Conservation of Heritage Areas in the City of Panaji: A Case Study of Fontainhas Area

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ABSTRACT
Panaji is the capital city of the state of Goa, and the city has been declared as a Heritage City under the JNNURM for urban renewal scheme. The city is spotted as one of the most attractive tourist destinations in India. Panaji is known for its Indo-Portuguese cultural heritage having a number of heritage structures, buildings, monuments and sites of significant importance. The Outline Development Plan 2011 has identified as many as 40 buildings, houses, sites and monuments in the City. It has many heritage structures, monuments and areas, which needs to be addressed for conservation. These heritage structures and areas have come under tremendous threat of new developments due to improper approach by the agencies involved in conserving including the people at large. The paper focuses on Fontainhas heritage areas by addressing the issues that are faced by the heritage area and proposes planning measures for regulating the heritage conservation areas for harmonious development in the City of Panaji.

Key Words: **Heritage Areas, Significance Assessment, Conservation, Strategies**

I. INTRODUCTION

Panaji was a small fishing village with lots of coconut trees, creeks and fields. For centuries, it remained so and was a neglected ward of Taleigao village with the only massive structure, Palace of Adil Shah by the Mandovi River. In 1632 the 3.2km causeway linking Panjim with Ribandar village known as the "Pointe de Linhares" was built. It was the longest bridge at that time when it was constructed. During this time, against the backdrop of the decline of Old Goa, the idea of Panjim becoming the Capital of Goa slowly gained momentum. The then Viceroy, shifted his residence from Panelim (near Old Goa) to Panjim in the newly re-modelled Adil Shah Fort, since known as "Idalcao's Palace". He began the process of slowly reclaiming land, initiated public projects, drainage systems and was also responsible for many of its government buildings and set the stage for Panjim to evolve into a magnificent city. By a royal decree on March 22, 1843, its status was elevated to a "City" and became the capital of Goa and was called "Nova Goa".

There are two old sections of the city existing today, one called "Fontainhas" and the other "San Tome". The hillock overlooking the city is called "Altinho".

II. HERITAGE AREAS OF PANAJI

Panaji is the capital city of the state of Goa, and housing beautiful residential, Institutional buildings having rich architectural heritage. The certain areas in the city of Panaji have been designated as conservation/ preservation areas. These areas can be easily identified due to the existence of monuments and structures having rich architectural heritage. The Outline Development Plan 2011 of Panaji has declared five areas as "Conservation Zone", and marked as "F" in the plan are: (1) Campal, (2) Mandovi river fronts (3) Fontainhas & Portais, (4) Altinho and (5) Fonduvem, Ribandar. The area comprises of 62.00 hectares' and works out to be 15 percent of the settlement area approximately of the settlement area approximately of Panaji Municipal limit excluding the unbuildable slope.

III. HISORICAL BACKGROUND OF FONTAINHAS

Fontainhas was once a palm grove with huts surrounding it in 1818. When the capital shifted from Old Goa to the new city, space was at a premium. Saline lands and mangroves were filled up and paddy fields created to accommodate the population that sought refuge here. The new area was given a new name. It was called Palmar Ponte in a sort of continuity with the name Ponte de Linhares, the bridge that brought them over into the new city. Many rivulets ran down the hill slope of Altinho to join the Ourem Creek on one side and subsequently the river Mandovi. The area was inhabited by "oil sellers, sailors, fishermen and tailors". One of the oldest houses in the precinct, Panjim Poussada (Gallery Gitanjali) was once the Ghanekar family mansion, ghan being the Konkani word for an oil press and ghanekars being the traditional name for the profession of oil pressers. Oil pressing was an important profession in traditional India. Oil meant for illumination and is a very important factor in the days before electricity.

Its mediterranean appearance, narrow streets and over hanging balconies, this old district or "Latin Quarter" lying along the banks of the Ancient Ourem creek has a different atmosphere from the main city. The entire area is set out at the base of hillside (Altinho) and the natural springs on the hillside, gave the name Fontainhas to the area. The areas of Fontainhas and Portais were the first areas to be inhabited here on account of the creek and the presence of fresh water springs.

