Session – I

Initiatives in conserving Kolkata's rich heritage

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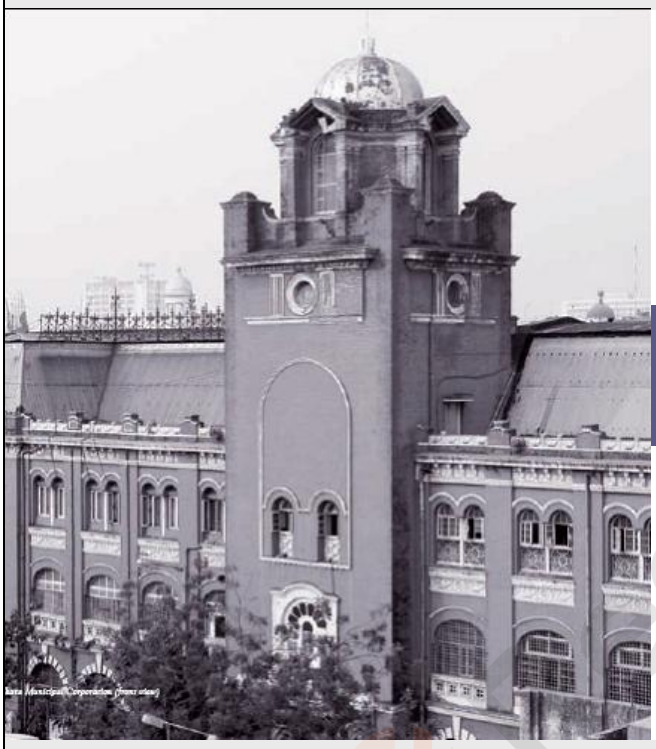
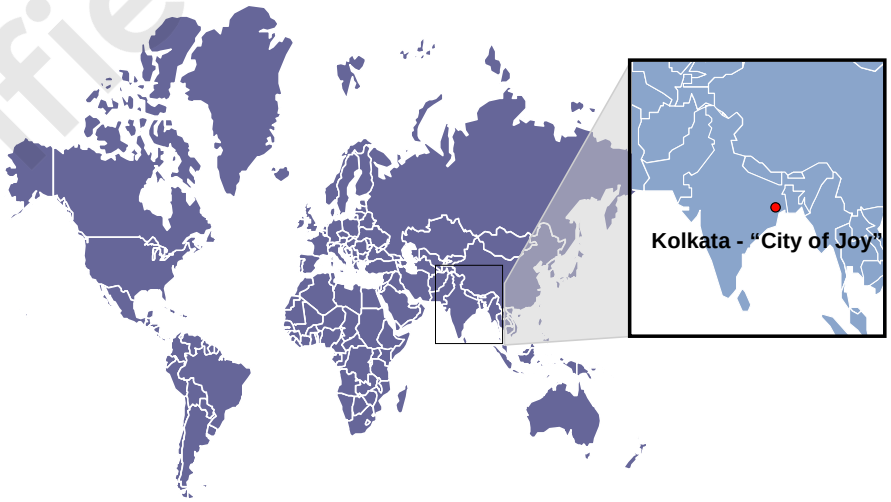


Kolkata Municipal Corporation

Initiatives in conserving Kolkata's rich heritage

Chennai, October, 2010

Kolkata is the largest metropolis in eastern India…



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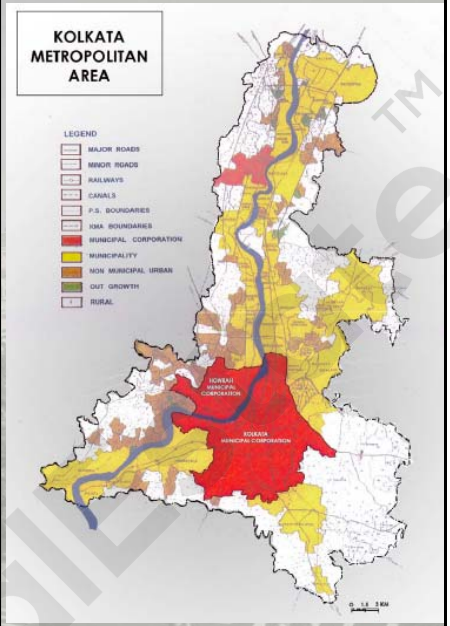
The city of Kolkata ...

