

REJUVENATING THE PAST

The Restoration of Parimal Garden, Ahmedabad - Est. 1960s



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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CONTENTS

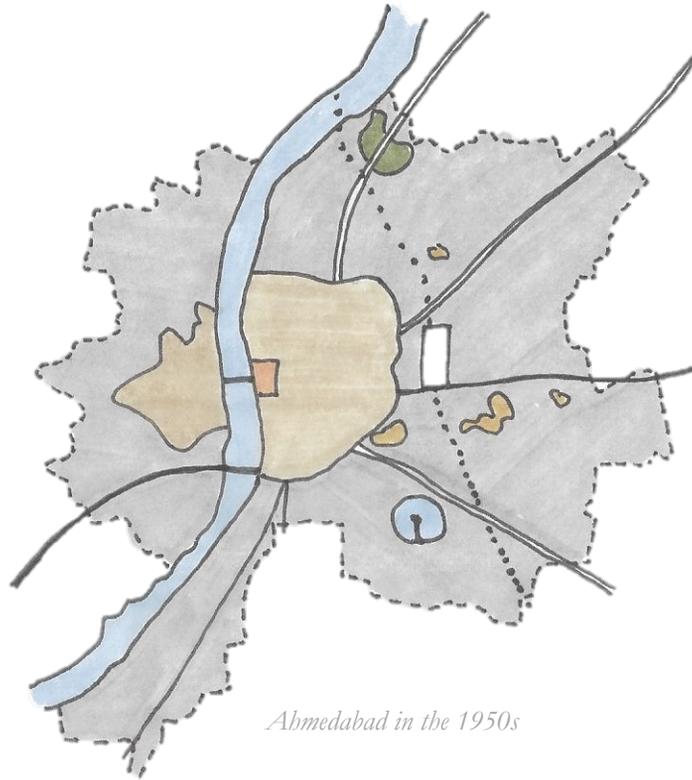
Ahmedabad in the 1950-60s

Evolution of The Garden

Rejuvenating the Parimal Garden

Pratiti Initiative

Bibliography



Ahmedabad in the 1950s

AHMEDABAD IN 1950-60s

AHMEDABAD- THE MANCHESTER OF EAST

“Unlike Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Kanpur, Ahmedabad was not a creation of British but a city which, while remaining true to itself, successfully adapted to the new industrial age, carrying over commercial and industrial skills and patterns of traditional social organization.”

The city’s expansive nature fostered architectural organisational paradigms based on idealised, abstracted representations of the Indian villages as it grew westward and absorbed nearby, ‘real’ villages in the first half of the twentieth century. The most prominent structure on the skyline were mills, which had smokestacks taking the place of minarets.



Gulzarilal Nanda



Kasturbhai Lalbhai



Dr. Vikram A. Sarabhai



Anasuya Sarabhai

PATRONS OF A PROGRESSIVE TOWN

Post-independence Ahmedabad was in a phase of renaissance. Many city fathers - exceptional people that were well travelled and made Ahmedabad their home - led the way with patronage that had foresight. Ahmedabad's industrious community brought the best international architecture home thanks to their pragmatism, and progressive & innovative vision.

Pioneers like Le Corbusier (1954-56), Louis Kahn (1962), Balkrishna Doshi (1962-93) Achyut Kanvinde, and Charles Correa were giving life to the vision of patrons of Ahmedabad.



**National Institute of Design,
Ahmedabad**



**Indian Institute of Management
Ahmedabad**



**Ahmedabad Textile Industry's
Research Association**

The Indian Institute of Management, the National Institute of Design, the School Of Architecture, ATIRA & many such institutions came into being then. Behind their intent for unsustainable patronage, the vision was to create a sense of community, and shaping Ahmedabad with development projects. It was during this period - with the establishment of these institutes - that the city and its patrons seemed to promote an interdisciplinary approach in areas of education and practice.

