

Integration of Historical Vestiges into Modern Urban Fabric Using Place-Making as a Tool

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Abstract: Historic sites represent the identity of the city. The rapid urbanization and city-making process have led to the decay and neglect of historical sites. To recover historical sites from the decline process, a place-making approach is used as a tool. Complex areas, with a historical urban fabric symbolizing the city's origins and often linked to important historical buildings, form the center of historical cities in India. These areas serve as a central point of identity for the entire city and are often endowed with notable heritage buildings. One such historical location in India is the coastal stretch of Manapad. The town is referred to as "Little Jerusalem." The unplanned developments have tarnished the city's image by destroying its historical urban fabric and identity. The study's methodology is based on a field survey that uses a visual survey approach to collect data through the use of techniques like photography, diagrams, or maps, as well as the analysis of various literature to understand the components of the urban fabric, historical evolution, growth, and development. The study attempts to analyze the urban fabric of historic sites, identify factors affecting it, and suggest strategies and measures for integrating the historic vestiges into the modern urban fabric. The proposed strategies are some of the tools and techniques that could be adopted by urban designers, planners, and local planning authorities in improving the urban fabric of historic sites.

Background: The modern townscape is established by historic areas, that contribute to a city's memory, urban identity, and development. In recent times, the historical connection was ignored in the process of city-making. Due to the development pressure, the urban form is constantly changing and losing its identity and character. Change is inevitable. According to the needs of its inhabitants, urban spaces, streetscapes, and buildings change and evolve.

Materials and Methods: Site study and Literature study are used as a main tool for the study. Place-making approach is used as a tool for integrating the fabrics.

Results: Some strategies are identified using place-making as a tool. Thus, it could be integrated into the modern urban fabric.

Conclusion: Manapad has long history and its famous historic structures are located. It has historic urban fabric. These conditions reveal the high potentials for the region to strengthen its unique character by taking the historic places as valuable resources. Nowadays, Manapad's historic core is currently undergoing transformation. The original traditional urban fabric will be lost forever if this irreversible process is not promptly controlled and minimized. By providing more importance to historic places and making their cultural values more obvious in the modern context, new urban development could make the locals more aware of and connect with their own past. It is essential to make efforts to maintain the areas that act as our link to the past. Although it is unavoidable that cities will evolve physically to meet modern needs, it is necessary to limit how much change occurs in order to preserve and maintain local identity. To address the concerns of changing urban fabric in Manapad's core, it is necessary to determine the historic identity of the area.

Key Word: vestiges, historical vestiges, historic core, place, place-making, urban fabric

I. Introduction

The modern townscape is established by historic areas, that contribute to a city's memory, urban identity, and development. In recent times, the historical connection was ignored in the process of city-making. Due to the development pressure, the urban form is constantly changing and losing its identity and character. Change is inevitable. According to the needs of its inhabitants, urban spaces, streetscapes, and buildings change and evolve. The fabric of the past remains a challenge in many cities. This becomes a development block and, many times, it is being destroyed. So, it becomes a challenge in front of urban designers to conserve or preserve the vestiges and convert them into an opportunity. The rapid urbanization of cities resulted in a significant concern for historic vestiges recovery to incorporate it into the modern urban fabric. The study attempts to explore the notion of placemaking as an approach to developing and conserving historic vestiges.

II. Site Context

Manapad is located in the southernmost region of the Indian subcontinent. It is a Fishing Community that is about 50 km far from Tuticorin, an ancient Indian port on the silk route. It is also called as “Little Jerusalem”. The history of Manapad dates back to the 14th century. The settlement was developed based on their occupation, which is fishing and pearl culture. It is Christian populated area with about 5,795 inhabitants that residing here.



