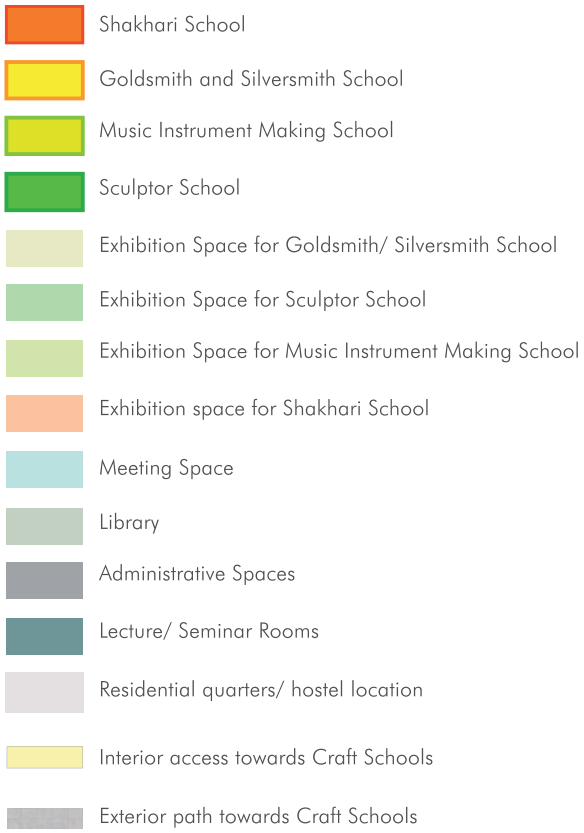

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
LOCAL SECTOR
Government Agencies
Civil Society Organizations
NGOs (such as BRAC, Grameen and Grameen Udyog)
Corporate Institutions (such as Asian Development Bank and Grameen Bank)
Academic Institutions
Museums
Other organizations specializing on Restoration, Heritage and Craft
INTERNATIONAL SECTOR
Aga Khan Foundation
UNESCO
Academic Institutions
Other organizations specializing on Restoration, Heritage and Craft
PROFESSIONAL GROUPS
Museum Curators
Anthropologists
Ecologists
Urban Planners
Architects
Community Leaders
Historians
Artisans
TANGIBLE HERITAGE ADMINISTRATION BODY OF SHAKHARI BAZAR
RECURRING COST
Maintenance of Heritage structures
Salary of Architects, Engineers or Craftsmen hired for any future modifications
Rent for administration offices
Salary for administration body
Expense for miscellaneous issues, such natural disasters
ONE TIME COST
Material and Construction Cost for Heritage structures
Salary of Architects, Engineers or Craftsmen hired



12.1 (Opposite) View of Shakhari Bazar street from inside a renovated temple on the street

