

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON 20TH CENTURY HERITAGE

The Y-block in Oslo, Norway

In 2016, ISC20C and ICOMOS issued an international Heritage Alert regarding the planned demolition of the so-called Y-block of the Norwegian Government Quarter at the heart of Oslo, the capital of Norway. Prior to this, ICOMOS had issued a letter of warning and had a meeting with the Secretary of State, but to no avail.

Background

The Government Quarter was one of two sites subject to the terror attacks of 22 July 2011 in and outside Oslo. A bomb explosion at the Government Quarter killed eight people and injured many others. Outside the city at a political youth camp, 69 youngsters were shot down in cold blood. Several buildings suffered serious damage, including the H-block and the Y-block, two monumental buildings central to the Government Quarter at the centre of Oslo. Even though the H-block and the Y-block are designed as an in-

separable unit with exceptionally high cultural and architectural significance, the Norwegian Government decided to tear down the Y-block in 2014, to make way for a contemporary, high-security new Government compound.

The buildings

The modern Government Quarter is located next to Norway's first government buildings from 1891, close to the Parliament from 1866 and other important official buildings. The architect Erling Viksjø (1910–1971) planned two complementary, monumental buildings, the H-block and the Y-block. The grouping of official buildings in this area started in the mid-19th century, continuing up to the latest government buildings of the 1990s.

The H-block was built first and finished in 1958. It is a Corbusier-inspired high-rise of 17 floors in a concrete and steel construction. The ground floor is recessed, exposing the bearing columns. The concrete is saturated with rounded river pebbles, then sand-blasted to create a natural finish. Architect Erling Viksjø and



Fig. 1: Erling Viksjø: H-block and Y-block (photo Teigens Fotoatelier, 1969–1972. Copyright: Dextra Photo)

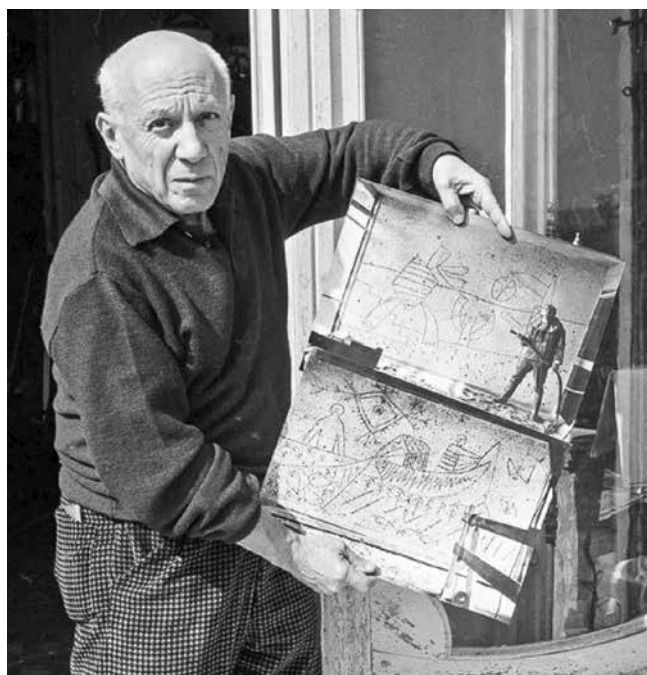


Fig. 2: Pablo Picasso, work in progress (photo Carl Nesjar, 1958–60. The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Architecture collections. Copyright: The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design)

the engineer Sverre Jystad experimented during the 1950s with concrete surfaces in order to achieve an ornamented surface with colour and texture. The sand-blasted natural concrete became the hallmark of Viksjø, and has been widely used since.

The Y-block was planned as a pendant to the H-block and was finished in 1969. It is only four floors high, Y-shaped, and embraces one side of the high H-block, creating a very characteristic and inviting public space. The facades are rounded, in the same sand-blasted natural concrete finish as the H-block. At the main short end of the exterior and in the entrance hall there are monumental decorations by Pablo Picasso. The execution was a cooperation between Picasso and Carl Nesjar (1920–2015), a Norwegian sculptor. There are also artworks by prominent Norwegian artists in the public areas of the H- and Y-blocks. The artworks were directly sand-blasted onto the concrete surface and are an integral part of the building, both at the short end of the exterior facade and in the main interior spaces. These extraordinary artworks were created in close relationship between the architect and the artists.

Significance

The complementary H- and Y-block are the most important monumental expressions of the breakthrough of modernism in Norway, within both architecture and the pictorial arts. Viksjø's government buildings symbolise Norway's democratic and optimistic community with the rest of the world in the post-World War II reconstruction, and the building of institutions for community and democracy. This belief was given an international perspective in the fact that an artist such as Picasso was invited and was himself inspired by Viksjø's project. The fact that the buildings survived the terror actions of 22 July 2011 strengthens their historical significance.



Fig. 3: Y-block, 2014 (photo: Olaf Steen, ICOMOS Norway)

The architect Erling Viksjø played a key role in developing the modernistic architectural language in Norway, where form, function, symbols, materials and decoration were to be totally integrated. His pioneering research into the aesthetic qualities of natural concrete inspired concrete work in monumental buildings throughout the world. The international importance of Viksjø and Jystad's technical and aesthetical experiments with the use of sand-blasted natural concrete is a very important part of the architecture itself.

The intimate and inseparable integration of architecture and artistic decoration make the H-block and Y-block in Oslo a modernistic masterpiece not only in a Norwegian, but also in an international context. Here, Picasso ventured on his first experiments with the active integration of creative arts and architecture. His cooperation with Carl Nesjar, who physically sand-blasted his decorations, was also the beginning of Picasso's work with monumental public decorations in New York, Paris, Barcelona, Stockholm, and Jerusalem.

On 22 July 2011, a protection order according to the Norwegian Heritage Act by the Directorate for Cultural Heritage was actually only awaiting its final signature.

The threat

When the precinct planning process started in 2013, the Ministry for Environment gave the Directorate for Cultural Heritage the mandate to make a report with updated assessments on protection value and new use of these two modernistic buildings and the rest of the Government Quarter. The report concludes: The main construction and artwork of the H-block and the Y-block were not damaged by the terror attack. The cultural heritage, architectural and artistic values in the complex have not been undermined. The Directorate for Cultural Heritage recommends preservation.

In spite of the recommendations from its own directorate, in May 2014 the Norwegian Government decided to collocate almost all ministries on the site of the Government Quarter. This decision was based on concerns for security and efficiency. Implicit in that decision and the future planning process was preservation of the damaged H-block and demolition of the Y-block. The zoning plan presupposes a new, high building in place of the Y-block.

ICOMOS approached the Norwegian government in 2014, stating that these decisions would seem incomprehensible only a few years on. Not only is the Y-block a building with great architectural and artistic values in its own right, it is also an integrated part of the Government Quarter.

The conclusion of the ICOMOS ISC20C was that because demolishing the Y-block had been a presupposition for all planning work for the area, an informed discussion on a possible and sustainable use of the Y-block was excluded from the start. All feasibility studies that were presented in 2015 were made on this basis. The inherent artistic qualities of the Y-block, in possible reuse or as part of a rebuilding project, were excluded as point of departure. A group of students from the Oslo School of Architecture and Design nonetheless presented a study where the Y-block was integrated. The study was rejected as irrelevant. These political decisions were made despite clear, well founded studies and recommendations made by the Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage in 2013, cited above, and the clear advice from the international expert body ICOMOS. A collected milieu of architects, architectural students and other professionals renewed their claim that the Y-block must be an integrated part of the feasibility study. The Directorate of Cultural Heritage repeated and emphasised its recommendations in March 2016.

The security claim is seen by ICOMOS as questionable, as up to today the government has not shown any documentation as to the necessity of demolishing the Y-block. Besides, parts of the building, amongst which the northern wing, are actually today in full use by government employees, who are very happy to work in the building.

At the point when ICOMOS approached the minister, public opinion was not yet raised, and the international Heritage Alert issued in 2016 hardly reached any newspapers, though it was referred to in international press. In 2019, the Y-block was nominated among the most endangered European heritage sites by Europa Nostra.

After the closed governmental process had finished and the demolition process started with local authorities, public opinion was on the rise. At this point, ICOMOS repeated its arguments in letters to the Government and local authorities, alongside the National Trust and Norwegian Association of Architects. Today, there is an active debate in most newspapers, The National Trust and Norwegian Association of Architects are actively protesting, and an Action Group holds weekly protest markings in front of the Y-block. The present situation is a stalemate, where the Government states that the process has come too far and is too costly to reconsider, and upholding a rather passé idea of security, whilst the protesting bodies are arguing for a preservation of the Y-block.

