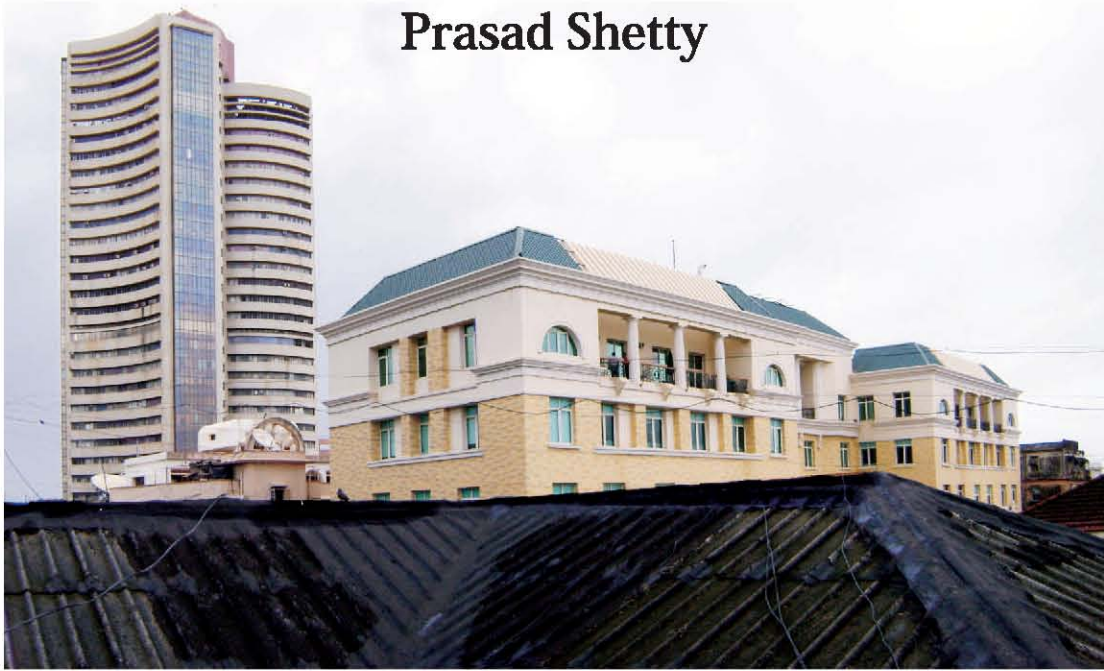


RETHINKING HERITAGE

Prasad Shetty



The paper examines the relationship between historiography, heritage discourse and conservation, in the context of the Mumbai's Heritage Movement. It is based on the contention, that historiography not only shapes the manner in which definitions of heritage get formed, but also the way the intervention strategy is imagined.

1. Manufactured Heritage

One of the first tasks in this paper, is to explore the link between historiography and the discourse of heritage. In the Indian context, it is not difficult to presume this link, especially when the champions of heritage repeatedly use history, of the “glorious past”, as the primary and the only defining framework for valuing something as heritage.

“They (the old buildings) are very much a part of our communities even today; and have much to teach us about our glorious past” (Deobhakta, 1992).

“The British left behind many valuable legacies, like language, social customs, administrative and judicial systems... their architecture, which boasts of imperial splendour, is an essential part of Bombay's glorious past” (Kanga, 1994).

“Prior to its colonisation by the British, the glorious ancient culture of India dominated primarily by the Hindus, Buddhists and then the Mohammedans, was always in the process of evolution. Although on the political face it shows the usual tussle, on the cultural side, one sees a process of assimilation” (Dengle, 1992).

Kanga's celebration and Dengle's scepticism of the same colonial rule, raises important questions of whose past, and which past is being addressed. While serious academic history has regularly questioned this “glorious past” (Thapar, 1966 Kosambi, 1975), architectural historians still seem to make bizarre assumptions on historical narratives. It seems from such texts, that for identification of architectural heritage, the questions of history do not matter. Let us then see exactly what matters for architectural heritage. We would focus on the heritage movement in Mumbai to analyse what kind of historiography goes into manufacturing heritage, as a consciousness of people.

