



## REIMAGINING HISTORY

*The Restoration of the Victoria Gardens; Ahmedabad*



LEAF, the research arm of M/s Prabhakar B. Bhagwat is engaged in research and publication in the areas of Landscape Design, Environmental Planning, City Development and Management and Developing Public Spaces.

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Queen Victoria in 1897



## HISTORY AND LEGACY OF THE VICTORIAN GARDENS

In 1897, a group of civic-minded individuals came together in Ahmedabad to discuss the manner in which to mark the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. They agreed on taking steps that would allow for the establishment of the Victoria Diamond Jubilee Garden; and so proposals were invited to respond to the objectives within the order.

## THE DIAMOND JUBILEE.

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### AHMEDABAD AND ITS CELEBRATION.

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AHMEDABAD, MAY 31.

A public meeting was held this evening at the Hemabhoj Institute to consider what steps should be taken to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of our Sovereign. The Hon. Mr. Bunchhodlall presided, Mr. Maueckjee Mody, Barrister-at-Law, proposed, and Mr. Madhowlall seconded, a resolution to the effect that in order to express the meeting's heartfelt gratitude on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee, steps should be taken to give a treat, including sports, to all the children of the Ahmedabad schools; to illuminate the public buildings and thoroughfares of the city; to arrange for a fireworks display; and to feed the poor of the city. Mr. Wadia, Barrister-at-Law, in an eloquent speech, proposed, and Mr. Ramanbhai seconded, a proposal to the effect that in order to commemorate the Jubilee steps should be taken to establish a garden which should be named the Victoria Diamond Jubilee Garden, and that the City Municipality be requested to undertake to maintain the same in future. Mr. Chimanbhai proposed that subscriptions be invited from the public to further the objects mentioned in the proposals passed at this meeting. Khan Bahadar Jehangirjee Vakil seconded the resolution, which was carried. A committee of thirty gentlemen was appointed, with Messrs. Lalchunker, Wadia, barrister, and Dayabhoj as secretaries.

The Times of India  
2<sup>nd</sup> June 1897

## CORONATION DAY IN INDIA.

Reioicings all over the Country.

### A SPLENDID DISPLAY OF LOYALTY.

Throughout the Indian Empire Coronation Day was observed as a general holiday, and in all parts there was a splendid display of loyalty. Special services, the feeding of the poor, and entertainments to children formed the usual method of celebrating the occasion. We received a mass of telegrams from correspondents in every part of the Indian Empire detailing local

#### AHMEDABAD

The ceremony of turning the first sod of the Victoria Memorial Garden and planting trees therein was performed before a large concourse of people. Mr. Pinitt, Collector, gave the history of the Victoria Memorial Fund, and Mrs. Lily, Mrs. Emmanuel, Miss Furdoonji Tarnaporowalla, Dr. Anderson, and others planted trees. A thanksgiving *Jagan* ceremony was performed by Dastoorji Babeh Jamsedji in Vakil's Aglary. After the ceremony Khansaheb Cowanji Daver made an impressive speech, wishing long life and prosperity to the King-Emperor. In the evening a dinner was held at the Parsee Club.

## AHMEDABAD CEREMONY.

### Queen's Statue Unveiled.

AHMEDABAD. January 7.

The ceremony of unveiling Queen Victoria's statue was performed to-day, at Ahmedabad, by the Commissioner, Mr. Barrow, before a large concourse of European and Indian ladies and gentlemen. A mandap erected in the Victoria Gardens was decorated with flags and the police band was present.

The following description of the statue will be of interest: One of the finest pieces of sculpture ever executed in India has just reached completion in the Bombay, Presidency. This is the magnificent marble statue of Queen Victoria set up as a memorial to her late Majesty at Ahmedabad. The work has been executed by Mr. H. G. Mhatre, the well-known sculptor of Bombay. Mr. Mhatre, it is interesting to note, received his early training as an artist in the Bombay School of Art, and it was in 1896 that the youthful student first gained the notice of the public by a beautifully executed statue of an Indian girl "going to a temple." The best authorities recognised the genius of which this work was the outcome and from that time forward the sculptor achieved many marble successes, among his works being a statue which was awarded a medal at the Paris Exposition. The statue of Queen Victoria is the most important task to which Mr. Mhatre has set his hand. Many people probably will remember having seen the plaster cast of it which was exhibited in the great Exhibition on the Oval at Bombay, three years ago.

At present H. H. the Maharaja Scindia has given his patronage to Mr. Mhatre by giving him some works of statues of his ancestors.

The late Queen-Empress is represented seated in a chair of state, wearing her crown and royal robes and holding a sceptre and globe in her hands. The height of the figure is over seven feet and it has been splendidly sculptured in the famous white Carrara marble. Mr. Mhatre has undoubtedly succeeded in carving an extraordinarily good likeness of the late Queen-Empress, in which her Majesty's serene noble dignity is faithfully portrayed. The details of the statue, notably the intricate carving of the sceptre and the embroidery of the royal robes, are beautifully carried out. The canopy and also the high back of the chair of state, which show behind the figure, have been executed in cold-blue Indian marble.

Rao Bahadur Keshowlal, the Municipal President, requested the Commissioner to preside and unveil the statue and the Collector to give a brief account of the work. He added that the statue which was a most pleasant reminiscence of the late revered Queen was erected in this beautiful garden, which as a place of retreat and recreation was a great boon to the Ahmedabad public, was laid out with funds raised by public-spirited Shethias and other inhabitants of the city with generous assistance from the Government. They were deeply indebted to the exertions of the Collector and the Garden and Statue Committees over which he presided.

The Times of India  
8<sup>th</sup> January 1910

## "OUR DAY."

### Hearty Response Everywhere

#### AHMEDABAD CELEBRATIONS.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENTS.)

In spite of the fact that Ahmedabad has been in the grip of the plague and although thousands are away the city has taken a fair share in the "Our Day" activities, chief amongst which were a lottery, the sending round of collection cards and subscription lists and a great fete in the Victoria Gardens which was largely attended. Amongst those present were the Hon. Mr. Pratt, Mr. Chatfield, Collector, and all the civil and military officers. The drawing of lottery took place there. In connection with the lottery Khan Sahib Kadri had worked hard to make it a success. It was the means of collecting over Rs. 9,000 while prizes to the extent of Rs. 4,000 were distributed. The drawing was conducted by Mr. Chatfield and Mr. and Mrs. Broomsfield assisted by Mrs. McCormac, Khan Sahib Kadri, Mrs. Vidyagavri Ramanbhoj and Homi Chahewalla. The winner of the first prize of Rs. 1,000 was a Koli labourer in the salt works at Kharagheda, the second prize went to a farmer at Prantij, the third to Mrs. Choksi grand niece of Sir Nowroji Vakil. The drawing was made before a large concourse of people. Mrs. Broomsfield and Khan Sahib Kadri made collection in Bombay from Ahmedabad residents temporarily residing in that city. The most attractive stalls in the fete were Mrs. Broomsfield's China stall which was surrounded by large crowd and stall was swept clean off all articles. Mrs. Broomsfield was assisted by Mr. Smith, Assistant Commissioner and Khan Sahib Kadri. Mrs. Harlye's attractive tea stall, at which she was assisted by her daughters and other European ladies formed a rendezvous for large numbers. Sir Nowroji Nusserwanji Vakil presided at the bar. With the permission of Captain Tucker the band of the 57th Regiment was present. The Ambulance Brigade and their band were also present under the direction of First Officer Jamshed Kothawalla. Among the side-shows a ram fight drew crowds while the wrestling and acrobatic feats were equally successful. Little Miss Peggy Broomsfield, attired as a Red Cross Nurse, the Misses Ramanbhoj and the Salvation Army girls did a good business selling flags. The total receipts will be more than Rs. 10,000.