Comparative Parameters	Area Under Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC)
Area (in sq. km.)	187
Population	4.5 mn + 5.5 mn (floating)
Number of Boroughs	15
Number of Wards	141
Density of population (per sq. km.)	25,000
Sex Ratio (females per 1000 males)	828
Total number of households	0.92 million
GDP ($ billion)	$8.9 bn
GDP per capita ($)	$1255
Literacy rate	85%
Access to electricity, toilets, drinking water	91%
Number of Slums	5500
Slum dwelling population (% of total population)	1.5 mn (33%)



A snapshot of Kolkata

History

- It was the capital of British India from 1772-1911 (140 Years)
- It is the only metropolis in Eastern India

Economic Profile

- The importance of Kolkata as a trading centre was first recognized by the British East India Company in the 17th century
- Kolkata is the main business, commercial and financial hub of eastern part of India
- It is a major port, and the only city in the region to have an international airport

Socio-Cultural Profile

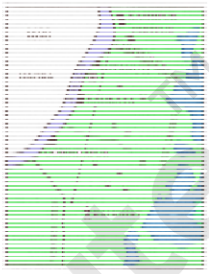
- It is a truly cosmopolitan city and is home to more than 15 different communities including international communities like Chinese, Armenians
- Kolkata is widely regarded as the birthplace of modern Indian literary and artistic thought

Agenda

1. Kolkata's Heritage
2. Issues in heritage conservation
3. KMC's efforts in maintaining the rich heritage
4. Overall Impact

History of Kolkata

- Documented history of Kolkata begins with the East India Company establishing its business base in Kolkata in 17th century
- In 1772, the city was declared the capital of British India.
- Wellesley, the Governor General took special interest in the development of city and its architecture which won the city the description "City of Palaces."
- Kolkata underwent rapid industrial progress since 1850s
- Socio-cultural reforms known as Bengal Renaissance led to general uplifting of people
- During its chequered socio-cultural history, Kolkata became home to numerous structures of historical and architectural importance



Kolkata's rich heritage

Significance of Heritage properties

- The heritage buildings could be defined as the buildings important in the history of the city and buildings with architectural and socio-cultural significance.
- They represent the social, cultural and historical aspects of the city.
- Besides aesthetic values, heritage buildings also have economic value. They help promote tourism and encourage investments in the city.

Issues in heritage conservation

- Owners of heritage properties often take no interest for renovation of the building/property unless the income generated from that is more than the spending.
- Premises Tenancy Act was not favourable to heritage properties
- Fragmentation of the property due to family partition is also a major area for concern.
- Owners are skeptic about the marketability of their property.
- Present socio-economic conditions are inclined to give priority to infrastructure development. Heritage issues are not integrated with that development.
- Lack of incentives to the owners of the heritage buildings.
- Lack of integration within different departments of KMC on heritage conservation.

Movement towards Heritage Building Legislation

- **Preparing an inventory of heritage buildings – initiated in mid 1990s**
- **LUDCP prepared a list of important heritage buildings in 1996**

- **Expert committee formed by Govt. of West Bengal in 1997**
- **Report concerning heritage buildings received in 1998**

- **KMC Act amended to address heritage conservation in 1997.**
- **Heritage Conservation Act introduced for West Bengal in 2001**

KMC: Facilitating heritage conservation

Salient features of KMC Act on heritage conservation

- Assigning responsibilities to owners of heritage buildings to maintain, preserve and conserve them
- Powers of KMC to declare a building as a heritage building and classify them into multiple categories
- Creation of Heritage Conservation Committee and their powers, responsibilities
- Defining ownership and transfer of rights of heritage buildings.
- Power to exempt rates and taxes, etc. on heritage building.