In writing Mumbai's history, the State Gazetteer discusses chronological events in rigid classifications of the Ancient, Medieval, Mohammedan, Colonial and Modern eras (Chaudhari, 1986). These classifications not only exist in the history writing exercises of the country (Mujumdar, Raychaudhuri, and Datta 1978) but also have become the backbone of architectural histories (Brown, 1956 Tadgell, 1990). When architectural history adopts such a classification, a new tool of analysis is born: “the style”. Buildings become representatives of a “period” and could be identified by how they look. Or in other words: “In what Style?” becomes the most important architectural history question. Heritage advocates seem to inherit an obsessive tendency for classifying buildings into, styles often reinforcing them with powerful adjectives.

“The stretch of Dr. D. N. Road is dotted with finest Victorian and Edwardian architectural edifices. Ranging from Venetian Neo-Gothic style of the Victoria Terminus; the Indo-Saracenic expression of the Municipal Headquarters; Neo-Classical features of the State Bank of Indore; the Mumbai Vernacular of Badri Mahal, and the flamboyant Art Deco of the Citi Bank, a veritable open air exhibition of magnificent heritage buildings can be witnessed along this route” (Lambah, 2002).

A more ambitious history by Mehrotra and Dwivedi (1995) classifies historical evidences based on chronological physical development in the city. But more importantly, this seminal work undertakes the writing of history in a very different manner: it describes events and buildings, relating them to the other contexts of the city along with discussing the cultural, and architectural merits.

“In 1735, Lawjee Nuserwanji, a Parsi foreman from the Company's shipyard at Surat, was invited to build ships and modernize the Bombay Shipyard. Lawjee's arrival with his family, marks the beginning of Bombay's ultimate transformation, into one of the busiest seaports in Asia... The classic Georgian style Saint Andrews was completed in 1819. An elegant spire was added in 1823... Next, stood a large, palatial building with a lofty porch. Initially it served as the residence of Governor Hornby, and thereafter from 1770 to 1795, as Admiralty House,

residence of Commander-in-Chief of the Indian fleet. The other important building on this street was the Secretariat or Writer's building" (Dwivedi and Mehrotra, 1995).

The work however foregrounds another important feature of history writing: the selective glorification of certain people and certain monumental buildings. It's attempts however to describe events and physical structures, where data is inadequate results into gross generalisations.

"By the middle of the 18th century, more immigrants came to the Bombay region, including Bhandaris from Choul, Vanjaras from the Ghat country, slaves from Madagascar, Bhatias, Bantias and Parsees and goldsmiths, ironsmiths and weavers from Gujrat. This influx was followed by a new wave of immigrants comprising potters and tile makers, kolis from across the harbour and kamathi construction workers. ... Densely populated colonies developed at Bhuleshwar, Kalbadevi, the CP Tank area and Pydhoni, were Hindu immigrants from Gujrat, Kathiawar, Kutch and Marwar came and settled in sizable numbers" (Dwivedi and Mehrotra, 1995).

The work of Dwivedi and Mehrotra (1995) is a significant shift in writing the city's history, and it lays the foundation for identification of heritage. The families of Lawjee Nuserwanji become city builders, and the buildings like the Saint Andrews, the Admiralty House and Writer's building become buildings that housed the city's history. While this history associated with buildings is able to become the "collective memory of the city", (Dossal, 1994), it ignores millions of other contributions.

After subscribing to all the naivety, adjectives, bizarre assumptions, obsessive classification, selective glorification and gross generalisations in these histories, the heritage activists took another step of targeting new developments and rendering them as abrupt/hazardous/ insensitive/threatening to the older environment.

"The elegant architecture of historic buildings has been defaced, by incongruous air-conditioning units, poorly designed sign boards, additions of upper floors and changes to the original colour schemes and fenestration. The bustling arcades are further congested with a multitude of hawkers and street dwellers" (Lambah, 2002).

"(The Fort Area's) highly structured physical diagram reinforced by magnificent buildings make it an incredible urban design example, especially as it is, counter to the megalomaniac schemes (characterized by high rise buildings) at Nariman Point (and) Cuff Parade... (But) the transformations taking place in the Fort Precinct are dramatically altering its structure and image" (Nest and Mehrotra, 1994).

