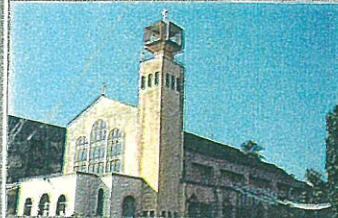
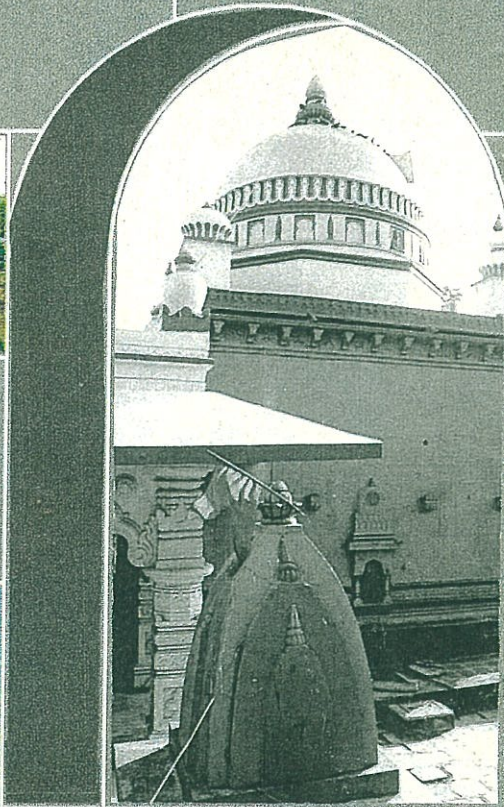
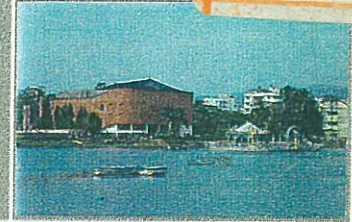
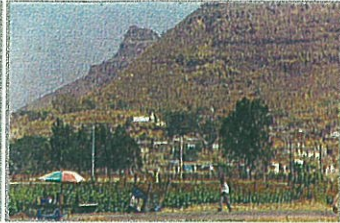


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A COMPREHENSIVE LISTING OF HERITAGE VALUES IN THANE

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A COMPREHENSIVE LISTING OF HERITAGE VALUES IN THANE - A CRITICAL NOTE

Most Indian towns have an original, historic part which still exists in some semblance to its past structure and form. Some have existed for over a thousand years and each has a particular story to tell which would contribute immeasurably to the understanding of our culture, both in whole and in part.

However in the pursuit of modernizing our environment, we often tend to overlook this tremendous legacy. Change is taking place in any case, and nobody believes that transformation cannot or should not take place in our society. In this process, however, valuable knowledge of our past is getting lost and it is imperative that we document the heritage as it was or is, before it is too late.

Thane, as history states, was once upon a time a very prosperous city abundant with temples, churches and lakes with numerous little settlements dotted over the entire area on the map of the city. The magnificent temples and churches depicted their own style and grandeur whereas the settlements showed various, yet, individual characteristics portrayed through their

built form and the interwoven fabric of the place. The city also boasted of a fort, which still exists and functions as a central jail. As many as Portuguese, typical vernacular, Art Deco, colonial and many other such influences can be seen from the architecture still present in the city.

A special mention in the gazetteer, as Thane once being one of the important ports along with Kalyan, Chaul, Sopara and Sanjan, goes on to show that this is indeed a historical city which was in the peak of its glory when trade activities were carried out with far off countries via the sea route. In spite of innumerable invasions, the city has survived the test of time.

But today, Thane City presents a very different picture of itself. It happens to be a substantially large urban agglomeration located next to the metropolis of Mumbai. On account of its location, Thane has carved out an image of itself. A glance into history, once again, shows that, as the City of Mumbai grew, the residents in course of time became more and more aware of the intensifying urban and economic pressures. They started feeling the pinch of constraint of space due to growing families and started looking for greener pastures. Thane proved an ideal choice

for them at this juncture. A certain class of people, mostly the middle and the lower classes who earlier resided in areas like Girgaon in south Mumbai, started shifting to Thane. Being centrally located and well connected to places like Navi Mumbai, Kalyan, Bhiwandi and Mumbai by road and rail, people opted to reside and commute to their work places from Thane. Incidentally, low land prices also initiated people to buy ownership houses and settle here for a longer time.

