PK Das
Principal, PK Das and Associates, Mumbai

Mumbai: The Waterfront Project

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ON THE WATERFRONT

RECLAIMING MUMBAI’S OPEN SPACES

P K Das Architect- Mumbai Waterfronts Centre
Abuse of Public Space-A Fort on the Waterfront
Abuse of Public Space
By Prajukta Samant

IF YOU want a house facing the sea in a prime area, rush to Carter Road, Bandra. Thousands of slumdwellers are scurrying to mark their plots with stones and white tape wound around four sticks stuck in the seabed. These houses do not come cheap, at a limit of Rs 1 lakh on reclamation, but the plot costs nothing.

The planned mass-scale encroachment is on the entire stretch starting about the office of the assistant commissioner of police, north west zone, Rakesh Maria, till the fishermen's colony at Khar Danda. There are approximately 5,000 plots to grab and they are selling like hot cakes.

On questioning, the slumdwellers allege that member of Parliament Sunil Dutt has given them permission to build their hutsmen. Dutt is currently in the US and could not be contacted.

Throughout the day, especially at low tide, people are seen walking far into the sea to demarcate plots for their future huts.

Even the fear of the hut getting washed away by the sea does not deter them. “We will make a high foundation made of debris from construction sites all over the city,” they say. “Then the hut will not get washed away,” said a yellow-saree-clad woman who was wheeling and dealing with a man on the sandy seabed.

When asked what she was doing, the resident of the nearby Chunni fishing village replied, “Ghar ke liye nishan rakhte hain, khali bari hui (I had gone to demarcate the boundaries of my house).”

Undoubtedly, residents of Carter Road are panicked. “We have been trying to get the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to give us No Objection Certificates to take over the development and maintenance of the promenade and beautification of Carter Road. Funds for the project have been released by Raja Sabha member Shabana Azmi,” said one person. While the Collector has released Azmi’s funds to MHADA who is executing the work, noted architect P K Das has designed the beautification of the 1.6 km long stretch.

Ten years ago BMC started dumping debris on Carter Road to construct a promenade like the one at Marine Drive and Worli Seaface. Residents then opposed the project and the matter went to court where the latter lost the case. In the meanwhile BMC shifted the funds allotted for the promenade elsewhere and the half-constructed walkway remained.

The Bandra West Residents Association (BWRA) then took up the work and got Rs 30 lakh from Azmi. But this is not enough and to get private sponsors the association needs a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the BMC. The project file is being passed from one office to another for the past year and now slumdwellers have discovered this space.

“Till not for delay from the BMC’s red tape we would have got an NOC earlier. The promenade would have been ready and our security guards would have been in place,” says a member of BWRA.

Maria has assured the residents that they will ensure that slums do not come up. “There is no chance that it will happen as my office is right there,” he said.

A bird’s eye view from a skyscraper on Carter Road reveals that the entire seafront is dotted with squares bound by stones. When MID-DAY staff went to the spot to investigate they found the slums dwellers had not been spared; white tape is seen in the greenery and some of the plots have been Nagar slum near Khar Danda is busy taking a plot for her daughter.

“Getting a plot and then building a house is hard work and expensive. But the reclamation will cost Rs 1 lakh. It is better to construct on your own as agents may duped you,” she said.

The BWRA meanwhile has sprung into action and is planning to hire private security guards to protect the area, a move which will cost them Rs 50,000 per month.

“We have no choice. After knocking on BMC doors for months, we realise that authorities are of no help,” said a resident.

DMC Encroachment

“On last Saturday some people were arrested. Yesterday I myself went to the spot to investigate. We expect police to stop them. Three labourers from nearby construction sites are damaging plots because they have heard some rumour that the government is giving away the land for free,” said a labourer.
Winds of change sweep across Mumbai's vandalised waterfronts

By Gunwanti Baliram

Mumbai: "In a city gasping for breath, it is quite dreadful," observes British architect and 'Bombay boy' Pierre d'Avoine, 'that Mumbai's greatest open spaces, its waterfronts, are being so vandalised that its people can derive little benefit from them.' Treated as dumping grounds for debris, garbage and sewage, or as free sites for encroachment, several of Mumbai's waterfronts are actually shunned by its residents. So, it is heartening to find some citizens' groups and architects launching joint initiatives to make their bit of waterfront back to life - as in Bandra, for instance.