It wouldn't be incorrect to describe the city as a hub of art & culture with a worldwide perspective, because it successfully combined the traditional with the modern. It was mill owners that embraced modern architecture as a symbol of modernity in the progressive town.

A TRIP TO THE “WEST”



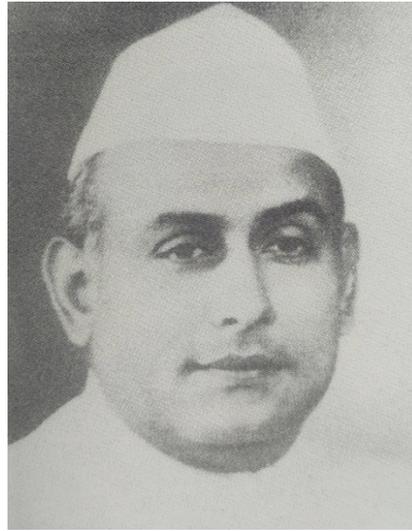
Arch at Kew Gardens- 1800s



Cambridge University Botanical Gardens- 1950s

In Britain, World War 2 curtailed the functionality of gardens for growing food or taking refuge. The 1950s shrugged it off & the design of gardens was more focused towards “mental rehabilitation” through ornamental & manicured lawns.

A PARADIGM SHIFT IN THE “EAST”



Chinubhai Chimanlal Sheth-1949

Popularly known as Chinubhai Mayor, he was the youngest President of the Ahmedabad Municipality & the first mayor of AMC in the 1950s. A refined gentleman, he proposed that Ahmedabad should have parks of great distinction. He was the man that brought together the mercantile - Jayantilal Bhikabhai who was a city industrialist; AMC - K.M. Katawala M D Rajpal; and the public who donated and worked together for the development of Ahmedabad.

He had been to the West. Inspired by what he had experienced there, he desired to build parks of great distinction, and in so doing, integrate a renewed sense of culture and community within the city.



Ahmedabad in 1940s Town Planning Scheme

EVOLUTION OF GARDEN

“At every instant, there is more than the eye can see, more than the ear can bear, a setting or a view waiting to be explored. Nothing is experienced by itself, but always in relation to its surroundings, the sequences of events leading up to it, the memory of past experiences.”- Kevin Lynch (The Image of the city).

The Parimal Garden we see now was an open green space in proximity to Law Garden; one of the prominent gardens in Ahmedabad. The pathways travelling along the fences of this open ground merge together & create nodes that are hotspots for people to meet and perceive the space.

