



# PONDICHERRY

Transforming cities through heritage preservation and places for people

INTACH Pondicherry

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# *Introduction*

Today our cities face a multitude of challenges and some among them are preserving our architectural heritage and creating public places for people. This little book gives one an idea of what can be done from examples achieved in Pondicherry with support from people and most importantly the local Government. The projects have been carried out by INTACH Pondicherry and persons closely associated with it. For more information log on to: [www.intachpondy.org](http://www.intachpondy.org)

This book shows some examples of restoration of heritage buildings, architectural façade control of new structures in the heritage precincts as well as creation of public places for people. There are also digital simulations of buildings that need restoration. One can see that even seemingly 'hopeless' buildings can be restored and infused with life!

It is hoped that this publication will encourage similar work in our country.

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# Pondicherry

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# *Pondicherry*

Pondicherry, a former French Colony on the East Coast of India, is a heritage city with rich cultural diversity - one of the major reasons being the cross-cultural 'Franco-Tamil' influence on the town. The Boulevard Town of Pondicherry has inherited a significant architectural heritage that can be evidenced from its well-planned grid-patterned layout comprising two distinct heritage Precincts - French and Tamil that needs to be preserved.

Today Pondicherry is highly urbanized with an increase in urban population density during the last two decades, which has led to severe stress on the existing infrastructure facilities, urban amenities, deterioration of the environment and the quality of life. Such rapid urban transformation is gradually destroying the fragile architectural heritage of the Boulevard Town. The transformation includes

un-controlled building boom, property division, demolitions and alterations, urban skyline, street scape character, high vehicular traffic etc, all of which has affected the heritage character of the town negatively.

The loss of heritage buildings has reached an alarming state in the recent years. Of the 1800 buildings listed in 1995, barely 500 survive today – most have been lost in the Tamil Precinct.

A planned heritage-sensitive development is needed and should be supported by comprehensive control and monitoring measures to stop further deterioration of the heritage character of the Boulevard Town of Pondicherry.



Some of the following examples demonstrate that even highly dilapidated heritage structures can be restored, extended, modernized and adapted to contemporary uses like hotels, shops, museums, residences or whatever other uses one may have in mind. The basic principles of restoration are to use, as much as possible, traditional technology and materials that were employed in the original construction. Modern amenities like good bathrooms, kitchen and air conditioning can easily be incorporated in the design. The end result invariably, if done well, can please both owners and visitors.

Often we are asked how long a building can last after restoration – if given basic care and maintenance these buildings can last decades and centuries.



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# RESTORATIONS

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17 Rue Romain Rolland

Year: 2000

Neemrana Hotels

UNESCO Asia Pacific Award, 10 rooms

Architect: Ajit and Ratna Koujalgi

(Restoration and extension area/cost: 900 sqm /Rs. 6 million)