The Times of India

14<sup>th</sup> December 1917

## AHMEDABAD

*The Times of India* (1861-current); Nov 30, 1918;  
pg. 11

### AHMEDABAD.

AHMEDABAD, November 27.

The celebrations on Wednesday were brought to a fitting termination by the Millowners' Association, who gave a Garden Party and a grand display of fireworks. The President and members were "At Home" to the guests at the Victoria Gardens kindly lent for the occasion by the Municipal Corporation. The grounds and the front of the Gardens were decorated with flags and brilliantly illuminated. On the sands below a motley crowd variously estimated at from fifty to seventy-five thousand people had collected.

Punctually at 9 p.m. on the arrival of the Hon'ble Mr. F. G. Pratt, I.C.S., Commissioner, Northern Division, the fete commenced with a fine display of fireworks. Altogether about 2,000 guests representing all communities and every trade and profession, civil and military, and consisting of ladies, gentlemen and children of all ages, found accommodation on the spacious platform of the gardens and watched the display with obvious satisfaction. Many parts of the city were also brilliantly illuminated.

Sweets were also distributed to workmen in all mill premises on the morning of the day and nothing was left undone to bring home to the wage-earner the significance and meaning of these celebrations.

Speaking earlier in the evening at an "At Home" which he gave, Mr. Pratt said the long and dreadful struggle had come to an end and it had pleased Almighty God to crown the arms of the British Empire and its Allies with glorious victory—a victory so complete that it was difficult for them, especially difficult for them, in India to realize its magnitude and its consequences. Very well, very completely and very nobly the soldiers and sailors had done their work. The last shot had been fired and the guns were silent.

The Times of India  
30<sup>th</sup> November 1918



## TILAK'S STATUE.

UNVEILED BY MR. GANDHI  
AT AHMEDABAD.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

AHMEDABAD, February 28.

In pursuance of the Ahmedabad Municipal General Board's resolution Mr. M. K. Gandhi unveiled Lokmanya B. G. Tilak's marble statue placed in the Queen Victoria Garden this morning before a large audience and proceedings commenced with a song and prayers. The statue is the work of the artist Mr. M. K. Kolhatkar and cost Rs. 15,000, Rs. 5,000 of which were raised by contributions from the general public and Rs. 10,000 contributed by the Ahmedabad Municipality. "Swarajya is my birth right" are words engraved at the foot of the statue.

Mr. Dolatram Umedram Shah, President of the Ahmedabad Municipality in requesting Mr. Gandhi to unveil the statue eulogised Lokmanya Tilak's manifold services.

Before unveiling the statue, Mr. Gandhi thanked the Municipality for doing him the high honour of asking him to perform the unveiling ceremony and further congratulated the municipality for the public spirit shown by placing the statue in a pub-

lic garden. Proceeding he said there was once a time when even a Government aided library could not keep Lokmanya's photo, but now happily that time was gone. He mentioned Lokmanya's services and emphasised that he lived and died for India's freedom. He exhorted the public to carry home Lokmanya's principle "Swarajya is my birth right," and work wholeheartedly for Swarajya. He appreciated the work of Mr. Kolhatkar, the artist. Then amidst cheers Mr. Gandhi unveiled the statue and garlanded it with a handspun yarn garland.

### NATIONAL FLAG HOISTED.

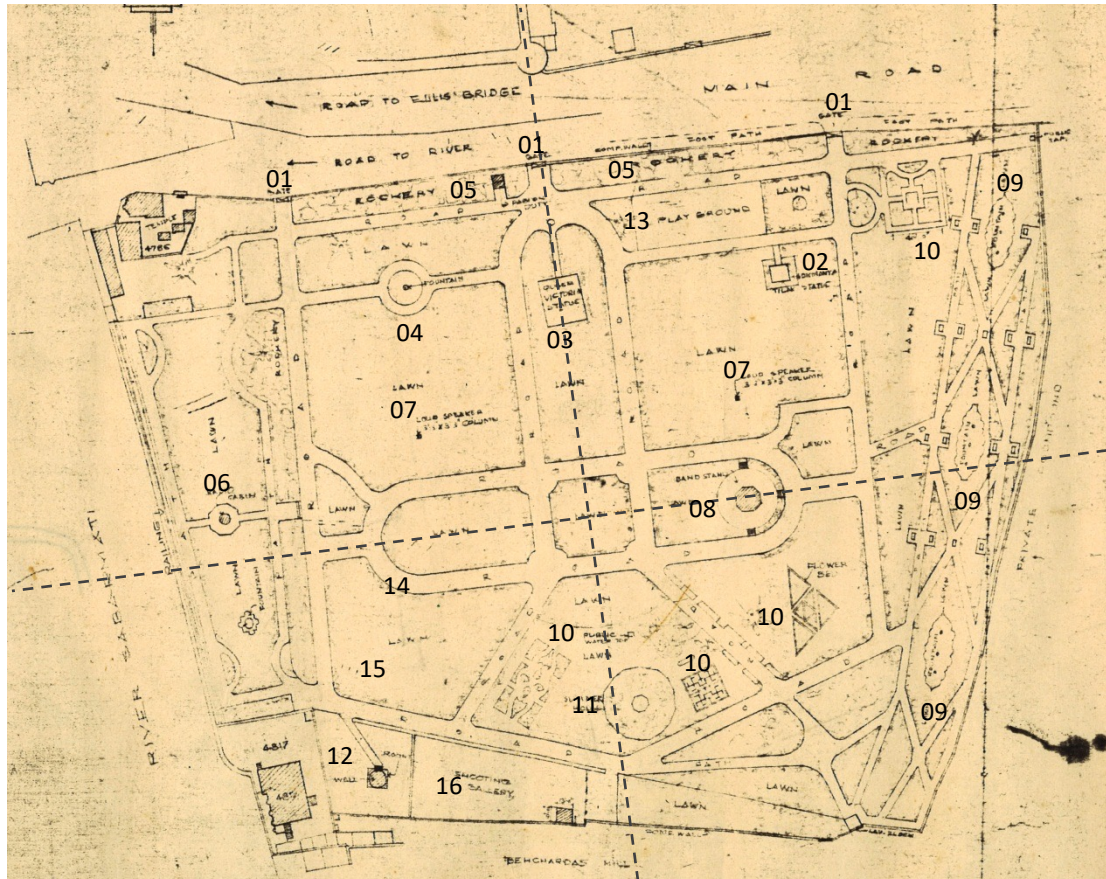
After unveiling Lokmanya B. G. Tilak's statue Mr. Gandhi performed the ceremony of hoisting the national flag at the Ahmedabad Municipality Gandhi Hall before a large gathering of leading citizens.