Creation of Corpus Fund

- KMC has taken the initiative for raising funds through voluntary contribution from organizations, persons or company
- In the budgetary provision, some amount of money from the own source revenue is earmarked for heritage conservation
- The fund is to be utilized for restoration/upkeep of heritage structures

KMC: Facilitating heritage conservation

Grading system	Grade I	Grade IIA	Grade IIB	Grade III
Number of heritage buildings	611	197	109	Under scrutiny
Total	**917**			

Incentives to maintain Heritage buildings

- Exemption from property tax
- Allowing transferable development rights
- The heritage building owners are occasionally allowed to change the use of buildings from residential to more profitable uses like commercial hotels, etc.
- It is proposed that owners of Grade II and Grade III buildings be allowed controlled development like vertical and horizontal additions, etc.

Integration of modules across departments

- A well coordinated system has been developed, integrating different departments of KMC - Assessment, Building, Advertisement, Chief Valuer and Surveyor and Project Management Unit Departments
- All databases are synchronized to keep track of the characteristics of heritage buildings
- Benefits of interconnection of databases
  - Online checking of heritage database during mutation / amalgamation / separation by assessment department.
  - Online checking of heritage database while giving plan sanction by building department.
  - Online checking of heritage database while giving permission of hoarding by advertisement department.
  - Online checking of heritage database while issuing SOR by Ch. V & S department.

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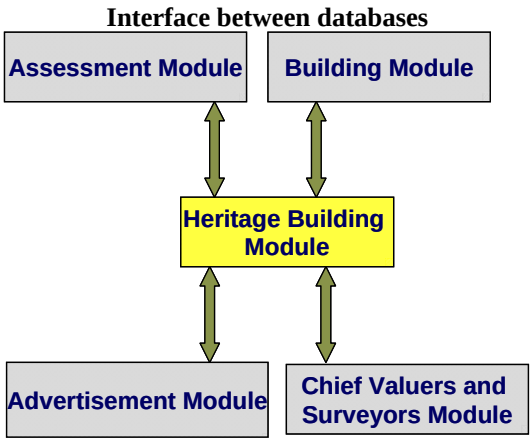

Demonstration of the system from central server

Projects undertaken by KMC for heritage conservation

Project description	Project cost
Restoration of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad building	INR 3.5 million
Restoration of cemetery of William Carry, Joshua Marshman and Ward at Sreerampore	INR 1.2 million
Restoration of Job Charnock's cemetery at St. John's Church	INR 0.7 million
Rejuvenation of Dalhousie Square (Pilot Phase) - The work involves restoration of footpath with cobblestone, installation of Cast iron street furniture like railings, lampposts and bollards to make it compatible with the surrounding heritage buildings	INR 10.6 million
Renovation of residences of Sukumar Ray, Satyajit Ray at 100A, Garpar Road	INR 1.5 million
Restoration of the Residence of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay at Kanthalberia, Naihati	INR 1.8 million
Illumination of St. Andrews's Church at Dalhousie Square through INTACH	INR 2.9 million
Contributed to the following publications: i) *Ghats of Kolkata* ii) *Commemorating Derozio* iii) *Jaywalker's Guide* iv) *Eloquent Earth*	

Heritage conservation projects in the pipeline

Proposed Projects	Project cost
Publication of final list of heritage buildings with photographs and grading	
Roll out phase of Dalhousie Square that includes i) Paving of footpath by granite cobblestones around Lal Dighi, BBD Bagh ii) Installation of cast iron decorative railings, bollards, lamp posts – both for median and footpath	INR 100 million
Restoration of 3 ghats in the banks of river Hoogly	INR 30 million
Rejuvenation of Garia Mahasamsan	INR 2 million
Restoration of Bara Rash Bari at Tollygunge	INR 10 million

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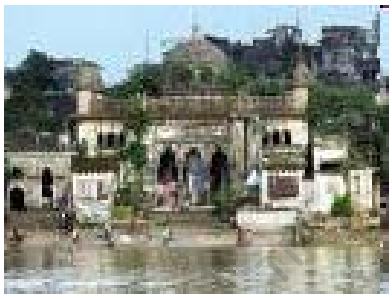

Projects approved by Heritage Conservation Committee

36/1A, Lala Lajpat Sarani

The Heritage Conservation Committee, a few years back, considered for restoration, the front portion of the premises and the construction of a new building at the rear of the premises, by demolishing a portion of the heritage building.