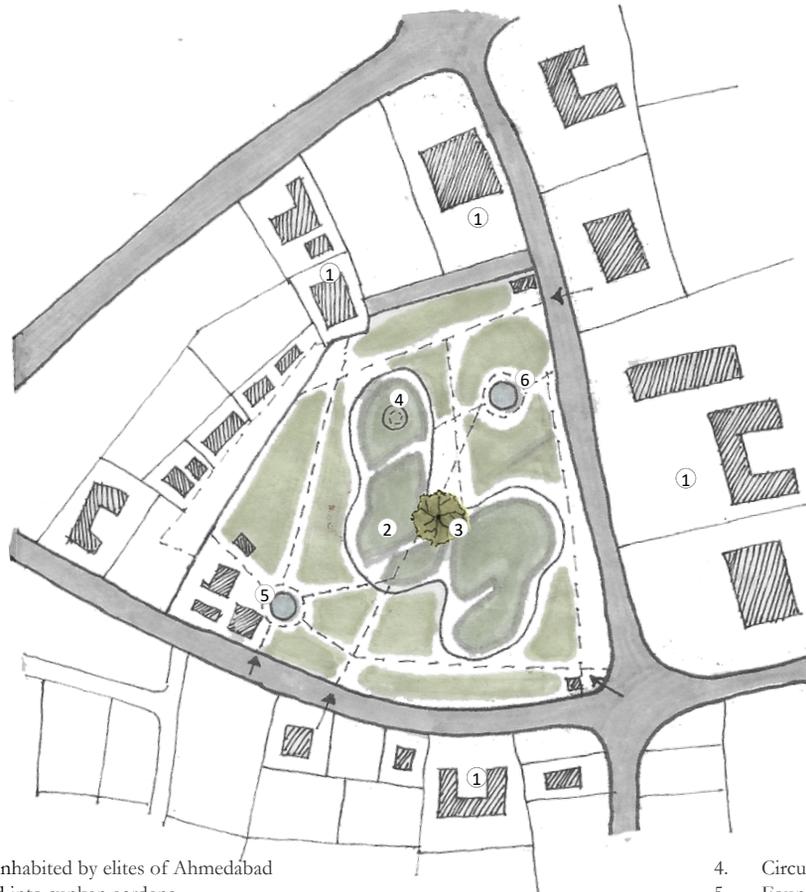


1. Plots were divided as per residential land use
2. A low lying area, Water tank- 1945

3. Old Banyan Tree
4. Narrow streets for transit

URBAN CONTEXT OF PARIMAL GARDEN - 1940s

The garden has grown & aged with time, reflecting its surroundings. Perusing through the 1940s archives showed us that the land where the Garden was envisaged was a low lying open space that was surrounded by residential spaces which were ultimately occupied by the elite sections of the society by the end of the decade. Two of its edges were fenced by major transits.



1. Bungalows inhabited by elites of Ahmedabad
2. Area divided into sunken gardens
3. Old banyan tree

4. Circular Sitting
5. Fountain 1
6. Fountain 2

URBAN CONTEXT OF PARIMAL GARDEN- 1950-90s

Chinubhai Mayor, was intent on making a garden that was inspired by the pleasure gardens in Britain. With four entrances marked on the edges facing roads, the narrow pathways steer visitors to the beautiful lawns. And then, for four decades, the Garden continued to grow and evolve. It was also during this period that there was a densification of what is referred to as the 'Old City', along with a more easily facilitated migration across the river. With a change in ideas of densification and urbanization, in 1998, it was decided that the Garden would be redesigned.



- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Scattered Commercial Development | 4. An informal path created by users | 7. Bougainvillea Arbour |
| 2. Often water logged, modified into a pond | 5. Fountain 1 | 8. Brick pillars |
| 3. Old Banyan tree | 6. Fountain 2 | 9. Mounds to buffer traffic noise |

URBAN CONTEXT OF PARIMAL GARDEN- 1998- EARLY 2000s

By the late 90's early 2000's, the land got demarcated as a commercial zone, making the road junction a major node for interaction & transit; the edges let people experience the garden. The redesign of the Garden by Ar. Kamalbhay Mangaldas incorporated a central waterbody; two fountains became the foci with pathways revolving around them. The Old Banyan tree stood strong next to the lake, with the mounds guarding the Southern edge as acoustic barriers.



- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Dense Commercial Development | 4. A formal means of access | 7. Bougainvillea Arbour |
| 2. Lily Pond | 5. Fountain 1 | 8. Brick pillars |
| 3. Old banyan tree | 6. Fountain 2 | 9. Mounds to buffer traffic noise |

URBAN CONTEXT OF PARIMAL GARDEN- 2020

The development of Ahmedabad brought with it widened roads, increase in traffic of people visiting the garden, and the surroundings growing to become a commercial hub. Even with shrunken garden boundaries, Parimal Garden remained a breathing space amongst these closely packed commercial complexes.



