



On The Edge

Planning, Describing and Imagining the Seaside Edge of Mumbai

Source: Max Lehnenkugel

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Introduction

As we find it today, Mumbai is a city literally poised on the edge. The capital of the state of Maharashtra, and informally, the financial capital of India, it is a city of about 12 million people occupying 437 square kilometres on a long and narrow piece of land that juts out of the western coast of India into the Arabian Sea. It is separated from the mainland on the east for most of its length by the Thane creek. It is also the rare big city with a natural forest within its city limits. The Sanjay Gandhi National Park, a protected forest, drives a large wedge into the land mass in the northern part of the city and creates a V-shaped natural edge along it. Add to that the Mithi river, which connects to the Mahim creek as well as the region along Malad creek, and the edge with nature is revealed as a preponderant aspect of the physical reality of the city.

A map of the city from 1843 reveals that much of Mumbai's central landmass was itself either an edge or was part of the crossover zone of wilderness and land (Edney 1997 and Tindall 1982). Mumbai's development has basically been a negotiation with the edges of each of the seven islands as well as of the larger island of Salsette which, housing the extended suburbs, is the major part of Mumbai's footprint today. The edge condition is a huge part of the experience of the city, also due to a variety of human interventions like the urban rail and road transport corridors. For instance, the linearity of the city's geographical base is further heightened by the manner in which the two railway lines and two major interstate highways break it up into thinner strips on plan. Thus, Mumbai's basic urban form, from one perspective, is that of an array of slivers with edge experiences and situations on either side of each sliver. This sliver form is merely a

distorted projection into the present of an earlier centrality of the edge condition for Mumbai.

Significance of the Edge with Water

Against this background, we would like to make a preliminary exploration into the manner in which the city has taken cognizance of this preponderance of natural edges in its expanse, especially through the process of planning. Because of its preponderance as well as of the implications of the sea and a forest adjacent to it, the study of edge conditions of the city as a whole is critical for places like Mumbai. It is also important in general, given that coasts the world over are urbanizing fairly rapidly. In India too, riversides and seashores are the sites of many important cities. For instance, every one of the four major cities of the moment, New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata (formerly Calcutta) and Chennai (formerly Madras) is fronted either by a river or a

sea. After all, three of these cities Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai were created by the British as trading centers connected to the international maritime trade routes. They therefore owe their very existence to the peculiarities of geography that enabled them to become important ports. Many other economically and politically important cities like Ahmedabad, Pune, and Patna too have significant length and location of river fronts within the city limits, though of course the case of river front cities requires separate consideration.⁽¹⁾

Through this preliminary overview of issues relating to the conceptualization of the region at the edge between land and water, we hope to argue that it is a very special condition, especially when it is shared with the sea, and that this specialness includes but also extends beyond the ecological dimension (which is possibly the most critical of all, as the recent tsunami demonstrated

all over South and Southeast Asia). It therefore becomes important to enquire into the attitudes of the planning establishment (which includes professional planning bodies as well as the state which ultimately controls them) towards the natural edge and the purported wilderness beyond. In doing this, we shall also suggest that at least part of the problem is the absence of an adequately rich description of the edge with nature as a multi-dimensional entity. The absence of description is naturally accompanied by shallow understanding, which is reflected in the largely instrumental official view of this zone.



Source: Max Lehnenkugel

Narratives of the Edge

At the moment, it appears that the main narratives informing urban development in Mumbai so far have been the following:

- a) The narrative of urban development which seeks always to occupy and push the natural edge 'out', and to expand the city's footprint and zone of impact
- b) The narrative of the edge as a space for the experience, and thence the consumption of nature, that needs to be opened up more extensively for private and public use.

The first narrative is of course the dominant one and continues to be so, given that it has always had the support of the business elite of Mumbai, and a grip on the developmental imagination of the political class (Guha 1996).