The consequence of such a large influx of people into the city was observed in the form of land development. The immediate need of that time was to provide houses for all the people desirous of residing in the city of Thane. An unplanned and haphazard growth without the commensurate infrastructure started the process of decline of the city. The surrounding villages were being encompassed within the purview of the new building activity. As a result the character of the existing settlements, however small, was being wiped out. The place that was once referred to as 'The City of Lakes' by Sir Patrick Geddes, started crumbling down in the frenzy of urban development.

The fact that the existence of a Municipal Council earlier, which monitored the administrative affairs of the area of

Thane was later replaced by a Municipal Corporation to meet the increasing demands itself shows the tremendous development taking place within the city. Quiet and confined settlements like Charai, Chendani Koliwada, Rabodi inhabited by different religious communities had their own character, which was reflected through the architecture prevalent there.

E.g. Bungalow type houses with Portuguese influence in Charai, tiny vernacular houses in Chendani Koliwada, etc. These sensitive, yet architecturally important areas are losing their battle against unbridled urban development. Their very existence is at stake. Unless an effort is taken to study and document these areas today, whatever that is still existing will be lost.

This study has been initiated for the sole cause of protecting such areas, which could tell us a lot about its architecture and also the history behind it.

<u>SECTION I</u>	<u>SECTION II</u>	<u>SECTION III</u>
1.0 PREFACE	1.0 HISTORIC EVOLUTION	1.0 PRESENT SCENARIO
2.0 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	1.1 PHYSICAL GROWTH	1.1 RAMPANT BUILDING ACTIVITY
3.0 <i>A COMPREHENSIVE LISTING OF HERITAGE VALUES -- A CRITICAL NOTE</i>	2.0 SIGNIFICANT AREAS	1.2 ENCROACHMENTS AND SLUM AREAS
4.0 INTRODUCTION	2.1 IDENTIFICATION	1.3 URBAN PRESSURES
4.1 INCEPTION -- STUDY TEAM AND BRIEFING	2.2 CLASSIFICATION	2.0 THREATS TO THE IDENTIFIED HERITAGE STRUCTURES AND PRECINCTS.
4.2 METHODOLOGY	2.3 EVALUATION	3.0 NEED FOR PUBLIC AWARENESS.
• PROJECT WORKPLAN	3.0 COMPREHENSIVE LISTING	4.0 NECESSITY FOR FORMATION OF THE GUIDELINES.
• RESEARCH FRAMEWORK		5.0 CONCLUSION.
• PROCESS		6.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY
4.3 LIST OF SOURCES		
4.4 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS		
5.0 HISTORY OF THANE		
5.1 CHRONOLOGY		
5.2 EARLIER INHIBITANTS		
5.3 NATURAL RESOURCES		
5.4 CHANGING CHARACTER DUE TO INVADERS / RULERS		
5.5 IMPORTANT REGIONAL AND LOCAL LANDMARKS		
6.0 GROWTH OF THANE		
6.1 INDUSTRIALISATION		
• EFFECTS AND CHANGING CHARACTER OF THE CITY.		
6.2 DEGENERATION OF THE HERITAGE AND NATURAL VALUES.		
6.3 ESTABLISHMENT OF THANE AS A 'SATELLITE TOWN'		
7.0 URBANISATION		

METHODOLOGY :

PROJECT WORK PLAN :

The historic city of Thane does not have any conservation guidelines or legislation presently. Precincts, within the city with rich architectural character and an established heritage value need to be conserved through appropriately designed guidelines backed by a true legislation.