Queen’s Mansion at Park Street

The building known to be named on the coronation of Queen Elizabeth-II is an arcade with colonial architectural features. LIC India has taken up the restoration work.

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Metropolitan Insurance Building

LIC India was persuaded to undertake restoration of the building by KMC. The restoration plan for the entire building has since been cleared by the Heritage Conservation Committee. Façade restoration of the building has been completed

Job Charnok's Mausoleum

St. Andrews Church

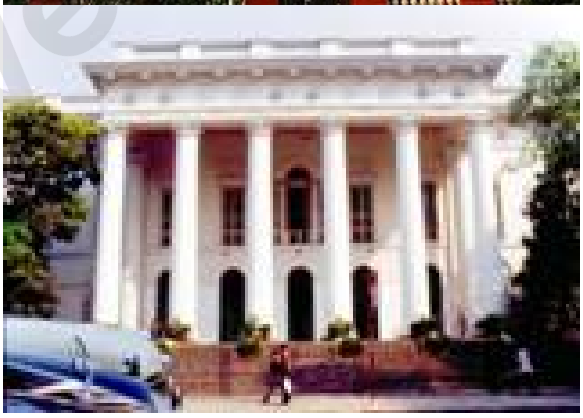
Conserving Heritage through PPP model

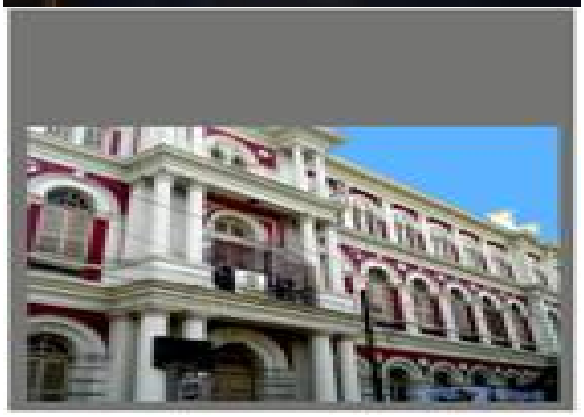
1300 listed 'Heritage' buildings, 500 Parks & Squares crying for attention