It has overseen the various policies and practices of expansion and emission into the sea and the creeks that the city authorities have mobilized over the last century and more. The second narrative, which appears to be the 'softer' aesthetic side-theme in the progress of Mumbai's development has actually been given some strength by the economic value attached to the aesthetics of the seaside view and breeze in the hot and humid modern city. This narrative has recently achieved greater prominence with the

emergence of a middle and upper class citizens' movement to convert many seaside edges into policed but public promenades⁽²⁾. In this focus on public space, as well as through its operation in the market for private property, this narrative has marched in step with the first one.

In the light of many problems that the unrestricted run of these two narratives has unleashed upon Mumbai, a couple of counter narratives have emerged, which lack any serious popular or political support, as yet:

- c) The ecological narrative of the edge as a special ecological zone (which is also critical to the survival of the city), which needs to be preserved and protected against ecologically destructive development, and
- d) The narrative of the human rights of the original dwellers of the edge, the fishing communities, whose economic and cultural survival have been mortally affected by the city's tinkering with the seaside edge.

Finally, an as yet inadequately formulated narrative, is

- e) The narrative of heritage which focuses on the cultural and historical resources that are gathered together along the edge as we find it today.



Source: Max Lehnenkugel

What is striking is that there is no evidence of an integrated developmental narrative having been formed by any of the planning authorities (or by responsive actors from civil society), which engages with the different concerns that each of the above narratives focuses on in a coordinated manner. Part of the problem is that an integrated description of the edge as it is found today does not exist. We shall develop a brief description of the seaside edge on the western coast of Mumbai that interweaves the core concerns of some of the narratives above. We hope that this will give a sense of the essential interrelatedness of these diverse concerns. Such a description, we further hope, will foreshadow the possibilities for an integrated narrative.

Describing the Edge

Mumbai's seaside edges on the east and the west have a very different relationship to the rest of the city. Broadly, the eastern edge is currently occupied by the port, oil refineries and related activities of storage and manufacture, which virtually cuts the city off from the sea. This seaside edge is thus a 'barrier' to the sea with most residents of the city not having direct experience of this edge at all, except for occasional dramatic glimpses of cranes and masts of ships one gets from vantage points like the elevated Dockyard Road local railway station. Much of the land along

this edge is owned by the Mumbai Port Trust, a state body, and is currently the object of a tug of war between this agency and civic activists in the city who believe that with the greater success of Nhava Sheva port across the water on the mainland much of the land here should be handed over to the city for its developmental needs. Thus a very important tussle is on with regard to approximately 400 hectares of high-value land in the island city, which could possibly be handed over to the city without disturbing the port activity. Meanwhile on the northeastern extremity of this seaside edge is the large and sensitive installation of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre at Trombay, from within whose campus one can glimpse the Elephanta Island in the distance. In many ways then, the eastern edge is a zone of restricted access, which has been off limits to the public.

The southern tip of the city where the eastern and western edges meet is again largely inaccessible to the city, being under the control of the Indian Navy. The space of the city as a whole truly begins to connect with the Arabian Sea from Cuffe Parade northwards, the connection being consolidated truly for the first time at Marine Drive. However, even along the west coast, the adjacency of public space to the sea is a much-interrupted affair as one goes up the coast right to the tip of Versova, famous as the suburb of showbiz, especially of the television world. The experience of the sea as one travels the edge is thus of an intermittently revealed wilderness. By and large, the city is oriented inward and away from the sea, like most other Indian cities and towns along water (Ramachandran 1989). In addition, Mumbai is entirely focused upon commercial activity that is essentially land-based. Land continues to be both site and object of commerce in the city, in spite of the severe real estate crash in the late 1990s. Possibly, the obsession with land reduces the perceived value of the uninhabitable edge, whether mangroves or inhospitable rocky



Source: Karin Schlerhold

edge is an important marker of the cultural differences in the attitude towards the wilderness between the village and the city that it predates, and is an important contributor to the contemporary conflict between the two imaginations of the edge with the sea. This contradiction is expressed most clearly at the newly renovated promenade for recreation at Carter Road, Bandra at whose northern end the fishing community nearby continues to dry its fish and carry out other productive tasks even as upper middle class joggers turn about for the return jog (Figure 4).