Mr. Gandhi, congratulated the Municipality on their decision. He said that there were three colours in the flag red, green, and white for Hindus Mahomedans and other communities respectively which suggested that all these communities should live in peace and harmony. He said that the National Flags had been hoisted by several municipalities and lowered also. One should be prepared to die for keeping up the honour of the National Flag.

*“At the beginning of the 20th century, a public garden was laid out by the municipality just outside Bhadra Fort near Ellis Bridge, on the site of the old jail garden. This garden was named Victoria Garden in memory of Queen Victoria. A statue of the Queen was installed in the garden and a bandstand was built where a band played once a week for a few years from 1906. This garden was within easy reach of the city.”*

Ahmedabad - A Society in Transition (1818 - 1914)

With land being granted by the Government and the municipality in 1901, the Garden was developed in 1905, becoming one of three Victoria Gardens in the country.



**Earliest Found Plan of the Victoria Garden**

0 10 30 60m

The plan demonstrates a sense of formality, order, and structure that has been associated with the Gardens from the time.

- |                                 |                  |                      |
|---------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 01. Gate                        | 07. Speaker      | 12. Well             |
| 02. Lokmanya Tilak statue       | 08. Bandstand    | 13. Playground       |
| 03. Queen Victoria's statue     | 09. Fountain     | 14. Pathway          |
| 04. Nanavatty Memorial Fountain | 10. Flower bed   | 15. Lawn             |
| 05. Rockery                     | 11. Summer house | 16. Shooting Gallery |
| 06. Radio cabin                 |                  |                      |



**Victorian Gardens, Byculla, Bombay, 1861**



**Victoria Memorial Garden, Calcutta, 1921**

*The Victoria Garden finds its grounding in the collection of rare foreign plants that became indicators of the cultures from which they come, allowing for a return to the more formal style of gardens that catered to the Elite sections of society. They were a response to increased leisure time that allowed for a focus on aesthetics and visuals.*

In India, the Victoria Gardens were a result of a mixture of Victorian formalism, and using native plants, and growable English plants.

The oldest Victoria Garden in India - also known as the Veermata Jijabai Bhonsle Udyan in Mumbai was established in 1861. Not only is it the oldest public garden in the country, it is home to the oldest public zoo in India.

Kolkata is home to the Victoria Memorial Garden that was built between 1906 and 1921. Attached to the Victoria Memorial Hall, the garden houses a Bronze Statue of Queen Victoria, along with the Edward VII Memorial Arch, and statues and memorials for various dignitaries.



## ELEMENTAL HISTORY OF THE GARDEN IN AHMEDABAD



**Pedestal of the Statue**



**Queen Victoria's Statue**  
(Now at Sanskar Kendra Museum)



**Lokmanya Tilak's statue**



**The Nanavatty Memorial Fountain**



**Speaker for the First Public Radio**



### **The Statue of Queen Victoria**

Executed by H.G Mhatre, and unveiled in 1910, a 7-foot statue of Queen Victoria was a reminder of the values of the British Empire. It currently sits in Sanskar Kendra.

### **The Statue of Lokmanya Tilak**

A tribute to his service to the country, a Memorial to Lokmanya Tilak was designed by M.K Kothatkar, and unveiled by Mahatma Gandhi in 1929.

### **The Maha Gujarat Shahid Memorial**

Within the Garden sits a reminder of a struggle for identity; a reminder of the Mahagujarat Movement (1956 - 1960).

### **The Nanavatty Memorial Fountain**

Built by Dr. Bryomji H. Nanavatty and his wife Dhanbai, to commemorate the untimely demise of their 19-year old son - Phiroze.

### **The Bandstand**

The Bandstand was where a band played once a week for a few years - starting from 1906. When the process of refurbishment began, only a single structure for the same remained.

### **The First Public Radio**

The Garden was said to be home to the first public radio in the city; individuals gathered to listen to it. Even today, the garden has within it, the remnants of one of the many speakers that previously dotted it.

THE ENVIRONS SURROUNDING THE VICTORIA GARDEN,  
AHMEDABAD



Ellis Bridge



*Ravivari*



Jam-e-Masjid

*Outside of the history that was associated with the Garden itself, it gained added significance as a result of the markers of the past it was surrounded by.*

### **Ellis Bridge**

Initially built in 1870 - 71, this nearly 150-year old landmark bridge was the first in the city, and it connected the Eastern part of the city with the Western.

### **Ravivari | The Sunday Market**

A legacy from the 15th Century, passed down to the present by Sultan Ahmed Shah, providing its visitors with books, utensils, stationary, and other essentials.

### **Jam-e-Masjid**

Erected by Ahmed Shah I in 1414, this is the oldest mosque in the city, and was said to be the royal household's private place of worship.

### **C.N.I Church**

The Church of North India is the dominant united Protestant Church in Northern India. Its Gujarat diocese, in Ahmedabad, was founded between 1970 – 76.

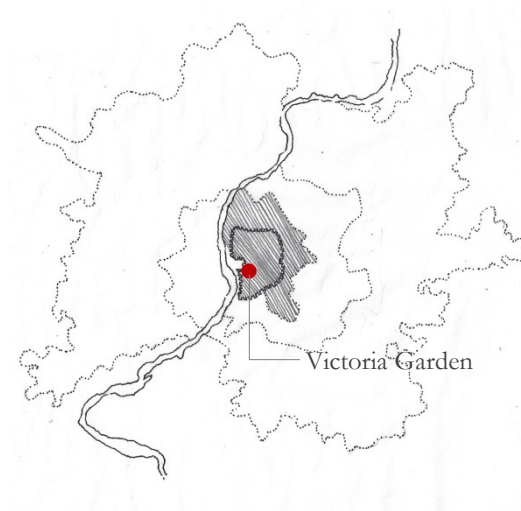
### **The Bhadra Fort**

Built in 1415, the Fort was used as a royal court. It served as a prison after the British occupation of Ahmedabad in 1817 till India gained Independence.

### **The Town Hall**

Officially known as the Sheth Mangaldas Girdhardas Memorial Hall, this auditorium was originally conceptualised in the 1930's by English architect Claude Batley and located on the Western edge of the Ellis Bridge.

## EVOLUTION OF THE URBAN FABRIC OF THE CITY



### **Ahmedabad in the 1800's**

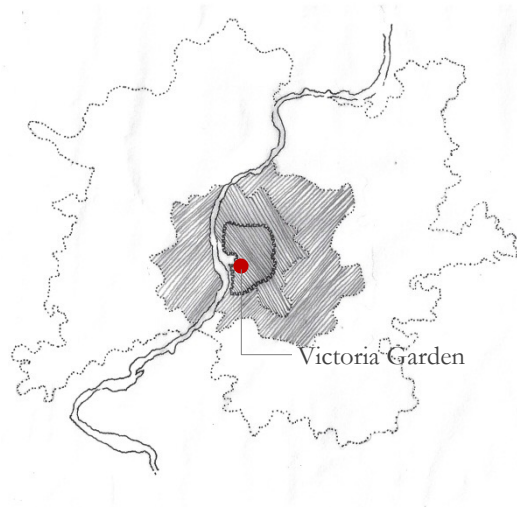
In Ahmedabad, the 19th Century marked an era of industrialisation in the city with the establishment of the first textile mills, and also the building of the Ellis Bridge in the 1870s. The city became a space for the process of production. This, in turn, led to the integration of migrant population into the city, and an expansion of the city towards the other side of the Sabarmati River.

