

KHOTACHIWADI IMAGINARIES WORKSHOP

7. – 10. January 2016, Mumbai, India

REPORT

Workshop by:



Supported by:



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INTRODUCTION

The Khotachiwadi Imaginaries workshop was held on January 7-9, 2015, followed by a week-long exhibition in the neighbourhood. The workshop was open to participants interested in Khotachiwadi and what it represents for Mumbai. The workshop's premise was that heritage conservation is important, especially in a place like Khotachiwadi that reflects the city's history. However, in Khotachiwadi, preservation goes together with transformation. What needs to be preserved more than anything is the residents' sense of engagement with their neighbourhood.

In the workshop, every participant focused on a specific location or element of Khotachiwadi. They analysed their element graphically and interacted with people who used them, and then re-imagined how it could evolve over time. Participants generated ideas for how to creatively use, transform, and activate Khotachiwadi. The final output was a mix of very diverse representations of the neighbourhood and its possible futures, which were framed and exhibited in the street, providing an opportunity for further interactions with residents, visitors and people passing by.

On the day of the exhibition, a map of Khotachiwadi was painted on the wall at the entrance, which was transformed into an exhibition wall. Next to the map, a large emblem in copper, designed by one of the participants, was nailed onto the wall. It reads "Khotachiwadi" in Marathi.

Walls were whitewashed in various parts of the neighbourhoods, alleys were cleaned, stationary motorbikes were adorned with masks, an open space was transformed into a pop-up tea salon with new benches and flowers, an old abandoned car was turned into a flowerpot, architectural drawings were framed and put onto compound walls, and games were organised for the kids.

Some participants spray painted pictures of cats onto the walls of some of the alleys, along with local children. One group built a sturdy, wooden frame of steps to help children cross over from one chawl into another. It also happened that some residents interacted with each other for the first time in spite of having lived next to each other for years. Kids particularly enjoyed getting together to paint and play games.

Children, youth, adults and elderly residents from Khotachiwadi, as well as passers-by from the main road, all came in to look at the designs and ideas, and interacted with the workshop participants. The exhibition was held at three main points in the neighbourhood: the entrance near Girgaum Church, the back wall of Girgaum Lodge, and the gate outside Ideal Wafers. All three of these are already points of high interaction and activity, and the exhibition made it all the more exciting. Over two weeks after the exhibition day, the frames are still hanging on the streets of Khotachiwadi, not because the organisers forgot to remove them, but because we were asked to leave the exhibition up a little longer!

Thanks to our sponsors:

Goethe-Institut Mumbai
Swiss Embassy in India
Studio X, Mumbai

ORGANIZERS

Khotachiwadi Welfare and Heritage Trust

The Trust was established in 2003 in order to mobilize the residents of Khotachiwadi as well as other people interested in preserving and enhancing the unique qualities of this hamlet in the city. For information about the Trust, contact Ronak at 98 2025 8609 or by mail ronak.gangdev@outlook.com.

ARA

ARA is a collective of four architects and one filmmaker based in Berlin. In 2015 they published the book *Architecture Reading Aid Ahmedabad* at Ruby Press. They are engaged in exhibitions, workshops and imaginaries. The ARA team is comprised of Niklas Fanelisa, Jens Franke, Marius Helten, Björn Martenson and Leonard Wertgen.

urbz

urbz is an experimental platform for the production and diffusion of information on cities and neighborhoods. It organizes collaborative workshops bringing together residents, artists, architects, urbanists and activists. It operates from Mumbai and Goa in India and has branches in Brazil, Colombia and Switzerland. urbz believes that residents are experts in their neighborhoods. Their everyday experience of the places where they live and work constitute essential knowledge for planning and urban development. For more information, visit urbz.net or email contact@urbz.net.



Drawing

DAY 1 WORKSHOP



Observations & Discussion



DAY 2 WORKSHOP



Review



DAY 3 WORKSHOP



Setting up



Exhibition Wall B

DAY 4 EXHIBITION

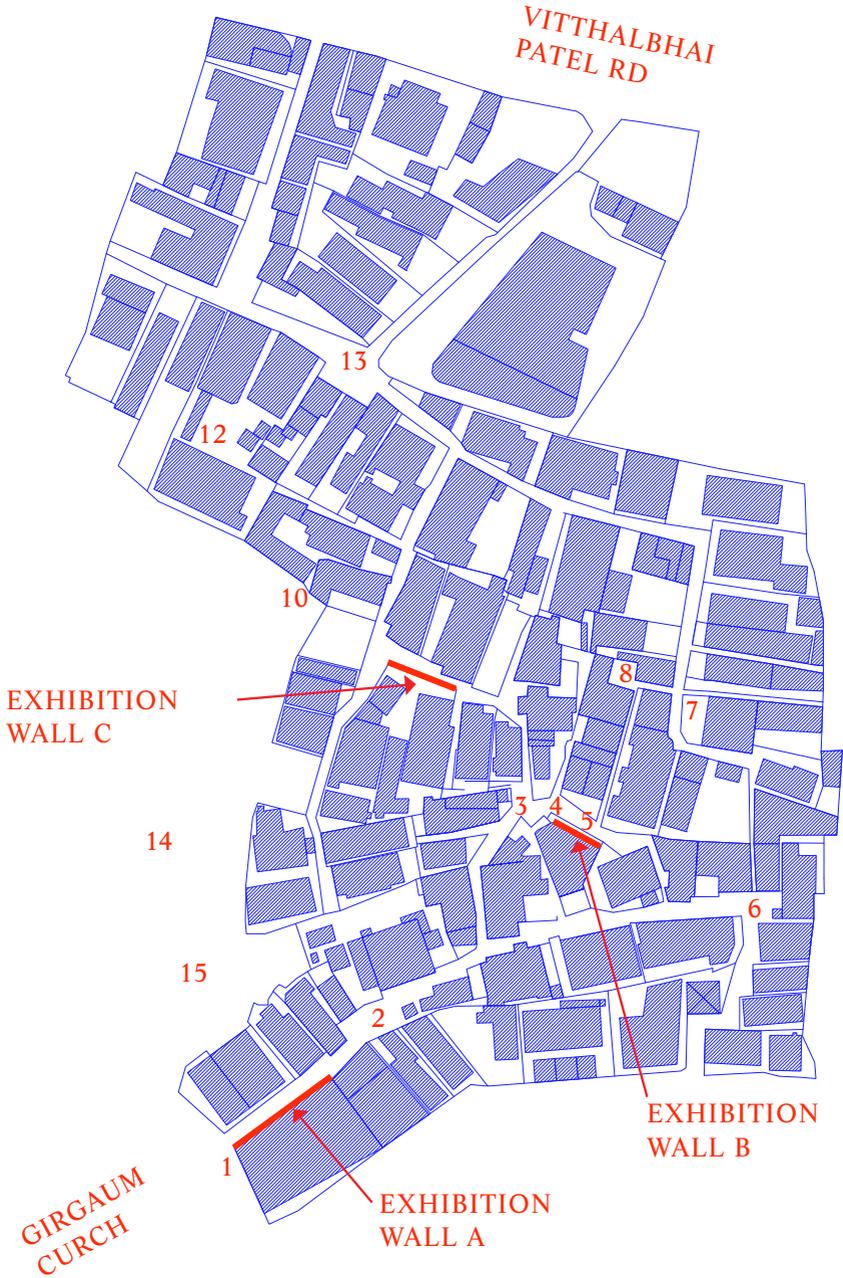


Exhibition Wall C

PROJECTS

- 1 Khotachiwadi Typography – Kruti Saraiya
- 2 Billi Wadi / Follow the Cat – Aaditya Todi
- 3 Gully Gallery – Shail Bajarria
- 4 Letter from a Neighbour – Sujata Rao
- 5 Koffee Khotachiwadi – Sweta Kandari
- 6 Bike Garden – Aasavari Kanhere
- 7 Bench Diaries – Pranitha Shetty
- 8 Bench Addition – Pranitha Shetty & Aasavari Kanhere
- 9 Bike Totem – Rheaa Rao
- 10 Coumpond Curtain Wall – Aarti Mehta
- 11 Budhane House – Appurva Chauhan and Jhanvi Sanghvi
- 12 Chawl Connection – Jai Bhadgaonkar and Jan Bega
- 13 Chawlment – Namrata Toraskar
- 14 Wall of Shared Memory – Rajji Desai
- 15 Temple Wall – Vaibhav Tannir

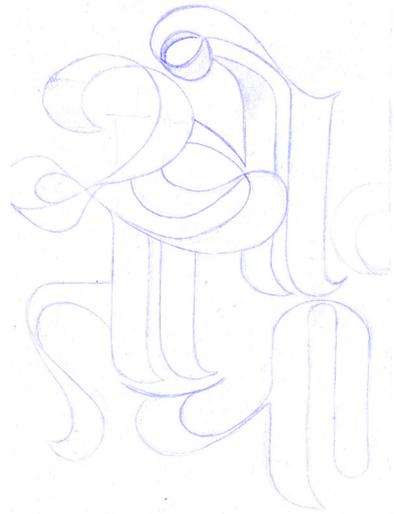
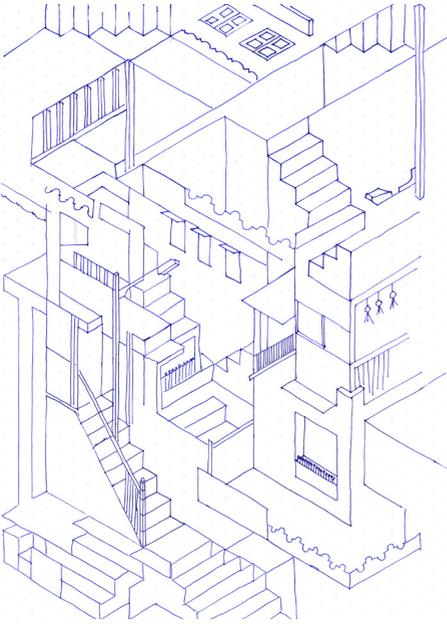
MAP



Through the eyes of a typographer, Khotachiwadi appears to be a lot more than just bungalows, chawls and buildings. The neighbourhood comes across as a mix of people of different origins, with the various structures having unique fonts or styles of text for signboards, addresses and name plates. These exemplify their backgrounds and co-exist in the same space. All of these converged into an emblem that read ‘Khotachiwadi’ in Marathi, which then materialized as a brass sign during the workshop.

The emblem is an attempt to capture the preserved culture and inter-connectedness of the space through hand-drawn vernacular alphabet that brings out the emotional resonance of Khotachiwadi. It was nailed onto the wall and is one of the most popular outputs of the workshop. Many residents and passers-by stop and take selfies in front of it.

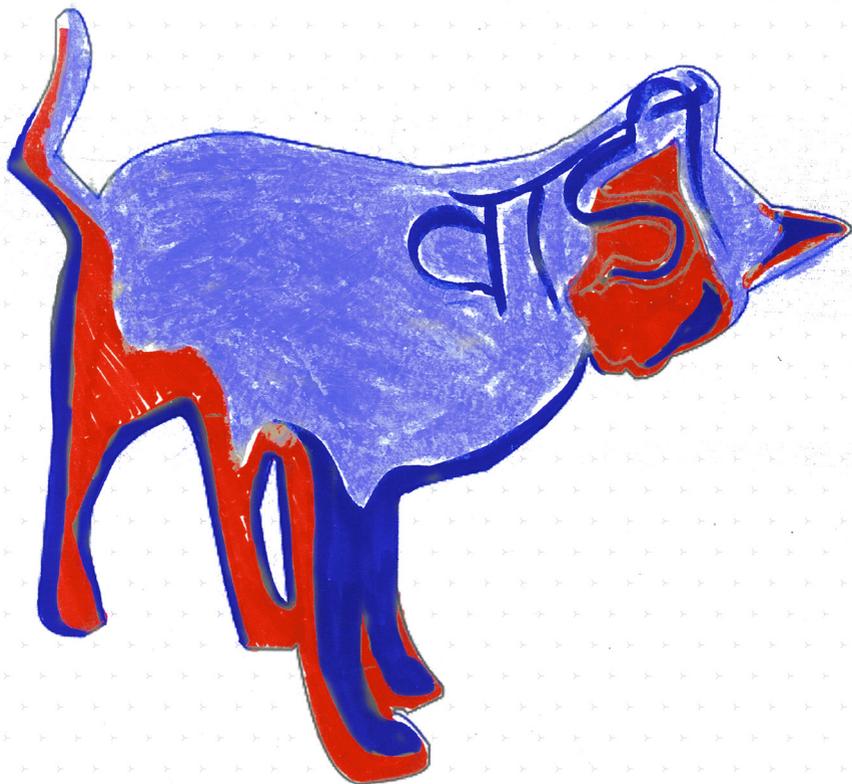
KHOTACHIWADI TYPOGRAPHY



This project deals with the back-alleys of Khotachiwadi. Cats are everywhere in the neighbourhood and we are sure that the cat to human population ratio is disproportionately high! The Billi Wadi project builds on the ties between cats and residents, mediated by children. Local cats were photographed in their favorite habitats and the photos were converted into stencils. These stencils then became an art project for Khotachiwadi. Children were allowed to choose the stencil that resembled their favourite resident cat and spray painted them on the walls of the neighbourhood. Many local children got involved in the project and, along with their families, took upon themselves the task of creating cat and pipe designs in alleys.