The high-rise buildings, the air-conditioning units, and the hawkers all were problematic for the aesthetics subscribed by the heritage activists. With such ambiguously constructed values, supported by concocted histories, they were able to do one thing: manufacture heritage. Further they made another ambiguous move: they argued for the protection of this heritage.

The reasons for this were often explained through gross simplifications, or arrogant imperatives, or even vague fears of losing the past.

"(Conservation is essential) to maintain or create surroundings which enable individuals to locate their identity and derive security, despite abrupt and rapid social changes, historic continuity must be preserved in the environment... It is warranted essential by the need to retain (heritage) for the next generation" (Thapar, 1988)

"We have lost most of our earlier urban heritage. We are now in the process of loosing extremely rich medieval towns... Pressures of development are causing serious fractures in the historic fabric of Indian Cities" (Jain and Jain, 1992)

This romanticism for the past, sees buildings out of their contexts. Colguhoun (1996), links this position of romanticism to the writing of history suggesting that such a "view of architecture is absolutist". Colguhoun further articulates that, in its concern to stress the uniqueness of each culture, this history overlooked the extent to which cultures are based on the ideas and principles of other cultures. The heritage activists were not only unable to see this relationship between cultures but also failed to realise, that built environments, are products of a context and the new context of the city has its own definition of urban form. A. G. K. Menon (1989) suspects the cultural orthodoxy of the heritage activists as being politically motivated, especially in a time, which is "witnessing the rise of cultural fundamentalism and communalism". Sangeet Sharma's (1993) set of interviews with several intellectuals and politicians of Mumbai, affirms Menon's fear, where everyone was ready to undertake the burden of saving the history of the city. The amount of support such romanticism could gather in the political realm, is evident by the formation of the Heritage Committee, and the Heritage Regulations under pressures from few intellectuals and NGOs in the city.

While the arguments spurred by nostalgia remain the most powerful, and simultaneously, the most ambiguous in explaining the need to conserve heritage, other arguments are more articulate on the matter. Cyrus Guzder (1993) traces the origins of the heritage conservation movement, as an environmental movement. His account tends to suggest that heritage was a useful tool to promote an awareness, that was necessary to save the city of haphazard development, which was threatening the physical health of the city, its infrastructure as well as the liveability. The other argument floated for heritage conservation, is that it protects the traditional skills and work patterns (Dilawari, 1997). The argument is articulated well in the Kanga Committee report on Urban Heritage of Mumbai (1992): "In a poor country, the case of adaptive reuse was compelling... to retain the socio-economic character of traditional areas".

Both the above arguments contend for a version of environmental and economic sustainability, that is not contextual. The coming in of hawkers in arcades, and the rise of tall buildings are functions of the economy. The arguments for environmental sustainability have been under severe critical scrutiny in recent times, (Vishwanathan, 2002) generally rendering them, as elite preoccupation for a clean and green landscape without hawkers and slums. On the other hand,



Figure 3: Archival Material sourced by the Kamla Raheja Institute for manufacturing heritage consciousness (Source: Design Cell, KRVIA)

classical colonial buildings, to include labour housing, infrastructure and even older work based settlements like the fishing villages. The importance of this elaboration is the inclusion of more people who have contributed towards building the city, rather than selectively glorifying some. There is a whole issue of 'identity and empowerment' hidden here. Rahul Shrivastava's (2002) 'neighbourhood project' on involving youth of the labour community to write a new history theorises this empowering capacity of history. Shrivastava argues that being included in the history of a place gives tremendous sense of belonging. And this sense of identity is important specifically in the current conditions of extreme economic polarity overlapped with high ethnic fundamentalism.

In this section, I shall focus on the methodological shifts in writing of alternative histories. While Kosambi (1989) develops a contextual spatio-cultural analysis and Shrivastava (2002) argues for local communities writing their own history, a third methodology developed much earlier by Damodar Kosambi (1975) becomes a backbone to understand Indian history, from an alternative framework. Damodar Kosambi critiques the conventional writing of Indian history, as being lost in myths and glorifications, and attributes this to the unavailability of related data

in literature, archaeology and anthropology. Showing a distinct Marxist leaning, this work defines history "as the presentation, in chronological order, of successive developments in the means and relations of production", to tell how people lived at any period (Kosambi, 1975). Damodar Kosambi's work puts together a history of India as a function of the changing economy.