The Elite and the industrialists followed in the footsteps of the British, settling in areas like Shahibaug, and Dariapur-Kazipur – setting the foundation for the city's growth from the East to the West.



**Urban fabric in the vicinity of the park**

- |                        |                 |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| 01. Jam-e-Masjid       | 04. Ravivari    |
| 02. I P Mission School | 05. Sabarmati   |
| 03. Bhadra Fort        | 06. Jail Garden |



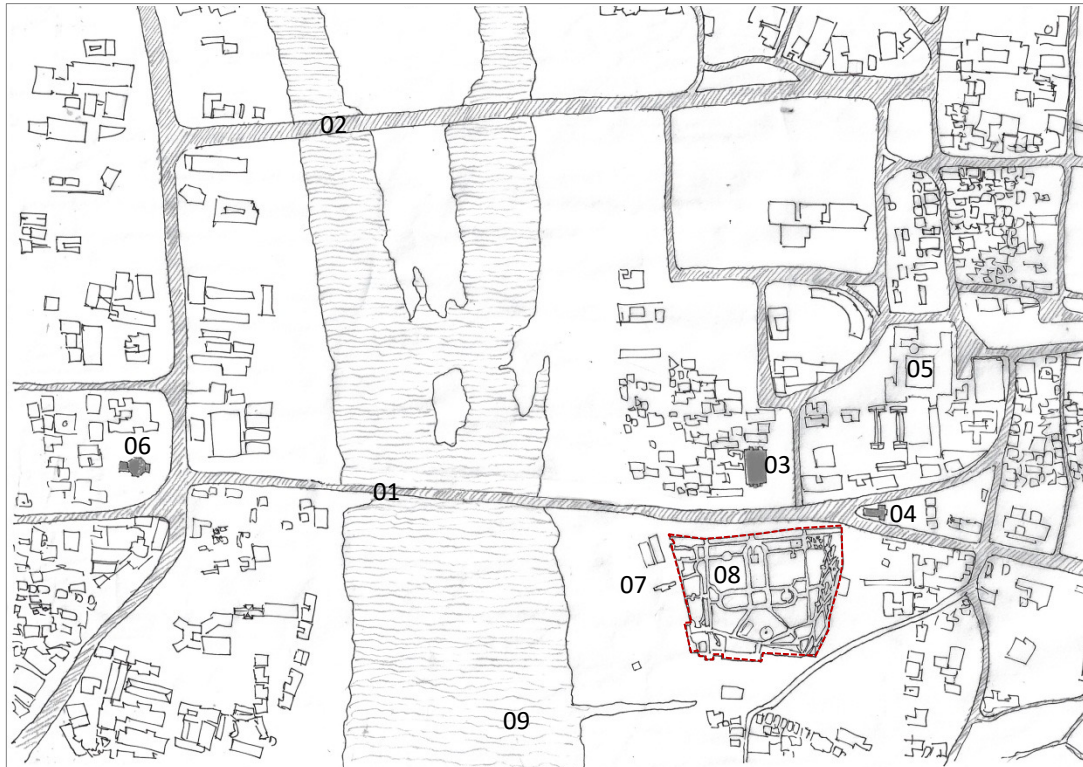
### **Ahmedabad in the 1900's**

The early 20th Century saw a densification of the Old City, facilitated by the unchecked growth of shops. It was during this time that Relief Road (1940) was constructed to function as an important circulation artery. The Nehru Bridge (1962) built across the Sabarmati River facilitated further migration across the River.

The nucleus of the city continued to migrate - first across the river, and then towards the South; the older neighbourhoods were left in a state of neglect and disrepair.

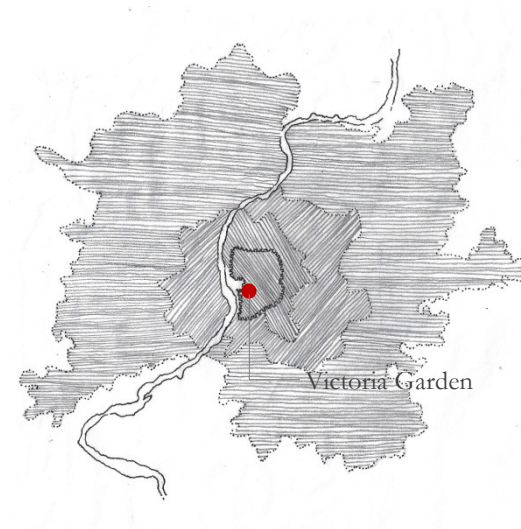
Towards the end of the century, the Victoria Garden that was well-tended to in its early decades - began its journey towards disrepair.





**Urban fabric in the vicinity of the park**

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 01. Ellis Bridge | 06. Town Hall       |
| 02. Nehru Bridge | 07. Ravivari        |
| 03. Jam-e-Masjid | 08. Victoria Garden |
| 04. C.N.I Church | 09. Sabarmati River |
| 05. Bhadra Fort  |                     |

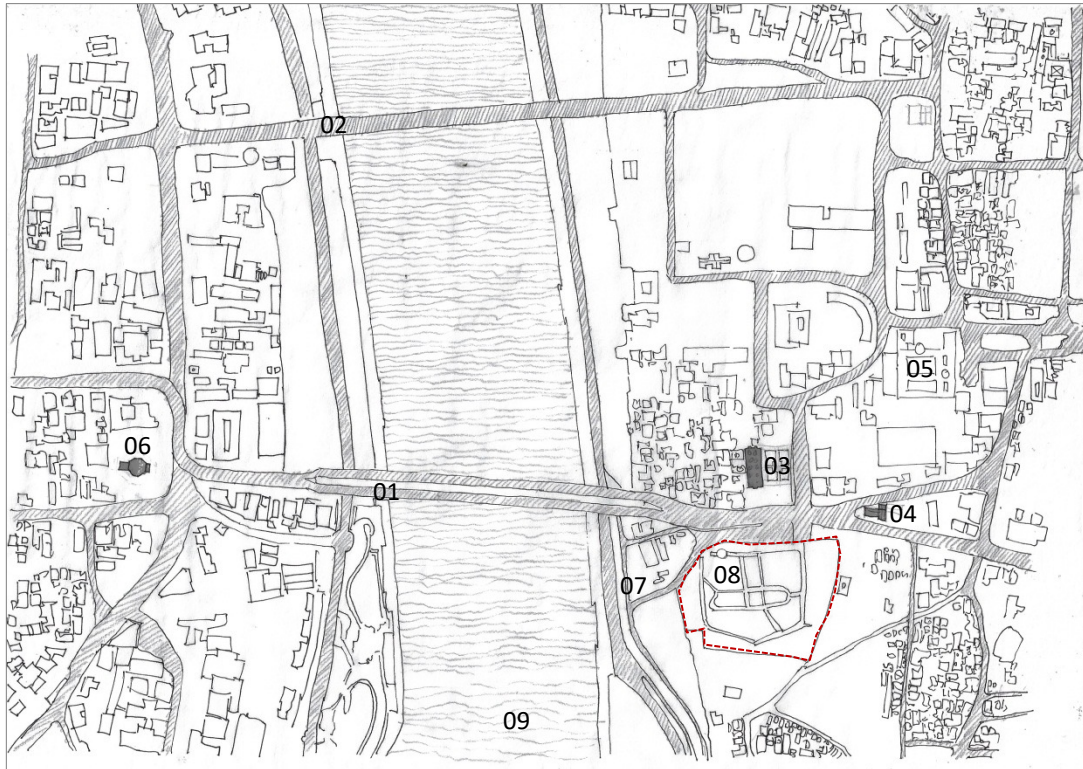


### **Ahmedabad in the 2000's**

By 2000, or perhaps even prior to that, the park became a space for undesirable social elements, and activities; its boundary was encroached.