The process became a community activity, which was part of the original idea to create more thriving public spaces as motivation for residents to keep back-alleys clean. A simple artistic project such as 'Follow the cat' lays the basis for a playful trail that contributes to the identity of Khotachiwadi and is also sensitive to the residents' interest in keeping rats away.

BILLI WADI – FOLLOW THE CAT



KHOTACHIWADI TYPOGRAPHY



Signs and type

BILLI WADI – FOLLOW THE CAT



Alleys

The houses in Khotachiwadi are very expressive, both architecturally and culturally. Having gone through incremental changes, growth and repair over the years, they encompass a diverse palette of material. The porches, verandas and staircases are excellent spaces for spontaneous interaction with local residents full of stories, that tie the houses and street into a continuum.

What imaginaries could be set in such an ensemble? The primary connect of a visitor to Khotachiwadi is the realm of the street, the facade and the transient spaces that connect these.

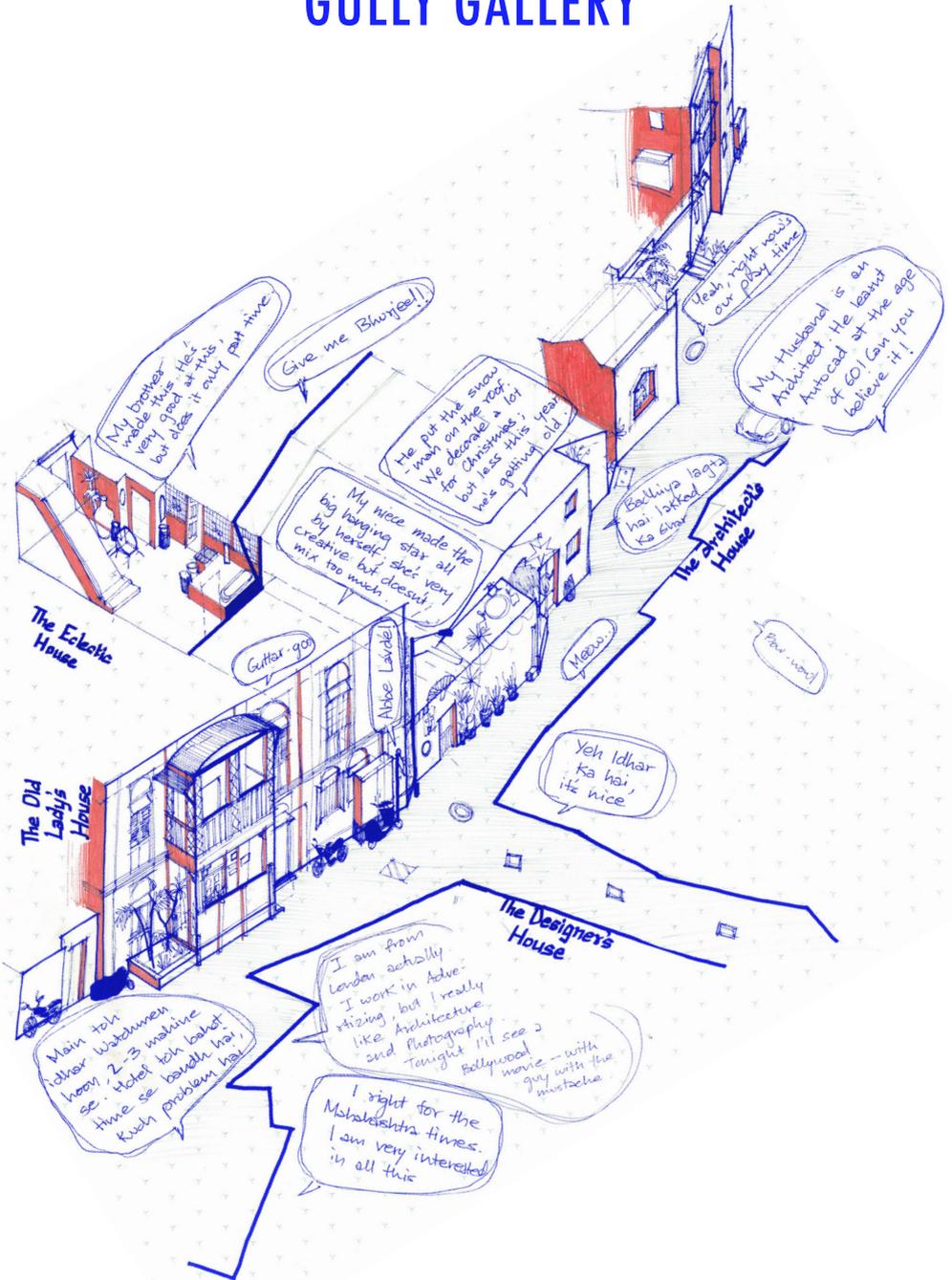
What if the street were a room, and the facades, its walls? This communal room is filled with curiosities for the flâneur - and becomes a 'Gully Gallery'.

The design proposal aims at a very small aspect of this idea - a temporary entrance pavilion. Due to the design's location near the entrance, it pauses the connection between Khotachiwadi and the city outside. An info desk sits adjacent to the entrance. It is flanked by a stairway leading to the terrace level above, where angled glass windows frame the views.

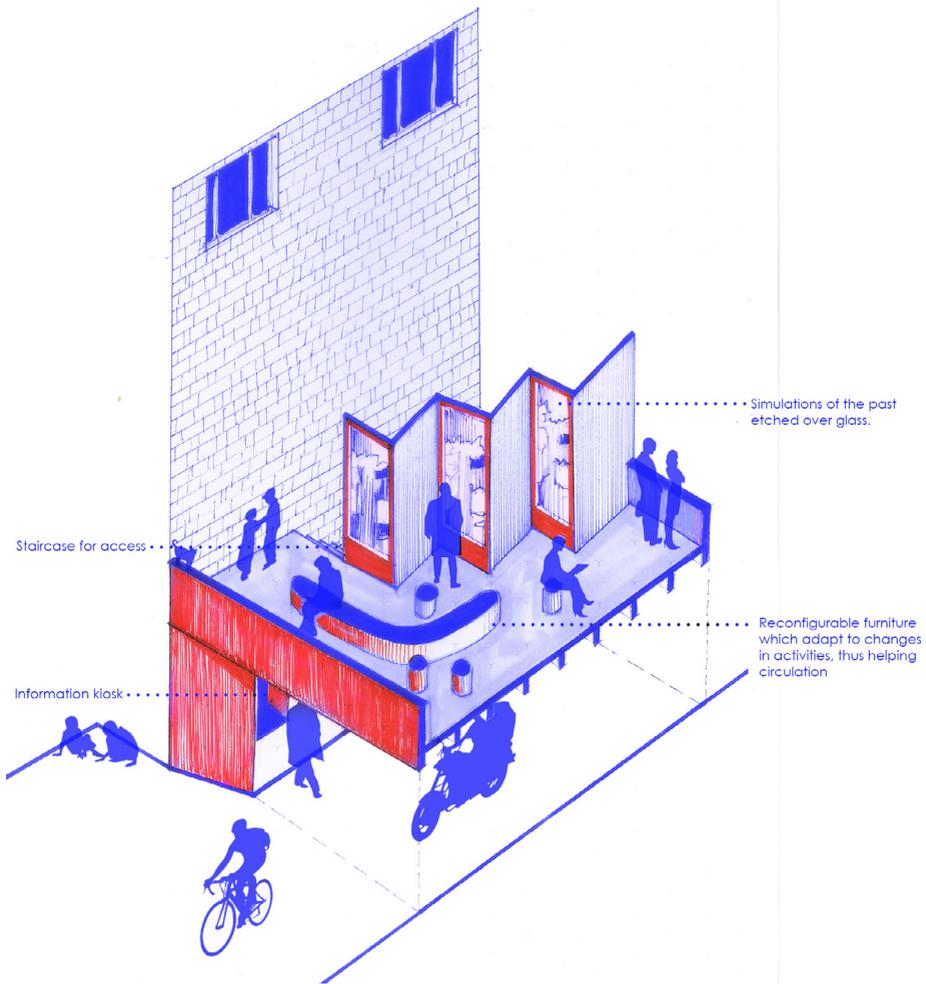
These glasses each relate to a time in the past, and drawings are etched over the parts that did not exist then. A visitor views Khotachiwadi at different points in history, and is thus able to decipher the various layers that cohere in its present form. A reconfigurable unit of furniture sits across from this backdrop, which can be a place for reflection as well as discussion.

The motive of this intervention was to create a space that, perhaps for part of the year, stimulates an interest in architecture, as well as a way of life which is a product of this architecture, that is slowly vanishing from our urban horizon.

GULLY GALLERY

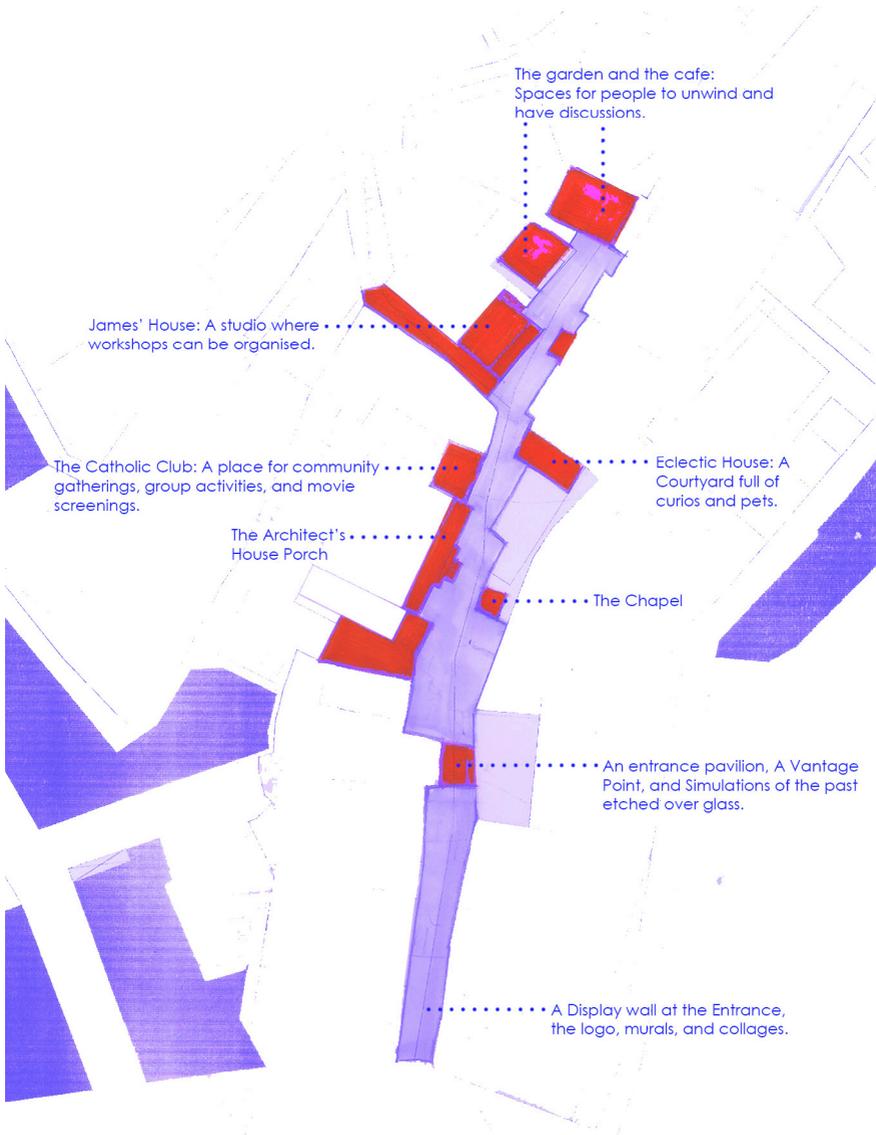


Entrance to Khotachiwadi



Shail Bajaria

GATE



Entrance to Khotachiwadi

Asha/Agarwal lodge is situated on a crowded and commercial lane that is at the fringe of the wadi. The owners of Asha lodge are keen on selling it. Like many residents of the wadi who cannot afford the upkeep of their property, they are attracted by the offers that builders propose.