The above methodological shifts, were adopted by the Kamla Raheja Institute for Architecture to develop a history of architecture and urbanism in Mumbai. The framework that was developed through studying various geographies of the city, looked at history, as changing modes of production, identifying shifts in the economy of the city and its effects on the built environment (Design Cell, 2000a, 2001). Environments of the city are considered here as a function of the changing economy. Five overlapping phases are identified in the growth of Mumbai's economy: the agrarian economy, the mercantile economy, the industrial economy, the service economy and the financial economy. Changes in City Landscape, State Policy, Built Form, Urban development practices and perceptions of the city are mapped with respect to changes in the economy. The focus of this history shifts from classifications of buildings into glorious eras, to understanding economic landscapes, from identifying styles to identifying types and contexts and from narrating glorious events to documenting people's lifestyles. The framework elaborates identification of heritage, from built-structures to include work conditions, living conditions and other city cultures. The most important shifts from the conventional discourse could be identified when the studies include labour housing, fishing villages, informal industries and slums as heritage of the city along with classical revivals and art deco buildings.

Another experiment by Collective Research Initiatives Trust (CRIT), goes ahead not only in academically articulating writing of history, but also involving communities in such writing. The formulation of a "community diary" by CRIT was one such experiment where this history written by people and put together in form of a diary, was used as a bargaining tool with the government for urban services (Shetty, 2003). This is a case demonstrating the use of history as an empowering tool.

3. Questioning Conservation

Expanding the scope of heritage identification, and articulation of an alternative framework for history questions, the idea of preserving and conserving heritage. The large question is if the slum, the dilapidated labour housing and the fishing village are the heritage of the city, then



Figure 4: Historic Leather Industry in Dharavi Slum (Source: Design Cell, KRVIA)

how do we strategise an intervention in such condition. I present here three cases of strategising interventions that were carried out, based on the new heritage articulation. The first case is an instance of mobilising the community to take care of their own environments, against the dominant interests of builders and politicians, the second is a case of developing a cooperative in the slum, and the third an ongoing discussion on the city fringes where rapid urbanisation is threatening the livelihood of people.

The first project was undertaken, by research and consultancy wing of the Kamla Raheja Institute for Architecture, on the old residential district of Mumbai (Design Cell, 1998, 1999, 2000b). The infrastructure and service resources of these districts, were under threat of getting appropriated by builders, who were undertaking rampant development activities on account of high land prices, and the proximity of the area to the business centre. Very few members of the local community were aware and interested in the issue. The project began with an attempt at manufacturing a sense of heritage for the precinct. The study group undertook various researches and pulled out archival material, to prove that the place was designed, as per the garden city rules, in Europe, and is only one of its kinds in Asia. Presentations were made to a number of residents' groups to bring about a consciousness for heritage. The Group was successful in mobilising the community and putting pressure on the Government, to declare the area as a "heritage precinct". A set of institutional and financial strategies was formulated to realign varied interests and resources to benefit the area. This project used heritage as a tactic to organise communities, towards becoming active participants in the otherwise, polarised processes of urban conservation in the city.

The second project was on Dharavi (the largest slum in Asia) by the students of Kamla Raheja Institute of Architecture (KRVA, 2003). Having developed a newer framework for history as discussed in the second section of this paper, the institute decided to focus on mapping work patterns in the slum, and looking at history of the slum, as the history of service labour in the city. The study found that this slum was much older, that many of the colonial buildings in the city had harboured some of the oldest industries. This was definitely the city's heritage. The big question was however to articulate a method to deal with such a heritage especially, in the context, where large apartment blocks were being constructed to rehabilitate slum dwellers, and clean the city of slums. The tangible form of heritage, which was the slum itself, was under threat, but protecting it would be absurd. The question the study-group asked itself was, why the notion of heritage, was important to the place. After extensive debate, the group articulated that it is the history of workers and their work, of small-scale industries that is the heritage of the place. The new apartment blocks were stripping the people of this traditionally developed work culture, and their livelihood opportunities. Moreover, the labour intensive small industries of food, garment, leather and ceramics were under threat with the new cleanliness drive. The study group mapped labour conditions and service industry in detail, towards identifying opportunities that could be taken advantage of. The slum was seen as an industry with the slum dwelling as a unit of production, and slum dweller as a unit of enterprise. The problem was that this industry has several middlemen, appropriating the large profits created in these industries.