Plan of Parimal Garden
Kamal Mangaldas - Devendra Shah-
1998



Need to Densify Planting Beds



Create Visual Boundaries



Introducing biodiversity through aquatic plants



Need for Upgradation of the Nursery

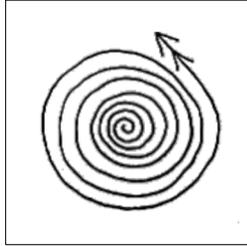


Parimal Garden- 2020

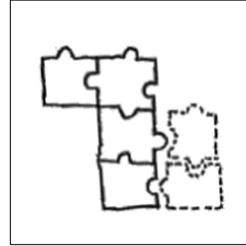
- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Entrance | 7. Open lawns |
| 2. Pre-function Plaza | 8. Informal Lawns |
| 3. Lily Pond | 9. Pathways encircling fountain |
| 4. Bougainvillea Arbour | 10. Children's park |
| 5. Meditation ground with Brick pillars | 11. Meandering pathways around lawns |
| 6. Mounds as acoustic buffer | |

REJUVENATING PARIMAL GARDEN

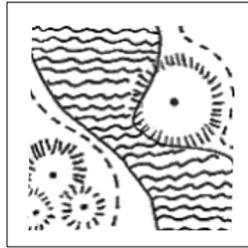
The redesign of the Parimal Garden was envisioned as an exercise in retaining old memories, and connections, while simultaneously building new ones. Rejuvenating Parimal Garden would be a tribute to the people who envisaged a space for the community, as well as to those who were the custodians of this legacy that has become synonymous with the identity of the city over a duration of over sixty years!



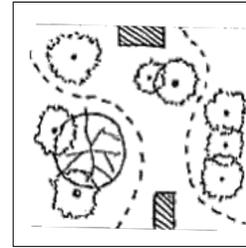
A Legacy Continued



Nostalgia that connects



Continuity & Change



*Preservation & enhancement of
biodiversity*

DESIGN IDEOLOGY

The idea was to not recreate the essence of the garden, but rather to restore it while being sensitive to the people who have long-established associations with the Garden; a process for design needed to be devised that was rooted in the existent design. The intent was to enhance the sense of spatiality and identity that has been lent to the space; where the new simply expressed itself as an extension of the existent elements.



Design Evolution

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Entrance | 5. Meditation ground with Brick pillars | 9. Pathways encircling retained fountain 2 |
| 2. Pre- function Plaza | 6. Re-graded Mounds as acoustic buffer | 10. Formal pausal space in the pathway |
| 3. Lily Pond | 7. Open lawns | 11. Children's park |
| 4. Bougainvillea Arbour | 8. Informal Lawns | 12. Meandering pathways around lawns |
- Initial Site Boundary

Beginning of the rejuvenation

Following the footprints along the twisting pathways, the garden was formalized along with infusing the chaos. It's old and resolved as well as young and dynamic.



Design Evolution

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Entrance | 5. Meditation ground with Brick pillars | 9. Pathways encircling retained fountain 2 |
| 2. Pre- function Plaza | 6. Re-graded Mounds as acoustic buffer | 10. Walkways close to pond |
| 3. Lily Pond | 7. Open lawns | 11. Parking |
| 4. Bougainvillea Arbour | 8. Informal Lawns | 12. Informal pathways around lawns |
- Initial Site Boundary

Developing the design

The Lily Pond - an inseparable element of the garden – expresses itself as a more immediate connection. The segregated lawns offer a sense of privacy for the users, even within the a public space.



Design Evolution

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Entrance | 5. Meditation ground with Brick pillars | 9. Fountain 2 acts as a focal point |
| 2. Pre- function Plaza | 6. Re-graded Mounds as acoustic buffer | 10. Amphitheatre facing Lily pond |
| 3. Lily Pond | 7. Open lawns | 11. Children's Park |
| 4. Bougainvillea Arbour | 8. Informal Lawns | 12. Meandering plaza through the lawns |
| ----- Initial Site Boundary | | |