This project deals with the ways in which small businesses in Khotachiwadi can enhance the economy of the neighbourhood. Since Khotachiwadi is known for its architectural and heritage value, a practical and viable option would be to convert existing premises into B&B's or homestays.

The proposal engages with the idea of involving corporate sponsorship and corporate social responsibility (CSR), an important duty of big companies. It suggests that private engagement can bring in the funding that the Khotachiwadi Heritage and Welfare Trust requires in order to be fully operational. While it is practical for many bungalow owners to sell their property, one way of ensuring that heritage is conserved is if the Trust oversee the process of selling. This can ensure that only buyers interested in preserving the heritage take over the property.

The final output was a letter from the participant to the residents of the wadi, outlining the proposed suggestions for “preserving” and revitalising the neighbourhood. It was carefully crafted and designed, for exhibition near the main entrance of the wadi. Visitors and residents could easily access it as they entered and exited Khotachiwadi, and would be able to contact the participant if they have ideas or feedback. The publicly framed letter helps the participant remain connected to the Trust, the residents, and the neighbourhood.

Sujata Rao

“LETTER FROM A NEIGHBOUR”

10th January 2016



Dear residents of Khotachiwadi,

I as your neighbour, who also holds property and runs a hotel near Crawford Market, completely understand your divided feelings towards disposing off ancestral property or holding on to it.

LANDLINE : 022 2208 0226
022 2208 4607

In this regard I would like to share some thoughts with you.

MOBILE : 9773200702

It would be wonderful if all residents became members of the Khotachiwadi Trust. They could then authorize the trust to find buyers for those interested in selling their property. The trust would prioritize buyers who would want to retain the fabric of the wadi and respect the form of its original structure.

Related to this, there are certain ideas I would like to bring forth.

1. Create a brand for Khotachiwadi, and have a unique logo.
2. Encourage the Trust to make appeals to wealthy well-wishers from India & abroad to donate to the trust.
3. Connect with philanthropic organizations to sponsor bungalows.
4. Take all bungalows for sale, treat them as one block and convert it into a museum complex, or use it for film screenings/shooting/story-trails etc.

Please connect with me on sujata_pilinja@yahoo.com or 9820504374, to brainstorm with me.

Do join me for a cup of chai and some bhel at New Vasantashram, as well. I would be happy to meet you and have more discussions on this!

Yours sincerely,

Sujata Pilinja Rao
New Vasantashram, boarding and lodging house

www.newvasantashram.com | info@newvasantashram.com



Asha/Agarwal lodge on the periphery of Khotachiwadi



GATE



Exhibition Wall 1

The Sri Sai Dutt Chowk, which gets its name from the Sri Sai Dutt Mandir, acts as a junction in the heart of Khotachiwadi. To cross the neighbourhood, one has to go through this junction. Currently, the chowk has a few benches, where the residents sit and chat or rest during the day. Vegetable vendors halt their carts here and call out to customers. The residents also use the space to play carrom board in the evenings. However, the majority of the area lies unused because of the unorganised parking and seating spaces, which are not maintained.

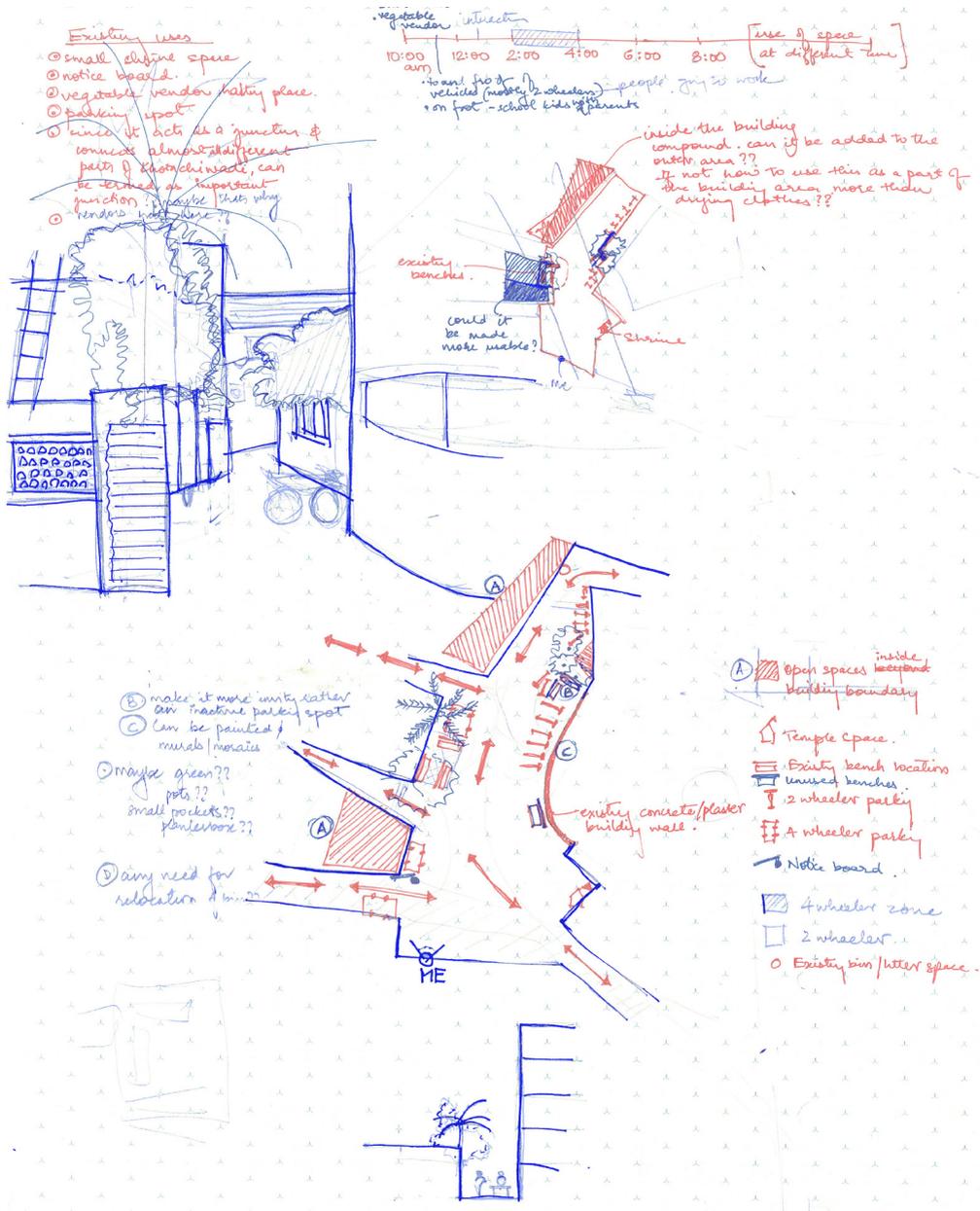
The participant created a timeline study to understand the various functions of the space at different points during the day. The design proposal suggests that a few empty pockets of the surrounding buildings be incorporated into the chowk to make them more useable.

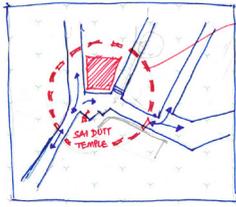
Based on the above analysis of Sri Sai Dutt Chowk, a proposal for a café emerged. This involved revamping the unused seating area and relocating the parking which would make the space more appealing. Also, a café would provide visitors a place to sit, rest and to take in the atmosphere of Khotachiwadi. This proposal suggested the use of basic construction materials, like bamboo, bricks, broken china mosaic and scrap glass. With these, the output attempted to blend into its surrounding easily. Another suggestion for this space was an 'otla' (or a platform) which could be used by the residents for leisure, as a performance space, or during festivals.

An open air cafe or tea salon materialised on the last day of the workshop for the exhibition. Tea was offered to residents and people passing by. New benches were installed. And the entire chowk was decorated with flowers and plants. What is usually the preserve of a few people who live just around, became a very public space for a day, showing the long-term potential of open spaces in Khotachiwadi.

Sweta Kandari

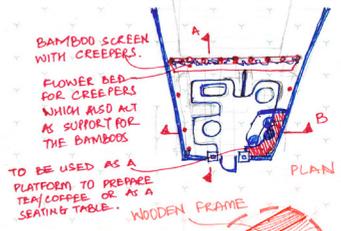
KOFFEE KHOTACHIWADI



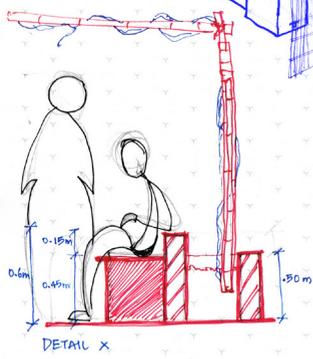
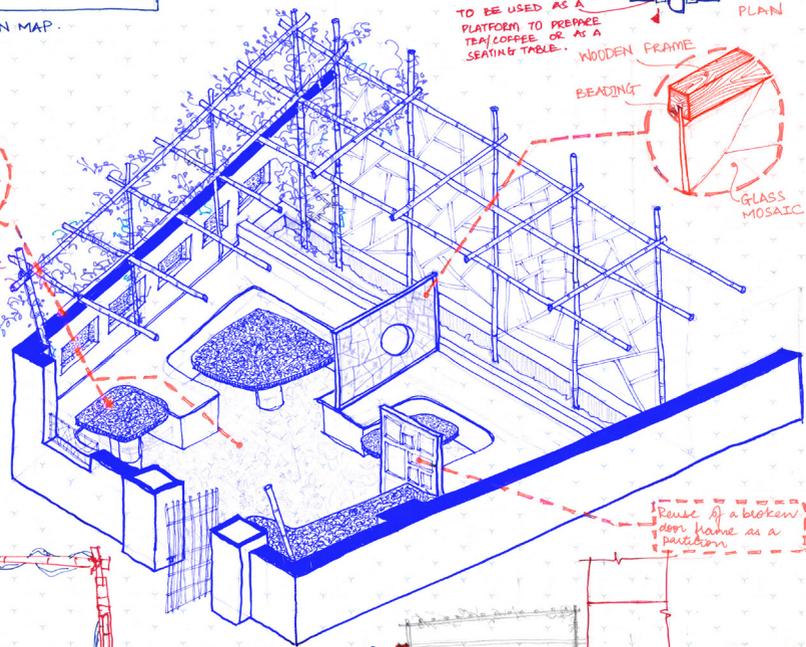


LOCATION MAP.