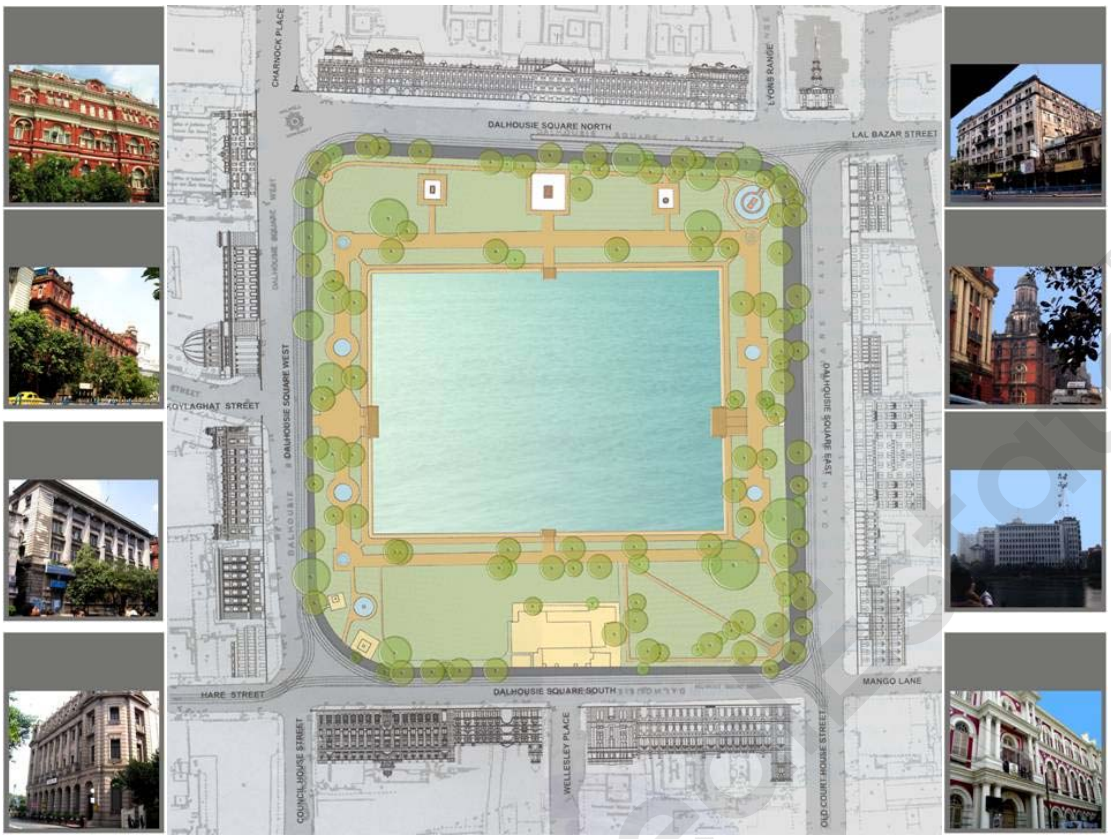
Private trusts, civil society organizations and PPP ventures being maneuvered for aggressive solutions on river banks, heritage squares, and city centers

Background note on Dalhouse Square

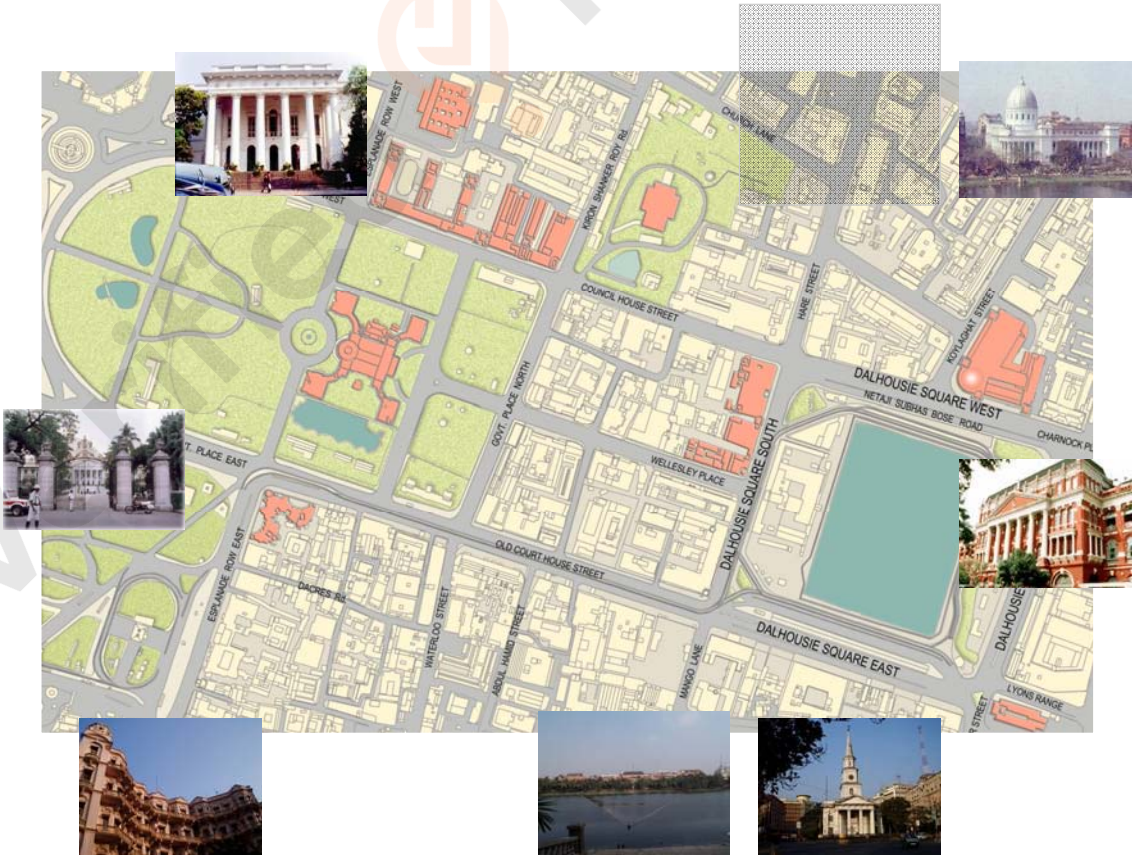
- The 2.5 Sq Km Dalhousie Square area is surrounded by imposing buildings such as Writers' Buildings, GPO, St. Andrews Church, corporate offices of several financial services companies
- Dalhousie Square was the bustling epicenter of English colonial power and trade during the two centuries that the city served as capital of India under British rule.
- This area, in the heart of Kolkata with its colonial buildings, was listed as one of the 100 endangered sites by the World Monument Fund (WMF) in 2004.