Walk along the Bandra waterfront now, and you will find that the dramatic black rocks along the old Band Stand are rising from the debris, as it were, as are the mangroves off Carter Road. What's more, a new promenade is being constructed along these contours of seafront so people can take a brisk walk and get a breath of fresh air.

The Bandra project, on which work started a couple of months ago, is part of architect and housing activist P.K. Das' masterplan for the restoration of the city's waterfront. Drawn up over two years ago, the masterplan looks at the phased rejuvenation of three types of waterfront areas - public spaces like beaches and waterfront promenades; native settlements like fishing villages; and scenic heritage precincts like the Worli, Mahim, Bandra and Vissal forts.

To begin with, he is sensibly tackling public spaces. These include 14 independent schemes estimated to cost about Rs 1 crore each to execute. Complied to the rules of the coastal regulation zone, the architect is anti-reclamation and believes instead that it is important to stop the abuse of our existing waterfronts and work within the existing realities to progressively restore and preserve our natural beauty.

His restoration projects envisage the creation of landscaped walkways, seating, lighting, security, drainage, planting of suitable trees and shrubs and the installation of plazas on the history of the waterfront/countyhood. "Above all, they involve citizens' participation in execution and maintenance."

The Bandra scheme is being executed under the supervision of a team of local residents' association with an initial grant from Rajya Sabha MP and actress Shabana Azmi. She has donated Rs one crore from her MP's constituency development fund to the Bandra waterfront development programme - Rs 30 lakhs each for Carter Road and Band Stand and Rs 40 lakhs for Juhu.

"We will mobilise donations to carry on the updation work, and collect a small monthly maintenance fee from our 1,200 members to maintain the promenade. There will be no entry fee and everybody is welcome to use the promenade," says Arup Sarbhadikary and Minala Soni of the Bandra Band Stand Residents' Association.

Impressed by the work so far, new sponsors are coming forward," adds a Carter Road resident.

"I'm thrilled, my faith in the abilities of the local citizens' groups and the architect of the scheme has not been vindicated," says Shabana Azmi. "Such localised initiatives are the best alternative to large grandiose plans which move away from citizens rather than draw them in. They also cut across class barriers, maintaining the MP adding that she intends to continue to support them in every way she can.

Work on the Juhu project will commence next month, according to Ms Azmi. It envisages sprucing up the beach as well as the 'influence areas', i.e. the Juhu-Tara Road and the seven axis roads leading to the beach, and creating a plaza around the Shivaji statue with proper sanitation facilities for both hawkers and visitors.

Several agencies, including the traffic police, the taximen's and hawkers' unions, residents' groups and the National Airport Authority have been consulted on the issue and have agreed to cooperate in the Rs 2.4 crore project, adds Mr Das.

The plans for the Dadar-Prabhadevi waterfront have also been cleared by the BMC, and the architect and local citizens' groups are discussing how best to implement the programme. "Hopefully, it will all come together. It's hard work, but very rewarding," he says.
Mumbai’s Meager Open Space

LONDON: 7.2 A/1000 PEOPLE
NEW YORK: 6 A/1000 PEOPLE

CHICAGO: 4 A/1000 PEOPLE
TOKYO: 0.9 A/1000 PEOPLE
MUMBAI: 0.25 A/1000 PEOPLE

COMPARISON OF AVAILIBILITY OF OPEN SPACES
Absence of Comprehensive Planning
Restoration of Mumbai’s Waterfronts
A Preliminary Survey and A Comprehensive Plan

P.K. Das Associates Architects
Protection of Eco-sensitive Borders
Protection of Eco-sensitive Borders
Putting the fort back in Bandra

Kavya Jerath

AFTER transforming the Bandra waterfront, Bandra Fort Committee members are getting down to restoring the glory of the Bandra Hill or Bandra, from where Bandra gets its name. We are talking about thatneglected piece of land on which stands the once-majestic Bandra Fort.