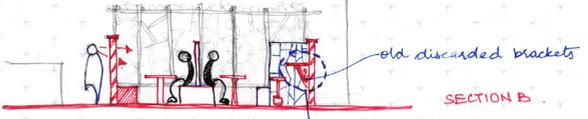
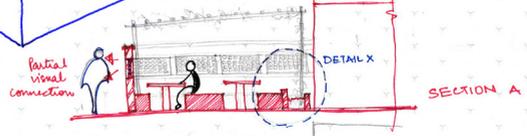
also as a junction



BROKEN CHINA MOSAIC FOR TABLE TOPS AND FLOORING



DETAIL X

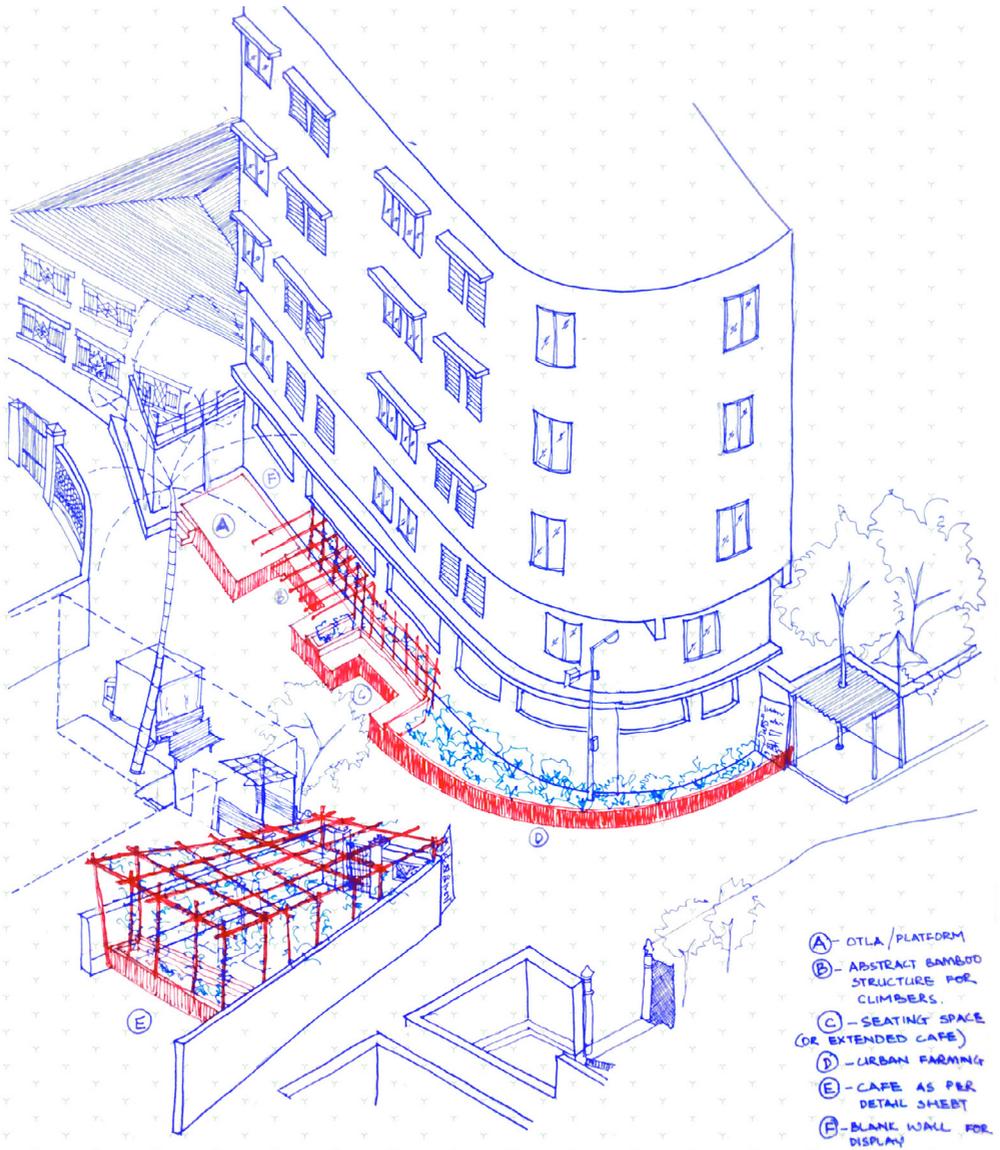


used as a cooking platform when needed.

MATERIALS USED

- ⊙ BAMBOO
- ⊙ BROKEN CHINA TILES
- [DISCARDED / BROKEN GLASS PIECES]

KOFFEE KHOTACHIWADI



Shri Sai Dutt Chowk - Ambeshwar Bhuvan



Benches in public spaces

KOFFEE KHOTACHIWADI



Shri Sai Dutt Chowk – Ambeshwar Bhuvan

The Sri Sai Dutt Chowk Junction is a busy one. People from both inside and outside the neighbourhood pass by and stop at this intersection of lanes. The junction is a bustling meeting point for the various people of Khotachiwadi at various points in time over the course of the day.

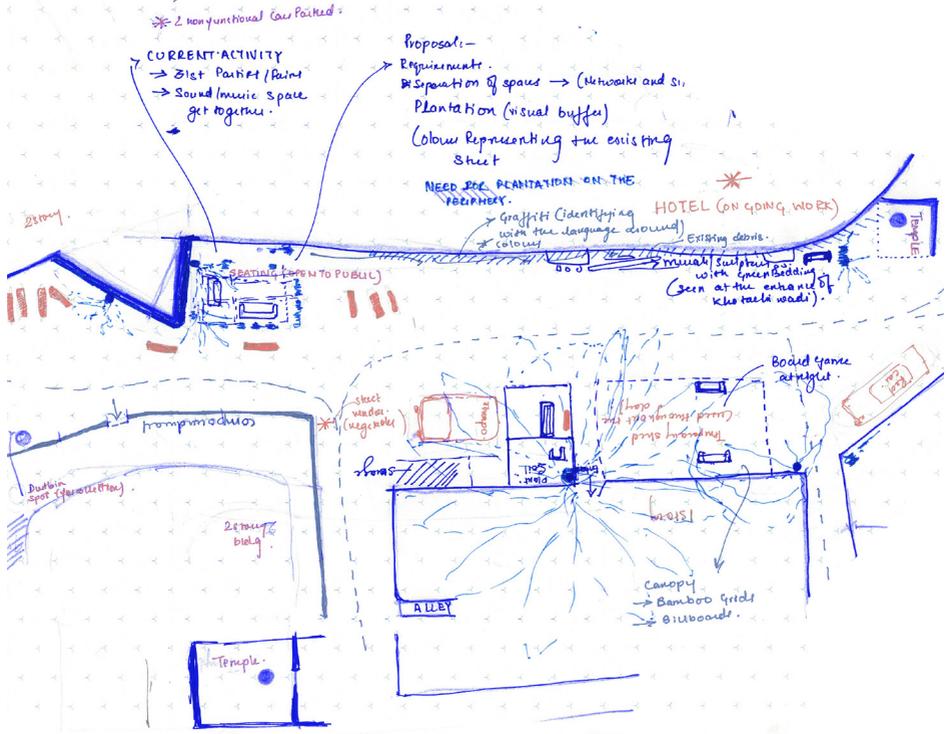
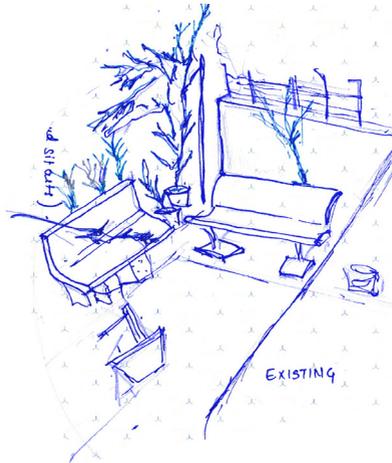
After observation and analysis of the area, it became clear that the benches of this chowk are a key aspect of social interaction. The use of these benches is often obstructed by the presence of parked motorbikes. Many of these are unattended and left in the area throughout the day. The bike garden was an idea to redo the little square and the benches in it to create a more vibrant social space, while adapting the arrangement of bikes and benches to each other and the activities that they facilitate.

The specific element that was focused on was the bench that directly faces the back wall of Girgaum Lodge. The participants decided to do a whole study of the uses for the bench at this spot. In the morning, it was used by passers-by who stopped for a quick chat and the odd vendor looking to sell his ware. This spot was also where the fisherwomen gather to sell their catch. During the course of the day, the bench became the preferred spot for the locals to chat with each other, for children to catch their breath during their playtime and for cats to lounge on. The evening brought with it a convivial game of carrom amongst the locals who gathered under the make-shift structure behind the bench. The bench then served as the place for those who wanted a quick break from standing and watching the game.

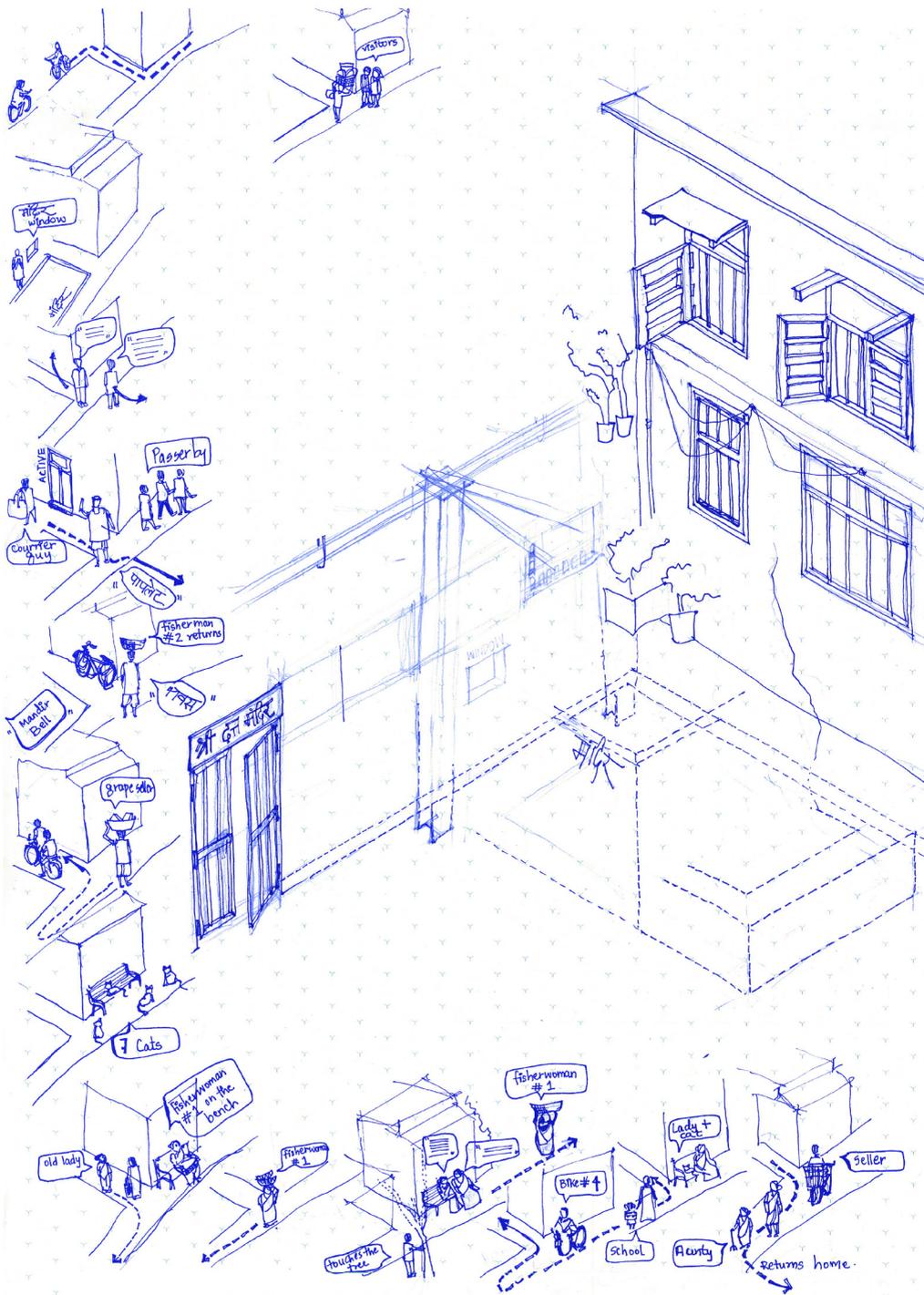
It was evident that the bench was an element of importance for social interaction. These benches are found throughout Khotachiwadi and their potential to bring the residents together is one to be explored.