3.4.0 Integrated Approach

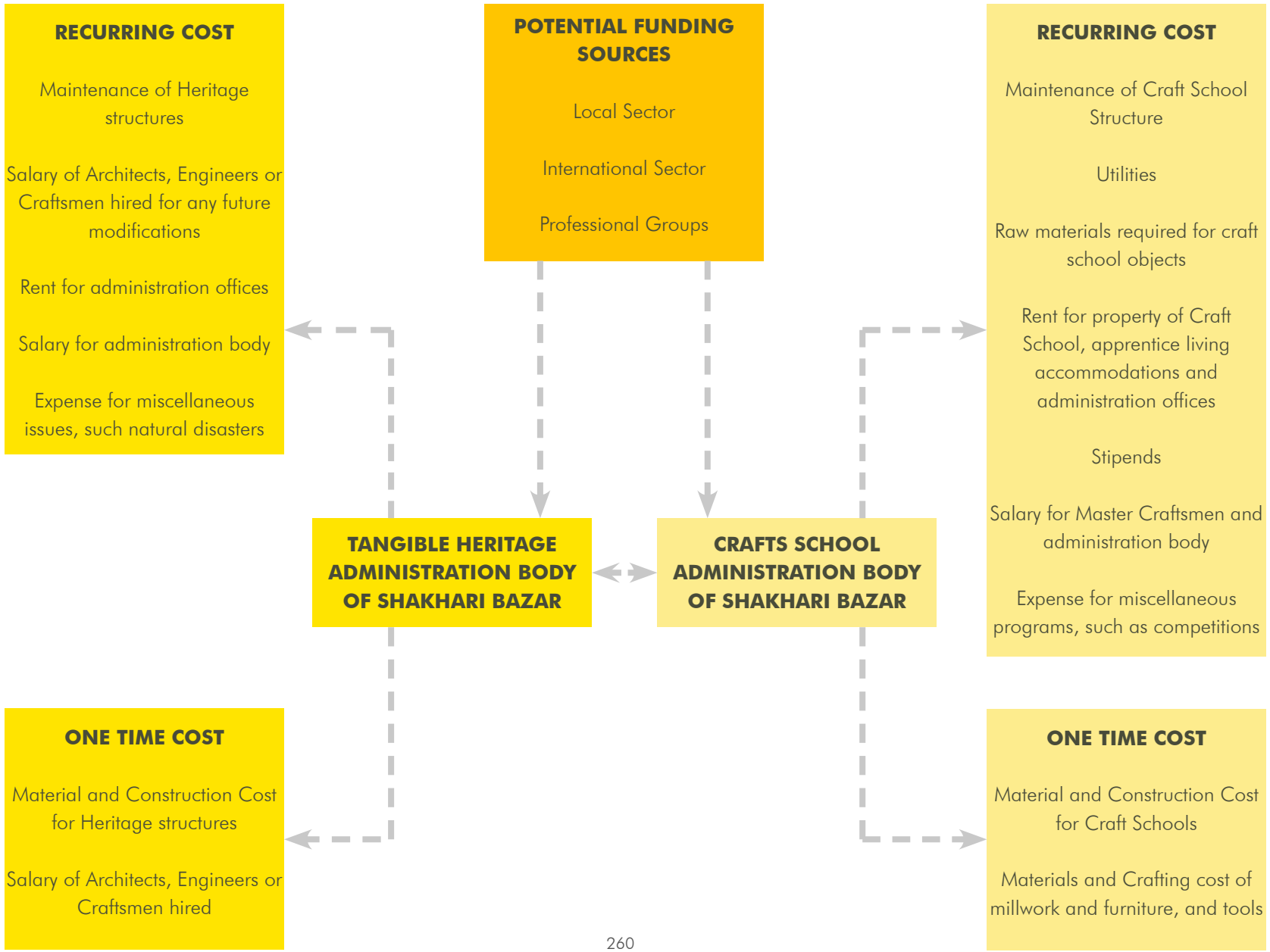

12
11
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6B
6A



12.2 (Opposite) Proposed network of Craft Schools, reconstructed structures and service spaces on Shakhari Bazar

The formal and informal methods act as a collaborative strategy of spatial facilitators to initiate the authentic rendering of the street of Shakhari Bazar into a haven of intangible and tangible heritage through inclusion and learning. As described in the chapter 'Heritage and Craft', heritage has diverse meanings and, therefore, needs to be addressed as such. It is important to address various elements of the streets simultaneously to be able to achieve a well-rounded solution to the sustainability of heritage. While the informal method aims to sustain intangible heritage through organized spatial interactions among makers and users using dialogue and learning and through practise of new construction of Craft Schools, the formal method aims to utilize the crafts and the inclusion of owners for an informed reconstruction and adaptive reuse of the tangible heritage structures, in order to conserve the heritage of Shakhari Bazar. It is as important for the government of Bangladesh and other formal bodies, as it is for the local craftsmen and owners, to engage in a collective and informed discussion of the strategies for sustaining and conserving heritage on the street. Therefore, this thesis informs and proposes a multi-disciplinary delineation of schematic structural strategies to achieve cognizant reconstruction and conservation of both the tangible and intangible heritages of Shakhari Bazar.

