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REVITALIZATION OF THE RICKETY - A CASE OF GEORGE TOWN

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Abstract :

India is a land of tradition and values. Many parts of the south are identified with different types of architectural styles along streetscapes. But due to the lack of maintenance of the buildings, the essence of the urban streetscapes is lost and there is a need for revitalization of the spaces that are considered to be urban voids. Urban voids not only become derelict spaces but also sabotage the beauty of a place thereby turning these spaces into slums or squatters. Every city emerges from its core and the city development process begins from it. The old city morphs into the central commercial centre, which forms the core city, as the city grows and develops. Cities, like living creatures, require ongoing upkeep and development to function properly, without which city function fails and urban deterioration occurs, which in turn leads to processes such as urban redevelopment, urban renewal, etc., The vision of the research will be to provide strategies to address the issues of urban degradation. The mission of the project is to identify the spaces that are capable of transforming the place as such to create new imagery of George Town, Chennai. The reason for the study is that George Town is at the stage where it has to be revitalised so that there will not be any problems in the near future in adopting sustainable development goals. Design strategies such as rehabilitation (of pedestrian precincts and parking lots), redevelopment (renewed centralization, widening of roads, recreation centres), and enhancement of the environment (public gardens and green spaces) will be identified through figure-ground mapping in the identified area. This paper observes the various developments that are to be done in the near future.

Keywords :

Revitalization, redevelopment, green spaces, settlement, revenue, historic buildings

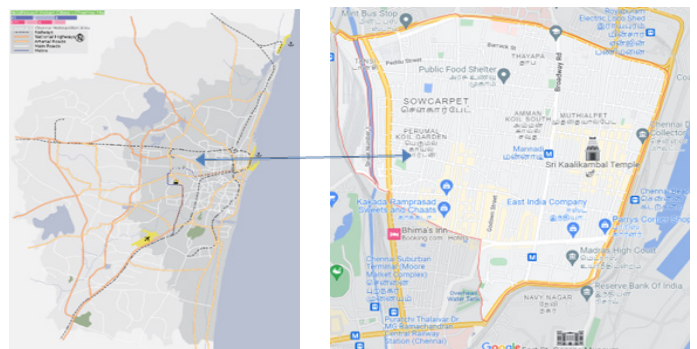
1. Background

George Town, Chennai is the area from where the expansion in Tamil Nadu began in the 1640s. It was named after King George V. The burgeoning business area in George Town came to be known as the CBD (Central Business District) of Chennai. Due to improper preparation, as well as failure to follow any administrative guidelines for density development, at present, the legacy of the buildings is vanishing. The chief issues should be tended to while doing a reasonable revitalization of George Town. A sustainable methodology for the city is one that gives due significance to the environment, economic value, and should provide inclusive surroundings for future generations to come .

George Town was the origin of Chennai's modern city and was the city's main commercial centre until the early 20th century, but the city's central business district gradually moved south from the mid-20th century and is now known as Anna, located in the Twin Circle of Salai. This led to a shortage of development funding in the northern part of the city. However, some of George Town's community-specific areas, such as Sowcarpet, home of the wealthy Marwari community, are still important commercial centres in the city.

Some of Chennai's most busy market locations are found in George Town. The Chennai Port and the Bay of Bengal coast

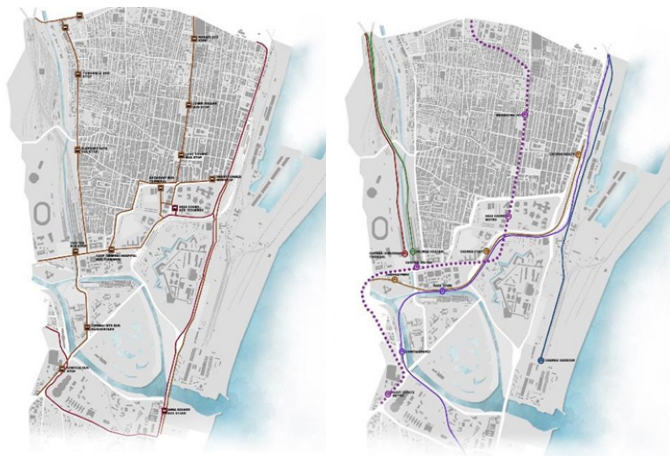
separate George Town from the rest of the eastern coastal plains. It acts as the command post for Chennai city, which grew out of this little economic hub. George Town is now the city's most important commercial district. A well-connected network of roads and railways connects it to the rest of the city. Burma Bazar, located near Raja Salai Road, is a popular shopping destination in George Town. The area is quite busy, and there is a lot of traffic. Even though the Broadway Bus Stop and the High Court Bus Stop are both conveniently located, overcrowding is a typical issue for both stops.



Location of George town

2. Introduction

Along with its physical growth, the city consolidates throughout time as its limits are widened. Due to the city's ageing, redevelopment and renewal procedures are crucial for the city's regeneration at this time. It has become commonly recognized in recent years that revitalising historic districts and inner-city areas is an effective tool for long-term urban development, combining cultural values with economic prospects and community benefits. Urban agglomeration makes the central business area overcrowded causing humongous stress on the available resources and infrastructure. Therefore, it is crucial that meticulous planning should be adopted for the city to be resilient. Resilient planning must be implemented to meet the needs of the current population, without compromising on that of the urban future.