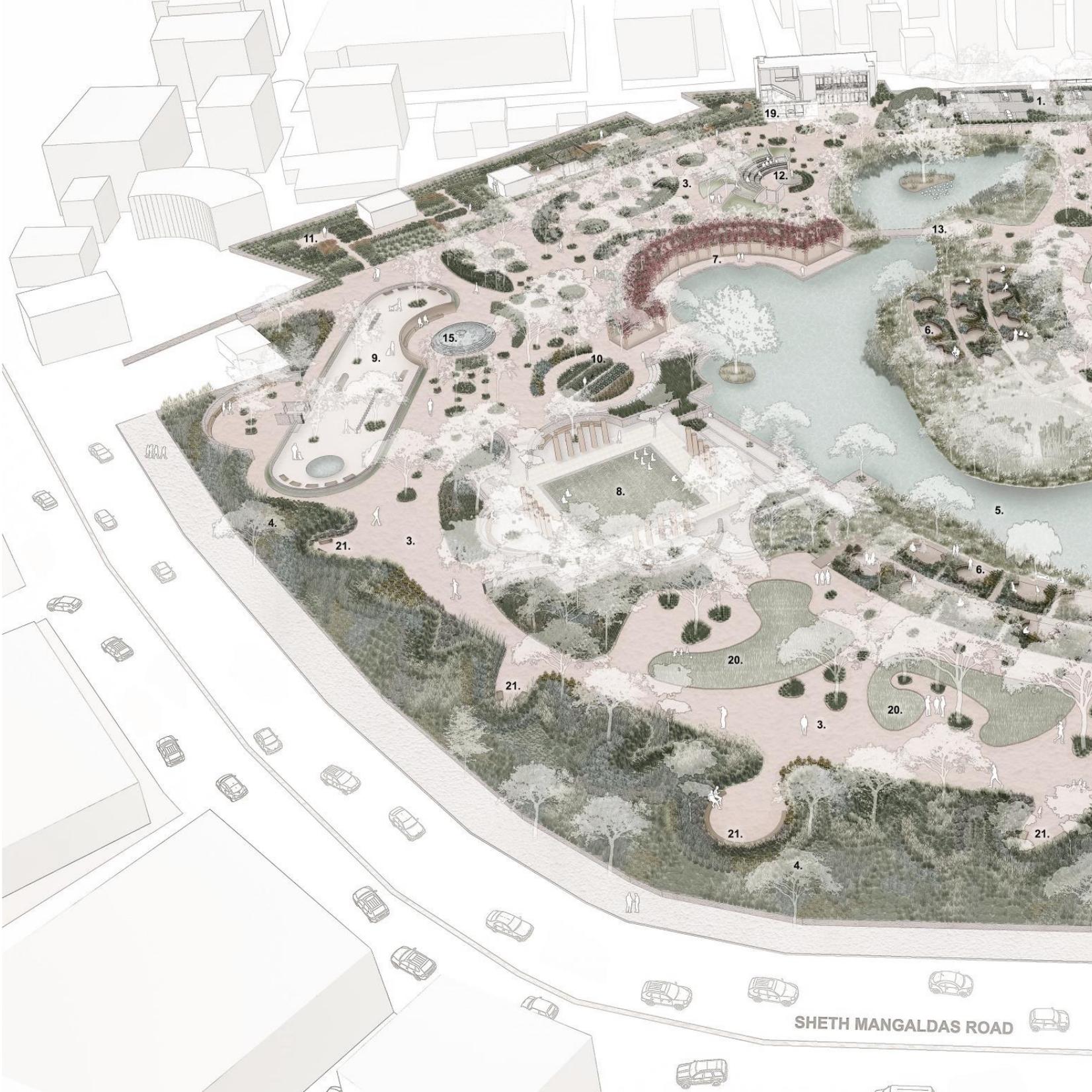
Shaping the master-plan

Evolving pathways - directing visitors, into a plaza; a non-directional base, where all the intricate spaces old and new, were carefully infused in. It will allow vivid views to be experienced, and give freedom to the visitors exploring the garden. A meandering seating plaza has been intended to act as a space for pause, while the location of the amphitheatre was reimagined keeping in mind concerns of ambient noise.