A proposal to restore and repurpose the hill has been sent to the state's Heritage Committee for its approval and work is expected to start soon. A year after work begins, you will be able to enjoy a stroll, sit on the benches and even hold small programmes on the hill — mostly like the Carter Road Diwas. Promenade — not to mention enjoy the grand view of the two other points of Mumbai: Worli and Mahim. Point from the hill.

Rajas Salga Member of Parliament Shabana Azmi is directing her MP's bandw on this project too, after having finished the promenade at Bandra and Carter Road.

The project cost Rs 1 crore, of which Rs 20 lakh has been sanctioned by Shabana Azmi's MP fund, "very architect P K Das. "There may follow an awards from the Heritage Committee, since the Bandra Fort or the Castella da Agua, is a Grade III structure, says Arup structural engineers.

"Couples are a big put off"

TAZMIN Poonawala, a resident of Folk Hill, says she does not like to come to the fort because she has put off by the presence of many couples. "I wish they had done this place better," she recalls how during her school days it used to be remote. Today, the walls are too steep to see, and we do not like the walls, she says.

Bel Air and Khadars, two who reside in Bandra and are now based in the US, state the fort during their school days to relax their childhood memories. Khadars feels the fort could be developed into a good tourist attraction bringing in some tourist and a Godwin view of the area.

Bel Air feels the government could put up a sign explaining the significance of the fort. We would rather visit this place during our school days. The government should also help to place the signs," he says.

DREAM VS REALITY: The improvements to the Bandra Fort area (left) that architect P K Das (right) has proposed, which will benefit the people who come to Bandra Fort to watch the sunset (right)
A community effort scripts a success story

THE development of the seafront at Carter Road and Bandra Bandstand has won international recognition, with the receipt of this year’s award instituted by the Washington-based Waterfront Centre for Waterfront Development Projects. Selected among entries from all over the world, the award recognises the efforts of an entire community to ‘retrieve its waterfront for the public’.

A few years ago, the 4.5-km stretch of the Bandra seafront was little more than a dumping ground, sewage disposal area and thickly peopled by encroachers. It was P K Das, an architect by profession and also among the architects of the save-the-waterfront scheme, who took up the cause of the depleting open spaces in Mumbai and conducted an extensive study of Mumbai’s waterfronts. Soon, the Bandra West Residents’ Association (BWRA), the Bandra Bandstand Residents Trust (BBRT), P K Das & Associates and Member of Parliament Shabana Azmi came together to save the Bandra seafront. What followed is a classic success story of citizens’ civic efforts.

“We felt we needed to do something to protect our water-fronts,” says Darryl D’Monte, president of BWRA and noted environmental activist. “So we got together and forged a partnership.” Das handled the architectural inputs, Shabana Azmi contributed nearly Rs 1 crore from her MP’s (local area development) funds and the residents took up the cause as one they all held dear.

That was perhaps when the mission’s success was assured — For the first time, different organisations pitched in together. The government in the shape of the MHADA and the private citizens’ forums worked in co-ordination to restore the picturesque coastline at Bandstand and Carter Road. The results of the redevelopment efforts are in plain sight — palm trees, amphitheatres, a children’s park, an art court.

Having re-designed the facade, there was still the question of maintenance. That’s where Harsh Marwala of Marico Industries contributed his bit. Marico Industries has so far spent almost Rs 25 lakh towards the beautification drive and planted more than 30 species of palm trees. That’s where the name Palm Promenade at Carter Road comes from. Another corporate, U S Vitamins, contributes to the maintenance of Bandstand.

The seafront has gradually grown into a buzzing cultural centre, where concerts, yoga and tai-chi sessions and plays are held. “There’s a play every Friday, and in January 2003 we will be organising a major concert and a carnival too,” says D’Monte.

— UJJAYINI DAS
A Cultural Forecourt
Citizens inspire Bandra face-lift

Nasser Lailjee
Bandra

ON this waterfront, there is certainly no Marlon Brando, but the people of Bandra Bandstand certainly have their own heroes.