The informal method and formal method could be further facilitated with the inclusion of service spaces required for the organization and maintenance of intangible heritage and tangible heritage. Both the examples from the 'formal' method could undergo adaptive reuse in order to ensure that the tangible heritage structures can be occupied by the apprentices of the Craft Schools. As shown in fig 12.2, the combined network of the newly constructed Craft Schools, the adjacent living quarters or hostels for the apprentices and the reconstructed tangible heritage structures could form a network that can catalyze the sustenance of the heritage with the help of services. These services are exhibition spaces, libraries, administrative spaces, meeting rooms and lecture or seminar rooms. The ground


RECURRING COST
Maintenance of Heritage structures
Salary of Architects, Engineers or Craftsmen hired for any future modifications
Rent for administration offices
Salary for administration body
Expense for miscellaneous issues, such natural disasters
POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
Local Sector
International Sector
Professional Groups
RECURRING COST
Maintenance of Craft School Structure
Utilities
Raw materials required for craft school objects
Rent for property of Craft School, apprentice living accommodations and administration offices
Stipends
Salary for Master Craftsmen and administration body
Expense for miscellaneous programs, such as competitions
TANGIBLE HERITAGE ADMINISTRATION BODY OF SHAKHARI BAZAR
CRAFTS SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION BODY OF SHAKHARI BAZAR
ONE TIME COST
Material and Construction Cost for Heritage structures
Salary of Architects, Engineers or Craftsmen hired
ONE TIME COST
Material and Construction Cost for Craft Schools
Materials and Crafting cost of millwork and furniture, and tools

floor of each of the 12 tangible heritage structures that provide a path for the Craft Schools at the rear could be used for each of the service needed for the craft schools. The combination of these structures and the reconstructed structures could result in 13 hostels and 12 service areas. Therefore, with the 12 service areas available, this thesis proposes 2 administrative spaces (1 for formal method implementation and 1 for informal one), 2 lecture or seminar rooms, 2 libraries, 4 exhibition spaces (1 for each Craft) and 2 meeting rooms. The multi-storied hostels would provide enough space for the apprentices. Other tangible heritage structures of Shakhari Bazar could be renovated and reconstructed to allow for more number of student facilities and living quarters. Given the procedure of implementing these programs in reality, this network will likely be revised after discussion with the guild of craftsmen and the building owners. Therefore, this integrated idea serves as an example of the spatial distribution of programs that could organize and sustain tangible and intangible heritage of Shakhari Bazar.

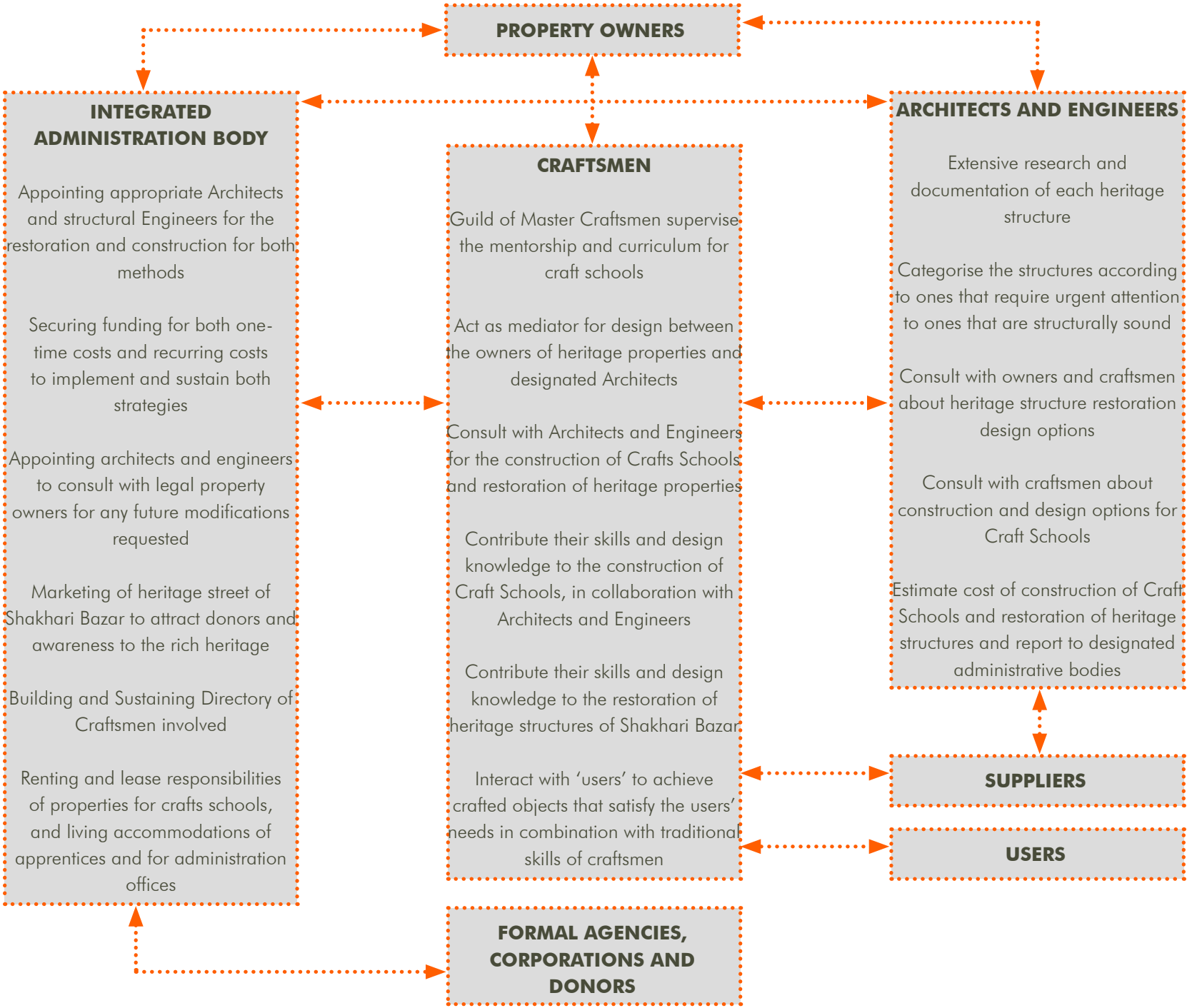
It is essential that the government incorporate various other actions in order to protect the 'tangible' and 'intangible' heritages of Shakhari Bazar and to sustain their existence. The Cultural Policy of Bangladesh adopted in 2006 can be summarized as follows[1]:

1. To safeguard and encourage all cultural expressions in Bangladesh in order to celebrate the distinctiveness of Bangladeshi culture and promote positive national awareness;
2. To promote culture in order to contribute to the economy of the country;
3. To safeguard, conserve and enrich cultural elements of Bangladeshi life, including indigenous Bangladeshi culture that had been discouraged in the past;
4. To derive positive results from international exchange of artists.

12.3 (Opposite) Financial Flow of constructing and sustaining intangible and tangible heritage of Shakhari Bazar

The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (1972) lays down (Article 23) that

1. UNESCO. "National Workshop on Implementation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Bangladesh". 17-20 July 2013, Dhaka Bangladesh. Accessed March 25, 2014.


PROPERTY OWNERS
INTEGRATED ADMINISTRATION BODY
Appointing appropriate Architects and structural Engineers for the restoration and construction for both methods
Securing funding for both one-time costs and recurring costs to implement and sustain both strategies
Appointing architects and engineers to consult with legal property owners for any future modifications requested
Marketing of heritage street of Shakhari Bazar to attract donors and awareness to the rich heritage
Building and Sustaining Directory of Craftsmen involved
Renting and lease responsibilities of properties for crafts schools, and living accommodations of apprentices and for administration offices
CRAFTSMEN
Guild of Master Craftsmen supervise the mentorship and curriculum for craft schools
Act as mediator for design between the owners of heritage properties and designated Architects
Consult with Architects and Engineers for the construction of Crafts Schools and restoration of heritage properties
Contribute their skills and design knowledge to the construction of Craft Schools, in collaboration with Architects and Engineers
Contribute their skills and design knowledge to the restoration of heritage structures of Shakhari Bazar
Interact with 'users' to achieve crafted objects that satisfy the users' needs in combination with traditional skills of craftsmen
ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS
Extensive research and documentation of each heritage structure
Categorise the structures according to ones that require urgent attention to ones that are structurally sound
Consult with owners and craftsmen about heritage structure restoration design options
Consult with craftsmen about construction and design options for Craft Schools
Estimate cost of construction of Craft Schools and restoration of heritage structures and report to designated administrative bodies
SUPPLIERS
USERS
FORMAL AGENCIES, CORPORATIONS AND DONORS

the State "shall adopt measures to conserve the cultural traditions and heritage of the people, and so to foster and improve the national language, literature and the arts that all sections of the people are afforded the opportunity to contribute towards and to participate in the enrichment of the national culture."[2] Article 24 says that the State "shall adopt measures for the protection against disfigurement, damage or removal of all monuments, objects or places of special artistic or historic importance or interest"[3].