The case has passed through the hands of the County Governor, who could not stop the process on legal grounds, but actually urged the Government to reconsider.

At present, the National Trust, the Norwegian Association of Architects and the Action Group have received anonymous private funding for a lawsuit against the State. The charge is expected before spring 2020, complaining mainly on the undemocratic

process and the lack of consideration for all professional advice, home and abroad.

Status June 2020

At this moment, the Y-block is being demolished. The lawsuit against the State has been withdrawn, as the Government will not postpone the demolition until a judicial decision is made.

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The Viking Ship Hall, Roskilde, Denmark

The Viking Ship Hall is the main exhibition hall for the Danish Viking Ship Museum, situated about 30 km west of Copenhagen. The museum is one of four in the world displaying Viking ships. The Hall was built as a combined working and exhibition space in 1968 at Roskilde after the discovery and excavation of six flattened shipwrecks in the nearby fjord. It is considered a masterpiece of modern Danish architecture. It was the second late modern building being listed for protection in Denmark in 1997, but was delisted in 2018 after a long period of political pressure. It is now under threat of demolition.

ICOMOS' arguments for preserving the hall as a part of the new museum

The ICOMOS Heritage Alert states that "ISC20C and all Danish heritage organisations consider this an alarming and unnecessary loss of one of the most internationally significant modern buildings in Denmark.

ISC20C appeals for the preservation of the Viking Ship Hall, stressing that the structural issues and the climate conditions of the building site are not unique and can be addressed. The investment and the effort to preserve architectural masterpieces in concrete are widely supported and achieved in many places around the world.

ISC20C appeals for immediate action to preserve the Viking Ship Hall as an internationally outstanding architectural ensemble that has significant future large socio-economic potential."

"a unique structure that creatively integrates museum, setting and archaeology in a way that transcends historic definitions"¹

Thus was the description of ICOMOS in 2018. The Viking Ship Hall is an approx. 2000 m² building sitting directly on the shoreline, the water hitting the north glass facade. It is a strict, almost classical rhythmic structure of exposed concrete with large glass facades and vast sculptured panels on the flat roof to reflect the skylight into the exhibition space.

Inside, the architecture plays on the contrast between the curved ships and the strictly orthogonal structure, the different daylight effects, as well as the presentation of the ships in front of their natural habitat, the sea. The interplay of the wooden texture of the ships and the wooden board-marked finish of the concrete

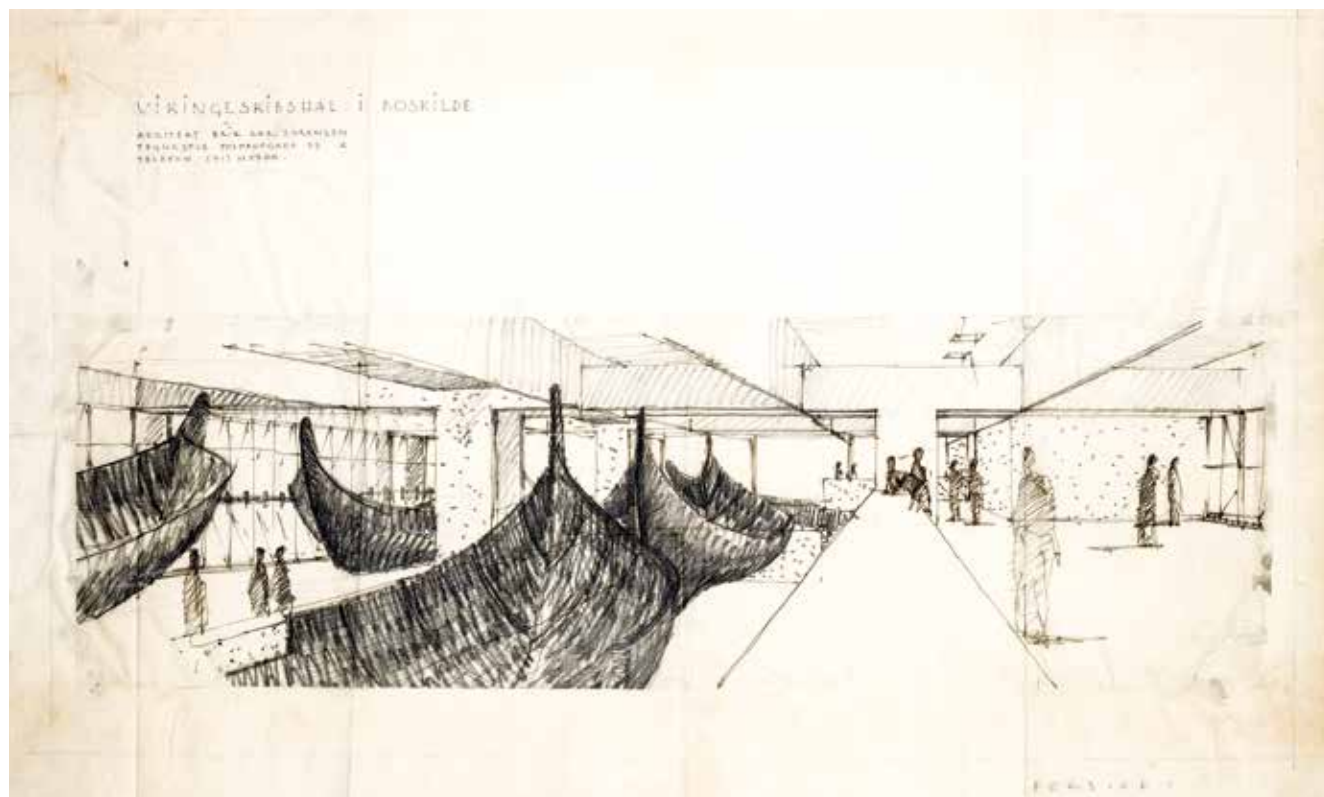


Fig. 1: The large combined working and exhibition space of the Viking Ship Hall seen from the upper level platform. The drawing underlines the interplay between the strictly orthogonal concrete structure and the dark, curved shipwrecks (drawing by Erik Christian Sørensen Architects, 1963–67, published by the Royal Danish Art Library inv. No. 52803)

adds to the delicacy of the design. The architect also stressed that the doubling of the structure, such as the columns, was adding to the spatial experience of the hall.

The building is dominated by the one large space which exhibits all five shipwrecks. The space is designed for the visitors to see the ships from different levels and different angles and without fences or glass. At the time of the inauguration, there were no actual shipwrecks in the hall, only steel skeletons on which the hull parts were to be mounted. For the first years, the visitors could then follow the work of the archaeologists. The exhibition concept was a new one at the time. Today the mounting of the ships is complete, and the hall is only an exhibition space, but the concept of a working museum is still a trademark for the Viking Ship Museum. It is one of the most important museums in Denmark and welcomes 170.000 visitors and half a million users as well 1000 volunteers per year.²

Architect and engineer

There is very little literature about the Viking Ship Hall as architectural oeuvre, although both the architect and the building are very well known in Denmark. The Hall was designed by the Danish architect Erik Christian Sørensen and the engineering firm Ostenfeld (today COWI). Sørensen won the architectural competition in 1963 and the Hall was inaugurated in 1969.

Cultural significance and mentions

In the year of the inauguration, Sørensen was assigned an architectural prize from the Danish wood industry, recognising that

the hall “at some point of its development was a wooden house”³ and that “The heavy concrete walls and the clean structural lines provide the best possible background for the ships’ light material and fine curves. Many other virtues can be cited, including that the structure can be extended, if new findings make that desirable.”

The national advisory board (DSB), which assesses all proposals for listings wrote: “In its overall character and setting in the landscape, Erik Chr. Sørensen’s Viking Ship Hall, constructed 1966–68, embodies outstanding architectonic values that justify the listing of a building that is less than 100 years old”. When the museum applied for a delisting in 2016, the national advisory board reviewed the assessment. The board stressed that the Hall was built upon structuralist principles and to a certain degree could be transformed. It also described the Hall as a “(...) humane and easily understandable interpretation, in which the soft curvature of the ships’ spans is enrichingly contrasted by the pure building design built 1000 years later – without any decoration and ornamentation.”

ICOMOS wrote a Heritage Alert in 2018. In 2019, the research INNOVA CONCRETE-programme adopted the Viking Ship Hall as one of the 100 most important European concrete masterworks and it is now on the INNOVA CONCRETE “100-from-the-20th” list.

Case history

The delisting of the Hall in August 2018 was the result of a long history of challenges specific to the site, but it is also an issue that is coming up for heritage all over the world.