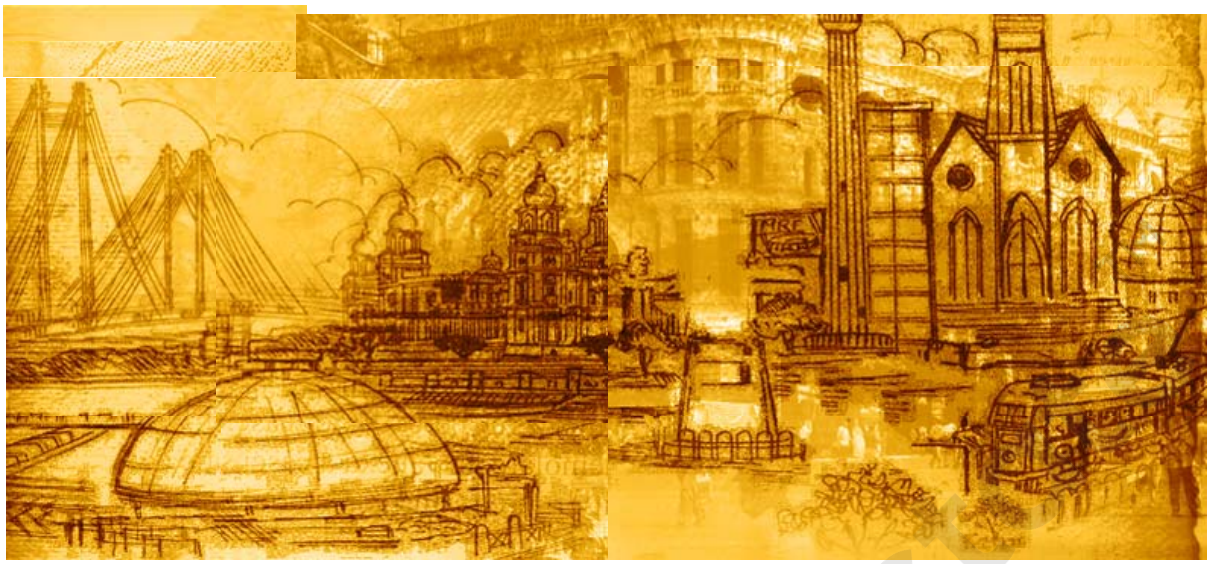






DALHOUSIE SQUARE





This is the beginning of a long journey to restore Kolkata's rich heritage and glory …

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