These guidelines would be most effective in Shakhari Bazar if the craftsmen and locals were directly involved in the decision-making and design process of its conservation. As observed in 2014, the craftsmen are already familiar with the process of design as they have been utilizing this method in their day-to-day lives since the 1600s. It could benefit the craftsmen, the users, and the formal bodies if they learnt from their past and collaborated their efforts to sustain, reconstruct and conserve intangible and tangible heritage. The informal method therefore aims to also include the local craftsmen of Old Dhaka in the construction and animation of the proposed Crafts Schools. This would instill a sense of responsibility among the craftsmen, and raise interest, value and respect for the culture and tradition of craft among the craftsmen and the users through collaborative design process of crafted objects.

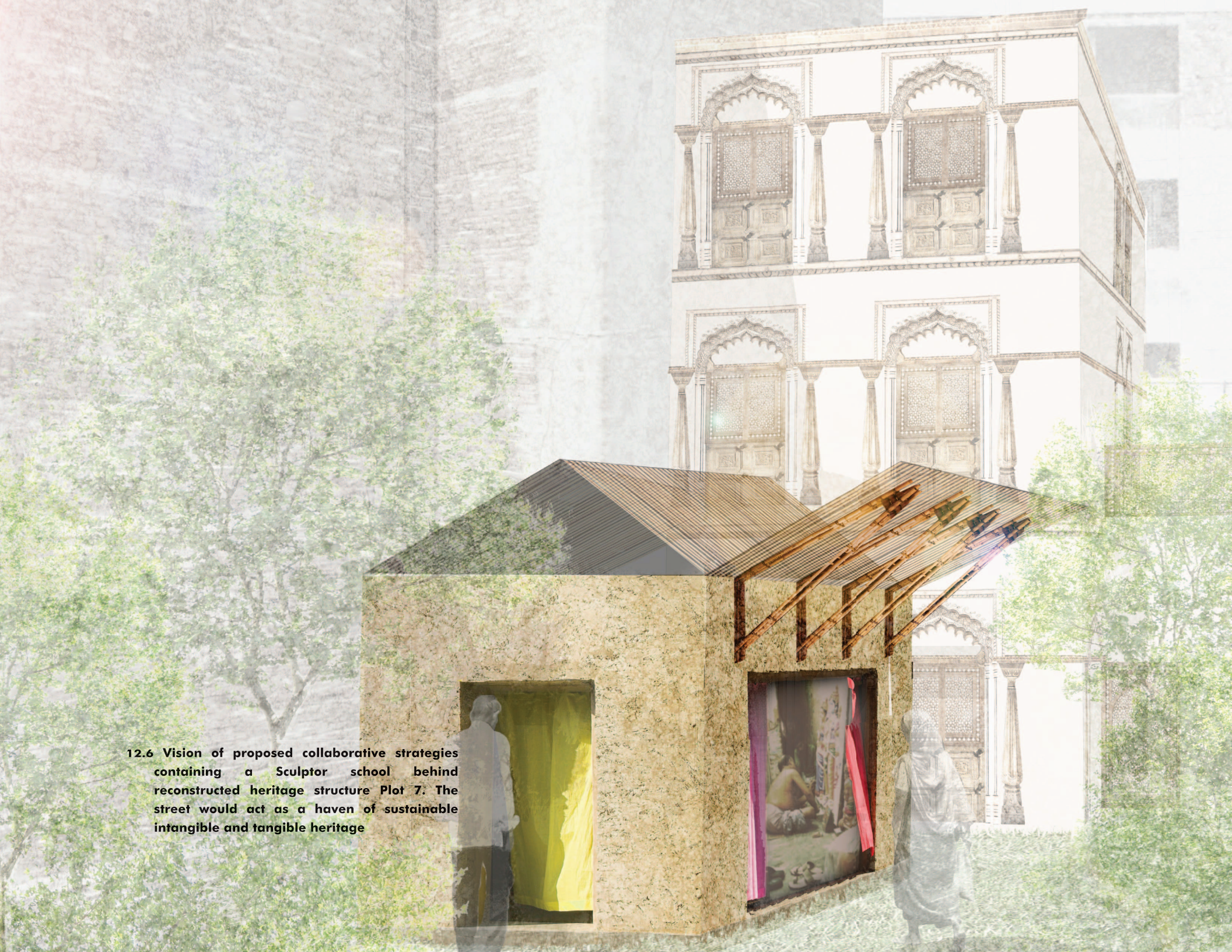
The integrated approach aims to combine the 'formal' and 'informal' method to create a multi-disciplinary approach to the conservation and reconstruction of tangible and intangible heritage. With the formal and informal methods working in combination, the street of Shakhari Bazar could become a treasure of authentic intangible and tangible heritage and balanced cultural ecology that could 'live' on indefinitely as it shapes itself to future changing lifestyles, as it has done for the past 400 years.