Aasavari Kanhere

BIKE GARDEN

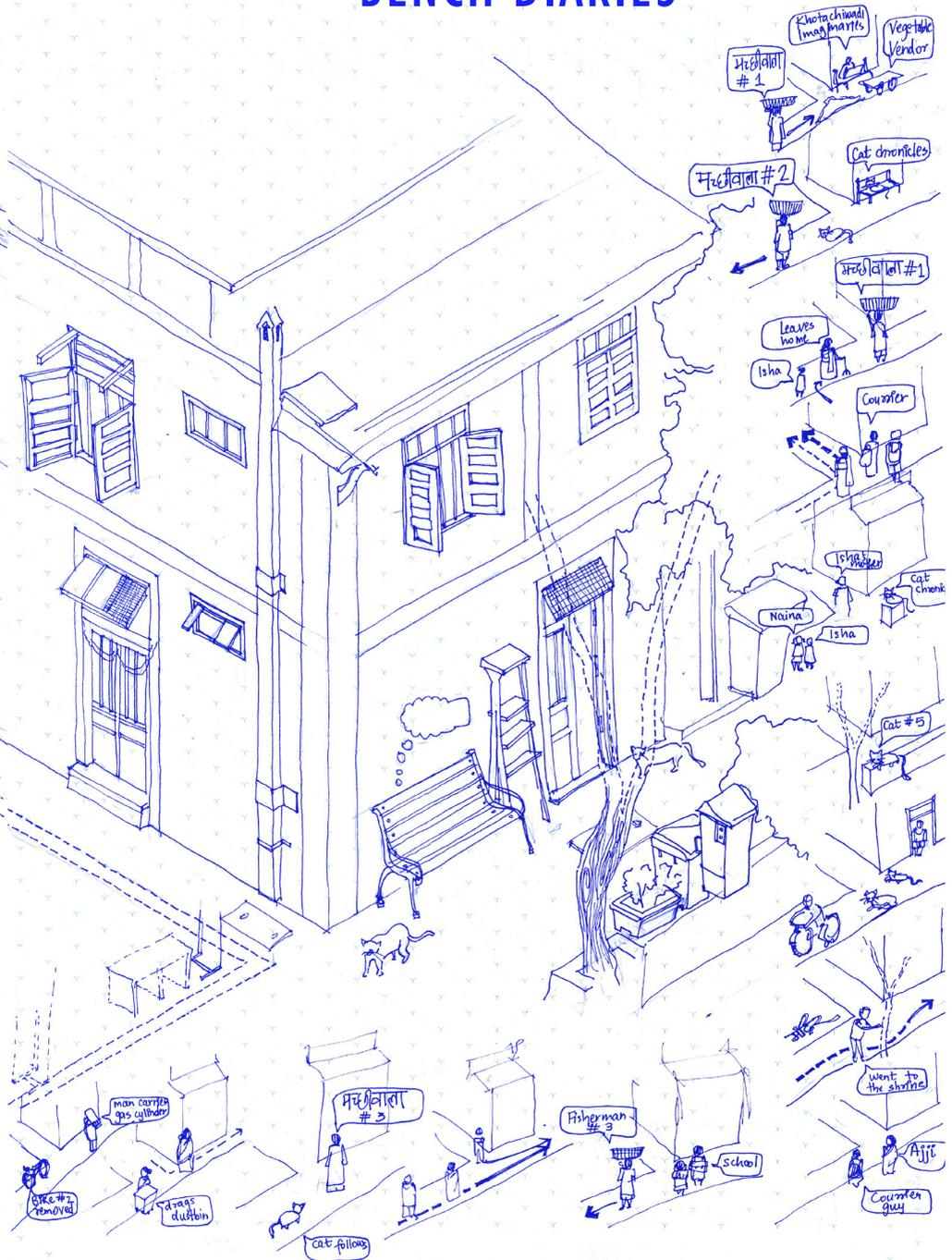


Benches in public spaces



Pranitha Shetty

BENCH DIARIES



Benches in public spaces

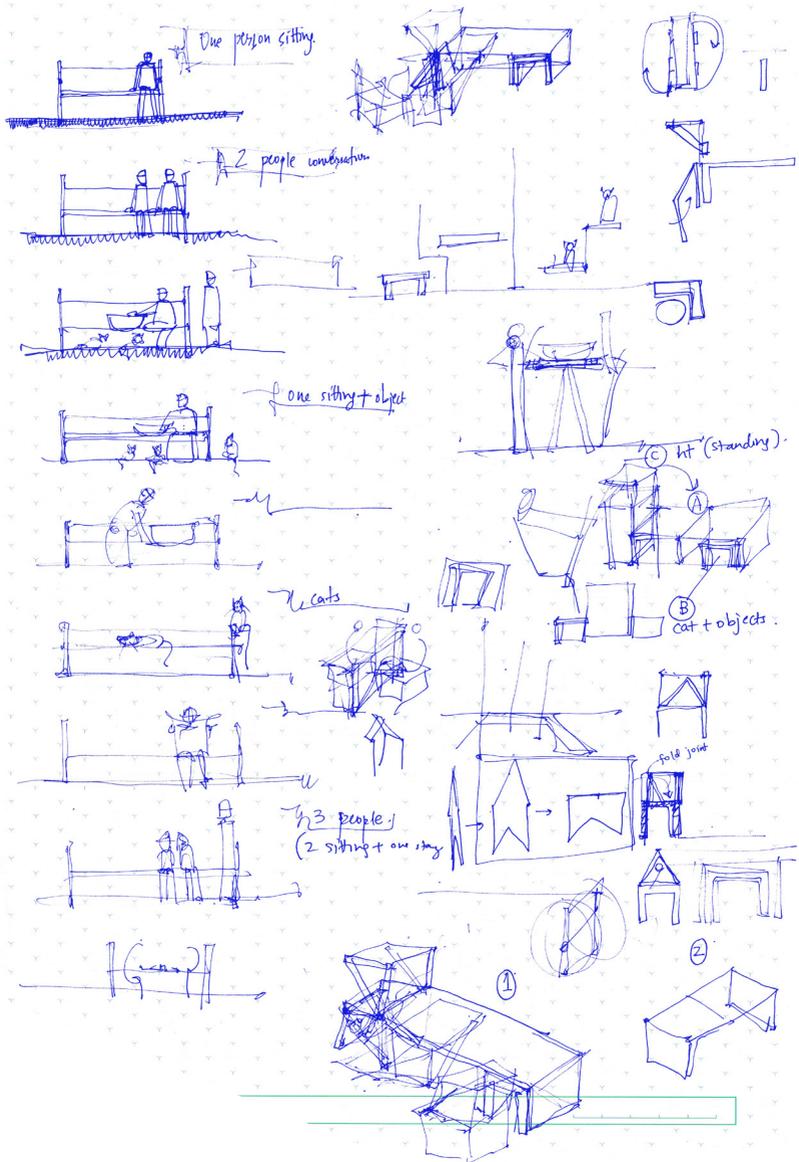
The junction at the Sri Sai Dutt Chowk is interesting because of the various activities that take place around it over the course of the day. The junction serves as a spot for convergence for people from all over the neighbourhood. The local residents, courier men, fruit and vegetable sellers, school children and old women, and the various cats of Khotachiwadi pass by this junction at some point of the day.

After a careful observation of this junction through the day, there was one element that stood out: the bench by the corner. In the morning, it is used by passers-by who stop for a quick chat and the odd vendor who is looking to sell his wares. This spot is also where the fisherwomen gather to sell their catch. During the course of the day, the bench is the preferred spot for the locals to catch up, for children to catch their breath during their playtime and for cats to lounge on. The evening brings with it a convivial game of carrom amongst the locals who gather under the make-shift structure behind the bench. The bench then serves as the place for those who want a quick break from standing and watching the game.

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Pranitha Shetty

BENCH DIARIES



Benches in public spaces

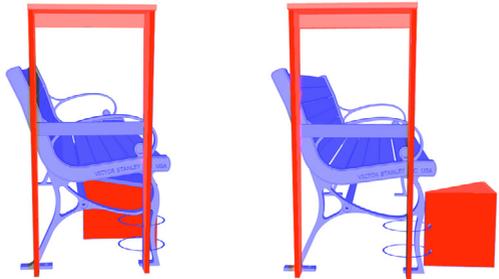
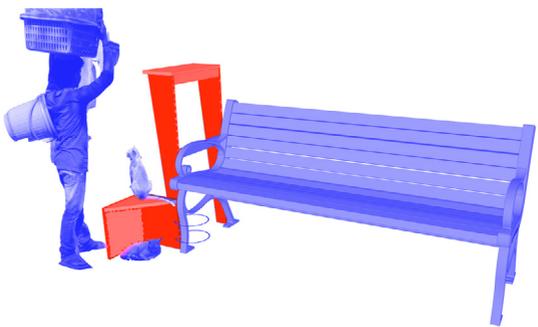
The Bench Diaries stimulated participants to respond materially to these observations. They designed their own version of the bench with the special add-ons. These add-ons for the Khotachiwadi street bench thus had to be more than just a seat. It had to be a place where people conversed both sitting and standing. Since standing is tedious, the design therefore included a handstand, as an ergonomic and functional addition.

This handstand is multipurpose and acted as a surface to keep hot chai, books or bags. An addition near the bottom of the bench was included in the design, to serve as a platform for fisherwomen to sell their produce. This could be used as a footstool and as a space for cats to perch on.

The simple proposal was made to scale with the help of carpenters at Studio X, Mumbai, partners of the workshop, and was installed for the Khotachiwadi Imaginaries Exhibition. The add-ons were designed as a DIY project that could be made by locals for the other benches in Khotachiwadi. Locals loved the idea and were excited about the different ways their simple bench could now be used. The proposal received positive feedback from residents, vendors, children and, of course, the cats.

Pranitha Shetty & Aasavari Kanhere

BENCH ADDITIONS



Benches in public spaces

Khotachiwadi is a labyrinth of narrow alleys, lanes, shortcuts and dead-ends. The proposal for this project was based on an intersection of fact and fiction. The idea of the project was to look at Khotachiwadi through the eyes of the buildings that surrounded these alleys. Buildings are silent and stationary observers that live through every change that occurs in a neighbourhood. Observing change through the eyes of Khotachiwadi's buildings could bring forth stories that have never been heard before.

Imagining buildings as people, different masks to represent several structures were designed and cut out. To supplement this, short street plays were written based on the kind of conversations these buildings would have with each other. The theme of these plays was to reimagine space in Khotachiwadi. As the stories emerged, the bikes, screaming through the alleys or parked obtrusively and defiantly on the streets emerged as important actors. Bikes became the friendly monsters of Khotachiwadi.

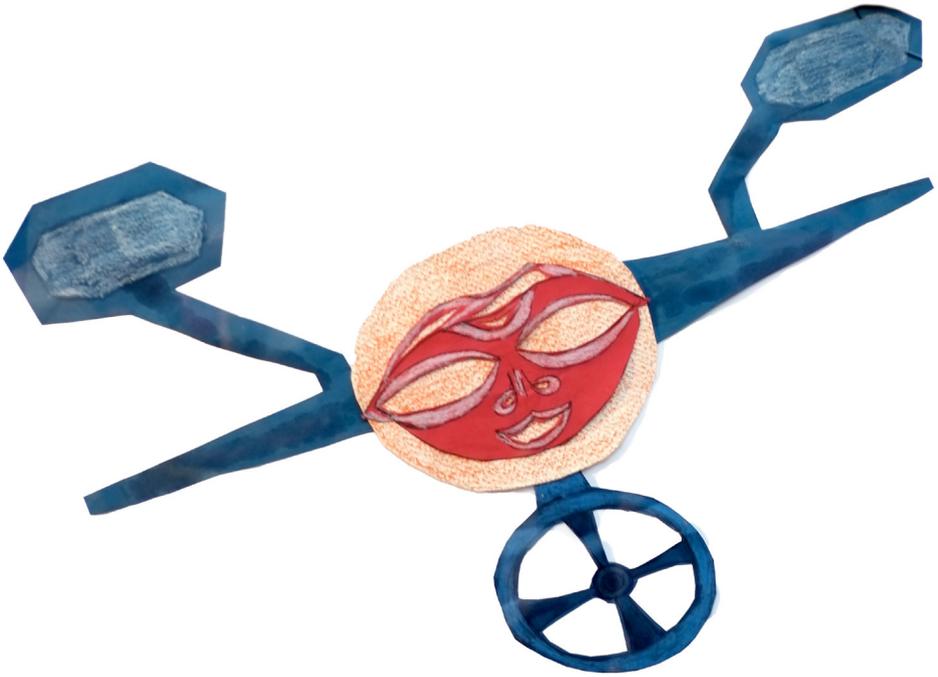
They are needed and loved. Used not only to go in or out of the neighbourhood, but also to sit on and play. At the same time, they scare kids and adults alike when they zoom up and down the narrow pedestrian lanes, roaring like beasts. It was only fair to decorate them with masks so their huge presence could be acknowledged and they could start telling their own many stories.

On the day of the exhibition, local residents were asked to pick a mask they identified most with and were encouraged to enact the plays. This was a great success amongst youngsters and children who were keen to voice out the problems of their own buildings and streets. As a creative means to alternate participatory planning, this intervention has great potential to encourage residents to communicate with each other as well as with officials to identify the problems that exist in the neighbourhood.

Rheaa Rao

THE SECRET LIFE OF BIKES AND BUILDINGS

BIKE TOTEM



Alleys of Khotachiwadi

BENCH ADDITIONS



Benches in public spaces

BIKE TOTEM



Alleys of Khotachiwadi

Architecturally, the way to express the need to demarcate public and private spaces is through the use of compound walls. Khotachiwadi has a variety of compound walls which shape space in different ways. Some walls are interactive because they are built ergonomically; others are opaque and concrete.