A. Characteristics of Fontainhas Area
Fontainhas area is having organic growth with informal layouts streets and stepped accesses. The area is having high density and mixed land uses. Interactive built-up

open spaces responding to human scale, lot of distinctive Architectural styles, the buildings together form a cohesive group. In the absence of tree cover, buildings overlooking narrow streets, lanes provide shaded walkways and create an interesting play of light and shadow.

The basic material used in the construction of the houses in the ward of Fontainhas was *taipa* (wetted mud), reinforced with bamboo netting and coconut husk or coir. The walls were plastered with a mixture of lime and cane jaggery (gur). Many houses have retained the original plaster which is almost 200 years old.

IV. FONTAINHAS HERITAGE AREA

The area consists of medieval Panaji in contact with the grid iron pattern for the rest of Panaji. The land use pattern is predominantly mixed commercial and residential.
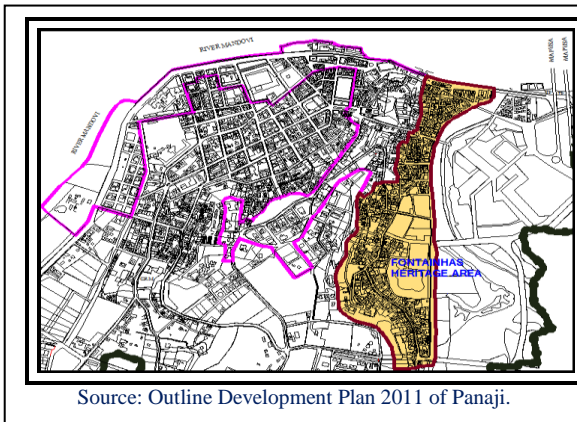
Source: Outline Development Plan 2011 of Panaji.

The narrow roads and buildings with similar architectural character make a distinct homogenous group creating a human and warm scale demands a compassionate approach. The Fontainhas Heritage area being the first areas to be inhabited here on account of the creek and the presence of fresh water springs after the construction of "Ponte de Linhares". The area is having as many as heritage structures which require identification. The City Corporation of Panaji and Goa Heritage Action Group have published a book "Walking in and around Panaji" depicting the building details in Fontainhas. The Goa Land Development and Building Construction Regulation 2010 have declared 40 sites, monuments, houses and buildings in the City of Panaji. The City has a number of unidentified Heritage monuments and buildings of importance specially Fontainhas area which requires identification. Some of the Heritage Resources of Fontainhas areas are identified as follows:

1. Maruti Temple, Houses of 2. Veira Velho, 3. Mario Ribeiro Santana 4. Lima Fernandes, 5. Christopher Nazareth, 6. Diogo Fonseca, 7. Mr. Rodrigues, 8. Ivo Fernandes, 9. Old Mint House, 10. Residence of Superintendent of Post offices, 11. Hotel Republica, 12. Fontainhas Spring (Fonte Fenix), 13. St. Sebastian Chapel, 14. Sao Tome Chapel, 15. Chapel of Portais, 16.House of Mr. Fernandes.

Fig. 1. View of the Maruti Temple

Fig. 2. View of the Hotel Republica

Fig. 3. View of the Heritage resources in Fontainhas having Indo-Portuguese Architecture

Fig. 4. View of the Portais Chapel

Fig. 6. Cars seen parked in front of the St. Sebastian Chapel.

Fig. 7. Cars seen parked in front of the House of Mario Ribeiro de Santana, Listed Heritage Structure.

Fig. 8. Heritage Houses in dilapidated condition due to non maintenance.

V. PROBLEMS OF FONTAINHAS AREA

The problems faced by the Fontainhas area are depicted in the map below:

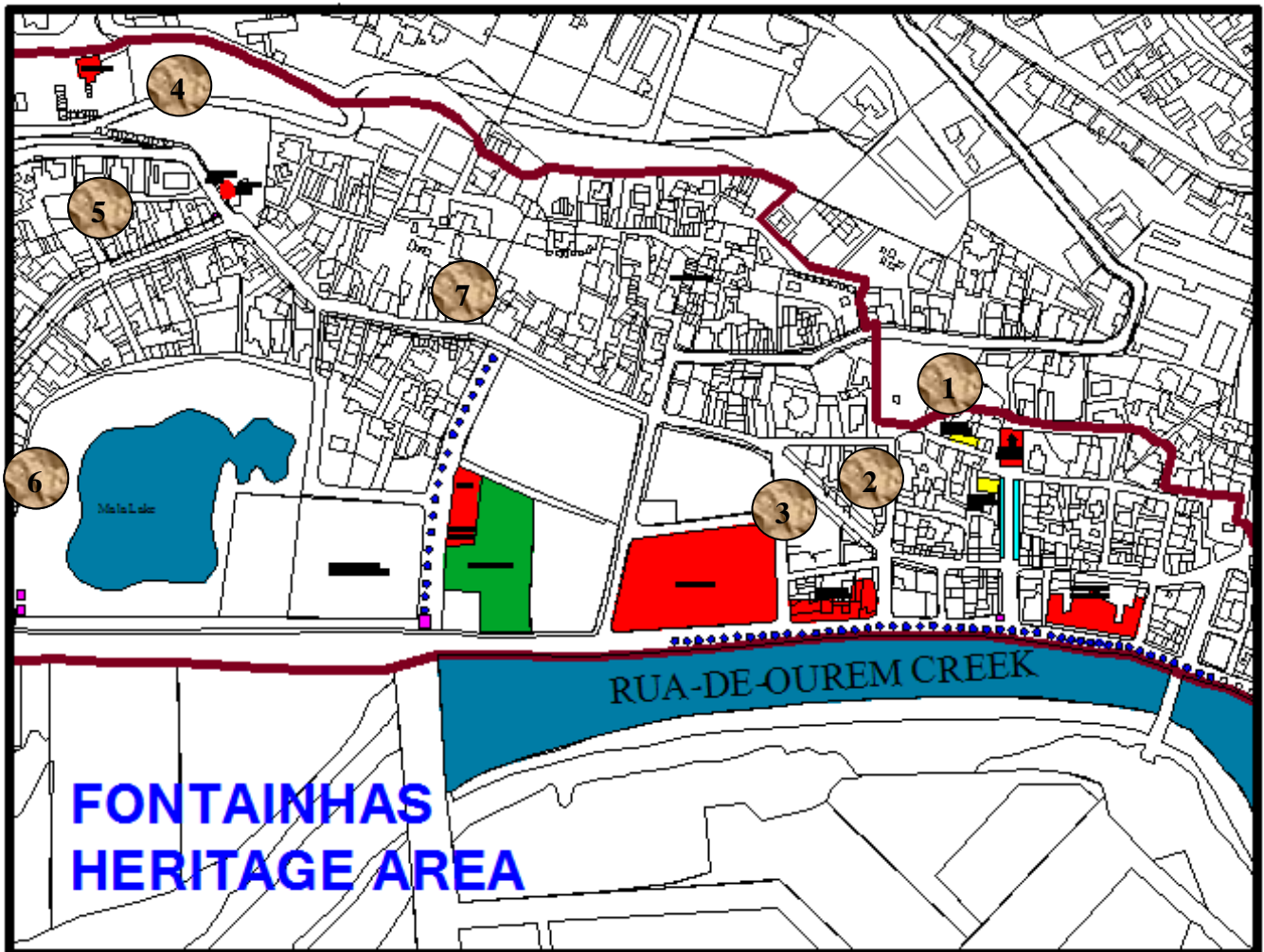

Fig. 5. Problems in Certain Parts of Fontainhas Areas

VI. REGULATIONS CONTROLLING THE DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA

The Goa (Regulation of Land Development and Building Construction) Act, and The Goa Land Development and Building Construction Regulation, 2010 regulates the development in the Fontainhas Heritage area and covers under Zone (F) "Conservation Zone" in the regulations.

The Outline Development Plan 2011 of Panaji has earmarked this area as Conservation Zone and has designated the residential zone as (F-S), Commercial zone as (F-C) and Institutional zone as (F-P).