Along with the villages an important feature of the history of the city are the forts that once guarded this stretch of coast (Gaitonde 2004). The most significant of the surviving forts along the western coastline of the city are those at Versova, Bandra, Mahim and Worli. The fort at Mahim is supposed to have been built before 1673 while the Portuguese built the one at Bandra in 1640. There are other forts in the city, which looked out at the creeks and bays on the eastern side, like the ones at Sion and Sewri. Some of these forts predate Mumbai's career as a British built city. They are thus older than the history of Mumbai as a 'produced' city, which really begins, with the handover of the city by the Portuguese to the British in the 1660s as part of the marriage contract between Catherine of Braganza, the Portuguese princess and Charles II of Britain. Interestingly, however, these forts almost never figure in the discourse of the heritage movement in the city, which has tended to conflate Mumbai with South Mumbai's colonial built environment, in terms of the idea of heritage at the very least⁽⁴⁾. A similar relegation, in the discussion of heritage, affects the many religious sites that dot the edge, including among others, the Mahalakshmi Temple, the mosque of Haji Ali nearby, Mount Mary's Church at Bandra and the Ban-ganga Tank at Walkeshwar (Jamkhedkar 1997)⁽⁵⁾. The Ban-ganga Tank, in particular is probably the most important heritage site in the city, purely in terms of its

formations. Such an attitude may have been the foundational framework for the developmental negotiations with the sea, its bays and creeks from early on in the three centuries old career of the city as an important trading center⁽³⁾. The ecological discourse emphasizing the value of the special environmental conditions at the junction of land and sea are of more recent origin and have found it difficult to alter the already existing developmental attitude towards the sea and the forest that the city is intimately connected with.

Much like the city, the many fishing settlements that dot the coast (and whose very survival is today under threat) also have a complex spatial relationship with the sea. Fishing villages occupy specific nodes in the corrugated western coastline of the city all along the coast from Versova southwards, at Juhu, Khar, Mahim, and Bandra, and Cuffe Parade. In many ways, the city and these villages have grown with backs turned towards each other on the one hand, even as on the other, the process of urban development has ensured that the city has effectively encircled and put pressure on the spatial survival of these villages. Spatially, the fishing villages are emphatically introverted, with the edge to the sea being often occupied by the paraphernalia of work- boats, sheds, piers as at Versova fishing village, as well as at the Mahim Bay. This presence of 'work' at the

antiquity, since it was probably first constructed in the 13th Century A.D, and rebuilt in 1715 .

Traditions of Engaging the Sea

These symbols of older traditions of inhabiting the coast reveal an engagement with the sea that is remarkably different from that of the more modern Mumbai. The figure of the sea as a live (almost socialized) agency hovers over fort and temple, church and mosque, as well as on the fishing village gathered together for protection against the elements. The special places of this coastal landscape the forts and the religious spaces are marked by their unusual and dramatic confrontation with the sea. Such a confrontation is not viable for the village and therefore a very complex relationship between the edge dweller and the wilderness is mediated by these places (as well as by spaces of work), through ritual-intention in the case of the religious spaces and through accident by the forts. Of course, the direct confrontation the forts offer with the sea is accidental only in terms of its offer of a unique recreational experience, and is founded upon the capacity of the sea to be the bearer of human threat.

This sense of the agency of the wilderness is markedly absent in the attitude of the modern city towards the wilderness, and it shows in the way the city has treated its edges with the wilderness. Whereas the sea is a very live presence for the fishing village- as the site of a resource that must be obtained with work sometimes at the cost of death, and as the direction from which come storms and flood- the modern city on its shores appears to have a very different understanding of it. The modern western gesture of opening the city to the sea, as at Marine Drive, contrasts with Versova village which turns its back to the sea and creates a social environment 'within', almost like any other landlocked village. The village turns its back to the sea possibly in self-defence, fully alive to the agency of the wilderness. On the contrary, the modern embracing gestures of the city is



Source: Max Lehnenkugel

ultimately founded upon the confidence that the wilderness poses no threat, and is, on the other hand, an object of human contemplation and, in one sense, of consumption.

