REIMAGINING HISTORY

The Restoration of the Victoria Gardens; Ahmedabad
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THE DIAMOND JUBILEE

AHMEDABAD AND ITS CELEBRATION.

AHMEDABAD, MAY 31.

A public meeting was held this evening at the Hemabhoy Institute to consider what steps should be taken to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of our Sovereign. The Hon. Mr. Bunchodlall 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. Ohimabnbbai proposed that subscriptions be invited from the public to further the objects mentioned in the proposals passed at this meeting. Khan Bahador Jehangirjee Vakel seconded the resolution, which was carried. A committee of thirty gentlemen was appointed, with Messrs. Lalchunder, Wadia, barrister, and Dayabhoy as secretaries.
CORONATION DAY IN INDIA.

Rejoicings 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. Pint, Collector, gave the history of the Victoria Memorial Fund, and Mrs. L. L., Mrs. Emanuel, Miss Forrooji Tarnporowalla, Dr. Anderson, and others planted trees. A thanksgiving Jashn ceremony was performed by Dustoorji Saberb Jumaedji in Vakil’s Aglory. After the ceremony Kansaheb Cowasji 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 noble hand 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 Kesowlal, 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 plan demonstrates a sense of formality, order, and structure that has been associated with the Gardens from the time.

01. Gate
02. Lokmanya Tilak statue
03. Queen Victoria’s statue
04. Nanavatty Memorial Fountain
05. Rockery
06. Radio cabin
07. Speaker
08. Bandstand
09. Fountain
10. Flower bed
11. Summer house
12. Well
13. Playground
14. Pathway
15. Lawn
16. Shooting Gallery
ELEMENTAL HISTORY OF THE GARDEN IN AHMEDABAD

Pedestal of the Statue
Queen Victoria’s Statue
(Located at Sanskar Kendra Museum)
Lokmanya Tilak’s statue
The Nanavatty Memorial Fountain
Speaker for the First Public Radio
THE ENVIRONS SURROUNDING THE VICTORIA GARDEN, AHMEDABAD

Ellis Bridge

Ravivari

Jam-e-Masjid
To increase the flora diversity in the park

To be easily maintainable

To improve 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.

The Garden, as it was found (In 2019)

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

Original Land Boundary before road expansion
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
The park now is poised to become a social nexus for the community that lives around it; allowing for interaction and social bonding.