# *Hotel De L'Orient*





12 Hotel De L'Orient





14 Hotel De L'Orient



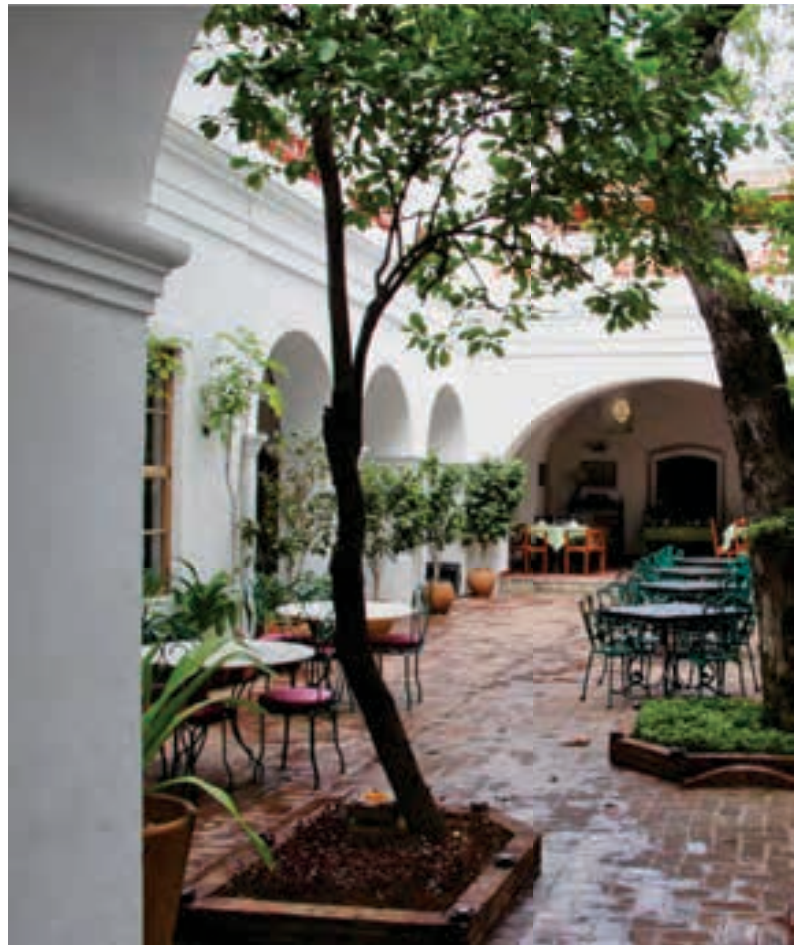








18 Hotel De L'Orient







Year: 2004  
UNESCO Award  
Government of Pondicherry  
Asia Urbs Programme  
(20 facades / Rs.2 million)

# *Vysial Street Restoration*





24 Vysial Street Restoration























12 Kalatheeswaran Koil Street

Year: 2004

Asia Urbs Programme

(Restoration and extension area/cost: 915sqm / Rs. 0.5 million)