The proposal explored a typology for a future wall which combines the functions and meaning of both public and private space. It demarcates ownership lines, yet keeps a flow of interaction into the street. The idea was to make the walls situationally interactive and contextually relevant. This was achieved by changing the material used for demarcation. Visually, a transparent element like strands of thread or chains can achieve the same effect that a wall does of respecting the difference between public and private space and yet dissolving this visually. A 'Compound Curtain Wall' can redefine opaque compound walls, encouraging interaction while maintaining boundaries.

COMPOUND CURTAIN WALL

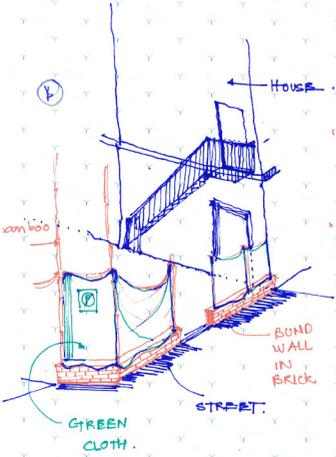
INTERACTION WITH COMMUNITY.

"Every Inch is important in this area for everyone."

"They fight for inch of space".

"Every tries to demarcate areas/property by building walls, park their cars etc."

"In early days compound walls / Element separating two functions. had a climate logic too. For e.g."



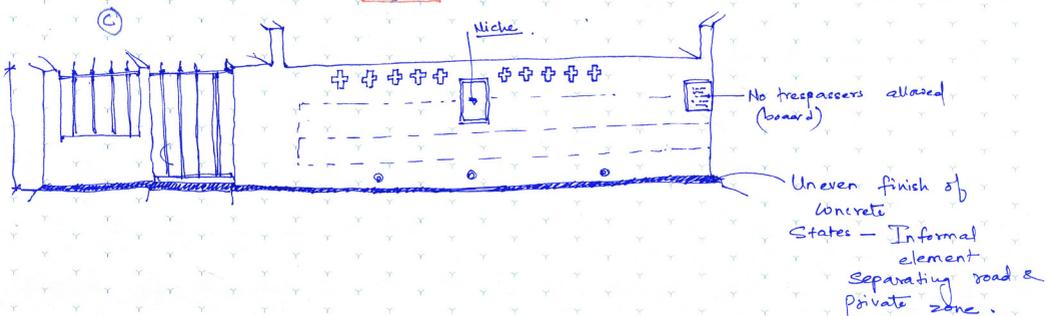
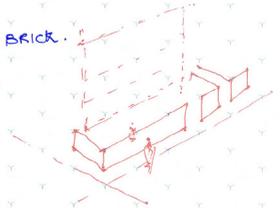
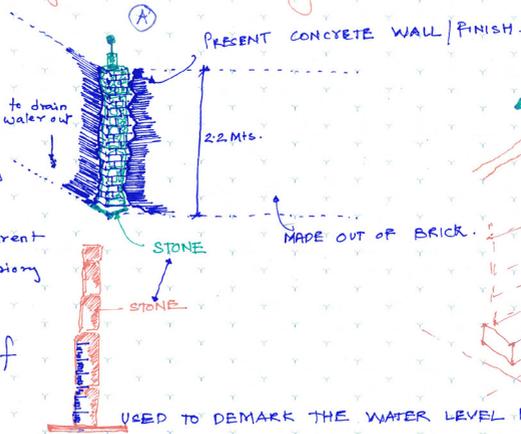
Ⓟ No parking sign.

" ONLY THE OWNER PARKS HIS BIKE."

"there used to benches & we used to play cricket in this area long time back."

"Now people think different & just wants their territory to be maintained"

- Residents of Khotachiwadi



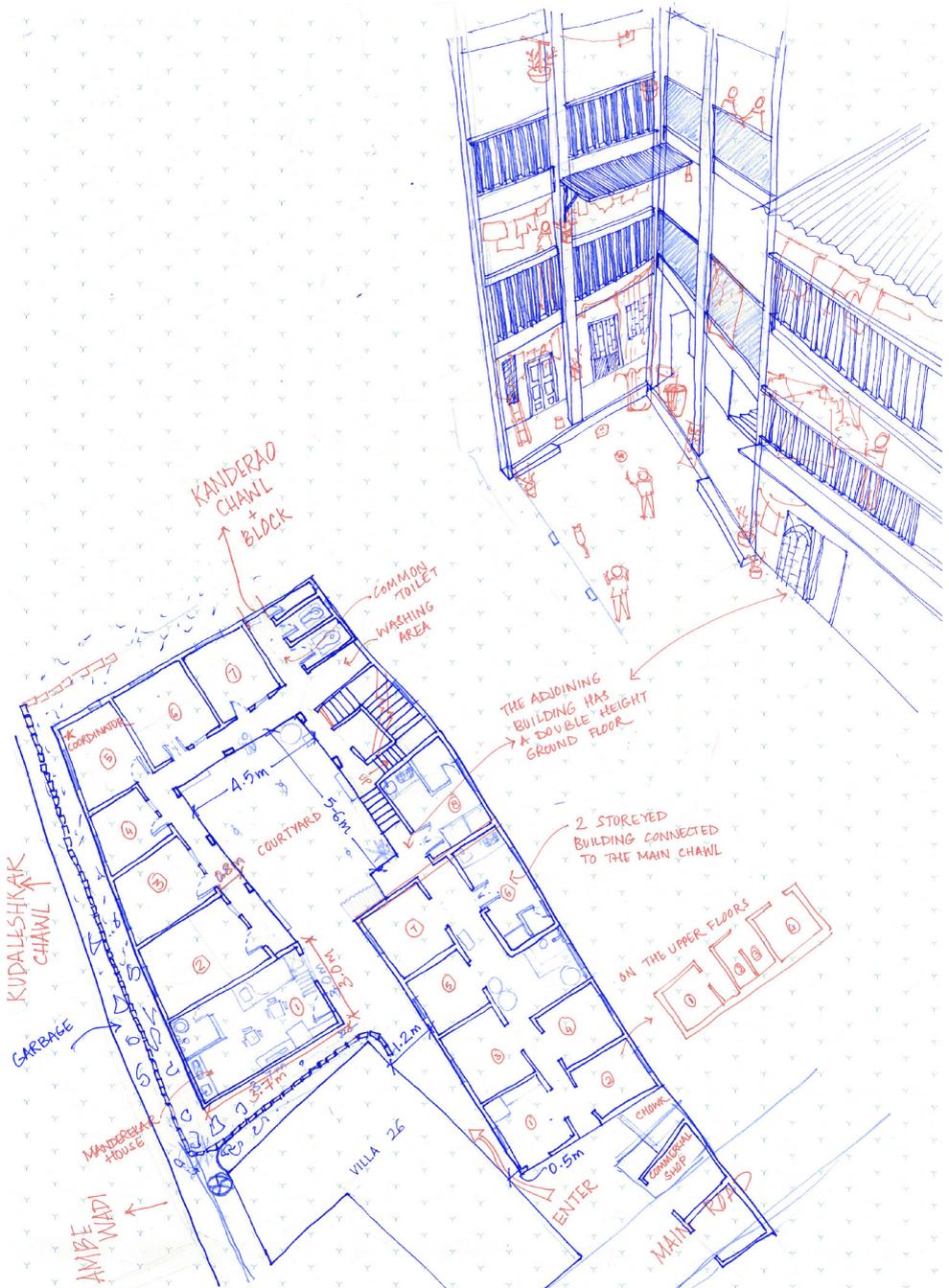
Walking through the narrow lanes of Khotachiwadi, it is very easy to miss the 'entrance' to the Budhane House chawl, a narrow, half-metre gap. This official entrance to the chawl opens into an old, beautiful courtyard. While the narrow entrance ensures privacy to the residents, it also poses many problems; it is a fire safety hazard, cuts the residents off from their surroundings and hampers the engagement of their chawl with the festivities and functions happening in and around Khotachiwadi.

The chawl is a three storeyed structure which has around 50 tenants, staying in 120 sq.ft homes. Initially, this courtyard was very functional and well kept. It was used for various programmes and festivals. The residents used it to project movies, celebrate festivals, conduct marriages and kids used it as a common play area. However, over time, these activities have disappeared.

After talking to the residents, several issues they faced were brought to light. Khotachiwadi, being a heritage precinct, attracts anthropologists, residents, educators, activists, urban designers and architects who discuss and catalogue its heritage structures. On the other hand, the chawls, an integral part of Khotachiwadi, are neglected. They lack space, mobility, and disuse has resulted in hygiene and sanitation problems. The residents also encounter problems bringing in furniture, refrigerators, and any other basic requirements which exceeds the size of the entrance. In cases of emergency, stretchers need to be tilted in order to take a person out of the courtyard.

Appurva Chauhan and Jhanvi Sanghvi

BUDHANE HOUSE



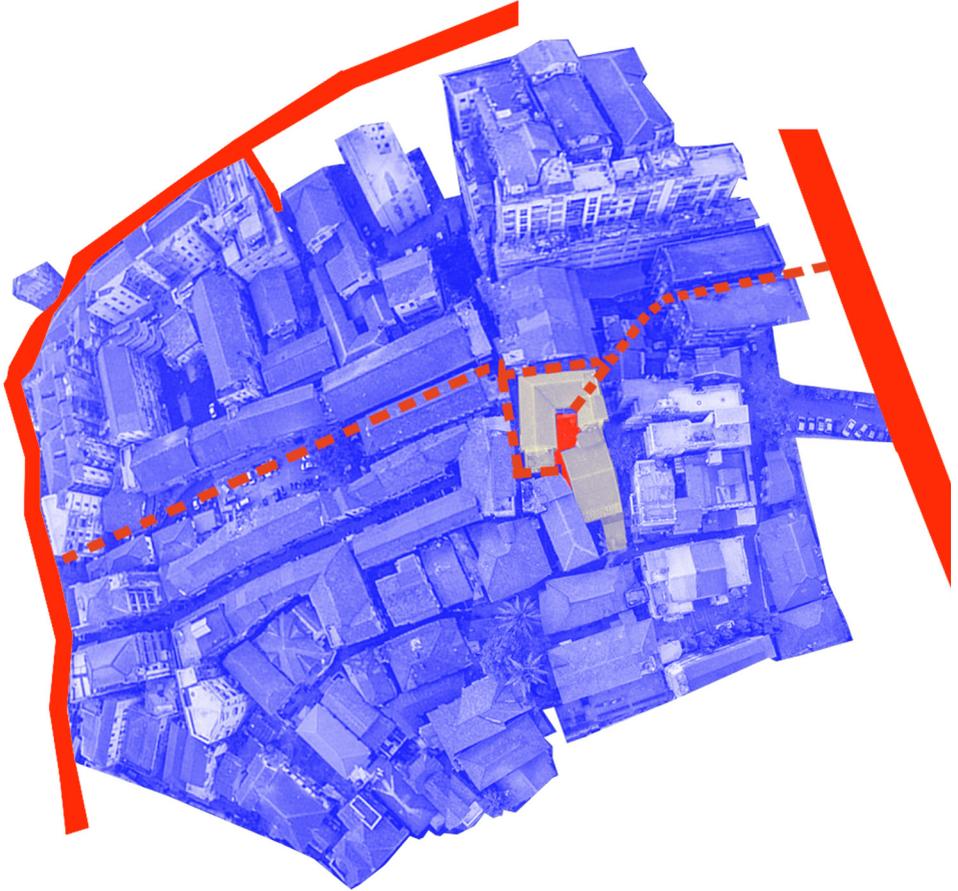
Budhane House Chawl

The design identified an alternate path for the residents, to create access to the main road. Bringing down the compound wall around the chawl would allow for a passage measuring 2 meters wide. The property line between the surrounding structures can be maintained by other means of demarcation. As a solution, the back alleys were cleaned and a route connecting Budhane House and Kudaleshkar Chawl's courtyard was identified.

Kudaleshkar Chawl's courtyard has access to the main road. However, there was a huge level difference between the compound walls of the two chawls. Temporarily, a staircase was built which would help the residents move between the main roads and chawls. The idea was to bridge the two adjacent chawls and their residents; many who had lived in their respective chawls their whole lives had never met until the day of the exhibition. Now the residents of Kudaleshkar and Budhane have more extensive interaction and movement.

Appurva Chauhan and Jhanvi Sanghvi

BUDHANE HOUSE BRIDGE



Budhane House Chawl



BUDDHANE BRIDGE



Budhane House Chawl

Ambewadi Chawl is a bustling place which functions as its own entity, independent of Khotachiwadi. Khotachiwadi has five entrances, none of which have the same potential as the shortcut to Ambewadi Chawl. There is a lot of movement between Khotachiwadi and Ambewadi Chawl through the shortcuts taken by residents. Currently, only those in the know make use of it, a trail that moves through a series of private spaces.