12.4 (Opposite) Flow of dialogue for both strategies among the craftsmen, users, suppliers, administration bodies, property owners, designated Architects and Engineers and formal bodies

2. International Monetary Fund. Asia and Pacific Dept., "Bangladesh: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper", (International Monetary Fund, 2013), 330
3. ibid



12.5 Vision of proposed informal strategy containing a Craft school among heritage structures. The street could act as a haven of sustainable 'living' intangible and tangible heritage



12.6 Vision of proposed collaborative strategies containing a Sculptor school behind reconstructed heritage structure Plot 7. The street would act as a haven of sustainable intangible and tangible heritage



12.7 Vision of proposed collaborative strategies containing a Craft school among heritage structures that could be reconstructed. The street could act as a haven of sustainable 'living' intangible heritage



12.8 Vision of proposed collaborative strategies containing a Sculptor school among reconstructed heritage structures. The street would act as a haven of sustainable intangible and tangible heritage

Conclusion



Mtu bila mila ni kama mtumwa'
is a Swahili proverb meaning
'a man deprived of his culture is a slave'

Shakhari Bazar is an example of a unique example of a rich treasure of both tangible heritage and intangible heritage that have the potential to benefit from each other. Unfortunately, there is a striking imbalance in its cultural ecology, due to the absence of the key role that had been played by the local craftsmen since the 1600s. This has resulted in the diminishing of the heritage that had stood as a landmark and icon for the achievements and identities of the nation in the past. According to the historical examples of the region, in order to restore that balance, it is essential to include and reinstate the position of the craftsmen and craft back into the society, to attain authentic rendering of the cultural heritage that street represents.

As a heritage site, it is essential for Shakhari Bazar to be conserved with a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of its identity and origin. Since this street has evolved for the past 400 years according to changing needs of its occupants, it is now a rich treasure of a sequence of a large number of architectural era landmarks. This street is one of the least documented heritage sites, making it difficult to obtain reliable and clear information on it physical and spatial program details. Therefore, it was essential for me to personally visit the site in 2014 and perform a comprehensive site survey. Unfortunately, during my site survey, I observed that it would not be long before the heritage landmarks diminish entirely. I had tried to gather as much data as possible during my four-month stay, but there is always potential to document and carry out a more extensive research at the site for more precise data. While carrying out the site survey, I also encountered a number of people who were unwilling to cooperate due to their distrust of the formal system and everyone who embodies that system. With that data, it would have been possible to determine the exact issues that needed to be addressed in each structure.

13.1 (Opposite) A man on Shakhari Bazar expresses his displeasure when seeing me photograph Shakhari Bazar

In addition to collecting physical data, it was apparent that the community living in Shakhari Bazar was still very similar to how it was 50 years ago. As a native of the new part


TIGER CEM

of Dhaka, this drastic difference in strong communal relationships in Old Dhaka, versus the weak or absent ones in new Dhaka, made it evident to me that the friction between the formal bodies and the informal system of Shakhari Bazar was deeper than what was evident initially. It was this disconnect and unfamiliarity, which discouraged collaboration between the two systems, that leapt beyond pure architecture and spatial elements. Therefore, this thesis proposes two types of strategies, 'formal' and 'informal', to encompass multi-disciplinary dialogue that could help balance the cultural ecology in order to attain authentic conservation of both intangible heritage and tangible heritage of Shakhari Bazar.