Fig. 2: The Viking Ship Hall situated directly on the shoreline with the water hitting the north glass façade is one of the most suggestive features of the structure, bringing the natural habitat of the ships as close to the wrecks as possible. From outside, the building meets the changing nature of the sea as did the shipwrecks centuries ago (photo Grethe Pontoppidan, 2018)

The museum was designed to be expanded and this has been an issue for the growing museum since the listing. In 1997 the museum built the first expansion, a ‘museum island and harbour’ next to the buffer zone of the then listed hall. The concrete construction of the Hall was painted in 1989–90. Erik Christian Sørensen made a unrealised project for restoration in 2006. The museum states that it has not been able to secure financial support for a major restoration of the Hall and ordinary maintenance seems to have been postponed repeatedly since 2010.⁴

In 2013 the discussion about the preservation of the Hall took a dramatic turn. The water pressure of a major storm surge threatened to break the north façade of the Viking Ship Hall. The dramatic pictures were broadcasted and a few months later the spokesman of the Danish Folks Party (DF) in agreement with the museum made headlines in the media with a statement that the Viking Ship Hall ought to be demolished and replaced by a new museum in the ‘Viking style’. It created a national political debate and received a lot of attention from the media, resulting in a discussion between the museum and the national heritage authorities. The discussions ended in 2018, when the minister of culture delisted the Hall against the advice of her own department and the national advisory board. The formal argument is the “Ministry of Culture’s assessment that the maintenance obligation cannot be extended to include the execution of the structural changes and new measures that NIRAS considers necessary to secure the building in a 50-year perspective.”

Risk

The future of the Hall is still not fully known. There is now no formal regulation to protect the Viking Ship Hall or its surroundings as heritage.

With financial support from the state, the museum is about to announce an architectural competition for a new museum. The museum has declared that they are planning to tear down the hall. Their argument is that “the Hall cannot be preserved as it is”. They have until now rejected the idea of preserving the Hall as an integral part of a new 7,500m² large museum, for which the state



Fig. 3: The interior of the museum overlooking the fjord (photo Grethe Pontoppidan, 2018)

has donated DKK 150 million. It is planned to raise around DKK 360 million extra private funding. The risk of demolition is grave.

From a technical point of view, the Viking Ship Hall is in acute need of maintenance and it must be fortified against climate change, i.e. the rising of the sea level and increasingly common storm surges. According to the museum and with reference to the latest technical report from 2016, the maintenance and reinforcement needs are:

- Renovation/altering of the roof and its drainage;
- Renovation of the brick facades south, east and west (maintenance to protect against occasional floods, standard concrete



Fig. 4: The Viking Ship Hall seen from the museum extension built in 1997. The extension is a new harbour area laid out as a new working museum, which reconstructs old Viking ships as those found in the fjord. Museum guests follow the reconstructions as they once followed the setting up of the wrecks. During summer time the reconstructed ships can be seen sailing on the fjord from the exhibition hall (photo Grethe Pontoppidan, 2019)

repairs, and consolidation due to chloride, different cracks, etc);

- A new façade towards the sea (to secure it against the water, and to control the UV of the daylight);
- Drainage of the cellar and foundation (to protect against upward thrust and eventually leaks in the membrane);
- A membrane/water barrier in the ‘podium’ of the Hall.

The museum stresses that the above-mentioned renovation will not comply with today’s rules for security, energy or accessibility. However, several technical reports that have been prepared between 2010 and 2018 all conclude that it is perfectly possible to renovate the Hall, only the cost estimates vary from DKK 25 to 65 million.⁵ This is still less than the DKK 150 million donated by the state. The lack of maintenance and repair is more than a serious structural issue. The lack of technical care for an icon such as the Viking Ship Hall also reduces the common awareness of the special qualities and needs of concrete heritage, and impairs the belief that it is perfectly possible to preserve concrete structures.

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Footnotes

- ¹ ICS20C, “ICOMOS Heritage Alert. The Viking Ship Hall, Roskilde, Denmark”, 2018, <https://www.icomos.org/fr/simpliquer/nous-informer/alerte-patrimoine/alertes-encours/53199-alerte-patrimoine-the-viking-ship-hall-roskilde-danemark>.
- ² “Nyt Vikingeskibsmuseum. Foretræde for Folketingets kulturudvalg 20.11.2019” (Powerpoint, Folketingets kulturudvalg, 20. November 2019).
- ³ Poul Erik Skrivers, “Træprisen 69 (Tale fra prisoverrækkelse 26. sept. 1969)”, *Arkitekten* 1969 (u.å.): 476–77.
- ⁴ Kulturministeriet, “Kulturministeriets afgørelse vedr. klage over Slots- og Kulturstyrelsens afslag på at ophæve fredningen af Vikingeskibshallen”, 30. august 2018, 11–12.
- ⁵ Kulturministeriet, 11.

The Challenge of Conserving Post-Independence 20th-Century Heritage of India

The inscription of Le Corbusier’s Capitol on the World Heritage List and the placement of some other 20th century historic properties on India’s Tentative List has brought about a decisive change in attitude towards the country’s recent heritage. However, a considerable ground remains to be covered to ensure its value-based assessment, protection, scientific conservation and, especially, its integration into contemporary and future development programmes. Given here are three recent cases that illustrate various facets of the situation. The first two examples are cases of individual buildings, both iconic designs of India’s most celebrated modernists— Raj Rewal’s ‘Hall of Nations Complex’ (Case Study 1) and, Charles Correa’s ‘Kala Academy’ (Case Study 2) facing the threat of ‘functional and aesthetic obsolescence’. The first was

demolished in 2017 despite intensive global campaigns, and the second is fighting against similar threats. The third example narrates threats of ‘redevelopment’ faced by India’s most celebrated urban complex, the Central Vista of the British Imperial Capital, New Delhi (Case Study 3), highlighting the need to frame appropriate policies for inclusion of historic properties in contemporary development programmes.

Case Study 1: The Unnecessary Demolition of the Hall of Nations Complex, New Delhi – When Heritage is Subsumed under Urban Development

The ‘Hall of Nations Complex’, the world’s largest concrete space frame and an undisputed marker in India’s post-independence architectural history, was demolished in April 2017 to make way for a ‘State-of-the Art’ Convention Centre more suited to contemporary needs and future vision. That this tragedy could happen despite intensive public campaigns and litigations to safeguard the historic edifice, that no notice was taken of its national and global significance, its sound physical state, the possibilities of retrofitting, or the fact that it occupied merely 3% of the total site and could well be integrated into the new proposal – all illustrate the gravity of the situation and underscore the need to focus on value-based assessment of 20th century heritage in India, if not in all of South Asia.

The project and its cultural context

The ‘Hall of Nations Complex’ was built in 1972 as the focus of *Pragati Maidan*, a 130 acre permanent exhibition venue in New Delhi that hosted India’s first International Trade Fair, with the express aim to celebrate 25 years of India’s independence and loudly proclaim its industrial achievement. The 1970s were a critical period of post-independence India when, though struggling with resource limitations, the country was making every effort to keep pace with the developed world and establish its own identity – blending the traditional and the modern in all spheres of life, including technology and architecture. The ‘Hall of Nations Complex’, designed by Raj Rewal (architect) and Mahendra Raj (structural engineer), reflected such aspirations. With its immense proportions and complex geometry, it was to become famous as the largest cast-in-situ concrete space frame in the world. Created as it was through rudimentary handcrafted techniques and inexpensive construction materials, without compromising efficiency and precision of execution, the structure became a symbol of 20th century India’s self-sufficiency, a marker of excellence in India’s architectural and engineering history, charting out a specifically Indian Modernity. These concrete structures remain unparalleled in the world¹

Design intent, structural design and construction system

The fabric and form of the complex was unique, driven by desired versatility to display objects such as aircraft, earthmoving equipment, tractors and cranes. It comprised two monumental column-free, large-span space structures – the ‘Hall of Nations’, a single, 6700 sq.m truncated square pyramid, and the ‘Hall of Industries’ made up of four smaller similar forms covering 7500 sq.m – both connected through ramps and bridges above ground and grouped to enclose a space for open-air exhibits. The ‘Hall of Nations’ had a clear span of 78m, with internal height varying from 3 m to 21 m. The four pavilions of the ‘Hall of Industries’ were raised on a 18m-high base of 40 m x 40 m, their height varied from 2.5 m to 15 m.