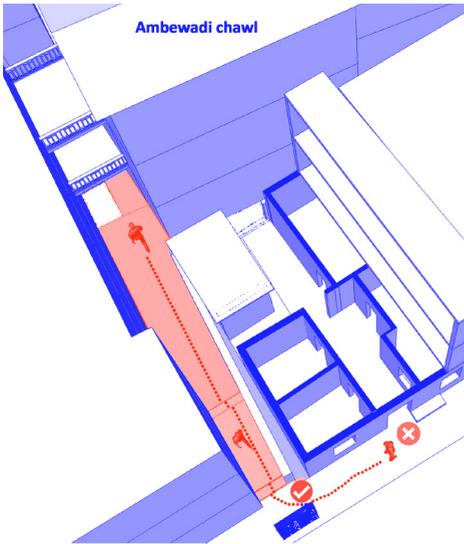
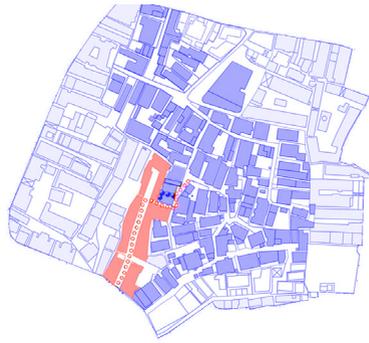
Connecting the two neighbourhoods could be a useful proposal for the many users of the chawl and could also establish a connection between the two neighbourhoods. Additionally, Ambewadi also receives its fair share of tourists who would be delighted to be connected to the neighbouring Khotachiwadi. The connection would provide tourists with more of the area to see.

However, residents in the vicinity are wary about formalising the passage as a connection between Khotachiwadi and Ambewadi. 'We spoke to the landlord, but he was worried that if the wall is removed, the passage will attract motorists', a resident informed the participants.

The advantage of a connection between the two neighbourhoods is that it can be beneficial to its economy as well as the residents. To solve the problem of residents' concerns about the proposed connection becoming a pathway for motorists, the proposal that emerged was designed to be exclusively for pedestrians. A change in level every few meters was suggested to deter motorists from using the passage. The idea was to make the passage an official connection between Khotachiwadi and Ambewadi allowing residents, visitors and tourists to seamlessly travel between the two neighbourhoods.

Jai Bhadgaonkar and Jan Bega

CHAWL CONNECTION



Ambewadi

The junction by Khanderao Chawl exemplifies the complex evolution of middle class tenements in South Mumbai. Khanderao Chawl has a central courtyard flanked by three-storeyed chawls on its sides. There is a temple which is the centre of the open space where a lot of the neighbourhood activity happens. It is interesting to see how the open space is further complemented by corridors of varying widths, which act as floorwise congregation spaces. There is also a vertical circulation connecting the court to the housing block.

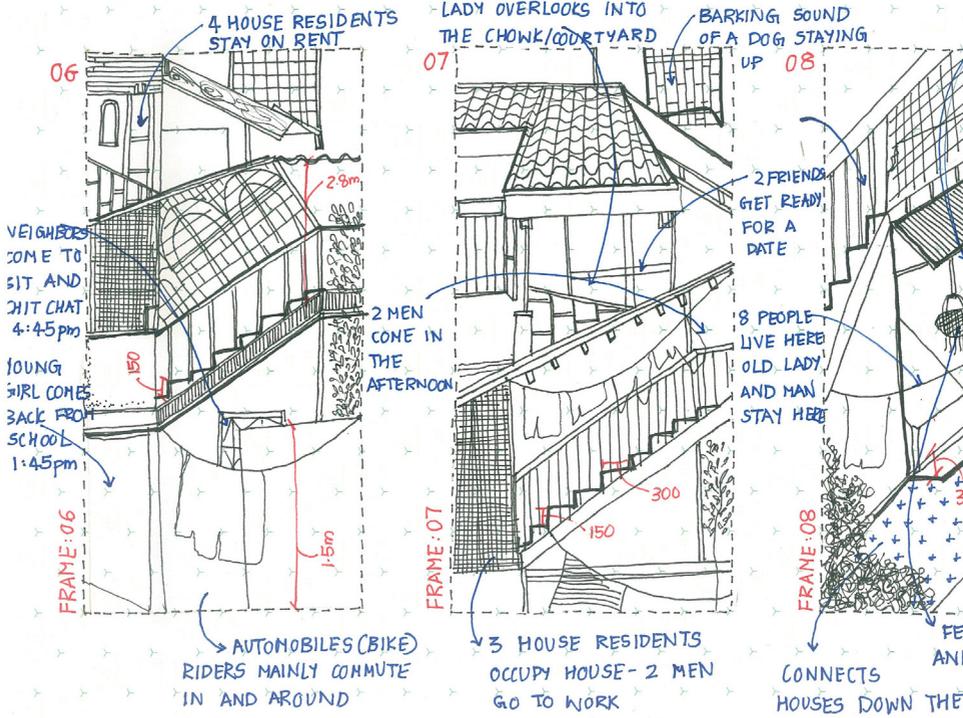
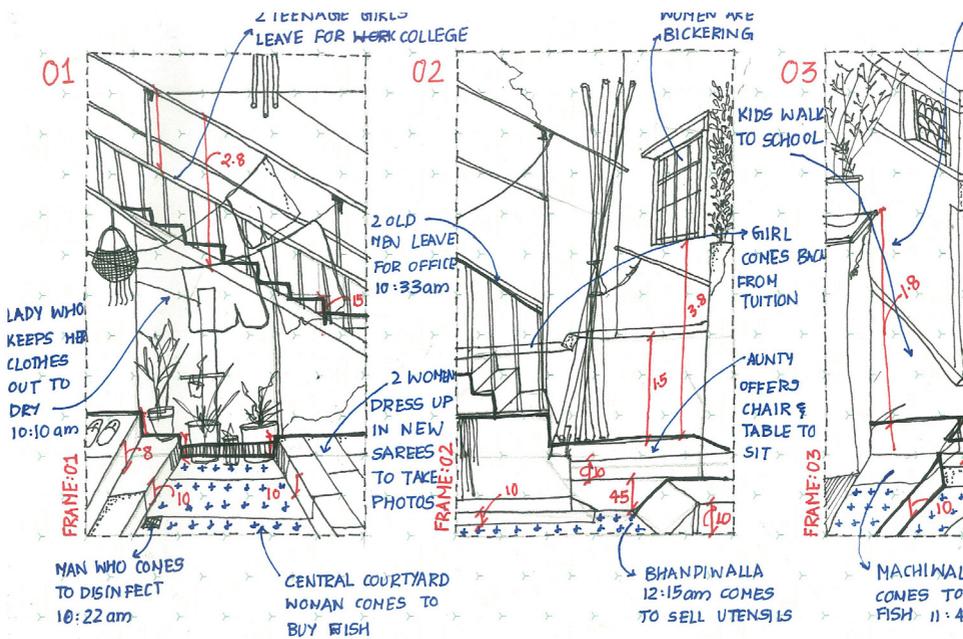
The residents express strong attachment to their buildings. The upcoming redevelopment project hovers over the existing chawl buildings and will negatively impact the communal space and the buffer zones that connect each block. It is imperative to sensitise the redevelopment projects to the lifestyle of the chawl dwellers and to the architectural context of the wadi.

The imagery proposed for Khanderao Chawl acts in multiple ways- rebooting the chawl-redevelopment, aiming for cultural, communal coexistence and harmony, understanding the heritage value of the neighbourhood, using the FSI creatively to incorporate the buffer zones in the redevelopment projects and connecting the same with the existing chawls, while looking at the vertical circulation within the building as interactive pockets.

CHAWLMENT



Khanderao Chawl



Rajji Desai

The first impression of the houses surrounding the courtyard was the cinematic appeal they projected. They have a strong resemblance to the visual construct of Jacques Tati's french comedy "Mon Oncle (My Uncle)". This made it interesting to examine the circulation among residents and their relationship to their houses. Through their activities, a mind map was created of the various facets of the house. By observing the visual trajectory of the interlocking staircases, a situation analysis map was also created.

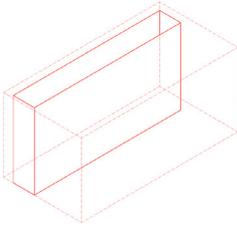
Observing and understanding the visual construct of the houses, and speaking to the women in them, provided many insights into the use/nature of space, the lifestyle of the users, their occupation, and daily routines. The human interactions with various objects on site helped inform the different value systems of give and take, or shared and borrowed, among the users.

All the houses in this area look into a common courtyard. The proposal was a concrete 'wall of memories' which can bring the community together. While the concrete is being cast, various souvenirs/ discarded objects from each of the seven houses are to be incorporated within the concrete, as a part of the wall. The idea is to create a part of the neighbourhood that the residents can consciously relate to, if they do not already, and create a trail of their footprints on their own walls.

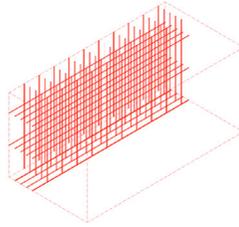
Rajji Desai

WALL OF SHARED MEMORY

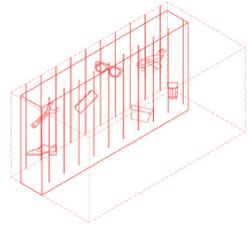
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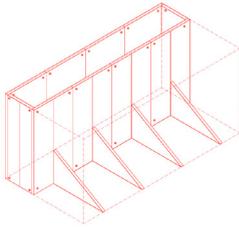
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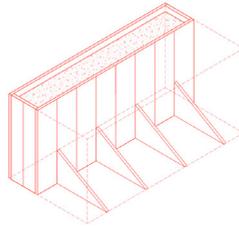
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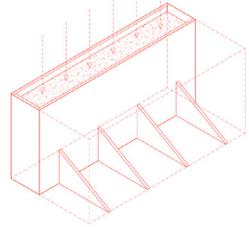
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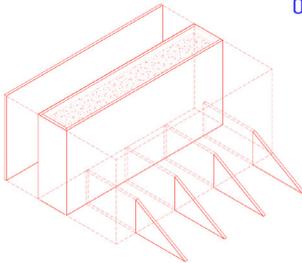
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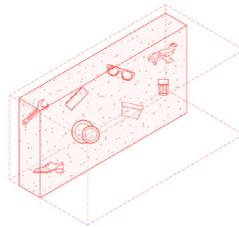
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07



08



Process of constructing wall of shared memories:

- 01 Blank wall
- 02 Reinforcement jhalli
- 03 Shared objects
- 04 Shuttering - plywood
- 05 Pouring of concrete
- 06 Curing / setting of concrete
- 07 Removal of shuttering
- 08 Shared wall of memories

"Our memory is made up of our individual memories and our collective memories. The two are intimately linked. And history is our collective memory. If our collective memory is taken from us - is rewritten - we lose the ability to sustain our true selves."
Haruki Murakami, 1Q84