It is to the credit of these heroes who set about saving a coastline that had been endangered by indiscriminate dumping. The movement took off with the Mohalla committee, which was formed in 1993, when a group of people started taking an interest in civic problems. They formed the Bandra Bandstand Residents Association in 1996, which was later converted to a trust in 2000.

The blatant dumping of rubbish along their precious coastline outraged the sensibilities of the local residents who had earlier fought it out in the court and got 1,500 trucks of debris removed from the area facing the Bandstand Fort. Once this was done the group moved ahead to try and reclaim whatever was left of the coastline. The idea was to prevent it from encroachments, particularly those that had come up in the area around the Searock hotel.

The citizens had already conceived of a promenade, prepared a plan and worked with architect PK Das, who designed and implemented it. Plans were approved by the BMC, MSRDC, collector, and other concerned bodies. The funds were provided by Shabana Azmi, MP, Rajya Sabha, under the MPLAD scheme for the infrastructure. But seeing the manner in which the work was proceeding, and the effort being poured by the locals, more money was invested into the project.

The construction started in May 1999. Exactly one year later May 2000 saw the Naval Police Band inaugurate the promenade at bandstand. Then came the Art fair on November 27, 2000. This was followed by a party for the under-privileged children in December 2000. An interactive play to highlight the problems of the common man was held next on the May 6, 2001.

The variety of events held at the promenade has brought the citizens closer to each other and there is a growing sense of camaraderie among all those who come here. They voluntarily stop people from creating nuisance, throwing rubbish as they have developed a sense of ownership.

The promenade is now almost complete, and a 1.6 km stretch of reclaimed land, from Bandstand to St. Andrews Church corner, has been saved from certain disaster. Encroachment and other such nuisances would have certainly destroyed the entire already endangered coastline.

"The people have developed a good trust and funds are slowly trickling in." The association and locals are appealing to every flat-owner in Bandstand to pay Rs 20 per month. Apart from this certain sponsors have taken a keen interest and have contributed towards the development of gardens and other features.

If this example is emulated, a number of public spaces will be reclaimed by the people, for the people.
The Western Waterfronts
The Bandra Waterfronts - Bandstand
The Bandra Waterfronts – Carter Road
Excellence on the Waterfront

WATERFRONT CENTER ANNUAL AWARD HONOR AWARD

“Clearwater Citizens Award”

Bandra Band-stand & Carter Road
Waterfront Development
Bandra West Residents Association
Mumbai, India
for a quality waterfront project selected in a juried competition

November 15, 2002

Larry Basley
Chair, Waterfront Center Jury

-Heritage awards highlight city’s hidden treasures-

WINNERS ALL: (Clockwise from top) The Naval Dockyard, Golibar Mahal, Bandra Bandstand promenade and the Corporation Hall—which bagged the HIS Awards for 2004.

“...and the HIS were appreciative of the navy’s effort to keep the ensemble of 1930s citadels within the Naval Dockyard but also open up the historic to the people. The navy conducted a contest within the precinct to come up with an appointment, on a Sunday to which those who haven’t gone on it. An architect Bandur Bisar and a group of his spectators punched in with hall (in red) and the church was inaugurated in January 18, 1832. The Bandra Paoay, a shop set up a year ago by Neeta Pratap, who is passionately involved in reviving the craft of papermaking by hand, won the award for putting on an old space to adaptive reuse. The shop, located in a colonial Fort building, has a new wooden floor and a patio with new windows adorned with etched paper artichokes...”

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GIVING MUMBAI A SEA-FRONT CHANGE

GIVING MUMBAI A SEA-FRONT CHANGE

Mumbai: When a lackadaisical city government allowed one of the biggest assets – the waterfront – to deteriorate into heaps of garbage and it was used as an open-air toilet, a determined group of citizens decided to bring about a change. Over the last six years, thanks largely to a citizens' initiative, about seven kilometres of Mumbai's western waterfront have been reclaimed and turned into what recipients P.K. Emenee calls the SEV, "a cultural new wonder.