Bus connectivity

Rail connectivity

3. Historical importance

Madras, presently called Chennai, was founded 375 years ago, majorly for trade and business. It was then known as the Presidency of Fort St. George. This was dependent on the first 'Black Town', where the High Court-Law college campus is currently located. After the siege of Fort St. George by the French, between 1746 and 1759 in two different periods, this Black town was razed. A new Black Town was developed north of Esplanade Road, now called NSC Bose Road, named after freedom fighter Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. This new Black Town remained the main supplier of goods to the merchants of the Fort and 'White Town', and it was renamed George Town in 1911. The Esplanade was created by the British to provide them a clear field of gun firing in case of future attack. The fortification and creation of the Esplanade brought about a feeling of security in the settlement and encouraged economic activity. By this time George Town had become the Central Business District(CBD) which has now become a major trading region that includes Parrys, Binny and many others.



Madras High Court 1957

High Court and Adjacent Road

LawCollege at George Town

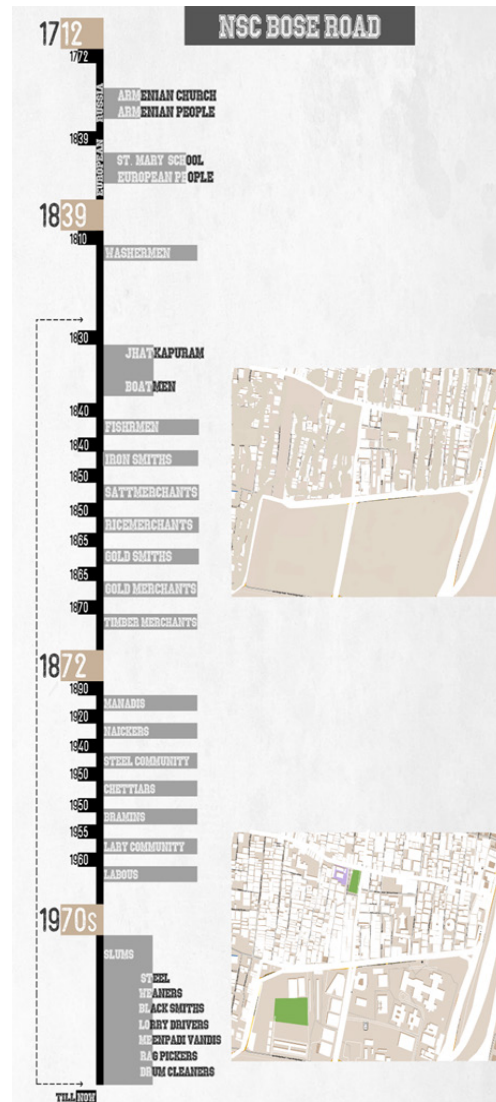
Around the same time, Bombay got its first railway route in 1853. From then on, the traders of Chennai started to look for a similar transportation system for them to make their businesses flourish. This resulted in the establishment of the Royapuram Railway Terminus on the newly opened Madras-Arcot line in 1856. After the British set up Pax Britannica - a police force, the esplanade was no longer needed. The high court was later built on the esplanade grounds in 1865. This kick-started the institutional land use of the north beach road with the construction of the banks and the post office later on. The growing trade activities caused a lot of congestion in the Royapuram terminus and as a result the central station was opened in 1873 to decongest the Royapuram harbour station. The principal roads (North Beach Road, Rajaji Salai, NSC Bose Road, Broadway street) leading to and from this region were formally built in 1893 to support the fast growing trade. In 1907, Madras Central Station was made the main station of the Madras Railway Company.



Black Town around 1851

Black Town around 1851

An aerial view of N.S.C. Bose



Evolution of N.B.C road

It is also extremely important that connectivity is ensured, with proper road safety and sustainable transport systems. With this, there is also a special need for emphasis on the requirements of marginalised groups, such as, but not limited to children, women and the disabled.

In this process, George Town's architectural and cultural heritage must not be erased, as it is integral to its legacy. Most importantly, the per capita environmental impact must be stressed upon, by focusing especially on improving air quality, and waste segregation and management. Provision must be made for green spaces that are safe, inclusive and accessible to all residents and visitors of George Town.

6. Conclusion

Due to rapid urbanisation, with up to 1.4 million people per week moving into urban areas, cities have lost their identity. The land use itself has changed in George Town, therefore the bye-laws are to be followed properly. During the construction process, the project must abide by the rules and regulations that are framed by the government. Public policies that promote resilience must include public procurement processes considering climate resilience in competitive comparisons and bidding considering the cost over the life of the asset under an alternative scenario. Serious effects of climate change are expected in the upcoming years. It is utmost in the hands of architects, urban planners, urban designers and all the stakeholders involved in the project to make it sustainable to meet the needs of the future generations that are to come up.

Forecast unit counts were also mapped and are shown to be quite heterogeneous, even at small scale. These fine-grained differences can be important for decision support.