Fig 1 Location of Manapad



Fig 2 Manapad Context; Source: Google Image

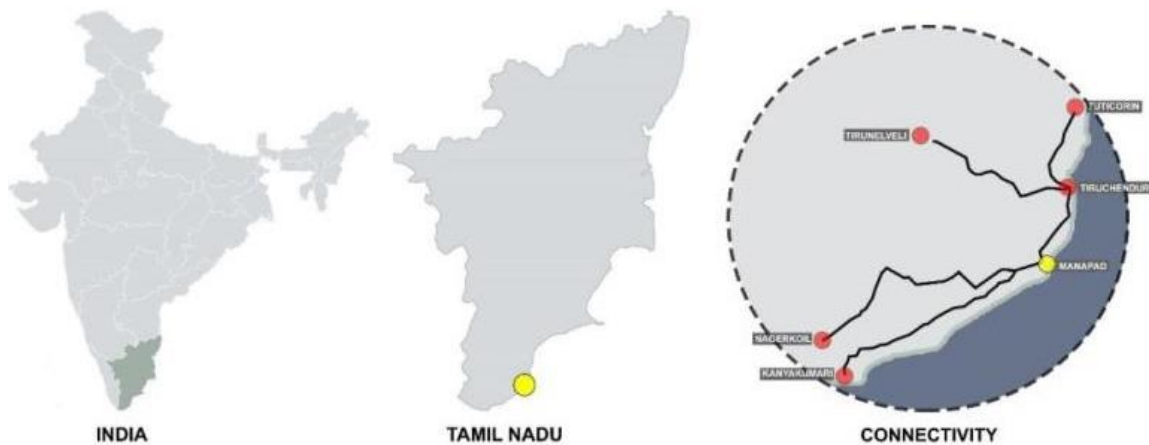


Fig 3 Major Connectivity towards Manapad; Source: Author

Its culture is particularly unique as a consequence of

- The Portuguese invasion during the 14th Century
- Trade links with Ceylon.

The village remained unaltered until the 1540s, when the Indo-Portuguese architectural style emerged. Their architecture displays this distinct culture. As they adapted to the hot, humid climate, their homes reflected the activities of the residents.



Fig 4 Historic Map of Manapad(left) Location of Manapad(right); Source: Google Image

Social Background

Social stratification based on caste and financial status are predominantly seen in this region. The settlement pattern also depends upon this cluster pattern. They have a unique culture as they have adopted parts of European culture while still maintaining their native cultural roots.

The settlement consists of three main clusters.

- It mainly has the Fisherman community, Nadar group, Paravas group and Ceylon-Portuguese group.



Fig 5 Settlement Pattern; Source: Author

Each of the group have their own culture which reflects in their design as well.

I. Fishing Cluster:

The settlement grew in an organic way along the coastline in clusters.

II. Nadar Cluster:

The next settlement was a community settlement and also grew in an organic way, towards the western part of the village. Their main occupation is supporting activities for fishing like boat building, basket weaving etc.

III. Upper Class Paravas Cluster:

The backwaters are on the other side, and it is laid out in a proper grid iron layout, with the churches on one side. This settlement was inhabited by the upper-class people, whose main occupation is trading with Ceylon.



Fig 6 Section of Settlement Pattern; Source: Author

The new settlements and the upper class (Ceylon Settlements) are planned in grid iron pattern whereas the oldest settlement is in organic pattern, which is altering their settlement pattern.



Fig 7 Settlement Pattern; Source: Author

Major Historical Landmarks

The three main beaches are Solitary Beach, Melodious Sand Beach, and Blue Lagoon. Besides beaches, there are a number of interesting places to visit, including the St. Francis Xavier's Grotto (place where he used to live), Palm Leaf Society, Lighthouse, Manapad Point, and Wanderer's Trail.

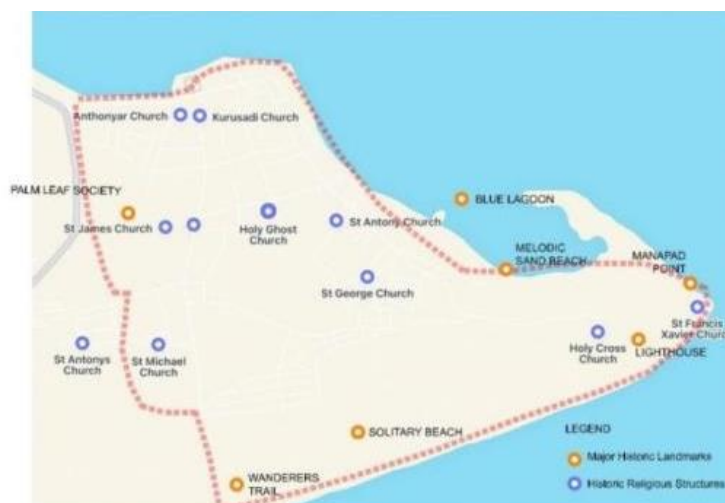


Fig 8 Various Landmarks of Manapad; Source: Author

Historic Buildings

Manapad is a Christian dominated region. The region is comprised of three churches: the Holy Ghost Church, the St. James Church, and two more shrines: the Holy Cross Church and St. Xavier's Cave. There are other religious places like St. Michaels Church, St. Antony's Church. And Kurusadi Church. These places are widely visited by visitors from all over the nation.



Fig 9 Religious Places of Manapad; Source: Author

Street Features

It has three main types of roads: Primary, Secondary, Tertiary. At the intersection of each street Grottos are present which is maintained by the people of that street. It becomes a place of social gathering in the evening.



Fig 10 Street Pattern of Manapad; Source: Author

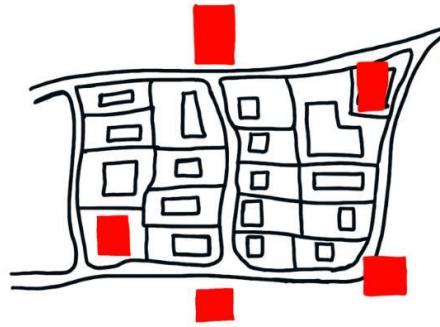


Fig 11 Grottos at intersection of each street; Source: Author

Residential Form

Manapad has a lot of old homes. It blends Portuguese and Ceylonese styles. It also has a lot of open and partially open places, such as verandas, balcoes, balconies, and so on. A characteristic of Portuguese architecture are balcoes, which are covered porches. Other Portugal features are ornamented window arches and railings. Majority of houses also have false ceilings. The majority of residences have symmetrical, tripartite facades.