As against the earlier efforts of the state to provide or facilitate the provision of housing, for slum dwellers, this study proposed a formation of a cooperative, so as to enhance the economy generating capabilities of the slum dwellers, and expected this move to address the other living conditions. This project formulated history, so as to articulate heritage as a culture, of work that requires protection and promotion.

The third project is undertaken by the Collective Research Initiatives Trust on the Vasai-Virar sub region, which is the northern periphery of Mumbai city. The region has an agrarian economy with a number of tribal, agricultural and fishing communities. The pressures of urbanisation has been immense in the recent years, with the builders' lobby, trying to appropriate maximum land and the state seeing the whole region as a dump-yard of Mumbai city. The development plan proposed by the state makes extensive reservations for cattle sheds, garbage dumps and slum rehabilitation schemes in the area. While we see that there is a tremendous external pressure for change, there is also an internal pressure: of the youth aspiring to discontinue the rural economy and settle in an urban landscape. The whole scenario seems to threaten tangible and intangible heritage of buildings, institutions, natural environment and local cultures. The Study Group adopted a position, that local aspirations are not eternal, but are constructs that can be changed. Hence the myth of urban services in the minds of the youth, had to be offset, with providing high yielding economic opportunities along with good services. The Study group decided to file an objection, with the government on the development plan on behalf of the community, aiming to get environmental protection norms into the development plan. The Study Group further undertook a study of identifying heritage buildings and precincts in the area, so as to get them listed and protected and hence target the builder lobby's aspiration, of extensive development. Currently, the Study Group is working towards developing three village strategy plans as pilot projects for an agricultural village, a fishing village and a tribal settlement. The aim here is not only to make communities participate in the planning process, but to strengthen local capacity for economic development.

The surveys here focus on capacity and opportunity. The project has several components with history writing, as one of the main components. The history perhaps has to be written with several objectives: to identify heritage, to identify trajectories in socio-economic landscapes, and also to make a case of neglect and appropriation of the area. The project again uses heritage as a tactic essentially to mobilise communities and argue with the government.

4. Conclusions: Alternative Histories And Multiple Heritage

The critique of historiography and the conventional heritage discourse in the first section along with the description of a alternative history in the second section perhaps, is able to identify many environments in the city that are of significant heritage value, but, which seem to escape the conventional definitions of heritage. The first and second sections attribute this problem to the methods of historiography. In this section I shall briefly revisit the issue of conventional heritage to consider its validity in the city of Mumbai.

The relation between tourism and heritage has been frequently explored (Orbasli, 2003). Quite often, the heritage sought for the consumption of tourists, is of the nature, that our heritage activists were championing to save (the conventional heritage). A slum or labour housing has yet to become objects for aesthetic consumption, (though recently there is a rising demand for this, specifically with some adventure tourists or anxious intellectuals). With demands of tourism for a certain aesthetic, it is natural that steps are taken to protect buildings in the city that would satisfy such demands. On the other hand, we also observe (through the quotations earlier) that there is a pride to claim a European legacy and an aspiration for living in a European environment, without hawkers in the arcades and air-conditioners on building facades. Though conventional heritage remains, not so original and authentic as it claims, such heritage satisfies some aspirations and brings some money into the city. And for these reasons, perhaps it is relevant to conserve such a heritage, unless, this conservation threatens livelihoods and rights of others, who hold stakes in such heritage. Hence the conservation strategy requires a protection and rehabilitation not only for the buildings, but also for the people who hold stakes in it. Perhaps then, even coffee table histories discussing architectural styles could be rendered relevant as they create and substantiate the demand for the heritage aesthetic.