The urban development around the garden most significantly impacted its experiential quality, and the relationship it shared with the River Front; the sense of connection between the park, and the natural riverbank was lost.

Apart from this, there are now two roads that the user must navigate between Ellis Bridge and the Victoria Garden - severing that connection as well.



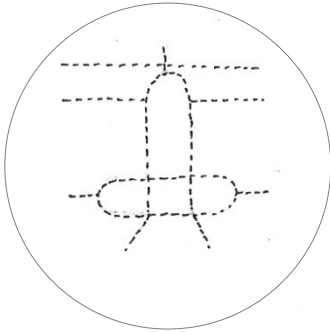
**Urban fabric in the vicinity of the park**

- |                  |                     |
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| 05. Bhadra Fort  |                     |

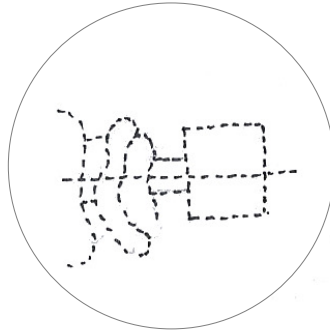
## THE RE-IMAGINATION OF THE PARK

Redesigning the park was a negotiation between honouring the memory of what the garden stood for, while contextualizing it within the new urban fabric and context that it found itself in.

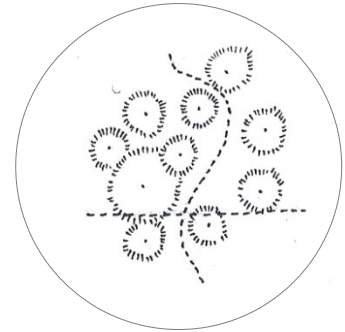
It takes into account the new relationships and connections that have been forged between the Garden, as it was found, and the River Bank, the Road Networks, and of course, places of history it is surrounded by.



To allow the memory of the formality that is associated with Victorian Gardens



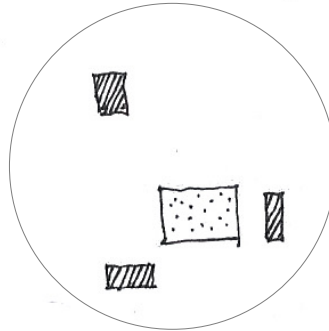
To reorganise the plan that was disturbed because of loss of the park land



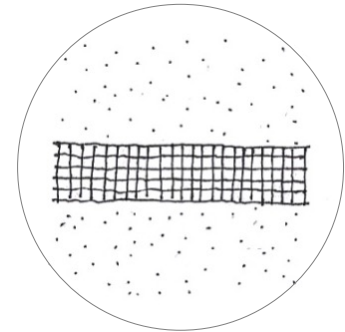
To develop a scheme that saved and conserved every tree that found its place in the park