Table 1: Regulations applicable to Conservation areas

Area of plot	Max. permissible coverage	Max. permissible FAR	Max. height in metres	Remarks
COMMERCIAL ZONE (F-C)				
Plot below 300 sq.mts.	70%	200	12.00 (G+3)	An additional floor could be allowed in special cases in stepped formation not exceeding a total of 15.00 mts.
Plot below 301 to 1000 sq.mts.	60%	180	12.00 (G+3)	
Plot above 1001 sq.mts.	60%	180	12.00 (G+3)	
RESIDENTIAL ZONE (F-S)				
Plot below 300 sq.mts.	70%	140	7.60 (G+1)	An additional floor could be allowed in special cases in stepped formation not exceeding a total of 9.00 mts.
Plot below 301 to 1000 sq.mts.	60%	120	7.60 (G+1)	
INSTITUTIONAL ZONE (F-P)				
Plot below 500 sq.mts.	60%	120	7.60(G+2)	
Plot above 501 sq.mts.	50%	100	7.60(G+2)	
Note: In case of existing 100% coverage, additional FAR totalling to max of 200 FAR could be considered and granted by the conservation committee on case to case basis in commercial conservation zone in Panaji.				

Source: The Goa Land Development and Building Construction Regulation 2010

VII. PLANNING ISSUES OF FONTAINHAS AREA

The Fontainhas Heritage area consists of medieval Panaji having narrow lanes, stepped accesses, on the base of hill of Altinho, having partly sloping and partly flat land. The area consists of many old buildings and predominantly of mixed land use and provides scope for expansion of new buildings and re-development which should be done with respect to the Architecture and space character of the area and demands a compassionate approach.

[1]. Traffic gets congested during the peak hours of the day due to seven schools which conflicts the office and school timings.

[2]. The area being organic in nature with narrow streets, lanes, stepped accesses and dead ends there is no alternate provision of road for diversion of traffic.

[3]. Age old Heritage resources have developed cracks in the walls due to non maintenance.

[4]. Buildings of sizeable height of 15.00 metres on the stretch of land abutting the Rua de Ourem Creek road have hidden the visibility of Heritage structures in the area.

[5]. No Incentives to the owners of the Heritage houses for maintenance and repairs.

[6]. Buildings of fine Architecture and aesthetic importance have been sacrificed for modern architecture in the name of new development.

[7]. Allowing more Coverage and FAR in the heritage precincts will develop the area more congested and the very character of the area will be lost. No parking facility is in the area even for the residents.

X. REFERENCES

VIII. PLANNING STRATEGIES

The Fontainhas Heritage area consists of number of heritage resources which are of high value and importance needs identification and proper management. The heritage resources of significant value if not identified in time then, there is a very fear of getting demolished for the new development and the very purpose of protecting the heritage and transferring to the future generation in the context of Sustainable Development will be lost. The conservation planning strategy to include the following:

(1) Heritage resources that are of importance and high significance in the Heritage Fontainhas areas should be identified and listed so that these resources are well protected having regard to harmony when new development are allowed.

(2) The new development in the area should confirm to the aesthetics and characteristics of the surrounding area in terms of elevation, height, bulk, roof pattern, colour scheme and materials used.

(3) The narrow roads in Fontainhas Heritage area should be made pedestrian so that the people can take a free walk in the area admiring the Historical place.

(4) Provision of intra non-polluting electric vehicle transport service within the area for residents only.

(5) An area of 1000 sq.mts should be acquired for the purpose of development of multi-storeyed parking for the residents only, where each owner of the house will contribute his equal share for life time parking in the construction of multi-storeyed parking.

(6) No parking zone should be made in this area except for residents.

(7) Incentives in the form of rebate in taxation should be given to the owners of the Heritage houses for maintenance of Heritage properties from spoliation and disfiguration.

(8) Effective and well thought Heritage Conservation regulations should be developed for regulating harmonious development in the area.

(9) The present regulation has remained ineffective in controlling haphazard development in the Conservation area.

IX. CONCLUSION

The Fontainhas area continues to be a focal point for Heritage tourists and travellers with a taste of past glories. There are still clusters of quaint old houses in particular on one street in Portais and around St. Sebastian Chapel, which should be maintained. Progress is inevitable and in generally a desired process but should be sustainable. The changes seen in the areas of heritage over the years are due to ineffective legislation and development control. The conservation Regulations has remained ineffective in controlling the heritage areas from disorganized developments.

A sound policy towards the conservation is required and managed successfully. There is also a strong need to revise the present conservation regulations for regulating the heritage areas towards harmonious and sustainable development.

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BIOGRAPHIES

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