The informal method attacks two of the main issues observed in 2014 – decentralized and disorganized spatial and pragmatic relationships among the craftsman and users, and lack of awareness and respect for artisans and their crafts. This method acts as a schematic spatial facilitator to formulate a network of Crafts Schools to encourage dialogue and learning of the various crafts among the craftsmen, users, and new generation of Shakhari Bazar. In the process of constructing these schools, the various local craftsmen can have the opportunity to develop economic and pragmatic design solutions in a collaboration of their skills. This method can be further improved with the addition of designated space for programs such as a library, communal spaces, lounge areas, and a central exhibition hall. These programs could start to form a concrete structure and organisation for a sustainable craft school network.

The formal method experiments with the idea of having formal bodies renovate and reconstruct physical heritage in alliance with the locals and craftsmen, as they have invaluable knowledge of the history and architecture of Shakhari Bazar from the generations of tradition and culture passed on to them. This strategy used two heritage properties as examples that could be reconstructed to produce a better living and working environment for the occupants, while using craftsmen's traditional skills to attain authentic

13.2 (Opposite) Typical morning on Shakhari Bazar for the Sculptor apprentices



reconstruction. With the help of a designated administration body, it could help encourage a sense of responsibility and respect for the heritage structures, and help promote dialogue and collaboration among the locals, craftsmen, and the formal bodies involved in Shakhari Bazar. The amalgamation of these schematic strategies would, therefore, act as a facilitator to create a machine that could result in a sustainable micro economy through the continuing traditions and cultural values that are kept alive by the occupants of this historic street.

Rendering heritage into its authentic form entails a number of factors that need to play out at precisely the right time. These factors include, but are not limited to, the availability of the craftsmen, the ability of the craftsmen, the interest of the craftsmen, the availability of funding, the availability of materials required, and the marketability of the crafts. Any change in any of their statuses can disrupt the cultural ecology that this thesis proposes. Therefore, this thesis invites an informed dialogue among the craftsmen, designers and formal bodies about the issues of heritage reconstruction and conservation of Shakhari Bazar and therefore, the implementation.

The government of Bangladesh, in 2015, has still not implemented any action to conserve intangible heritage. With further detailed research and site surveys, it would be possible to create a dialogue that could involve the government, UNESCO and the Aga Khan Foundation for the authentic reconstruction and conservation of the heritages of Shakhari Bazar. It is important at this point to understand the value of local traditional skills when implementing reconstruction of physical heritage, and Shakhari Bazar could act as a unique example of rendering authentic conservation of both its physical and intangible heritage through collaboration of the locals, users and formal bodies. Therefore, Shakhari Bazar has the potential to act as a precedent for carrying out further such conservation in other parts of Old Dhaka, as well as in other parts of the world.

13.3 (Opposite) Beautifully-crafted ornamentation on brick construction, depicting an example of the pre-colonial period design. This is one of the few buildings on Shakhari Bazar that is still structurally sound and has retained its authentic design, except for some evident wear and tear





0.15 I am hopeful for sustainability of this historical craft street
0.16 A young girl living in the heritage properties portrays a determined look

Journal
Elasticity of Optimism

23rd August 2014

I once read somewhere that architects are the prime examples of optimists. They have a unique vision that could potentially transform the future, maybe even for the better. It starts in the architect's imagination, and she is optimistic enough to think that this exact vision will be able to replicate itself in real life, and that other people would also perceive the space and its effects just like she had imagined in her head. I am also an optimist. Therefore, when I faced this question of Shakhari Bazar's future in the sustainable reconstruction of its heritage, my first instinct was to address the situation from various perspectives and disciplines that go beyond architecture. I believe this street should be able to satisfy the needs of the craftsmen, their families, the country's economic growth, and the other occupants.

"The participants in the dialogues die one by one and meanwhile those who will take their places are born, some in one role, some in another"

-Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities

Shakhari Bazar stands on the sacred site where the Buriganga River converges with the land to yield purity according to the locals, and they still craft shakhas which are a symbol of longevity and prosperity among the Hindu community. Various other unique craftsmen have also made their space in the street. In recent years, regardless of the economic undervaluing of their crafts, it seems like the unspoken function of these craftsmen to retain the identity and culture of the street from the past 400 years. I believe these artisans that have carried their traditional crafts for hundreds of years on the same street, hold the answer to our existing dilemma. However, the questions remain – how far can we stretch the extent of physical change to the street before it snaps itself a new identity, and will we be able to retain the identity without having to freeze the changing lifestyle along the way? I would like to remain optimistic and say that one day the site will be seen as an icon for the future cultural, architectural and economic enhancement.

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