But as discussed in the third section, history and heritage not only have a value for consumption, but also for the purposes of identity and empowerment. It is for these values that alternative histories are required. Moreover the third section also describes the uses of branding environments as heritage where heritage becomes an important tool with immense power to mobilise communities, gather support and organise sectors. Hence I want to conclude with suggesting that while the mainstream heritage activists continue doing, with what they have been doing, we need theorists and practitioners to undertake writings of many alternative histories which conceptualise multiple kinds of heritage towards empowering cultures and organising communities for protecting their environments and opportunities from being appropriated.

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A one-anna streetcar named Bombay

Nina Martyris | TNN

Mumbai: They were part of the city's roads for close to a century. Initially drawn by horses and then by electricity, trams carted lakhs of people across the city every day. Introduced by the British in Calcutta, Kanpur, Madras, Delhi and Karachi, the tram has been discontinued everywhere except Kolkata.



Frank Conlon

Prof Frank Conlon, a scholar of modern India, will talk about this historic chapter in the city's public transport later this week. A professor emeritus of South Asian History at the University of Washington, Seattle, Dr Conlon has written on the dining out culture in Mumbai and the Chitrapur Saraswat Brahmins, a subject he is revisiting. Excerpts from an e-mail interview:

Q. What sparked your interest in Mumbai's trams?

A. I came to Mumbai first in 1965 to do research for my Ph.D thesis. Subsequently I revisited the city perhaps ten times over the last 42 years. I feel Mumbai is a second home. Because I have always had an enthusiast's interest in electric railways—what Americans call 'street cars' and Indians call 'trams'—I kept taking notes on the side regarding the origins, rise and decline of tramways in Bombay. Unfortunately

the last trams came off the road in 1964 so I came here a year too late to see them in operation. On the other hand, the tracks and overhead wires were still in place on what is now Dr Ambedkar Road. Indeed, folks still refer to Dadar TTT meaning Tram Terminus.

Q. What was Bombay like when the trams were introduced?

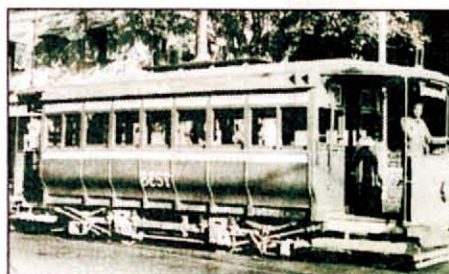
A. The idea of a street railway was mooted in Bombay in 1864 during the so-called 'cotton boom' when the city's population had more than doubled in a few years. However, the process of permissions and raising capital was slow, and horse trams did not arrive until 1873 under the auspices of an American company, the Bombay Tramway Company, which raised most of its capital in the United States.

Q. What did the trams look like?

A. Most of the tramway cars were modelled on American cars, but were built here. They involved rows of seats across the car on which four people could sit comfortably (and the Tramway company insisted that five must occupy.) They were open, so that during the rains, curtains were hung to offer some protection.

Q. How much of the city was covered by trams?

A. The tram routes were laid out only in settled and fairly densely congested areas of the city. The first line went from Colaba to Pydhonie via Crawford Market—negotiating the very narrow streets of the neighbourhood between the market and Pydhonie. A second line diverged at Bori Bunder to Dhobi Talao and then by



Kalbadevi Road to Pydhonie; soon the service was extended to the Byculla Bridge. Other lines were added later to serve what the British called the 'native town'. On the other hand, the horse cars were not allowed on Queen's (Karve) Road because it was assumed they would interfere with the convenience of well-to-do Indians and Europeans in the carriages travelling to Malabar and Cumballa Hill.

Q. Didn't the rich and famous also use trams?

A. A lot of people whom I met in the 1960s were nostalgic about the trams, but I cannot recall any famous person talking to me about it. One very famous person who did NOT ride the trams was Mohandas K Gandhi. In his autobiography he relates his early days in Bombay as a briefless barrister walking from his residence to the courts rather than paying the one anna fare.

Q. Why were the trams discontinued?

A. They were regarded by the corporators as old fashioned and inefficient, and BEST—which

had been taken over by the corporation after swaraj—regarded them as a dead weight because the tram fare was frozen at its early 20th century rate of one anna, while bus routes, which were introduced from the 1920s onwards, charged fares by 'stages' as they do today, so that a long journey costs proportionally more than a short journey.