The sense of connection and of the agency of the wilderness that the fishing villages have towards the sea is directly reflected in their celebration of Narali Pournima ('Naral' means coconut, and 'Pournima' full moon day) the full moon day in the month of Shraavan by the Hindu calendar. On this day, the sea is appeased with offerings of coconuts in the hope that it will remain calm enough for fishing operations to begin after the hiatus in the heart of the monsoon⁽⁶⁾. This integration of the sea into the social life of the village is not mirrored in modern Mumbai's everyday life. Only a residual sense of the connectedness of the city on land and the immense sea at its edge is sustained in continuing rituals like the public immersion of clay idols of Ganesha, the god of beginnings, at the end of the festival associated with him.

Spreading Out

The defining characteristic of Mumbai's growth over the last two centuries and a half must surely be the great impatience the city has shown with its natural limits, especially along its once numerous waterside edges. From being literally a sheaf of

slivers, the city on the map has infilled away to form a single consolidated strip of land as its footprint. Reclamation, in different guises and at different scales and with different degrees of success, appears to be the theme of this development, as result of which creeks have often turned into built-up neighbourhoods. For instance, the Bandra Kurla Complex a shining new business district in the rough geographical center of the length of Mumbai was an already polluted creek less than thirty years ago. Today it stands on the banks of the remnants of the Mithi river now a large open gutter for industrial effluents looking out towards the Maharashtra Nature Park which, in itself, was converted from a garbage refuse transfer center into a mangrove sanctuary.

The process of urban expansion into the sea has changed the edge condition significantly. However, there doesn't appear to be any record of the extent of damage caused in this process to various shoreline phenomena like mangroves or sandy and rocky beaches. While the major extensions of the footprint of the city beyond the existing edge have tended to be undertaken by the state through reclamation schemes, currently most of the land and mangrove area along the coast in the entire Mumbai Metropolitan Region is under threat. There are reports every week in the newspapers about the illegal destruction of mangroves by private developers presumably with the tacit support of corrupt civic officials. Of course, being the leading edge of the developmental narrative the government itself is rarely far from initiating its own schemes that imply the destruction of significant areas under mangroves⁶⁷.

The paradigm of expansion operates also where there is no direct expansion of the physical footprint of the city into the sea. The city may encroach into the sea physically through bridges that fly over bays as with the Bandra-Worli Sea Link that is under construction. Equally, the sea may be used as a recipient of all kinds of waste that the city generates, especially the sewage of

the city, which finally finds its way into the sea through more than a hundred marine outfalls. In both cases, the emergent ecological and human rights narratives have been approached in oppositional terms by the developmental imagination of the state. As elsewhere, moreover, the ecological and the human rights narratives have not been able to align together consistently in countering the developmental imagination of the state. Sometimes, as in the case of the opposition to the Bandra-Worli Sea Link, both narratives have countered the developmental narrative without standing in opposition to each other. The fishing community at the Mahim fishing village has developed a significant movement of protest against this project deriving from the ecological and human rights narratives, with the participation of a variety of activists from civil society from the city beyond the village⁶⁸. Independently of the community protests at Mahim, environmentalists and ecological watchdog groups from civil society have also protested against the ecological heedlessness of the project, effectively strengthening the argument of the fishing community (Goenka 2000). Elsewhere, however, the two narratives can stand in direct opposition. The alarm over the depletion of mangroves along most of the waterside edges of the city has generated a narrative, clearly evident in media reportage, in which the real estate developers as well as a variety of slum settlements are cast as being equally culpable. The dimension of human rights in the case of the slum settlements along mangroves (as well as at the periphery of the Sanjay Gandhi National Park) often appears to be completely irrelevant to the exclusively ecological narrative propagated by many civil society environmentalists. This parallels, in a strange way, the heedlessness of the developmental narrative of the state and the business elite, which sees the destruction caused to fishing communities as a small cost to pay for the benefits that can accrue to the city at large (or more realistically, to its elite)