To increase the flora diversity in the park

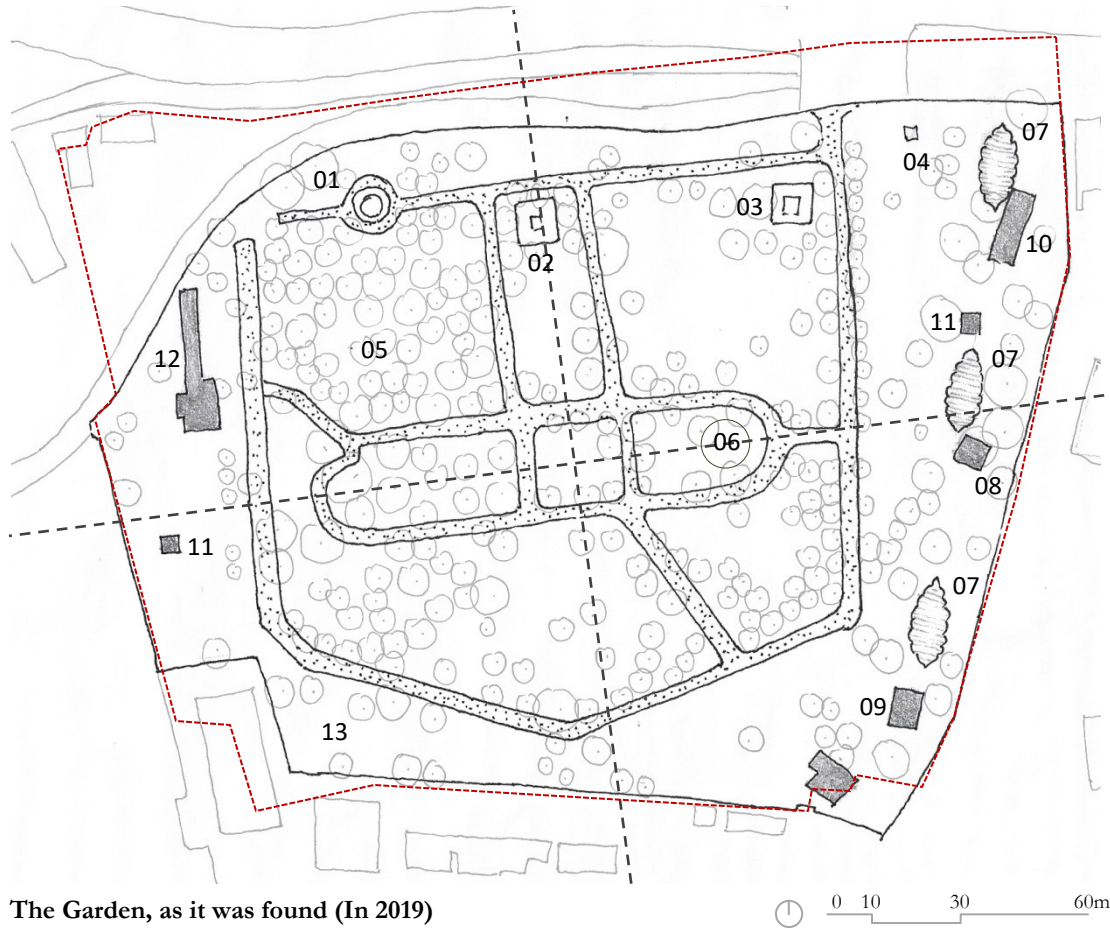


To upgrade it with better amenities, and services



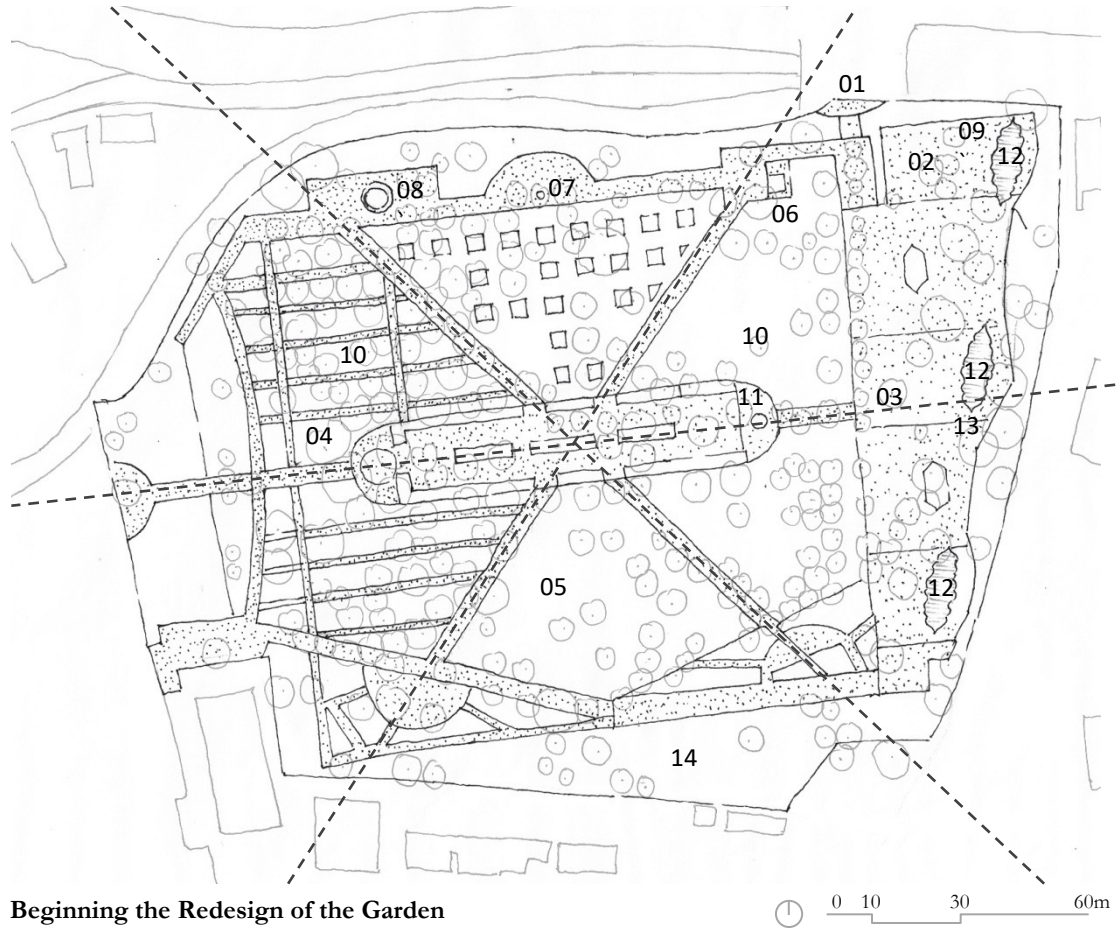
To be easily maintainable





The park lost its original structure to expanding roads, and was further disrupted by random tree planting initiatives. It retained little memory or glory of the past.

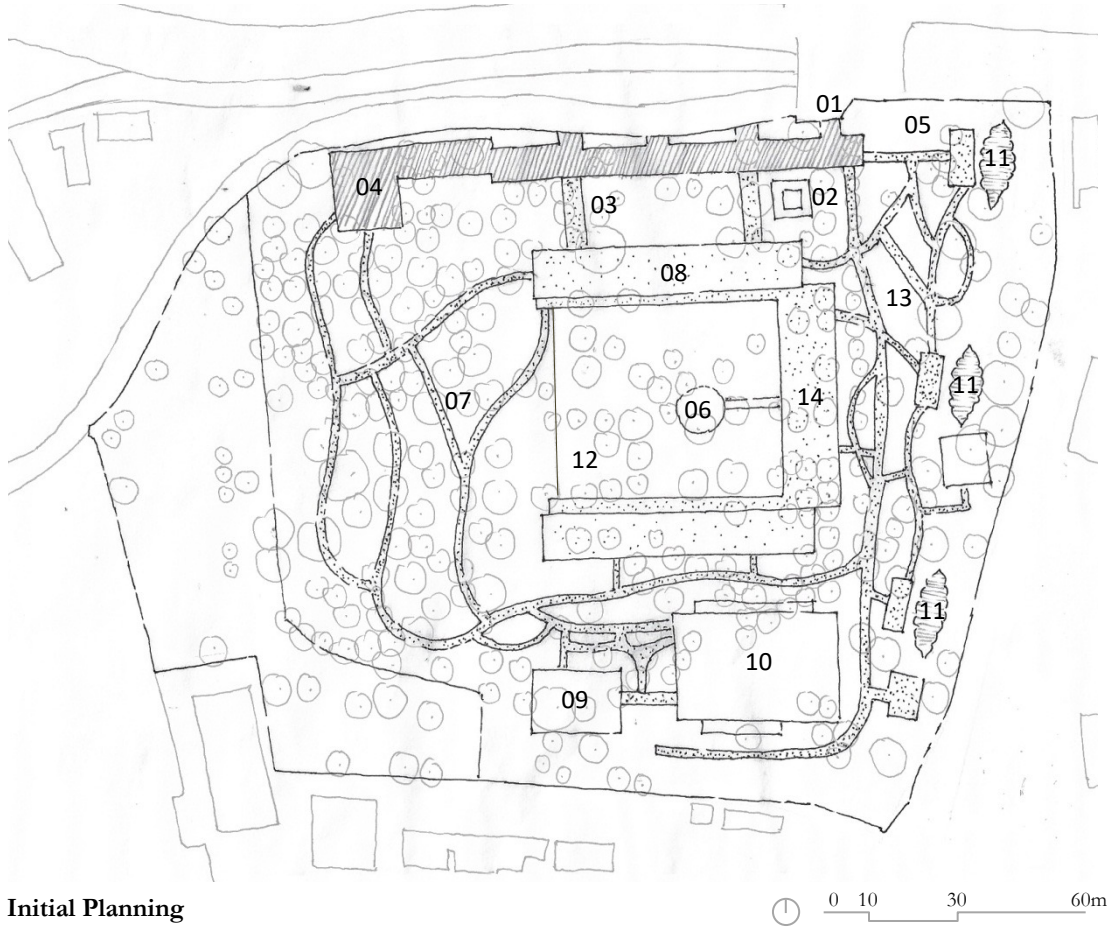
- |   |                      |  |
|---|----------------------|--|
| 01. Nanavatty Memorial Fountain           | 05. Speaker          | 12. AMC Office                                   |
| 02. Queen Victoria's statue (only chatri) | 06. Band stand       | 13. Fertilizer Factory                           |
| 03. Lokmanya Tilak Statue                 | 07. Water Tank       | --- Original Land Boundary before road expansion |
| 04. Maha Gujarat Shahid Memorial          | 08. Mazhar           |  |
|   | 09. Anganwadi        |  |
|   | 10. Maintenance Room |  |
|   | 11. Pump Room        |  |



### Beginning the Redesign of the Garden

Ideas of formality, axuality, activity, and user demographics formed the principles upon which the process of rehabilitation was based.