The structural design – a space frame system with a truncated pyramid as the basic module – was arrived at after investigating multiple alternatives, such as folded plates and hyperbolic paraboloids. Both structures are composites of smaller unit pyramids. The units used for the ‘Hall of Nations’ have a 4.9 m x 4.9 m base and 3.5 m height. Those for the ‘Hall of Industries’ are 2.6 m high and 3.6 m x 3.6 m at the base. The configuration of both these basic pyramids is such that all members of the square base and the four triangular sides have the same length, finally allowing the same building slope and the angle of this basic unit at $54^{\circ}44'8''$. Constraints of economy and technology necessitated the use of in-situ concrete and manual labour in place of steel or pre-cast concrete. Careful conceptualisation of construction stages helped reduce time and cost, as no scaffolding was needed before the construction of the roof.² The rhombic cross-section of the space frame members was an outcome of the search for a joint that would be easier to construct. The hand-made structural drawings of the project were also of unprecedented complexity and, in themselves, constitute documents of historic significance.³

The Halls were designed to be naturally lit and climatically comfortable. In a modern interpretation of the traditional Indian *jali* – a geometrical configuration of perforations that obstructs harsh sun while permitting air circulation – the architect used the depth of the structural space frame as a sun breaker.

Physical and legal status

Use and Condition: Since its construction in 1972, the Pragati Maidan and the Hall of Nations Complex was the venue for large annual exhibitions and cultural events, and a major activity node popular with all citizens of Delhi, deeply embedded in their memories. No changes were made to the original design and layout. The photographs taken (by the author herself) in September 2016 show that the buildings were structurally sound with only very minor signs of distress in concrete members. The complex, thus, fully satisfied the most stringent tests of integrity and authenticity.

Legal Protection: Delhi’s heritage laws are applicable only to pre-1947, pre-independence structures.⁴ What this means is that even the most significant heritage created after 1947 has no protection and can be damaged or demolished at will. Despite the fact that the Delhi Chapter of the Indian National Trust for Art

Fig. 1: The Hall of Nations is the largest cast-in-situ concrete space frame structure in the world, exemplifying an economic argument and simple aesthetic of modernity by utilizing minimal resources and indigenous technology in post-Independent India. (© Kiran Joshi, personal collection, September 2016)

Fig. 2a: Plan view of Hall of Nations, Hall of Industries connected at the mezzanine level (Source: Mehta Vandini, Mehndiratta, Rohit Raj, Huber Ariel (2016), *The Structure – Works of Mahendra Raj, Zurich*)

Fig. 2b: View of the complex around 1972 (Source: <https://web.archive.org/web/20130611023242/http://www.rajrewal.in/projects/exhibition-hall-nations.html>)

Fig. 3: View of the complex (© Kiran Joshi, personal collection, September 2016)

4a and 4b: Interior view of an exhibition in progress (Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pragati_Maidan)

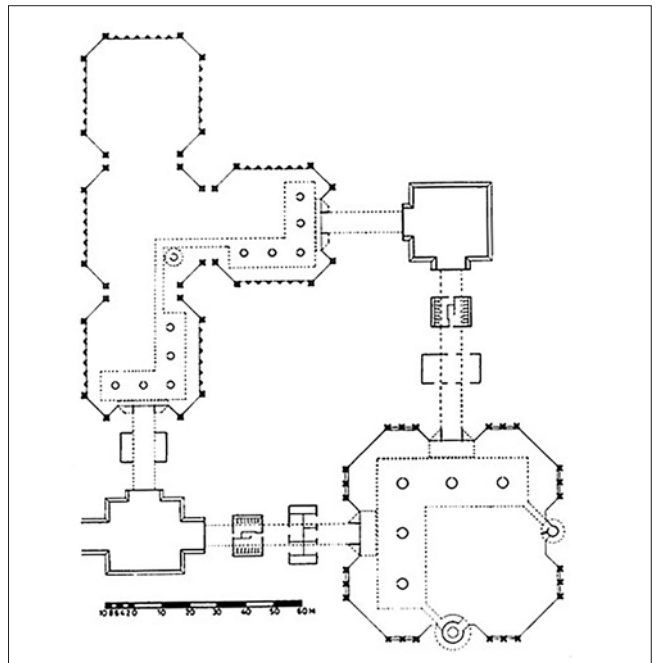




Fig. 4a and 4b: Interior view of an exhibition in progress (Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pragati_Maidan)



Fig. 5: Hall of Industries conceived as a combination of four square pavilions with chamfered corners (© Kiran Joshi, personal collection, September 2016)



Fig. 6: External view of the lattice framework inspired by traditional jalis-sunbreakers and louvres (© Kiran Joshi, personal collection, September 2016)

and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) had been pressing since 2012 for the protection of historic properties of the post-independence era, no legal protection was made available for the Hall of Nations Complex.⁵ Delhi's Heritage Conservation Committee (HCC) and the Delhi Urban Art Commission (DUAC) who were approached for recognition and notification as Heritage did not respond, either.

The threat

The owners/management of the complex, the 'Indian Trade Promotion Council' (ITPC),⁶ had been complaining that the original design, facilities and infrastructure of Pragati Maidan, as conceived in 1972, had become inadequate and obsolete to hold expositions of the scale needed in the 21st century. An ambitious redevelopment plan conceived in 2006, ahead of the 2010 Commonwealth Games, was later translated into a concrete project for an 'Integrated Exhibition-cum-Convention Centre' spread over the entire 123-acres site, with a seating capacity of 7000, parking for 4800–5000 cars, a 500-room hotel, a large food and beverages complex, pools, moving floors and helipad, besides exhibition halls.⁷ The Hall of Nations Complex, along with other permanent structures built in 1972, deemed obsolete, were slated for demolition. The IECC, promoted as a flagship project of the India Trade Promotion Organisation, was to open with the G20 Summit in early 2019.

Efforts at protection

Following reports of plans for demolition of this landmark structure, architects and heritage professionals began making all kinds of efforts to safeguard the structures. A number of pleas were made to local authorities (such as Delhi's Heritage Conservation Committee and the Urban Arts Commission) through various individuals, institutions and agencies to recognise and protect the Hall of Nations Complex. Intensifying its



Fig. 7: Interiors of Hall of Nations showing the system of natural lighting, sound state of materials and structure (© Kiran Joshi, September 2016)

efforts to gain protection of post-independence heritage, Public Interest Litigations were filed against the HCC, DUAC, the three Municipal Corporations of Delhi and the New Delhi Municipal Council, seeking stay of the impending demolition.⁸ In 2015, a proposal was mooted to convert the 'Hall of Nations' at Pragati Maidan into a 'Museum of Indian Design'.⁹ There were efforts to draw global attention to the iconic exhibition structure.¹⁰ Letters of support were received from leading Indian and global organisations such as Centre Pompidou, Paris, ETH Zurich, New York's Museum of Modern Art, and the International Union of Architects, noting the architectural and engineering ingenuity of the complex and appealing for recognition and upholding of its historic and cultural significance. However, all efforts proved futile as the provisions of the local Heritage Regulations do not enable protection of structures built after 1947. The decision left several other post-independence buildings in a legal vacuum of sorts and vulnerable to being damaged irreversibly.

The demolition

On the morning of April 24th, 2017 India woke up in shock to the news of the demolition of the Hall of Nations and the four Halls of Industries during the previous night. Hier Abb. 8 und 9 The act, widely believed to have been driven by real estate concerns alone, was met with widespread condemnation by architects, historians and conservation professionals, not just because of the loss of an important piece of the nation's heritage but of the manner in which it had been undertaken. The adjacent Nehru Pavilion, another path-breaking design by Raj Rewal, was demolished sometime in the ensuing week. The architect of the structures called it "an act of outrage" since the matter was sub-judice in the Delhi High Court.

Lessons for the future

There is no contesting the fact that the demolition was an outright tragedy that deprived the coming generations of an important part of their cultural heritage, creating a legacy inconsistent with history. The case is of special significance for the new republics of the 20th century, all actors in various nation-building and modernisation processes, their territories being the stage for a vast repertoire of highly significant 20th century heritage. What lessons can be learnt by India and other nations that are struggling with issues of "age limit" and "value-based assessment" for listing and protection of historic properties, and the need to consider retention of these as integral components of development schemes. Very obviously, a change in attitude towards our recent heritage is of prime importance, while modification of existing heritage legislation is needed to ensure stringent legal protection.

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Fig. 8: A newspaper report post-demolition (© archive of Kiran Joshi)



Fig. 9: Hall of Nations Demolished (www.hindustantimes.com/photos-in-dia-newsthe-hall-of-nations-a-lost-heritage-of-delhi)

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Case Study 2: Kala Academy, Goa, India¹¹ – Under Threat of Demolition by the Government of Goa

The Kala Academy, Goa's cultural centre, designed by the world-renowned architect Charles Correa¹² in the late 1970s, is threatened with demolition by the State Government. It is an extremely important building as it serves as the venue for almost every cultural event in Panjim. As an architectural icon of the post-independence period in India, it is of significance not just in the State of Goa, but also on an international platform. As it was designed nearly 50 years ago, like most other buildings in this coastal town of Goa it has suffered the vagaries of climate. However, the situation is not so grave or the problem so insurmountable that professional advice and intelligent conservation measures cannot address. A lack of empathy and appreciation for 20th-century heritage on the part of the Government seems to have led to this situation.