Earlier, this permanent daily garbage dump, when the Bhavanshi Pratishthan Group of Teachers' environmental centre and another organization for helping "prosper the lives of slum dwellers"

This, one of the four groups behind the pleasant were in the initial stage on behalf of the MWC, and the board to transform Bandra Beach into a destination and "Destination of the Sea" as well as the sea street of Bhandup. Four of them have been giving support to the activities of the MWC, and are still providing support to what they know as the Bandra Beach. They said the solid times of physical existence of the MWC, which had been set up to be avoided. "Our waterfront is not only a beach, but also an environmental alert," they said. The group said that they have been given a Rs. 1 lakh cheque, but MWC's plan is to build a seafront promenade near the Bandra-Worli Sea Link.

One month ago, a meeting was held by the MWC, during which the group said, "We have been given a Rs. 1 lakh cheque, but MWC's plan is to build a seafront promenade near the Bandra-Worli Sea Link."

The MWC plans to utilize the same money to push for the Stalin's headquarters, which is about 64 km long and 14 km wide. The city government has also given Rs. 50 lakh to the MWC.

PUTTING A SHINE ON OUR SHORES

In the present essay, I would like to talk about the project to transform the Bandra-Worli Sea Link into a destination for life. Currently, the Bandra-Worli Sea Link is not only a smooth ride, but also a destination for life. This project has been made possible by the MWC, which has received a Rs. 50 lakh cheque from the government.

THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS

- Helped build the Carter Road promenade of Bandra, transforming what was a neglected and encroached stretch into a lovely place for the public.
- Helped build the Carter Road promenade of Bandra, transforming what was a neglected and encroached stretch into a lovely place for the public.

THE GOAL: TO OPEN UP OUR WORLD

The Mumbai Waterfront Improvement Committee (MWIC) was formed as a result of a couple of months ago, but it has been involved in transforming the city for several years now. Its main aim is to create places along the waterfront for the public to relax and enjoy the view and the sea.

The committee is working closely with the city government to ensure that the waterfront is not only a place for the public to relax, but also a place where they can enjoy the sea and the view.

For more information, visit the website www.mwic.org.
Key lessons...
The movement continues...
Chimbai beach to get facelift
Resident's efforts to save seafront forces a reluctant BMC to take charge

Sayli Udas Mankikar
Mumbai, June 26

BANDRA MAY soon have another waterfront to be proud of. If everything works well, the little known and disappearing Chimbai Beach will get a makeover with features like promenades and fish-food courts.

The Chimbai beach is a one-km stretch between Joggers' Park and Bandra Bandstand.

Credit goes to the local residents, who have been fighting to save the beach for two years. Impressed by their efforts, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has now taken over to develop the seafront. The BMC has appointed architect P.K. Das as a consultant.

“We will spend Rs 4 crore for this public-private project. We will meet the architect and then discuss the plans with the stakeholders around the area,” said Anil Diggikar, additional municipal commissioner (Projects).

The plan also includes a drying area for local fishermen.

The beach — an extension of Chimbai fishing village — is a sorry picture. A number of illegal structures line the narrow lanes leading to the waters, while rocks bordering the sea have been dumped with debris.

“We will replace this with sand-terraces, promenades and resting areas. There will also be a food court on weekends where locals will make fish delicacies,” said Das. “This would not have been possible without the persistent effort of citizens.”

It all began after the fisher folk of Chimbai approached the H-West Ward Residents' Trust to stop the Maritime Board from constructing a ‘tsunami wall’ along the coastline after the 2005 deluge. “The flooding was actually because of the debris,” said Shyama Kulkarni, chairman of the trust.

The BMC had then expressed its inability to clear the debris saying JCBs could not reach the beach. But Bandra resident Vickram Rao, using personal funds, cleared 40 truckloads of debris from the site. A surprised BMC then took over.

“We are glad the plan has moved ahead, while the BMC and collector have promised to clear the encroachments.” Kulkarni said, adding that there were still about 100 truckloads of debris on the site.