- |                                      |   |  |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| 01. Gate                             | 07. Queen Victoria's statue<br>(only chhatri) | 11. Gazebo                             |
| 02. Plaza                            | 08. Nanavatty Memorial<br>Fountain            | 12. Fountain                           |
| 03. Axis to river                    | 09. Maha Gujarat Shahid<br>Memorial           | 13. Mosque                             |
| 04. Reclaimed ground below<br>forest | 10. Speaker                                   | 14. Area for other ancillary functions |
| 05. Lawn                             |   |  |
| 06. Lokmanya Tilak Statue            |   |  |

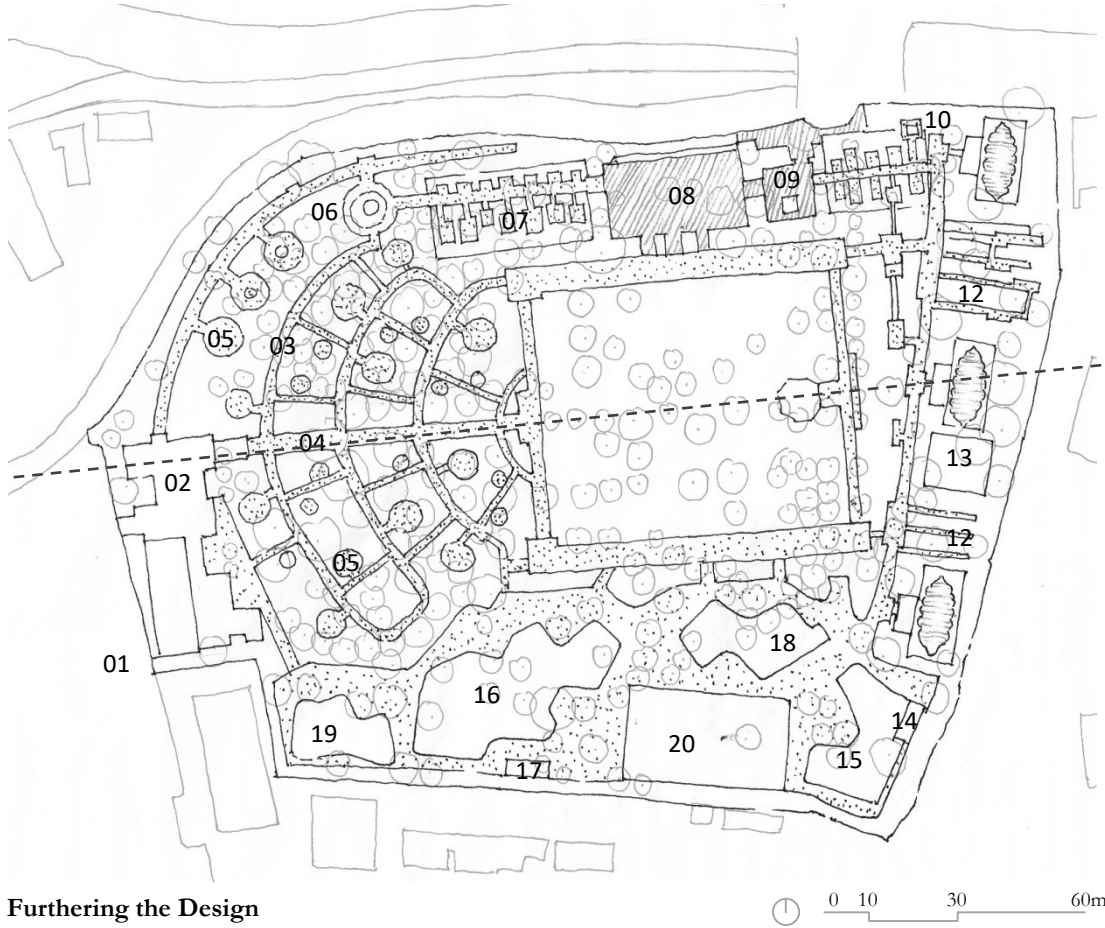


### Initial Planning

Meandering pathways were envisioned to connect the spaces within the garden, and then also to allow for a sense of formality while carving out a central lawn.

- |                                       |                              |                                  |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 01. Entrance                          | 06. Bandstand                | 13. Walkways amidst Flowers beds |
| 02. Lokmanya Tilak statue             | 07. Walkway in the forest    | 14. Trellis                      |
| 03. Queen Victoria's statue (chhatra) | 08. Row of trees             |                                  |
| 04. Nanavatty memorial Fountain       | 09. Play Area for children   |                                  |
| 05. Maha Gujarat Shahid Memorial      | 10. Multipurpose sports area |                                  |
|                                       | 11. Fountains                |                                  |
|                                       | 12. Lawn                     |                                  |