Description of the building

The Kala Academy, a popular cultural centre, is situated on the banks of the River Mandovi in Goa's capital city, Panjim. It was designed by Charles Correa, a world-renowned architect of Goan origin, who has to his credit some amazing icons of the post-independence era in India.¹³

The building sits low on the ground, hardly visible from the road. A prominent feature of the building is the concrete and bamboo pergola which is like an extension of the foyer of the auditorium and amphitheatre. The open plan has no plinth and very few walls, lending the building a feeling of openness and giving it a

remarkable character where the building seems to welcome one and all. Designed to cater especially to the performing arts, it has a number of facilities – a 1000-seat auditorium, a 200-seat open-air amphitheatre, and a special "black box" for recordings and productions. There is some basic accommodation for performers and, more importantly, facilities for holding dance classes as well as for imparting training in Indian and Western classical music. The walls of the auditorium have a mural by the renowned Goan artist Mario Miranda, depicting a traditional Goan theatre, replete with renderings of local people seated in the boxes.

Architectural significance

The Kala Academy in Goa is admired the world over as an architectural marvel. While Charles Correa, later in his career, did design a couple of other buildings in Goa, this was the very first project in his place of origin, to which he was deeply connected. It was also the very first cultural centre designed by him, as both the Bharat Bhavan in Bhopal and the Jawahar Kala Kendra in Jaipur were built much later than the Kala Academy. According to Nondita Correa Mehrotra, Charles Correa's daughter, the architect's deep emotional connection with the site influenced the way the building could connect to Campal (neighbourhood in which the site is located) and the River Mandovi. Because of the simplicity of the structure, one tends to think that not much thought and creative energy was vested in the project; however, the truth of the matter is that the architect did invest a lot of time and effort in getting the right energy into this space.¹⁴

Most architectural critics comment that the Kala Academy is characterised by the inclusive feeling that emanates from the space. An almost poetic description by Himanshu Burte states, "The foundational act of design at Kala Academy is that of opening up. The architecture (...) clears the ground; literally, letting the gaze (and moving feet) sweep clean through from the pavement outside to the river beyond." This character of being open to the city is ideally suited to a public building and more so to a cultural centre. As Himanshu Burte mentions, there is no perceptible 'architectural sign of exclusion – apart from the gate which is kept generously wide and low'.¹⁵

Ranjit Hoskote, art curator and critic, very eloquently says, the building "dissolves the distinction of inside and outside, architecture and nature. The street is internalised by the building, which opens itself to the sky, vegetation and the river. The ritualistic pathway, the interplay of sightline and screen, the open-to-sky spaces, the gradients linking various levels in a gentle terracing – all these classic features of Correa's architecture are present. And let us not forget the laterite that forms its key medium – it articulates the flesh and blood of Goa's architecture, it comes from the soil of Goa, from the soul of Goa."¹⁶

Cultural significance

Kala Academy has great cultural significance. Any Goan today from the age of eight to 80 years would have either performed at the Kala Academy or attended Konkani *tiatrs* (uniquely Goan theatre form), *mando* competitions (music form that blends Indian and Western music and culture), or film screenings. There is a whole cross section of Goans, across all generations, who will tell you why the Kala Academy is considered outstanding. For some it is the wide diversity of programmes and events, for music lovers it is the music competitions across all genres and languages, and for others it is the art and handicraft exhibitions and book fairs in the foyer and the art gallery. It has to be recognised for being the only government-run art institution in the country, with



Fig. 1: The low-rise structure with a bamboo pergola extending across the entrance. The characteristic feature of this design is the open plan which seems to welcome everyone (© Sharad Apte, received through Charles Correa Foundation)

separate faculties for both Western music, Indian classical music, theatre and dance.

As stated by Vivek Menezes, “Few venues in India host such diverse programming throughout the year, from the DD Kosambi Festival of Ideas Lecture Series (speakers for which have included the Dalai Lama) to the nearly four-decade-old Surashree Kesarbai Kerkar Sangeet Samaroha (which has featured virtually every luminary from the world of Hindustani Classical music). All these events run to packed houses in the 954-seat Dinanath Mangeshkar Kala Mandir auditorium, named after the Goa-born musician father of Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle, the most famed of female playback singers in India. Countless signature moments of contemporary Goan culture are connected to the Kala Academy. In 1990, the all-time great fadista Amália Rodrigues visited for the first time and sang for an emotional postcolonial audience overflowing with what the Portuguese call *saudade* (loosely: yearning). It was much the same in 2016, when the 84-year-old genius of the Jaipur-Atrauli Gharana,¹⁷ Kishori Amonkar, delivered what turned out to be her last concert in her ancestral homeland”.

Issues and present state of conservation

Like many 50-year-old buildings that are subject to the vagaries of weather in a monsoon climate, the building shows signs of

water leakage. And, like many government-owned properties, the building has suffered a lack of regular maintenance or timely repair. A recent announcement by a prominent representative of the Ministry of Art and Culture, issued on behalf of the government, stated that the Kala Academy’s open-air auditorium could not be repaired or renovated and that the structure is fragile. He further expanded that for the last several months, the management had stopped accepting bookings for the events and categorically expressed the need to demolish and reconstruct the venue.

The Charles Correa Foundation,¹⁸ on hearing the statements by the Government, expressed that they would be willing to provide technical advice and find a solution to the problems. Other professionals – including architects, conservationists and engineers – who have studied the Kala Academy from the point of view of the impending threat of demolition are confident that it can be repaired. The problem is far from being insurmountable and there is absolutely no danger of it collapsing and causing harm to life and property. Therefore, the decision on the part of the Government of Goa to demolish parts of the building seems an over-reaction.

Heeding the protests in the media and signature campaigns passionately objecting to the demolition of this iconic building in Goa, the High Court of Bombay at Goa had taken Suo Motu cognisance and requested that a response be filed in court. Following this intervention, the Goa State Infrastructure Development



Corporation (GSIDC) committed to undertaking a structural audit. The Goa Government has now also put on record that it will not contemplate demolition of the Kala Academy until the report is received and studied.

A number of professional bodies have also rallied around offering support. The Indian Institute of Architects (IIA), Goa Chapter, along with the Institution of Engineers, Goa Chapter, have indicated their willingness to inspect the institution and review the two reports by Goa Engineering College and Goa State Industrial Development Corporation that advised demolition and, to assist the Academy in restoring and preserving the threatened structure.

Conclusions and Way Forward

It is a pity that the Kala Academy, Goa, a building which is greatly admired by professionals and heritage enthusiasts worldwide, is not appreciated by the Government of Goa who is the custodian of the site and duty-bound to maintain it. The last time any major maintenance work was carried out was around 20 years ago, during the late 1990s. Thereafter, only cosmetic repair and refurbishment of interiors has been undertaken. Perhaps if a Site Management Plan, with protocols for regular maintenance and monitoring, was in place the current situation would not have escalated.

It would appear that we in India still have the strangest notions of what constitutes our heritage. There seems to be complete apathy and a lack of appreciation for icons of the 20th century. Just because a building was designed and built in the last century (and is thus less than 100 years old), it is not considered worthy of preservation, however iconic, culturally significant and deserving it is.

The aspiration of the government in power is to display its progressiveness to the world by building “world-class” facilities, replete with chrome, glass and coloured cladding sheets. That seems to have been the case with buildings in the national capital too, like the Hall of Nations and WHO Headquarters, which were demolished to pave the way for ‘world-class’ facilities. The government and bureaucrats need to be sensitised to the fact that buildings of the 20th century too are as worthy of a heritage tag and if the significant icons are not preserved for posterity, we will have nothing to represent this period of our history.

Status of June 2020

In January 2020, the Charles Correa Foundation arranged for an independent structural audit by experts who advised that unnecessary weight added by repetitive layers of non-performing waterproofing should be removed and that a new, temporary waterproofing should be applied before the onset of monsoons, and

Fig. 2: Kala Academy, a cultural centre in Panjim, the capital city of Goa, India, designed in the 1970s by award-winning architect Charles Correa is threatened by demolition because of the poor state of conservation. (© The Charles Correa Foundation)

Fig. 3: Public spaces with built-in seating with very practical and easy-to-maintain finishes like China mosaic, etc. (© Jefry Aniyara, received through Charles Correa Foundation)

Fig. 4: A large amphitheatre, overlooking the River Mandovi, a venue that is popularly used for casual gatherings and informal performances. The leakage into the ‘black box’ below is through this amphitheatre (© Sharad Apte, received through Charles Correa Foundation)

until necessary conservation measures are completed. However, no action could be initiated due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The court proceedings have also been adjourned indefinitely. In the meantime, the monsoon hit Goa on 8th June 2020 and we can only hope that the structure will not suffer much further damage.