As with other aspects of Mumbai's development, the real estate market has had a significant say in the manner in which the seaside edge of the city has developed. The interactions of land laws and development rules with the real estate market in Mumbai are complex enough to merit more than one independent study, especially if we take into account the impact of these interactions upon the city's urban form. As it happens, the nature of urban environmental form along the seaside edge in Mumbai is a contingently evolving patchwork of mangroves, rocky shore, older existing settlements, modern private residential and commercial development, and a smattering of public promenades like those at Marine Drive, Worli Sea face, and Bandra.

Mumbai confirms the suspicion that the edge with a particular form of wilderness (river, sea or forest, for instance) is capable of being attractive in the market, unlike other more ordinary peripheries of cities, which are often man made wildernesses of a kind. The lens of leisure or recreation mediates the relationship between the modern urban dweller and the natural wilderness at his feet, whether he is on the promenade or in his apartment ten stories above ground. This has implications for the development of private spaces as well as that of public spaces along the seaside edge, both being related in different ways.

The market is very likely to evince great interest in a 'special' edge when the conditions are favorable. The almost sudden growth of real estate development in Juhu near the beach (and at Versova further north along the coast) after the 1970s is an example of this interest. At the same time, that edge with the wilderness is also prone to suffer from the reduced value afforded to peripheries in general, if it is not inherently hospitable and more specifically, if it does not have special aesthetic appeal understood in terms of the modern expectations of visual reward from nature. Then, as at Charkop, a recently 'developed' suburb in north Mumbai, low cost housing

schemes as well as middle class cooperative housing societies are more likely to be the agents of stabilizing the land for habitation and the speculation that may follow. In the 1990s when Charkop was a newly emergent planned neighbourhood, its western edge was covered with mangroves, which did not yield a pretty sight (or smell). In such cases, the peripheral location (and not the proximity to the sea) is the determining factor in deciding land prices, which can be among the lowest in the city. The discomfort of the periphery is also reflected in the market prices in the eastern parts of Malad and Goregaon, which are nearer the buffer zone separating the city from the Sanjay Gandhi National Park, without great views and with the usual inconveniences of developing urban peripheries.

The Passive Wilderness

The aesthetic appeal of the wilderness, especially the sea (but also the forest) is quite obviously, a significant factor in the logic of the seaside real estate market, mainly in the 'modern' and 'planned' parts of the edge. That appeal has underpinned the popularity of some seaside localities like Bandra, Juhu and Versova for instance, and has put the fragile coastal environment as well as the economic and cultural survival of the original inhabitants into jeopardy. The value put by the modern middle and upper classes of the city on the romanticised wilderness appears to depend to a large extent upon it being a passive wilderness.

In fact much of the popular contemporary imagination of Mumbai's environmental situation appears to rest upon an assumption that the wilderness on either side is an acquiescent non-presence. It is only this assumption that explains the responses of extreme shock towards the many leopard attacks from the direction of the Sanjay Gandhi National Park, that suddenly clustered together in the month of June 2004 or through the recent threat of erosion that the seaside buildings at Versova have faced with some tidal changes

which some environmental activists believe to be connected to the reclamation work carried out at the mouth of the Mahim Creek in the 1970s to create the area known as Bandra Reclamation⁶⁹.