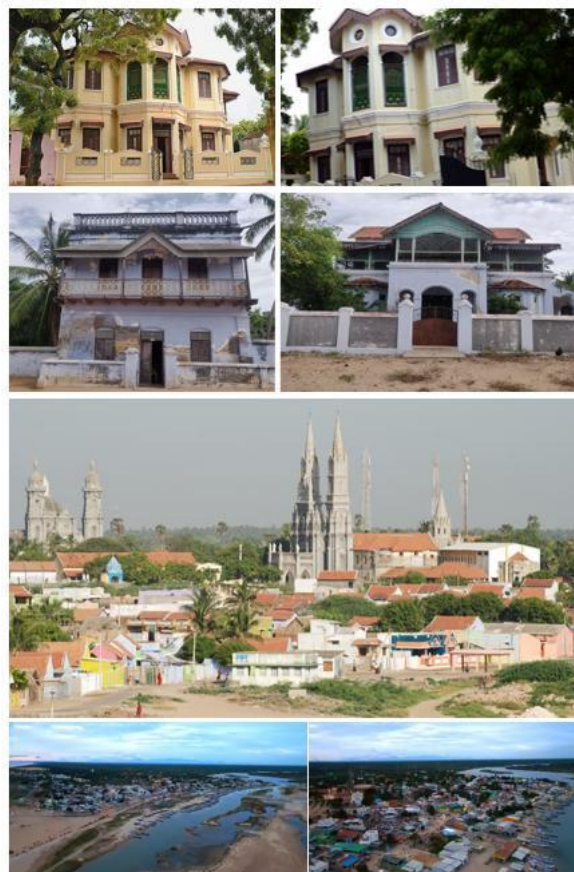


Fig 12 Residential typology of Manapad; Source: Google Image

III. Findings

Since place-making is one of the methodologies for developing a system of urban places scattered over an urban region (Castello, 2006). Using the Place-making approach for historical sites various strategies and techniques are identified for Manapad such as:

In terms of the linkage between the historic places and modern places, the street makes a separation between spaces. There are strong potentials to create more engagement between the historic places and modern places through street activities.

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Activity of people are one of the key elements in creating effective places. A strong network of activities produces a population flow and a vibrant neighborhood. These activities include those that occur in the neighboring buildings as well as those that happen in public areas.

Specific proper regulations regarding zoning, building byelaws, change of building use, have to be formulated for each of the zones to control changing physical fabric in core.

By using the place-making approach is used to explore a network of locations in Manapad (Heritage trail).



Fig 13 Proposed Heritage Trail; Source: Author

- i At specific locations the entry points to the region along with parking areas have to be planned.
- ii The characteristic feature of the neighborhood that could be improved is the coexistence of old and new structures that are adjacent to one another.
- iii These issues could be addressed by adopting measures like identification of streets where pedestrianization could be promoted.
- iv The proper network of cycling facilities to be developed in historic area for the tourists.
- v The boundaries of the historic sites, e.g., walls and fences, could be redesigned to decrease the rigidity and welcome pedestrians that could facilitate the vigorous flow of people
- vi Manapad's history and collective memory appear to be important factors in shaping the city's identity. One attempt to connect with the past is the naming of streets throughout the city after notable or royal figures from the history.

IV. Conclusion

Manapad has long history and its famous historic structures are located. It has historic urban fabric. These conditions reveal the high potentials for the region to strengthen its unique character by taking the historic places as valuable resources. Nowadays, Manapad's historic core is currently undergoing transformation. An increase in tourists is creating management issues like overcrowding, traffic congestion, parking issues, pressure on facilities, and much more. Also, it attracts more street vendors, which results in encroachment, among other things. Other modifications include the conversion of traditional structures to contemporary ones in residential areas, which

results in loss of architectural character. Noticeable changes in built characteristics of the urban fabric due to the modern development. This results in spaces are being used more intensely, which causes friction and eventually leads to a loss of identity and character. The original traditional urban fabric will be lost forever if this irreversible process is not promptly controlled and minimized. By providing more importance to historic places and making their cultural values more obvious in the modern context, new urban development could make the locals more aware of and connect with their own past. It is essential to make efforts to maintain the areas that act as our link to the past. Although it is unavoidable that cities will evolve physically to meet modern needs, it is necessary to limit how much change occurs in order to preserve and maintain local identity. To address the concerns of changing urban fabric in Manapad's core, it is necessary to determine the historic identity of the area.

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