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Case Study 3: The “Redevelopment” of the Central Vista, New Delhi

The Central Vista, New Delhi, the most iconic part of India's capital city, valued worldwide as an exceptional urban ensemble, is proposed for redevelopment by the Government of India. New Delhi, of which the Central Vista is the main axis, was designed by world-renowned architects Sir Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker and built between 1911 and 1931. Although conceived as the core of the British Colonial Imperial City, it has been used, since India's independence in 1947, as the capital complex of the Sovereign Republic of India. The Central Vista is one of the most visited tourist places in Delhi. It is used for Republic Day parades and various other functions organised in the lawns/green spaces



Fig. 1: The genius of the Central Vista is in its integration of vista and verdure (greenery) (© Sondeep Shankar)

which showcase the capital to the world. It is also an important open space for the public. Large crowds throng this area on a daily basis.

Description of the Central Vista

The Central Vista, a grand ceremonial axis, is the most distinctive and visually striking feature of the National Capital City, New Delhi. It is a landscaped stretch marked by imposing public buildings, forming a continuity between the Ridge¹⁹ and the Purana Qila.²⁰ The Central Vista ensemble comprises the main axis, Rajpath (originally King's Way), a tree lined avenue that runs east-west, radiating from the Rashtrapati Bhawan (originally Viceroy's House) on Raisina Hill, flanked by the Secretariat Buildings (North Block and South Block), and ends in the Princes' Park,²¹ where the palaces of the erstwhile princely states in India can be found. At the foot of Raisina Hill, a road perpendicular to Rajpath forms a cross axis known as Vijay Chowk (the Great Place) and marks the beginning of the Central Vista. This road leads to the Parliament House towards the north. Rajpath sweeps eastward to a hexagonal round-about with the India Gate²² and the Canopy.²³ Another cross axis, the Janpath, meets Rajpath at the midpoint between the Secretariats and Princes' Place. At this intersection, a group of four important public buildings mark the crossing, viz. the National Archives, the National Museum, the Indira Gandhi National Center for Arts (IGNCA) and the Ministry of External Affairs.

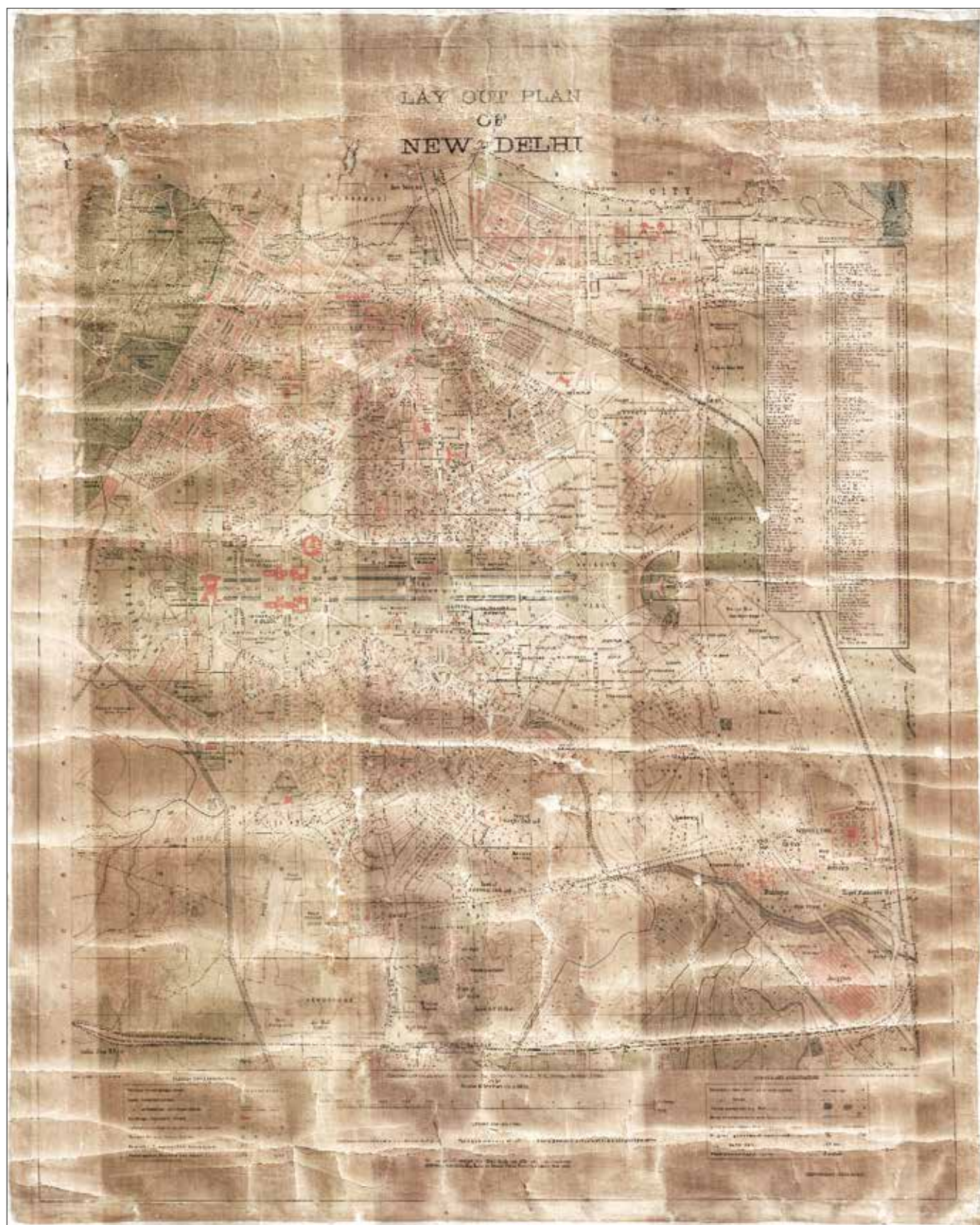


Fig. 2: Layout Plan, New Delhi (1934). Rajpath forms the main axis of New Delhi with the Rashtrapati Bhavan at the west end, the War Memorial Arch (India Gate) and the Canopy at the east (© Surveyor General of India. LAY OUT PLAN OF NEW DELHI [map]. 6": 1mile. Dehradun: Survey of India Office, 1934)



Fig. 3: Armature of the city identified as an important attribute that displays authenticity of form and material. This had remained unchanged over the years (© Department of Archives, Government of Delhi)



Fig. 4: The impressive composition of the Rashtrapati Bhawan which is today the residence of the President of India and the North and South Block of the Secretariat that today house ministries of the Government of India. When it was designed, it was one of the largest building complexes of its time, three storeys high and covering an area of 1200 feet x 1300 feet (© Sondeep Shankar).



Fig. 5: Canopy in the central Hexagon that once had a statue of King George V, later removed (© Press Bureau of India)



Fig. 6: The tree-lined avenue of Central Vista soon after the plantation, before the trees gained full height (© Press Bureau of India)

Outstanding Universal Value

New Delhi forms part of the area of Delhi proposed for nomination as a UNESCO World Heritage City. After wide consultation with architects, urban designers, historians and other professionals, the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of New Delhi was articulated. The following is an extract of the OUV from the nomination dossier:²⁴

'Delhi is an outstanding example of a city planning enterprise which illustrates a significant stage in the history of the Indian subcontinent. New Delhi reflects on a grand scale, hitherto unequalled, the fusion of two dominant themes of early twentieth century city planning: the City Beautiful movement (vistas) and the Garden City (verdure). The Central Vista, a broad ceremonial avenue, anchored by grand buildings, is expressive of pomp and grandeur. The grouping of the palaces of the Princely estates around the hexagon at the eastern end of the Central Vista symbolizes the diversity of the semi-independent political entities. In no other Garden City until then had the tree-planting component been as fundamentally integrated into the city plan as it was in New Delhi.'

'Its architectural style is an excellent example of an eclectic style that developed during the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, which confidently drew inspiration from traditional Indian architecture. This eclecticism was a carefully wrought combination of cherished mainstream ideals, the Classical canon and the European Renaissance with a very traditional Indian architectural vocabulary—such as chattris, chajjas, and jaalis. Forms and symbols of the Indian subcontinent that are both Hindu and Buddhist in origin, like elephants, nagas and lotuses were also liberally used.'