The houses around a courtyard opp. Sri Sai Dutta Temple

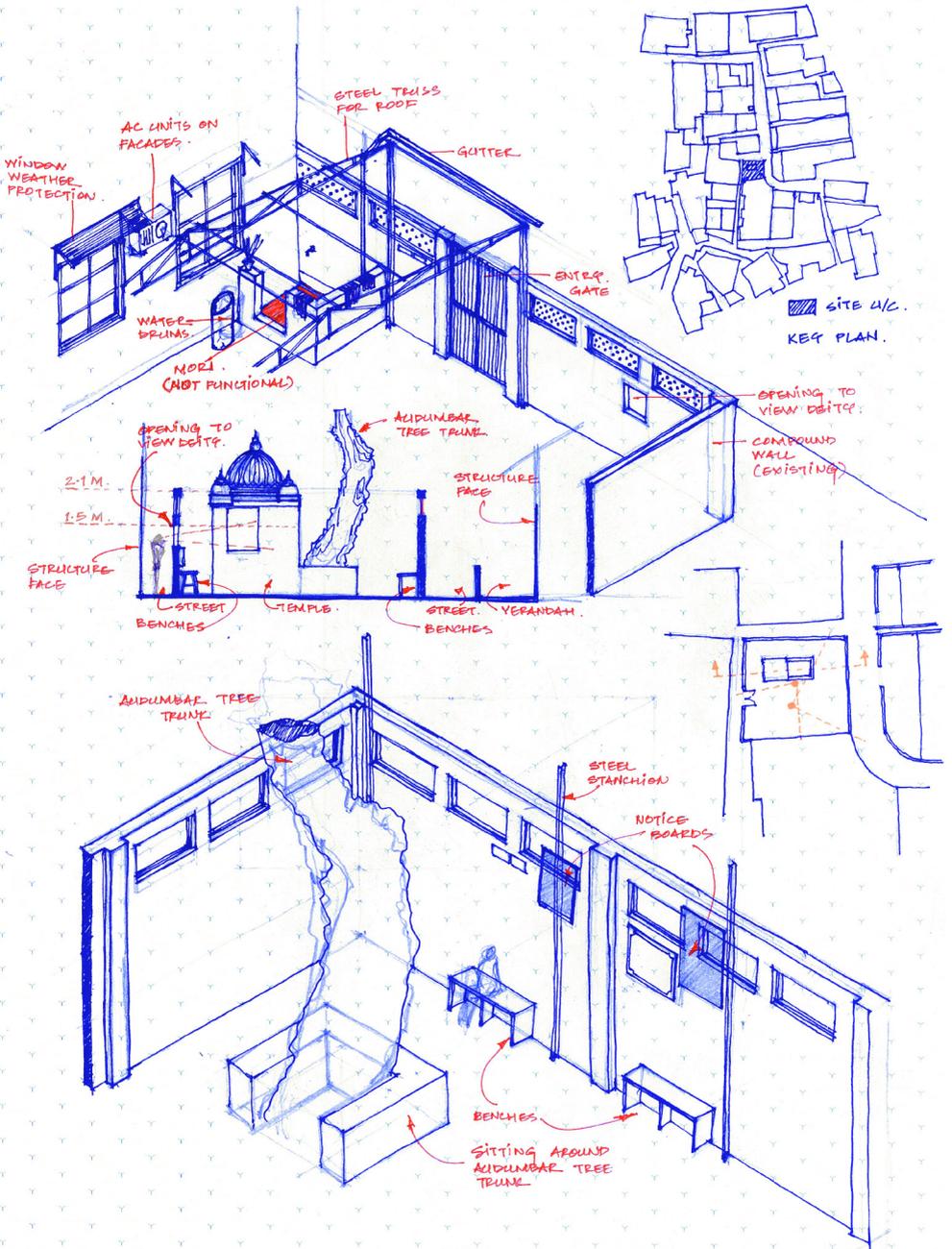
The Sri Sai Dutt Mandir wall was constructed a few years ago, and transformed the space around the temple into narrow access alleys. The wall was constructed for security reasons: to provide protection for the temple, which stands on private trustee-owned land. Though it prevented trespassing and misuse of the space, it also restricted passage. This space is particularly challenging because its religious significance calls for very different surroundings and level of silence than do its active neighbouring spaces.

Initially, the proposal for the space was to demolish the temple wall and make it a public square. However, owing to the context of the surrounding space, the proposal changed to create a situation which is silent and respectful in tandem with the temple's original requirement, as well as more interactive than the original. The proposal was to make the temple slightly more open, by making the wall porous. Building on this idea, additional functions were imagined for the wall.

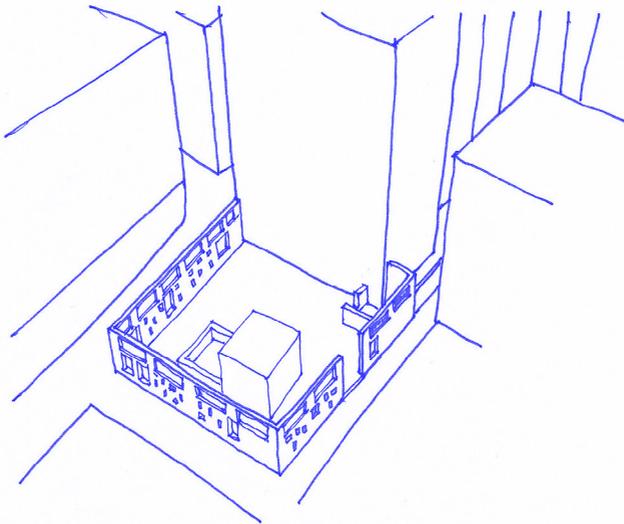
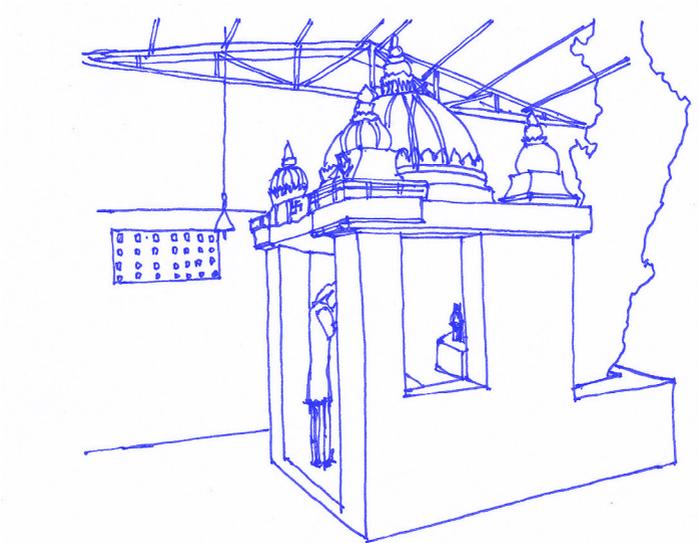
The design proposed to create niches in the wall into which an open neighbourhood library could be incorporated. These niches could be of different sizes and could also be used for seating purposes. This porous wall provides visual access to the surrounding alleys which were otherwise inaccessible. This way, the wall that was originally restrictive in nature now expanded the scope for its users, engaging them in public activity.

Vaibhav Tannir

TEMPLE WALL

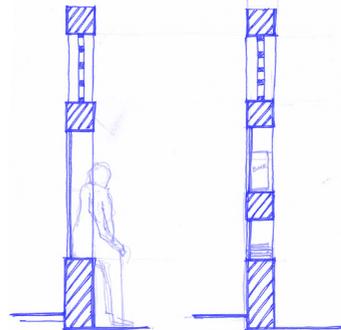
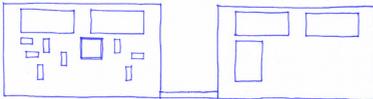
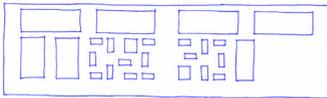
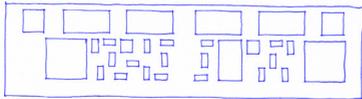
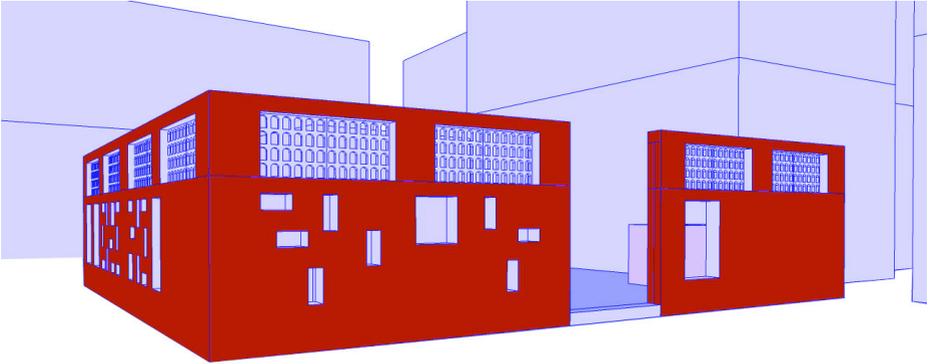


Sri Sai Dutta Temple



Vaibhav Tannir

LIBRARY WALL



Sri Sai Dutta Temple



Sri Sai Dutta Temple



Khanderao Chawl



CONCLUSION

Preservation through transformation requires us to look at heritage and architecture in the context of wider worldviews. The range of proposals that emerged in the Khotachiwadi Imaginaries workshop was part of such an effort. When Khotachiwadi can be seen as both a cause and an effect of very diverse experiences, Mumbai and interested citizens will all be in a better position to frame more creative and inclusive narratives about the most sensitive, productive, and mutually beneficial relationship we can have with this very special locality.

In 2017 we are planning a following up workshop on Khotachiwadi Realities, where we will pursue our efforts at translating ideas that emerge from such interactions between the neighbourhood and the global imagination and become concrete interventions. Stay tuned!

Khotachiwadi: past, present, future

➔ workshop

Sign up for a workshop that will document the SoBo heritage precinct



An illustration that shows the view from 'The Blue Bungalow'. COURTESY/URBZ.NET

DHARA VORA
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URBZ, an organisation co-founded by Rahul Srivastava and Matias Echanove, organises collaborative workshops and research projects on urban spaces. In an effort to preserve the heritage and improve the

standard of living, the organisation has been working in Khotachiwadi, a heritage village in Girgaum, for almost a decade now. Srivastava was also instrumental in setting up the Khotachiwadi Welfare and Heritage Trust, which is run by residents.

Unique heritage

"What makes Khotachiwadi interesting to us is not just the bungalows but also the diversity of the demographics," informs Echanove. As part of their constant efforts to understand and preserve the locality, URBZ has organised a four-day workshop. The workshop will feature Niklas Fanelas, Marius Helten, Bjorn Martenson and Leonard Wertgen, of Berlin-based architect and designers' collective, called ARA. They are currently in the city for the launch of their book Architecture Reading Aid Ahmedabad. "Their style of work is clean, descriptive and has an analytical approach. It represents the city and connects various aspects of architecture to the lively streetscape, such as the chaivall on the road. This is what we liked and thought it would be perfect to get

their perspective on Khotachiwadi too," explains Echanove.

The workshop is open for 15 to 20 participants. Interested candidates can send them their portfolio and state the reason why the workshop interests them. The workshop will be conducted in two steps: the first includes field report, observations and interactions with residents. For the second step, the participants will be encouraged to go wild, where they are free to present their idea of how the heritage locality would be in future in best case scenario. "We don't want to create Khotachiwadi as an urban museum. It is the evolving that makes the place nice. If you see the space there are rats and pipes running everywhere. Even the residents are supporters of positive change. We need to improve yet preserve what is beautiful," says Echanove who is an urbanologist. Like Mumbai, URBZ has worked in various cities

like Istanbul, Delhi, Konkan coast and Sao Paulo.

What excites him is the interest the topic has generated among a younger audience, with 90% of the requests for the workshop coming in from an age group of 20 to 30. On the final day, the team will present a 3D model of Khotachiwadi, the results of the workshop and a report created by URBZ at the Catholic Club. This exhibition will be open for everyone. "We want to envision the future and play the role of facilitators,"



Rahul Srivastava



Matias Echanove

Echanove signs off.

TO SIGN UP Check Khotachiwadi Imaginaries event page on Facebook
LOG ON TO
www.facebook.com/urbz.org



For a photo walk through Khotachiwadi, log on to mid-day.com



Khotachiwadi, FILE PIC



An aerial view. PIC COURTESY/URBZ.NET

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Made in Mumbai

Small steps for Khotachiwadi

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KHOTACHIWADI Imaginaries, a workshop conducted by the organisation, URBZ, and young German architects Niklas Fanelas, Marius Helten and Leonard Wertgen started a new design conversation at the heritage space last week. "Since the participants weren't experts on the locality, including us, we made them pick a spot and observe the happenings. This allowed them to keenly observe both, the physical space and the lives that involve around it," explains Helten while sharing results of the workshop that will be on display across Khotachiwadi till this weekend. He cites the example of a bench near a local temple that is used by residents for a nap, for evening meetings and by a fish vendor.

A design intervention made at the workshop is a flight of stairs in a back alley that helps connect two chawls. "The kids from both chawls play together in the evenings. Until now, they've had to take a longer route to meet at a



German architects Niklas Fanelas, Leonard Wertgen and Marius Helten

A design workshop conducted in the heritage precinct threw up myriad ideas



(From left) A flight of stairs that will connect two chawls; residents view the works on a wall at Khotachiwadi. PICS:ATUL KAMBLE

common spot. Back lanes of buildings are generally used for dumping garbage from the windows. With these stairs, we created a shortcut and helped clean up the alley. The kids plan to take care of the maintenance of the stairs," shares Helten.

We spotted stencilled cats on the walls while walking through the area, with a poster made by a participant. "There are several resident cats that roam the passages. We identified some of these spots, and the kids have spray-painted visuals of cats to mark their routes," informs Helten, before heading toward fashion designer James Ferreira's house, which served as venue for the workshop.