The defanged status imputed to 'nature' in the popular and professional imagination of cities is an obviously modern phenomenon. A variety of planning projects and practices involving the sea suggest a view of the sea and its edge with the city as being less 'alive' or responsive than environmental scientists and activists would believe. Thus the sea continues to be the dumping 'ground' for ever increasing quantities of inadequately treated sewage, and industrial effluents (which in Mumbai, have completely polluted the Mithi river along whose mangrove lined edges a bird sanctuary was active till the 1970s) with the only concession being the increasing length of recent marine outfalls.

In the light of the great increase in the general debate regarding environmental issues over the last three decades it is quite surprising that the mechanism of planning has not been able to integrate ecological concerns into the process of planning, even as lip service has begun to be paid to them. The best illustration of this happens to be the fact that the only law that recognizes the special environmental value of the edge and attempts to protect it, the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, was introduced by the central government of India (under the instruction of the Supreme Court of India) in 1991, and which the government of the state of Maharashtra, like most other state governments, is actively trying to combat in its tearing hurry to develop the city further. It is instructive that the planning establishment of the city (which is in direct touch with the city's peculiar geographical realities) needed a remote agency (the central government in landlocked Delhi) to tell it to care for its coast. This is of course, as true of the rest of the country as of Mumbai (Goenka 2000).

Description and Development

In the foregoing we have sketched the framework of narratives that defines the space of action and discourse regarding the development of the edges of Mumbai city with the wilderness, particularly that with the Arabian Sea to its west. We have argued that urban development has been driven largely by one narrative, even though, as our brief description of the western edge suggests, a richer weave is clearly called for to address the complex interaction of natural, cultural and economic forces that characterizes the inhabited coastline. The differences in the mode of engaging the sea between the modern city and the older villages that were sketched out only emphasize the need for a more nuanced understanding of the 'negotiation' nature of coastal space.

We suspect that the absence of an adequately rich description is involved in the fact that Mumbai's urban development has tended to be driven by a single narrative. Of course, it is true that this developmental narrative equating development with expansion is naturally attractive to most players in the planning establishment and to the social elite of the city. We believe, however, that the absence of a rich description has also contributed to the largely unchallenged run of the dominant narrative. As the increasing influence of the ecological narrative suggests, even in Mumbai, descriptions (and the critiques they spawn) developed from outside the dominant narrative can challenge its power and exert a corrective influence upon the developmental process. The Draft Regional Plan for Bombay Metropolitan Region 1996-2011, for instance, clearly admits that development plans for the city and the region have been progressively influenced by the increasing political and logical power of the ecological narrative (BMRDA, 1995).

A richer description addressing the concerns of the very different narratives mentioned earlier is necessary to lift the legitimate demands of ignored people as well as neglected environmental

phenomena involved with the edge between the city and the wilderness around it, into the consciousness of the planning establishment. Such a description will help compel the dominant narrative to engage with other narratives in a realistic and productive manner than in the more traditional adversarial mode. An integrated narrative of development that could be built upon such a rich description is more likely to disallow any single narrative the luxury of considering others as 'enemy narratives' largely irrelevant to its own concerns.

Two issues regarding the prospects of such an integrated narrative need to be recognized here, in conclusion. To begin with, in Mumbai there has always been a dearth of the most elementary description regarding the environmental, social, technological and historical ground realities of the city, in the form of detailed maps and data. Worse still, efforts to build even such a basic description are measly compared to what is needed. Mumbai's planning establishment lacks any significant institutionalized effort at research on the city. This is not surprising in a city that, to begin with, doesn't have any mechanism to ensure that a professionally qualified city planner is in charge of the complex task of city planning. The construction of a rich integrated narrative thus, looks like an unrealistic prospect.