'In their materials, the Rashtrapati Bhawan and the other buildings designed as part of the core are an impressive example of how two popular local building stones were used together. The designer recognized the virtues of pink sandstone, and the cream Dholpur sandstone, which was used so extensively, which had been employed by the Rajputs the Mughals. Both are excellently suited to Delhi's climate. This combination of building materials continues to be used even today by architects in the region.'

Design principles adopted for Central Vista

1. The design of the new creation was to be, in every way, worthy of the ancient and beautiful city of Delhi, absorbing the traditions of all the ancient capitals.
2. The layout and setting of the Central Vista of New Delhi responded to the natural rise in the ground, with the highest terminal point Raisina Hill used to site the Rashtrapati Bhawan and the Secretariat buildings, with the green backdrop of the Ridge (now a designated green belt).
3. Political imperatives governed certain design elements in the layout of New Delhi. Princely states were given prime plots around the hexagon and palatial buildings came up in each of these plots.
4. Prominent references to traditional Indian architecture were made in the design of the monumental buildings. These ranged from the liberal use of the distinctive red sandstone – widely used in traditional Indian architecture – and many different individual elements, forms, and motifs. At a visual level, an important axis of the city connected new developments to outlying ancient monuments.
5. In recognition of the need for fostering growth of traditional Indian arts, a cultural complex was planned to occupy the crossing of Rajpath and Janpath. Though only one building –

the National Archives – was built at the time, the later addition of the National Museum in 1960 is in keeping with the original intention.

6. All administrative and public buildings were planned on the avenue parallel to the Central Vista.
7. The central spine was reserved as a space for recreation of all classes, a function it serves until this date. Natural features incorporated in its design– indigenous trees and water – are the focus of this central spine.

Existing development controls and heritage legislation

India has acknowledged that the Central Vista ensemble is an irreplaceable architectural and planning icon. This has been demonstrated in a number of ways:

- The iconic buildings along the Central Vista were declared Grade I Heritage Buildings in 2010 by the New Delhi Municipal Council.
- The Master Plan of Delhi 2021 recognised this area, termed as the ‘Lutyens Bungalow Zone’, as a Heritage Zone deserving careful conservation.
- In 2012, the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, placed New Delhi on UNESCO’s Tentative List of World Heritage sites, along with the Mughal walled city of Shahjahanabad, for consideration as a UNESCO World Heritage City.
- The Delhi Urban Art Commission (DUAC) is mandated to scrutinise, approve, reject or modify proposals in respect of the Central Vista.
- A Central Vista Committee is mandated to protect the significance of the area.²⁵

The threat – proposal for ‘redeveloping’ the Central Vista

The Government of India has invited bids for comprehensive architectural and engineering planning for the “Development/ Redevelopment of Parliament Building, Common Central Secretariat and Central Vista, New Delhi”. The major objectives, as stated in the Bid Document, is to ‘re-plan the entire Central Vista area from the gates of Rashtrapati Bhavan up to India Gate, an area of approximately 4 square kilometres’ and ‘draw up a new Master Plan for the entire Central Vista area to represent the values and aspirations of a New India – Good Governance, Efficiency, Transparency, Accountability and Equity and is rooted in the Indian Culture and social milieu’. The Master Plan, besides giving concept, plan, detailed design and strategies for development/redevelopment works, refurbishment works, is required to suggest demolition of existing buildings and design of new iconic structures. The proposal specifically envisages development/redevelopment of the historic Parliament Building, development of a ‘Common Central Secretariat in the Central Vista area’, and the upgrading of the public facilities, amenities, parking and green space of the Central Vista to make it a world-class tourist destination.

The bid document cites several reasons why the present suite of the historic buildings has become redundant. In the case of the Parliament Building, the facilities and infrastructure are deemed inadequate to meet the current demand. There is acute shortage of office space and no chambers for members of Parliament, a situation that is likely to worsen over the next few years. The security arrangements are inadequate and outdated, and the building is not earthquake-proof. ‘Therefore, there is an imperative need to redesign and redevelop the existing Parliament Building with the same outer façade or construct a new state-of-the-art building



Fig. 7: Water was a key feature of the landscape (© Press Bureau of India)

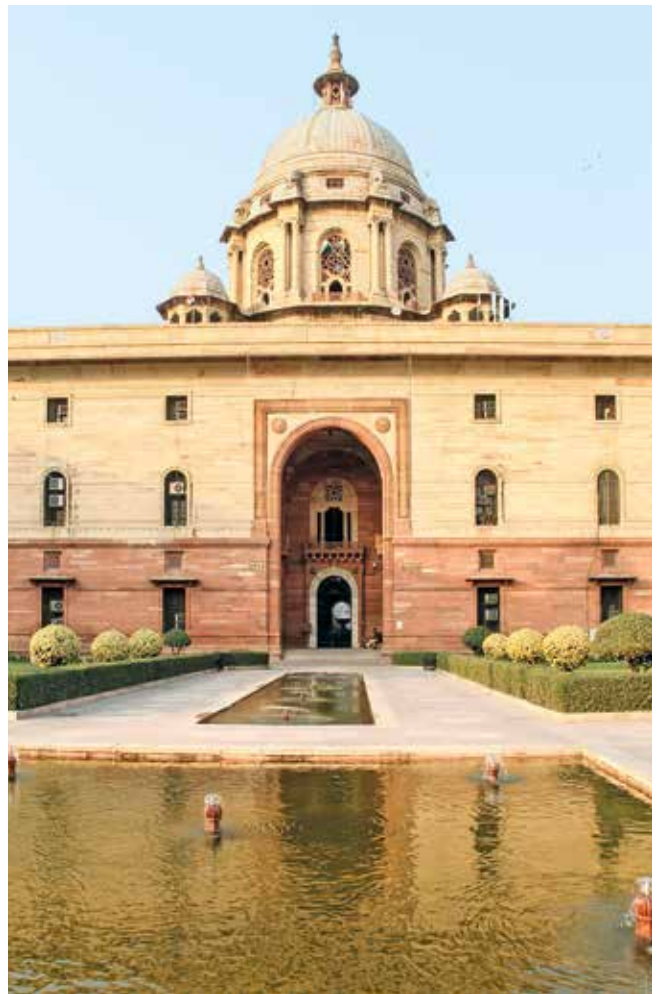


Fig. 8: Elements of Indian architecture such as *chattris*, *chajjas*, and *jaalis* used as decorative elements. The use of stone in two colours was also an inspiration from traditional Indian architecture (© Annabel Lopez)

located in close vicinity.’ The offices of the Central Secretariat (Ministries, Departments, attached and subordinate offices, etc.) are spread over 47 buildings, leading to inefficiency and difficulty in coordination. Many of the existing buildings/plots are under-utilised. There is a shortage of working spaces, parking, amenities and services. Most of the buildings in the Central Vista area are more than 40–50 years old and nearing the end of their structural lives. ‘Further, Buildings constructed over 100 years ago such as North and South Block are not earthquake safe.’ The Central Vista, as a whole, lacks basic public facilities, amenities and parking. The unorganized vending and haphazard parking leads to congestion and gives a poor public perception. Therefore, there is a need for its up gradation.’

Though the bid document asks the consultant to ‘adhere to the Central Vista Committee Guidelines and Lutyen’s Bungalow Zone Guidelines while carrying out the consultancy work for the Redevelopment of Central Vista’, the stated objectives belie the intention of upholding the cultural values of the site, and no such guidelines are in place.

Cause for concern

The site proposed for redevelopment constitutes the most iconic part of India’s capital city; it is valued worldwide as an exceptional urban ensemble. There is no doubt that spatial needs of the Government have increased and many of the buildings constructed almost 40 years ago need to be upgraded and retrofitted to satisfy contemporary statutory performance standards and efficient functional benchmarks for governance. The landscape elements of the Central Vista too are in urgent need of refurbishment. Further, the area is now under tremendous stress due increased public use. Thus, on many counts, some interventions have become necessary and should not be deferred.

Given the immense significance of the Central Vista, the government’s concepts of redeveloping the area as a “world-class tourist destination” has come like a bolt out of the blue, recalling to many the case of the Hall of Nations Complex. As soon as the plan became public, social media were inundated with outrage at the nature of this redevelopment proposal. Further, the Government attempting to undertake this humungous task, without any consultations with experts, professionals or public discourse and debate, has not gone down well with many sections of society. Professionals, heritage enthusiasts and concerned citizens are rallying together to raise an alarm about this decision of the Government of India.