# *Societe Progressiste School*





36 Societe Progressiste School

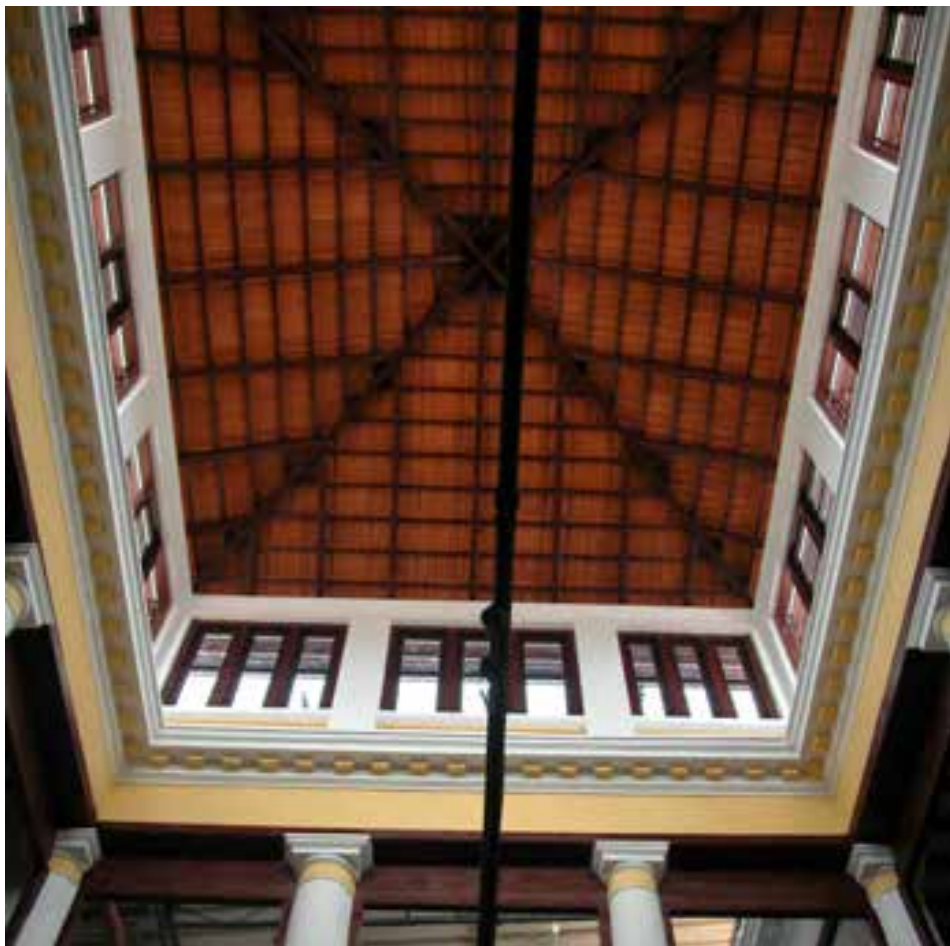












62 Rue Aurobindo

Year: 2007

Renuka Pratap

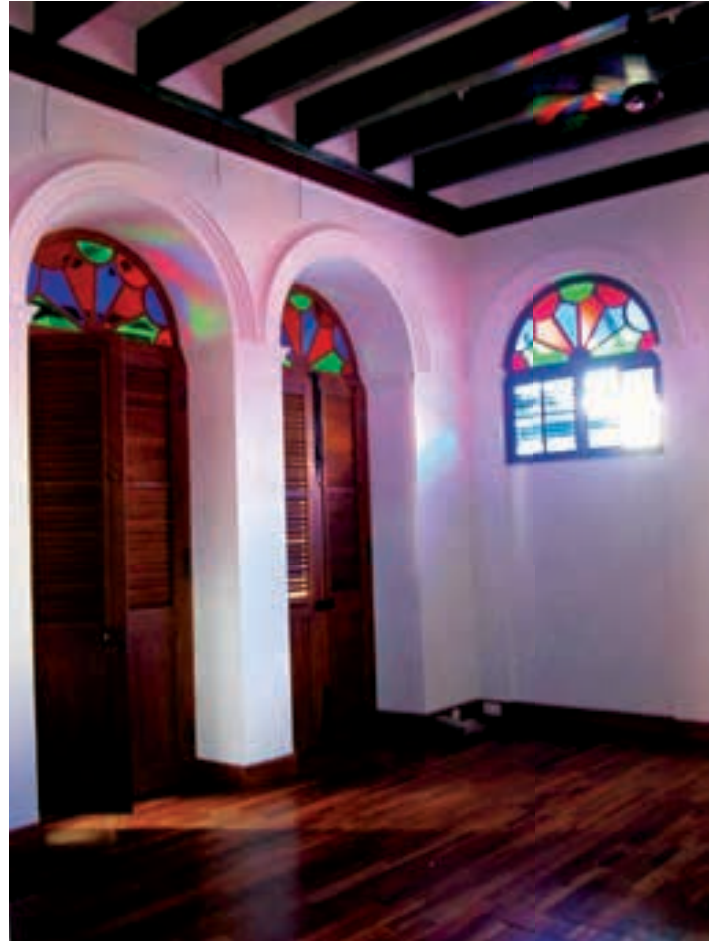
(Restoration and extension area/cost: 320sqm /Rs. 1.5 million)

# *INTACH Heritage Centre*





















Goubert Avenue, Beach Road

Year: 2008

Department of Tourism

(Restoration and extension area/cost: 260sqm /Rs. 0.8 million)