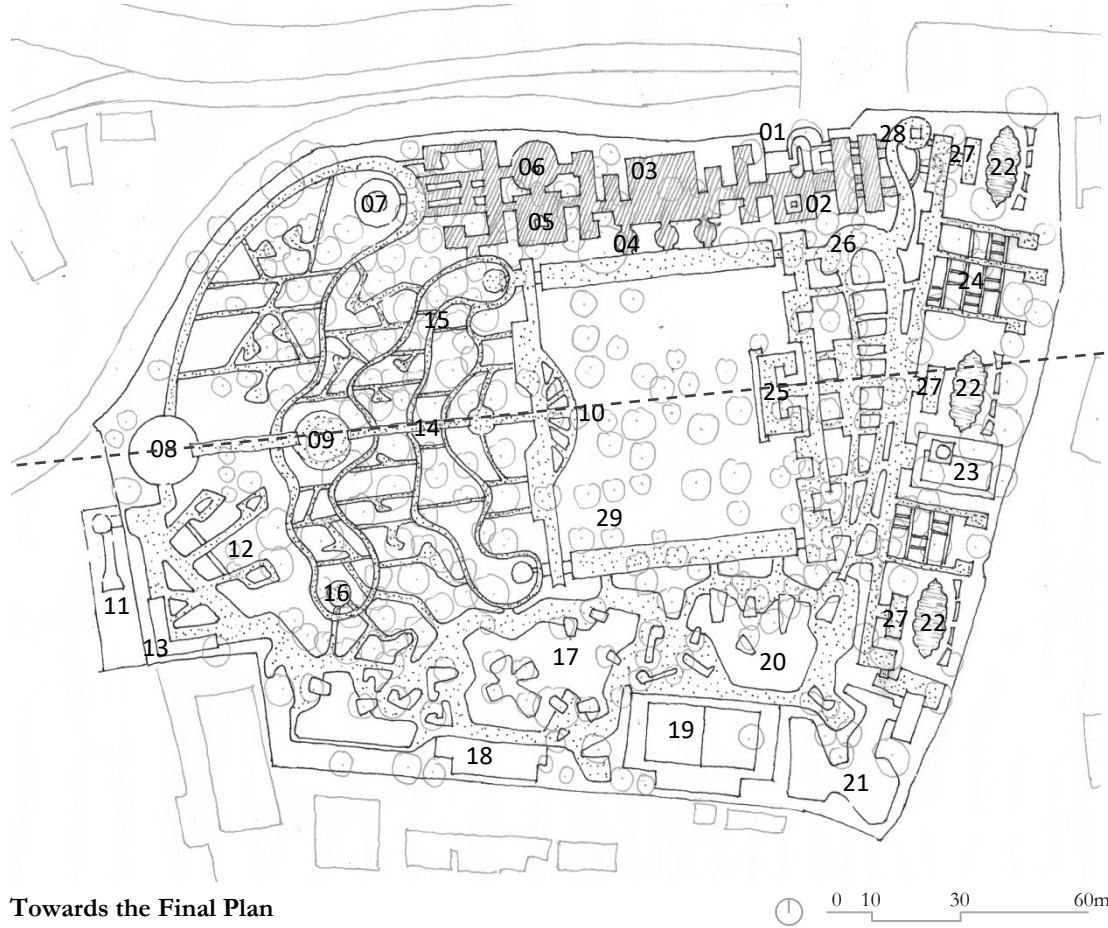


### Furthering the Design

Creating an uninterrupted axis to the river, while envisioning nestled spaces, each providing unique experiences; each catering to a diverse user group.

- |                                       |                                  |  |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| 01. Riverside Entrance                | 08. Central plaza                | 15. Play court for Anganwadi               |
| 02. Plaza with sculpture              | 09. Lokmanya Tilak Statue        | 16. Play area for Kids                     |
| 03. Labyrinth Walk                    | 10. Maha Gujarat Shahid Memorial | 17. Toilet/Utility/UG Tank                 |
| 04. Grand Arbor                       | 11. Seating amidst planting      | 18. Play Area for Physically disabled kids |
| 05. Seating within the woodland       | 12. Trellis Seating              | 19. Outdoor Gym                            |
| 06. Nanavatty Memorial Fountain       | 13. Dargah                       | 20. Multipurpose play court                |
| 07. Queen Victoria's statue (chhatra) | 14. Anganwadi                    |  |





### **Towards the Final Plan**

Reviving the Garden and the spaces within it, reopens old connections, and build new ones to its surroundings.

- |                                       |                                     |  |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 01. Park Entrance from Old City       | 11. Riverside Entrance              | 21. Anganwadi with Toddler's play area |
| 02. Lokmanya Tilak statue             | 12. Island Seating                  | 22. Water Fountains                    |
| 03. Entrance Plaza                    | 13. Proposed area for Food Stalls   | 23. Dargah                             |
| 04. Seating Decks                     | 14. Primary Pathway                 | 24. Seating Decks                      |
| 05. Queen Victoria's statue (chhatra) | 15. Walking Trails                  | 25. Bandstand                          |
| 06. Victoria Statue Hedge area        | 16. Seating courts in woodlands     | 26. Walking Pathways                   |
| 07. Nanavatty Memorial Fountain       | 17. Children's Play Area            | 27. Trellis seating                    |
| 08. Hedge court with statue           | 18. Toilet Block                    | 28. Maha Gujarat Shahid memorial       |
| 09. Hedge court in Woodland           | 19. Sports Court                    | 29. Central Lawn                       |
| 10. Parterre                          | 20. Play Area for Disabled children |  |

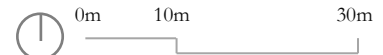






## LEGEND

1. Park Entrance from Main Road
2. Lokmanya Tilak Statue
3. Entrance Plaza
4. Seating Decks
5. Victoria Statue
6. Victoria Statue Hedge Garden
7. Nanavatty Fountain
8. Riverfront Entrance Court
9. Hedge Court in Woodland
10. Parterre
11. Riverside Entrance Court
12. Maze Garden
13. Existing Temple
14. Primary Pathway
15. Walking Trails
16. Seating Courts in Woodland
17. Children's Play Area
18. Toilet/Utility block
19. Multipurpose Playground
20. Anganwadi-Toddler's Play Area
21. Anganwadi
22. Existing Waterbody
23. Dargah
24. Seating Decks
25. Bandstand
26. Walking Pathways
27. Trellis Seating
28. Maha Gujarat Shahid Memorial
29. Central Lawn





**An enclosure that houses one of the statues**



**A defunct water body within the park**





### **The Plaza**

A connection to the city, this space within the garden creates a link between the visitors, and the life that passes by outside the garden's walls. It brings together all the memorials that are now markers of time in history.



### **Central Greens**

Nestled under the mature trees, an open space for play and leisure gets created.





### **The Forest and Walkways**

One of the two entrances to the Garden, towards the West, this space incorporates seating decks within the woodland - along with walkways that go through the various spaces. These spaces speak to an idea of biodiversity, and ecology that is enhanced by planting under-storeys.



**The Bandstand**

The refurbished Band Stand has been envisioned in M.S. Ultimately creepers will take over the structure – encompassing it almost entirely – creating a soft canopy.





### **The Children's Play Area**

This space is a result of an understanding of play, development, and how children interact with the spaces around them. It incorporates various forms of play – social, imaginative, constructive, experimental, and even sensory. The space is divided into three parts that allow for play for different age groups; catering to various stages of development. The space is nestled within a cluster of large trees.

















The park now is poised to become a social nexus for the community that lives around it; allowing for interaction and social bonding.

## **U.N MEHTA FOUNDATION**

Carrying forward the ethos of their late Founder, that of caring for others, U.N Mehta Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation whose focus is to bring to realization the various philanthropic undertakings of the Mehta Family of the Torrent Group - Community Healthcare, Education & Knowledge, Enhancement and Social Care and Concern - activities that benefit the general populous. Aggregated, the intent of the initiatives undertaken by the Foundation bring about lasting improvements within the communities that they are undertaken.

## **PRATITI INITIATIVE**

The Pratiti Initiative was conceptualised in 2016 to reimagine the public gardens, and public spaces in the urban fabric of the country. Through the consultative process that it has undertaken - both at the level of design, as well as execution - the initiative has been successful in developing and demonstrating a model that is replicable and sustainable; thereby improving the urban grain in our city.

The success of the model is, in no small way, the result of the public-private partnership established between the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, and the U.N Mehta Foundation. The AMC has been instrumental in furthering the process by allocating land towards the initiative, and continuously guiding the endeavour, with the Foundation taking on the responsibility of maintaining the gardens it has taken under its wing.





**Sukan Park**



**Swati Park**



**Sindhu Bhavan Park**



The initiative is based on the following principles -

**Identifying spaces across geography and size**

With Ahmedabad being chosen as the pilot city to test the efficacy of this model, spaces were identified across the city regardless of their size, or the urban density that they were surrounded by - demonstrating, without any doubt, the ability of the model to be adaptable.

**Cost-Effectiveness**

The gardens under this initiative are executed at a fraction of the cost that is normally associated with such endeavours.

**Instilling value**

The kit of parts developed thus - one that looks at accessible entrances, signage, park furniture, waste management, hydrology, and play equipment - creates a social value within these spaces that goes beyond the park. And then, where the focus of most public parks tends to be using flora species that are fast-growing, these gardens emphasise the need for biodiversity, and its ability to create native habitats, and preserving and healing flora.

Thus far, the undertaking has seen the completion of 7 parks in the city, with 6 more underway. Three parks have been identified in Surat as a part of this initiative.

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