The first step towards providing the above mentioned guidelines is to identify the zones within the Municipal limit, next step would involve identification of the collective value of the features of that zone-physical, natural and other within the context of and in relation to the other zones. Further an inventory of the items with historic and other references will be prepared as an up-to-date database in the right format and finally a "List" will be prepared.

IDENTIFICATION : The areas and buildings which probably would figure in heritage and conservation list were identified on the basis of the knowledge of the city. To add to this, initially, the entire city was divided in terms of areas on the basis of names and an insight of any important building or landmark in each of these areas was made. Certain areas

were identified by the age-old names derived from the customs and trade practiced there. An entire list of all such areas was made so that surveys could be conducted in each of these areas. Another list of individual structures, which deserved attention, was made to highlight the same. At the same time, available plans were also studied to facilitate the surveys. The ward-wise distribution of the city was accounted and correct boundaries of areas were identified accordingly. Another reference for this process was to scan through various local newspapers that regularly carry features on historically and culturally significant buildings and areas. This proved to be quite beneficial in the early stages of the study. After finalizing the specific areas, surveys were carried out on foot so as not to miss any structure. The surveys were intensive and covered visual analysis in terms of architectural style, age of the building, interesting details and features meriting conservation, and photo-documentation of the same. The history of the place was also looked into by talking to the residents and reference to any literature if available.

CLASSIFICATION : The classification is based on the surveys conducted.

Broadly, areas that comprise of many structures bearing similar architectural features have been clubbed to form a precinct. The other individual entities which exhibit their own styles and bear no relation whatsoever to any structure around have been classified as singular structures. The classification will enable forming separate guidelines for precincts and individual structures so as to facilitate the implementation of the same at a later stage.

The natural heritage, such as lakes, hills, etc. have been put up separately, since the guidelines for these will be different than those for the built environment.

EVALUATION : The process of evaluating the structures has been made after considering various different headings under which each of the structures may or may not classify. Besides, all structures have been studied for their various inherent features and detail which merit conservation. A study of whether they fall under any particular architectural style has also been made. The broad classification categories under which each structure or area has been checked are as under :

- National importance.
- Historical importance.
- Architectural style.

- Design and planning.
- Technology and material usage.
- Historical event.
- Personality.
- Movement.
- Institution.
- Regional or local importance.
- Special architectural or aesthetic treatment.
- Cultural or historic value.
- Local landmark due to image and identity of the city.
- Work of master craftsmen.
- Model of ornamentation or proportion
- Designed to suit particular climate.
- Precincts of importance to a townscape.
- Evoke architectural, aesthetic and sociological interest.
- Contribute to determine character of a locality.
- Representative of lifestyle of a particular community or religion.
- Distinguished by setting on a street line.
- Special character of facade and uniformity of height, width and scale.

Many villages, which fall under the municipal limits of Thane Municipal Corporation, have been studied for their characteristic vernacular architecture.

INTRODUCTION:

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

LOCATION : Thane is the northernmost district of the Konkan region, which lies along the Arabian Sea in the northwest of Maharashtra State. It extends between 18°42' N and 20°20' N latitude and 70°25' E and 73°44' E longitude. It is located next to Mumbai City and can be called its first suburb.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT:

TOPOGRAPHY : The city of Thane lies on almost flat land encompassed between the Yeour hills on the West, and the Parsik hills on the Southeast. The main city lies on the western shore of the Thane Creek. The high hills on one side and submersible marsh along the Thane Creek and Ulhas River bank have peculiarly divided the terrain. The plain terrain actually forms a wide belt along the foothills and away from creek waters and Ulhas riverbanks.

HYDROLOGY : There are more than 40 lakes present within the municipal limits of Thane City. The presence of many large lakes in the entire Thane district solves

the problem of drinking water throughout the year.

FLORA AND FAUNA: The vegetation in Thane consists of mainly uncultivated trees such as Neem, Peepal and Banyan. There are also a few plantations of coconut palms. To the west of Thane is the reserved forest area of Sanjay Gandhi National Park behind the hills. The creek fringes eastern parts of Thane with mangroves on its banks.