In the event that such a narrative is indeed possible, and this is the second issue, it is important to note that descriptions are politically significant constructions. A description or a narrative is at the heart of all action. The power of producing authorized descriptions usually translates into a power to remake the world in accordance with that description. The collisions and collusions between narratives in the space of developmental action are ultimately related to larger political processes, as they should be. The act of integrating one or more narratives thus, is an intensely political act, in which the relative weightages of different narratives will inevitably be determined through some arbitrary logic or

political mechanism. In this context, it would be naïve to think of description as an effective substitute for political action by the proponents of different narratives. However, this issue could be turned around so that it yields one strategy to address the general inadequacy of descriptions and knowledge regarding the city. Thus, an inherently political process involving a large variety of lobbies and localities in the constant production of a greater range of narratives could be one way of preparing the ground for the development of an ever evolving integrated developmental narrative.

The recent emergence of civil society activism in specific localities of Mumbai city offers one small sign that such a decentralized process of building description and developmental action is possible. Though limited to the upper and middle classes, and to projects with a specific aesthetic or cultural agenda, the qualified success of such activism suggests that there is scope in civil society for the growth of initiatives of description and self-description by other actors and lobbies. This represents an avenue for the development of a range of descriptions and developmental narratives, which may yet persuade the planning establishment to acknowledge the complexity of the ground realities that it has so consistently ignored so far in the case of the natural edges of the city.

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Footnotes

1. The cultural dimension is of much greater significance in any approach to the Indian riverfront city, given the rich traditions of

ritual mediation between communities and the rivers from which they have derived physical and spiritual sustenance. The most famous example of this would be Varanasi in north India, which has the Ganges passing through it.

2. In Bandra, an affluent seaside suburb in the northern part of Mumbai, after an unusually successful upper middle class citizens' campaign two underdeveloped but popular seaside streets were handed over by the civic authorities to local citizens' groups who designed, constructed and continue to maintain a promenade each. These spaces are extremely popular but also insidiously exclusive public spaces.
3. Reclamations have been a persistent dream in the imagination of Mumbai's development. See Guha (1996) for an account of the Backbay reclamation scheme that spanned over a century.
4. Mumbai's heritage movement has been among the most successful in the country. In 1995, Mumbai became the first city in India to have developed building byelaws that protected heritage structures in its southern precincts. It should be noted here that a research project documenting the forts in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region is currently underway at Rachana Sansad's Academy of Architecture, Mumbai, with the support of the Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority, the government agency responsible for planning for Mumbai.
5. It must be admitted that out of the lot, the Ban-ganga complex has had a significant presence in the consciousness of the heritage movement of the city, but has been difficult to protect and restore possibly because of the intricate interplay of cultural practices, local politics and real estate interests which resists any durable 'outside' intervention.
6. The monsoon in Mumbai lasts from June to September every year.
7. See Indian Express April 14, 2005, which

carries a report about a proposal to complete the 'missing link road' between Juhu and Versova which would involve the destruction of almost 20 acres of mangroves.

8. Girish Raut, personal conversations over mid 2004. Raut is a civil society activist involved in organizing the protest by the Mahim fishing village against the Bandra-Worli Sea Link.
9. The casual attitude of citizens themselves towards the forest is exemplified by an illegal recreation ground in the suburb of Mulund that encroached upon the adjacent Sanjay Gandhi National Park, which is a protected forest. Apparently built by a local elected representative in the state legislative assembly, this park was regularly used by people in spite of the known threat of leopard attacks. It was demolished in September 2004 by the Forest Department. (Newline, Indian Express, September 8, 2004 p 3)
10. For instance, civil society groups have been able to conduct art festivals and upgrade the physical realities of their localities. The Kala Ghoda Art Festival in South Mumbai became a catalyst for the formation of the Kala Ghoda Association, which comprises of institutions and organizations operating in the small precinct in the Fort area. This association has tried to upgraded streetscapes, introduced new signage, produced its own maps, and a specific narrative regarding the nature of this precinct as an art district. Similarly, a residents association in Bandra has developed a squalid seaside edge into a long promenade (see footnote 2), even as other such associations have tried to address the problem of garbage disposal and general beautification in their localities. A promising initiative in an old heritage precinct called Khotachiwadi has recently put the power of self-description into the hands of local residents, which can change the narrative earlier formed by architects and conservationists.

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