MASTER PLAN - PARIMAL GARDEN

The final design laid emphasis on ‘continuity’, the inherent value of the context & preserving what we were holding in hand along with considering ‘change’ while adding, eliminating, or transforming spaces.

The master-plan is painted on a plaza, with spaces that a public park needs; spaces woven together, demonstrating a cohesion between what’s new and what’s restored. The plaza spreads its arms embracing the Arbor, the Amphitheatre viewing the Lily Pond. The Plaza guards the segregated lawns as personal spaces, with restored fountains adding a movement to the garden.



SHETH MANGALDAS ROAD



LEGENDS

- 1. Entrance Plaza
- 2. Seating under Trellis
- 3. Walkways
- 4. Mounds
- 5. Lake
- 6. Seating Deck
- 7. Arbor
- 8. Meditation Ground
- 9. Dog Park
- 10. Butterfly Garden
- 11. Edible Plant Walk
- 12. Amphitheater
- 13. Bridge
- 14. Yoga Pavilion
- 15. Restored Fountain
- 16. Multipurpose Play Court
- 17. Children's Play Area
- 18. Outdoor Gym
- 19. Indoor Gym
- 20. Lawns
- 21. Seating
- 22. Toilet Block
- 23. Parking
- 24. Existing Temple



MEANDERING PLAZA

The plaza acts as a pause point – allowing the viewer to choose the manner in which they are hoping to conduct their journey through the garden.



MOUND DESIGN

Re-graded mounds create a visual - and indeed an experiential buffer – from the main road that edges the garden; reinforcing its position as a space for quietude and peace.



MEDITATION GROUND

For a garden that has a history of a thriving user community, the redesign incorporates a formalized Meditation Ground that is surrounded by refurbished brick pillars whose design is intended to pay homage to the textile families of the city – whose patronage contributed significantly to its growth and development. Upon the brick pillars, conceptualized and executed by artist Premkumar Vaishya (David), are monkeys made from scrap metal – playfully journeying from one pillar to the next – perhaps a reminder for us to find humor and joy in the smaller nuances and instances!



BOUGAINVILLEA ARBOR

Indispensable to the identity of the Garden – almost since its formalization – is this arbor which has now been refurbished; only in so much as to enhance its expression.



SEGREGATED LAWNS

Separate lawns allow the visitors their own space - within something that continues to be very much public! Amidst the woods, sits an amphitheater – relocated and redesigned. While the space was always integral to the Garden, it was relocated as a part of the redesign in response to ambient noise.



FOUNTAINS

Two fountains located within the compound of the garden have been refurbished – retaining the old base, but replacing the bowls. And then, the Garden is also home to one of India’s first pet parks!





PRATITI INITIATIVE

U.N. MEHTA FOUNDATION

U.N. Mehta foundation is a non- profit organization whose objective is to bring their various philanthropic works to fruition, carrying on the ethos of their late founder, that of caring for others. The activities comprise of Community Healthcare, Education & Knowledge, Enhancement and Social Care and Concern - activities that benefit the people. The Foundation's activities aim to make long term benefits in the communities in which they are implemented.

PRATITI INITIATIVE:

Recognizing the integral part public parks play in the constitution of the urban fabric, a group of landscape and architecture practitioners within Ahmedabad, under the guidance of LEAF, have refurbished and designed many parks across the city, and continue to do so. The goal of this on-going initiative continues to be to create an adaptable, sustainable, and cost-conscious model for the design and refurbishment of public parks in a city.



Sindhu Bhavan Garden, Ahmedabad

The Pratiti Initiative was conceived back in 2016 with an aim to reimagine the public spaces, and public gardens within the urban context of the country.

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 endeavor, with the Foundation taking on the responsibility of maintaining the gardens it has taken under its wing.



Sukan Garden





Victoria Garden, Ahmedabad



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