As a democratic country, concerned citizens are expressing that conceiving a project of this scope and vision needs wider public and professional consultation. The major concerns raised by the citizens include:

- The extraordinary haste with which the redevelopment is proposed – most projects are to be completed within the next two to five years, the Parliament Building plans are to be ready by July 2022, the Central Vista by November 2020 and the new Central Secretariat by March 2024;
- A total absence of audit of the existing buildings to determine the functionality of the spaces;
- The absence of ‘Guidelines of the Central Vista Committee’, though the bid document states that the development will be in conformity with these;²⁶

- The lack of attempt at carrying out a Heritage Impact Assessment of the proposed redevelopment.

What is also particularly worrying are statements by potential bidders such as, “what we do with our Parliament Buildings will powerfully signify who we are, how we view our past and where we see ourselves going”, leaving people to conjecture whether this whole exercise is yet another attempt to wipe out the memory of a colonial past, or the brainchild of individuals “who want to make a massive mark on the city of Delhi?”²⁷

Citizens’ initiatives

A major rebuttal has been issued by INTACH’s Delhi Chapter that has been campaigning hard over the years to uphold the cultural values of the city’s heritage. INTACH’s primary concern is whether this redevelopment would violate the protocols for interventions in historic areas. It is worried that the absence of “guidelines” of the Lutyen’s Bungalow Zone (LBZ) that particularly relate to the Central Vista by the Central Vista Committee (CVC) leaves this iconic zone open to subjective interpretation/misinterpretation.

INTACH, having prepared the dossier for “Delhi – a Heritage City” and the “Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan for Rashtrapati Bhawan and the President’s Estate”, is well versed with the significance and character of the Central Vista and appurtenant areas and has thus proposed a set of guidelines to preserve the significance and ensure that its Outstanding Universal Value is not compromised. The Guidelines generally address the grandeur of the Central Vista and the need to retain the same, the visual axis that was an important aspect of the design, the need to preserve the notified heritage buildings, the importance of the tree lined central spine and the important function it has as a green open space for the common man.

Many more individuals, institutions and organisations are also following suit. While there is no doubt that the area needs refurbishment and upgradation, with the concerted effort of professionals, one hopes that a viable solution can definitely be arrived at and one would not lose an important marker of India’s cultural history to vagaries of development and ill-founded notions of modernisation.

Status of June 2020

Whereas on the one hand, the Supreme Court of India has refused to suspend the project on the grounds that no progress can be made under the conditions imposed during COVID-19, on the other hand, the project continues to be developed at a tremendous pace, with the appointed architect making presentations to several audiences. The detailed design of the new Parliament building next to the present historic one has been completed. The land use of several sites has been changed to allow new constructions, while some older historic buildings are to be demolished or converted into museums. Of the almost 2000 objections raised by the public to the change in land use, some 1,292 individuals were selectively invited to a hearing, but each was given merely 2.5 minutes to make their point.

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Footnotes

- ¹ The buildings have been acknowledged all around the world as icons of modernity. An exhibition was held at the Pompidou Centre, Paris in 2016; the Museum of Modern Art in New York expressed interest in adding models of The Hall of Nations and the Nehru Pavilion to its permanent collection, while the World Monuments Fund (WMF) received the application for nomination of the Hall of Nations for 2017.
- ² A system of scaffolding supported the structure until level 5, after which scaffolding was removed as the structure was self-supporting.
- ³ Every effort was made to visualise and graphically explain the complex intersections. For example, the 11-member nodes were explained with up to three views, all hand-drawn.
- ⁴ The built heritage of Delhi currently enjoys protection at three different levels, by three different agencies: (a) Buildings of National Importance which have been in existence for not less than 100 years as of 1958 are protected by the Archaeological Survey of India Act of 1958; (b) Buildings of regional importance which have been in existence for not less than 100 years as of 2004 are protected by the Delhi State Department of Archaeology Act of 2004; (c) Significant buildings of heritage value, not protected by either the Archaeological Survey of India Act of 1958 or Delhi State Department of Archaeology Act of 2004, but built before 1947 are notified as Heritage Buildings by the New Delhi Municipal Council and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi.
- ⁵ The campaign for the protection of Delhi's "modern heritage" has been carried out by Prof. AGK Menon, a member of ISC20C since 2018, ever since the demolition of Delhi's Chanakya Cinema in 2008. This prompted him to present, through INTACH, a tentative list of sixty-two such buildings in Delhi to the HCC for protection in 2013. The list was "under consideration" by the HCC for over three years.
- ⁶ An agency of the Government of India, which organises exhibitions at the site.
- ⁷ "All new Pragati Maidan by 2010". *Financialexpress.com*. 24 March 2006. Retrieved 18 June 2015; Pragati Maidan to get new showcase". *The Times Of India*. 30 August 2006. Retrieved 18 June 2015.
- ⁸ Legal Interventions: (a) W.P.(C) 5271/2016, Indian National Trust For Art And Cultural Heritage Vs. Heritage Conservation Committee and Others; (2) Nath, Jayant. *W.P.(C) 1146/2016 & CM. No.5060/2016 THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS AND ORS versus UNION OF INDIA AND ORS*. High Court of Delhi, 2016.
- ⁹ 'Hall of Nations' at Pragati Maidan could be made into museum By Baishali Adak, Published: 00:13 BST, 7 October 2015 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-3262322/Hall-Nations-Pragati-Maidan-museum.html>
- ¹⁰ For example, the 2016 exhibition at the Pompidou Centre, Paris, showcased, with numerous models, the technology and large span exhibition spaces in modernising India; followed by an application in 2017 for nomination of the Hall of Nations Complex to the World Monuments Fund (WMF) Watch List.
- ¹¹ The Kala Academy, Goa was established by the Govt. of Goa on 28th February 1970 as an apex body to develop music, dance, drama, fine art, folk art, literature, etc. and thereby promote the cultural unity of this State.
- ¹² Though a Western-educated architect, with degrees from the University of Michigan and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Charles Correa is known for introducing modernism to the non-western environment of India.
- ¹³ Charles Correa's better-known works include the Jeevan Bharati Building at Connaught Place, New Delhi; Vidhan Sabha, Bhopal; Jawahar Kala Kendra, Jaipur; British Library, New Delhi, etc. His most notable international works are the McGovern Institute for Brain Research at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Champalimaud Centre for the Unknown in Lisbon, and the Ismaili Centre in Toronto.
- ¹⁴ See 'Trashing the Magic of Charles Correa' by Vivek Menezes.
- ¹⁵ Himanshu Burté is an architect, urbanist, and associate professor at the Centre for Urban Science and Engineering (CUSE), Indian Institute of Technology (IIT-B), Mumbai. See his write-up in *Art Connect*, the biannual magazine of The India Foundation for the Arts (2008).
- ¹⁶ See 'Trashing the Magic of Charles Correa' by Vivek Menezes.
- ¹⁷ An apprenticeship fraternity (*gharana*), founded in the late 19th century, a leading representative of Hindustani classical music. The *gharana* is known for its distinctive vocal aesthetics, raga repertoire, and technical aptitude.
- ¹⁸ The Charles Correa Foundation (CCF) is an initiative of internationally renowned architect and urban planner Charles Correa. It is a not-for-profit public charitable trust to initiate and encourage education and research in human settlements. It was founded in August 2011 as a catalyst for architectural, urban design, planning, and community-based projects that improve the condition of human settlements in India.
- ¹⁹ The spur of land forming the northern extremity of the Aravalli Mountains and a designated green belt by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. It is a 'no-build zone' in the Master Plan of Delhi.
- ²⁰ A fort built by the Mughals, the site is believed to be the site of the first human habitation in Delhi.
- ²¹ Princes' Park comprises the palaces of Indian princes who were allotted plots with location and area determined by the 'Warrant of Precedence'. The most powerful states – Hyderabad, Baroda, Mysore, Bikaner, Patiala, and Jaipur – were given lots forming a hexagon around the canopy.
- ²² The War Memorial Arch commemorate martyrs, India's dead soldiers and the Unknown Soldier. The shrine is known as the Amar Jawan Jyoti (literally: 'flame of the immortal warrior').
- ²³ A slender structure which marks the centre of the hexagon. It was built as the baldachin for the protection of a marble statue of King George V, erected to serve as a monument to the founder of the city upon his death in 1936. The statue was removed after independence.

²⁴ 'Delhi's Imperial Capital Cities', dossier for nominating Delhi as a UNESCO World Heritage City, prepared by INTACH Delhi Chapter, 2014.

²⁵ The Central Vista Committee was constituted by the Central Public Works Department to specifically protect the heritage value of the area defined as the Central Vista.

²⁶ The problem with the proposed redevelopment of Delhi's Central Vista, by A. G. K. Menon in *The Telegraph*, online edition on Friday, 4 October 2019.

²⁷ As quoted by Ram Rahman in *Leading Architects Concerned About Central Vista Revamp Plan for New Delhi* <https://thewire.in/urban/delhi-central-vista-revamp-plan>.