*Le Cafe (old Port Office)*





54 Le Cafe (old Port Office)





56 Le Cafe (old Port Office)







58 Le Cafe (old Port Office)



52 Rue Romain Rolland

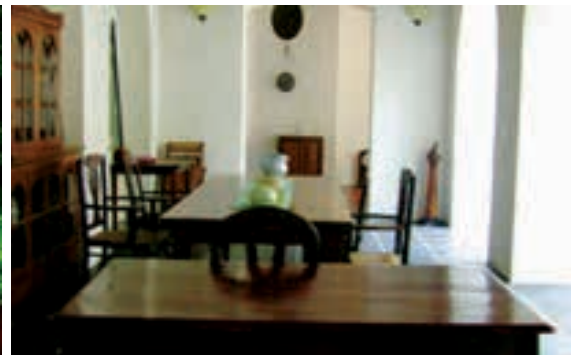
Year: 2010

Jyoti Saikia

7 room guest house

(Restoration and extension area/cost: 820sqm / Rs.15 million)

# *Gratitude Guest House*





62 Gratitude Guest House





64 Gratitude Guest House







66 Gratitude Guest House





68 Gratitude Guest House



58 Perumal Koil Street

Year: 2010

Annamalai & CGH Hotels, 10 rooms

(Restoration and extension area/cost: 1100sqm/Rs.15 million)

# *Maison Perumal*





72 Maison Perumal







74 Maison Perumal







96 Perumal Koil Street

Year: 2011

Annamalai, 7 rooms

(Restoration and extension area/cost: 825qm /Rs.6 million)

# *Anantha Heritage Hotel*





80 Anantha Heritage Hotel











84 Anantha Heritage Hotel



17 Vellala Street

Year: 2012

Govt. of Pondicherry

(Restoration and extension area/cost: 560qm /Rs.12 million)

# *V. Subbiah and Saraswathy Memorial Museum*





88 V. Subbiah and Saraswathy Memorial Museum











92 V. Subbiah and Saraswathy Memorial Museum



15 Rue Bazaar Saint Laurent

Year: 2013

Sandeep Reddy

(Restoration and extension area/cost: 460sqm/Rs.12 million)

# *Reddy House*





96 Reddy House







98 Reddy House





100 Reddy House



When it is not possible to restore a heritage building because there is no legal protection, the next best thing to do (what we call damage control) is to guide and design the façade so that it fits in better in the streetscape. This has been possible only because the Pondicherry Planning Authority seeks INTACH's opinion regarding all buildings coming up in the historic town. The façade design is a product of close cooperation with the building owner and the design becomes part of the building permission.

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# FACADE CONTROL

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## FACADES CONTROL EXAMPLES





## UPCOMING FACADES



Central Excise, 1999





24 Rue Francois Martin, 2003



City Bank, 2005













13 Rue Victor Simonel, 2006









14 Rue Labourdonnais, 2010





4 Aurobindo Street, 2010







Odian Salai Police Station, 2011









There are a number of government owned heritage buildings that need to be renovated. The following examples of digital simulations show how such buildings can be brought back to their original condition.

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# RESTORATION PROPOSALS

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HEAD POST OFFICE - 1970







HEAD POST OFFICE - EXISTING



HEAD POST OFFICE - EXISTING SIMULATION



HEAD POST OFFICE - PROPOSED





LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT









## POLICE HEAD QUARTERS







All our cities in India are being reshaped in favour of motorized traffic and people have no proper and safe place to walk or congregate – un hassled by vehicles, noise and pollution. The following pictures show some examples. We hope that in future more urban areas are won back for people – where pedestrian has the priority, especially in commercial streets.

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# URBAN INTERVENTIONS

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Year: 2007

Department of Tourism

Government of Pondicherry

(Restoration and extension area/cost: 41500sqm/Rs.33 million)

# *Bharathi Park*





144 Bharathi Park







146 Bharathi Park





148 Bharathi Park



Year: 2010

Department of Tourism

Government of Pondicherry

(Restoration and extension area/cost: 1.5 km/Rs.60 million)

# *Beach Promenade*





152 Beach Promenade





Year: 2010

Department of Tourism

Government of Pondicherry

(Restoration and extension area/cost: 4400 sqm/Rs.24 million)

# *Gandhi Tidal*









158 Gandhi Tidal



## JAWAHARLAL NEHRU STREET - URBAN INTERVENTION PROPOSAL







Published By:



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