CLIMATE : The Thane climate is typically coastal and sultry but not very hot. The area receives an average rainfall of 2500 to 3000 mm. Weather is warm. It is observed that the mean maximum temperature varies from 32.37°C to 34.57°C during the whole year. In the months of summer it is maximum and in winter ranges from 17.6°C to 20.55°C. The range of humidity is from 45% to 87%.

HISTORY - CHRONOLOGY

- | | | | | |
|------|---|---|------|---|
| | | sixty lakes in the city of Thane. | | started building a fort in Thana. |
| 636 | AD.: Subhedar Khalif Omar of Bahrain and Oman dispatched his army from Iran to loot Thane. | Around the seventeenth century, Thane was famous as a port. | 1739 | AD.: The Peshwas captured Thane and Vasai regions. The Portuguese reign came to end. |
| 660 | AD.: The Arabs invaded and destroyed villages around Thane. | 1633 AD.: The Portuguese built more than twenty Churches. During the construction of the St. John, The Baptist, it is said that Antonio de Porto destroyed the twelve temples, which surrounded the adjoining Masunda Lake and used these stones to build the Church. The bell of this Church (72' 0" high) is believed to be the largest amongst all the remaining Portuguese Churches in the country. | 1754 | AD.: The Old District Court, which has been recently demolished, used to be earlier the residence (wada) of Ramaji Mahadeo Biwalkar, a Subedhar of Peshwa Balaji Bajirao. |
| 913 | AD.: Arab historian Al Masudi referred to Thana as <i>Tanha</i> or <i>Tabah</i> . | | 1760 | AD.: Subhedar Ramaji Mahadeo Biwalkar renovated the Kopineshwar mandir. |
| 917 | AD.: Abu Rehan Albiruni, a great historian has stated that Thana which is forty miles south of Sopara as the Capital of Konkan. | | 1774 | AD.: The British captured the fort of Thane. |
| 1318 | AD.: Emperor of Delhi, Mubarak Khilji captured Thane and placed a Muslim as head of the state. | 1666 AD.: Marathas captured Northeast part of Thane. | 1778 | AD.: During British rule, the Subhedar Wada started functioning as a court. |
| 1533 | AD.: Thane City changed hands from Sultan of Gujrat to the Portuguese. | 1710 AD.: The Parsi community built the Tower of Silence near Teen Haat Naka. | 1780 | AD.: Keshavji Sorabji Rustomji Patel built an Agyari (fire temple) in a predominantly Parsi locality. A Parsi Guesthouse is adjacent to the Agyari. |
| 1538 | AD.: At this time there were about sixty temples and | 1730 AD.: Portuguese captured the Island of Salsette. For purpose of security, they | | |

- 1803 AD.: The first District Court of Thane was set up near the Jambli naka.
- 1818 AD.: The Maratha rule came to an end.
- 1824 AD.: The construction of the Collector's office commenced at the far end of the Station Road.
- 1825 AD.: St. James Church was built near the Castle Tank adjoining the fort.
- 1833 AD.: A Traveler's bungalow was built on the eastern side of the Collector's office.
- 1835 AD.: Civil Hospital was built near the Tembhi naka.
- 1838 AD.: Thane fort was converted into a jail.
- 1853 AD.: The Great Indian Peninsular Railway started between Bombay and Thane.
- 1862 AD.: The Hirakot Fort, which is at a distance of a quarter

a mile from the station to the east of the road, started being used as Mamlatdar's office. Earlier this also functioned as a town Jail.

1928 AD.: Brahman Co-operative Credit Society was established.

1929 AD.: Khan Bahadur Bapuji Cawasji Diwecha, a Parsi, built the Town Hall opposite the Collector's office.

GENERAL HISTORY

The history of Thana is vast and immense, related to the whole of Thana district, entire Konkan region and the Western coast of Maharashtra. Thane or Sthan, is a settlement also known in the past as Konkan-Thane being the head quarters of Konkan Kingdom of the Shilaharas. This former headquarters of the Salsette subdivision is prettily placed on the west shore of the Salsette creek, in wooded country, between the Yeour range of the Salsette hills in the west and the steep picturesque Parsik peaks on the mainland

to the south - east. The fort presently being used as the jail, the Portuguese Cathedral, Hirakot or the Diamond Fort, Custom House, a few carved and engraved stones, and several large reservoirs are some of the signs that go to show that Thane was once a Great City.