Q. Which cities in the world still have trams?

A. Most cities in the world that retained trams did so either because there was not a significant growth of automobiles—for example in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In the US almost all cities pushed trams off the road because they were not 'modern'. One city that stayed with trams right through was Melbourne in Australia which has a wonderful network. In cities in America where geography restricts the access of buses, as in Pittsburgh or San Francisco, light rail services operate through tunnels to overcome hilly geography. In the UK, tramways are being re-introduced under the name 'light rail' and use heavier, longer carriages and private rights-of-way.

Mumbai's geography makes such applications problematic—except perhaps in some areas of North Mumbai or Navi Mumbai. Trams are not obsolete, but trying to reintroduce them to South Mumbai would be a daunting project.

(Dr Conlon's lecture is on Feb 15 at 5 pm at St Xavier's College. Organised by Mumbai study group Pukar and St Xavier's history dept)

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TICKET TO RIDE: On March 31, 1964 the last tram travelled from Bori Bunder to Dadar. It was packed with VIPs and souvenir hunters eager to buy and preserve the last tram's ticket; on left, a BEST tram car

Sewri, Ghodbunder forts on way to regaining old world charm

Directorate of Archaeology and Museums appoints contractors to restore 2 edifices under the 'Integrated Development of Mumbai Fort Circuit'

LEKHA AGARWAL

JULY 23

AS THE restoration of the Bandra and Worli forts rapidly progresses as planned under the 'Integrated Development of Mumbai Fort Circuit' (see box), the government has simultaneously made headway on the plan for the makeover of Sewri and Ghodbunder forts—contractors were appointed last week and work is likely to commence by August.

Incidentally, the contractors who are restoring the Bandra and Worli forts will also be giving

a facelift to the Sewri and Ghodbunder forts. Devang Constructions, overhauling the Bandra Fort, has been appointed for the ambitious Rs 3.59 crore Sewri project and Laxmi Waterproofing and Construction Company, which is giving a Rs 1.61 crore makeover to the Worli Fort, will undertake the work at Ghodbunder Fort, according to R N Hegde, Director, Archaeology and Museums.

Hegde is most keen that work on the Sewri Fort commences at the earliest, given the "great scope" the structure offers. Located on the eastern waterfront

Sewri Fort



Restoration under Rs 7.65-crore project

The Government of India, Ministry of Tourism is funding the Rs 7.65 crore Integrated Development of Mumbai Fort Circuit that envisages the restoration of five forts—Bandra, Ghodbunder, Sewri, Worli and Vasai—to boost tourism. While the Archaeological Survey of India will restore the Vasai Fort (since it is a nationally protected monument), the state Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, which owns the remaining four forts, will undertake their conservation work.

and standing on a quarried hill, the fort is a Grade I heritage structure and was used as a check-post when the British originally built it in 1680.

Today, while it is in "better structural condition compared to other city forts", it is in dire need of a serious overhaul—piles of garbage are found along the waterfront and the structure itself is used as a public toilet. Plus, the site needs to be cleaned of weeds and small shrubs, creepers hugging the masonry need to go, fractures and voids in the walls have to be filled, and the roof and floor re-

quire major repairs.

While these issues will be looked into during phase I, the plan chalked out by the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums proposes an amphitheatre, promenade, mangrove park, a museum and also a special gallery for viewing the flamingos that frequent the Sewri mudflats (their winter habitat).

Also awaiting an overhaul is the Ghodbunder Fort, 43 km from Mumbai and built by the Portuguese. It offers breathtaking views of the Bassein Creek, which will be optimised during

the restoration. The immediate priority is the "surface vegetation that has led to large-scale disintegration of the stone," says Assistant Archaeologist B V Kulkarni, who has extensively researched forts across the city. In phase II, tourist friendly amenities like signage, illumination, landscaping, toilets, car parking and drinking water facilities would be made available.

Meanwhile, the Rs 67 lakh restoration of the Bandra Fort "should be completed by Diwali latest", says Hegde. After all, this will be the first showpiece of the Rs 7.65 crore project.