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Get ready for a clean Juhu beach

In 12 weeks, relocate food stalls and build car park, orders high court

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JUNE 28

ONE of Mumbai’s busiest beachfronts will soon bid adieu to the chaos created by more than 100 hawkers. It will also sport a gateway to the beach and several public conveniences.

Thanks to an order delivered by the Bombay High Court on Monday, the three-year-old Juhu beach restoration and redevelopment plan spearheaded by residents has now received a major impetus.

A division bench of acting Chief Justice A P Shah and Justice S U Kamdar directed the relocation of 125 food stalls at the central chowpatty along the Juhu Tara Road within 12 weeks.

The petition was filed by 120 local residents’ associations, Rotary Clubs and hotels.

Accordingly, the central chowpatty will get a podium that will act as the gateway to the beach.

Before it is built, 125 bustling food stalls selling piping-hot vada pav, masala dosa and pav bhaji will be relocated to a yet-to-be built food court at the northern end of the central chowpatty.

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The facility, says the order, should have hygienic surroundings, water connections and a garbage disposal and drainage network.

Each stall owner will have to deposit Rs 40,000 with the suburban district collector that would entitle him to a 2 m x 1m built-up space to be built by the Maharashtra Housing and Development Authority.

The food court, the high court said while considering objections raised by the Chhatrapati Shivaji Smarak Samiti, will be located 60 feet from a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji standing at the elbow of Juhu Tara Road.

A concrete ramp will scythe through the food court and take beach-goers to the shore.

According to the plan, a ramp has been built at the northern section of the central chowpatty to facilitate Ganapati immersions. Public convenience centres will also be built at the central chowpatty.

The high court has also ordered the civic authorities to return land being used as a parking lot to the Airports Authority of India, which had leased it to the civic body.

It will be revamped to accommodate more vehicles — 185 two-wheelers and 152 four-wheelers.

The Rs 1.5-crore plan also includes clearing eight access lanes, creating a small park and removing encroachments including private bungalow extensions.

Counselling Shiraz Rustumjee and Jamshed Mistry represented the petitioners.
Gateway revamp plan gets civic panel nod

Mumbai: The Gateway of India precinct makeover plan got its initial boost on Wednesday with the civic standing committee clearing the Rs 4.5 crore phase 1 of the project.

While the Grade 1 heritage monument itself would remain untouched, phase 1 would include expanding the pedestrian space in the precinct as well as relocating all the public amenities at a facility centre.

The facility centre to be located behind the Shivaji statue will house all the existing ticket counters that currently clutter the pathway to the precinct. It will also have public toilets, a police chowky, a BMC conservancy chowky, an MTDCC stall and the existing Aarey stalls.

“The plan is to create more area for public movement. For this, we will have to remove the barricade around the garden at Gateway and include some of it in the paved portion. In a nutshell, the phase 1 of the plan will look at enhancing pedestrian movement over vehicular movement and at augmenting the public facilities,” said P K Das, architect for the Indian National Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage (Intach), which has been awarded the contract for drawing up Gateway revamp plan.

Even though the work of executing the plan was awarded to Prime Engineers on Wednesday, standing committee member Ravindra Pawar opposed the idea. “The plan makes no provision for parking based on the argument that most people who come to Gateway use public transport or tourist vehicles. The cars belong to those who visit the nearby Taj hotel. How can they go ahead with the plan without permission from the traffic department?” asked Pawar.

Satish Mathur, joint commissioner of police (traffic), said he was yet to get a copy of the plan.

According to Das, the precinct would be made into a no-parking zone. “The world over, no monument allows parking in its precinct. The Taj hotel has provisions for underground parking which it has closed down for some reason and many of its cars are parked outside. All this would be cleared up soon. Parking space for tourist buses and cars will be taken care of in phase 2,” said Das. He added that phase 2 would look at whether the area from the museum to Regal theatre can be converted into a BMC parking zone.

“Also the BMC is proposing to build an underground parking lot near Regal theatre,” said Das.
NARIMAN POINT PROPOSAL
A LANDMARK BUSINESS DISTRICT
THANK YOU