The earliest possible date in Thana's history can be claimed as 636 AD when Khalif Omar dispatched his army from Iran to loot Thana. In the tenth century, Thana was stated to be one of the most important ports as said by Al Masudi. In the twelfth century, Al Idrisi, a traveler, included Thana port as one of the important ports along the western coast. Marco Polo has mentioned that during the thirteenth century, leather and cotton used to be exported via the sea route from Thana port.

The glorious years of Thana must have been between the 7th-12th century, the period of the Shilahara Kings. It is said that Thana was the capital city of the whole of the North Konkan area. During this period, many temples and architecturally important structures were built. The remnants in the form of copper plates and disfigured images of various Hindu deities were found from time to

time till date at places like Siddheshwar Talao, Masunda Talao, etc. depicting the glory of that era. The Kopineshwar mandir was being built during this period that was later renovated by Subhedar Ramji Mahadeo Biwalkar in the eighteenth century. During 1800's, the town had mainly grown to the west of the fort with a wide road leading towards Southwest to Mumbai and a road towards north leading to Surat via Ghodbunder. Thereafter it became district headquarters and transformed into an individual town during 1960-70.

Thane has thus witnessed various rules ranging from Muslims, Portuguese, Marathas and British.

MUSLIM RULE : In the beginning of the fourteenth centuries, the Turkish Sultan of Delhi conquered the coast and established a garrison at Thana. This is shown by the accounts of the Franciscan Friars, Jordanus and Odericus, who were in Thana between 1321 and 1324. The Friars state that the Saracens or Mohammedan held the whole country. They had destroyed an infinite number of idols, temples and likewise many churches, of which they made mosques for Mohammed, taking their endowments and property. The people residing during

that period were the pagans, Hindus and Parsis.

PORTUGUESE RULE : After the treaty with Bahadurshah of Gujrat in 1534, the Portuguese acquired the region of Vasai and Salsette. During 1538, Salsette was famous for the ruins of the great and beautiful city of Thana and the mighty cave temples of Kanheri. In the hills, was plenty of timber for ships and galleys. Later they formed a separate Thana District comprising of the villages along the coastal region and appointed a General of the Portuguese, and of the Gujrat kings. During 1560, Salsette had two divisions, the isles of Salsette with one subdivision and 99 villages and the town of Thane with 8 wards or *pakhadis*. Thana was a great city with 900 Gold lace looms and 1200 white cloth looms. Silk weaving was carried out in the city in the *Khatrali* or the *Khatarpada* or the Weavers' row which lies to the north of the St. John's church. There were as many as 4000 workers employed in this activity. The cloth would have come to general use were it not they cost from 40-50% that of the French and China silk.

Salsette was never well defended. There were coast forts at Daharavi and

Versova, a small watchtower at Bandra, and three small fortresses at Thana. One to the North of the city, it was a square fort with two bastions named Reis Magos. Other two round towers to the south, St. Pedro and St. Jeronimo. In 1728, complaints were made of the defenseless state of the island, and the construction of present fort was begun. Between 1534 and 1552 Antonio do Porto destroyed 200 temples, made over 10,000 converts, built 12 churches, and by founding orphanages and monasteries, secured a supply of Native Priests.

MARATHA RULE : By 1675, Shivaji Maharaj captured all the headquarters, which were earlier under the Muslim rule. He made many fruitless efforts to capture Thana, which was then under the Portuguese rule.

Later on in April 1737, a Maratha force entered Salsette. In 1739, the Peshwas captured Thana and Vasai and put an end to the Portuguese rule. In 1754, Ramji Mahadeo Biwalkar, Subhedar of Peshwa Balaji Bajirao built a Bungalow (the old District Court, Court Naka), and started administration from there.