

REVIVING HERITAGE: THE CULTURAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF RESTORING HISTORICAL BUILDINGS AND HAVELIS OF MANDAWA

Satakshi Choudhary¹, Vivek Kumar²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Design, Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan
Assistant Professor, Art & Design Department, Sharda School of Design, Sharda University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh

²Associate Professor, School of Architecture and Planning, Banasthali Vidyapith,

satakshi.choudhary@sharda.ac.in¹
vivekkumar@banasthali.in²

Abstract

Mandawa has recently directed attention toward the preservation of its physical and cultural heritage. Mandawa's new urban developments are incorporating heritage aspects into their development plans, drawing attention from across the world while promoting economic progress. Cultural legacy can automatically give people a sense of belonging by helping them understand past generations and their origins. These developments raise concerns about the need to preserve authenticity as a fundamental value of cultural heritage. The purpose of this research is to show the relevance of supporting heritage building rehabilitation and redevelopment. It looks at how integrating heritage with development has sparked a cultural rebirth. Restoring historic structures like Havelis is essential for maintaining the architectural and cultural legacies of ancient societies. This study investigates the importance of repairing these ancient buildings, highlighting their relevance beyond their visual attractiveness. In addition to being works of architectural art, Havelis and heritage structures serve as archives for societal memory, culture, and history. Restoration and rehabilitation act as a bridge between the past and present. It helps modern societies to interact with their cultural heritage meaningfully. This research explores the complex significance of these structures by looking at how they relate to sustainable development, tourism, and cultural identity. This paper highlights how restoring Havelis and heritage structures promotes economic growth, community empowerment, and the preservation of cultural heritage by examining case studies and restoration initiatives. The purpose of the research is to determine whether citizen interaction with the built heritage of Mandawa is impacted by authenticity. It assesses the extent to which the cultural Renaissance has facilitated a feeling of community among the methods to guarantee that buildings will continue to inspire generations to come.

Keywords: Restoring, Haveli, Ancient Buildings, Economic growth, Community empowerment, Preservation

1. Introduction

An important aspect of any culture is that it sheds light on the customs and values of the local community and its cultural legacy. So maintaining a cultural legacy is regarded as a crucial and important part of growth (Farooq, S., & Qureshi, A. K., 2020). The main motivation for maintaining cultural heritage is the growing link between embracing change and encouraging urban development (Mehmood, S., & Jan, Z., 2022). Maintaining the authenticity of historic architecture is very essential while evaluating "change" as a sustainable strategy for heritage management. Managing change in historic buildings such as Haveli is not crucial; instead, maintaining the authenticity and traditional essence is vital (Khalid, A., & Farooq, S.). To protect the architectural and cultural heritage of ancient civilisations, preservation and revitalisation of Havelis and other ancient buildings are essential (Routh, R., Bhavsar, D., & Patel, R., 2022). These centuries-old buildings are reminders of the social, cultural, and artistic norms in which they were constructed. Havelis are representative of the rich architectural traditions of Indian states like Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh, as they were formerly the residences of nobles and prosperous merchants. These historic buildings are much more than important historical and

architectural landmarks (Ahmad, A., & Khilat, F., 2023). They act as a link to the past while influencing the present and motivating the future. Havelis represent the identity, memory, culture, beliefs, continuity of communities, and their love for art. With several important historic structures and heritage sites, Mandawa features a unique tangible and intangible history in the form of handicrafts, music, poetry, ceramics, traditional architecture, its beautiful Haveli, and more. Mandawa is a small town known for its colourful past and rich cultural legacy. Located in the centre of the Shekhawati region of Rajasthan. Mandawa is renowned for its magnificent Havelis, with elaborate murals, colourful frescoes, and magnificent architecture that capture the creative sensibility. Rich merchants founded Mandawa in the 18th century, and it was developed into a thriving hub of trade and culture that drew merchants from all over the Indian subcontinent (Qureshi, A. K., Farooq, S., & Kamal, M. A., 2020).

The main goal is the rebirth of these structures, which is important towards community development and cultural preservation, not just architectural restoration (Singh, M., 2024). Many of these ancient buildings are in danger and neglected, falling apart, or being demolished as modernity encroaches near them (Mandal, B.). This tendency leads towards the destruction of these priceless historical landmarks, as well as the sociocultural values these structures uphold (Agrawal, P., Vegad, T. C., & Bhagwati, P., 2023). The importance of restoring Havelis and historic structures encompasses a strategy that takes into account their effects on the environment, economy, culture, and history (Nayak, D., 2016). The purpose of this research is to investigate the various dimensions significant in restoring Havelis and heritage buildings, with an emphasis on their function in maintaining cultural identity, encouraging sustainable development, and improving community well-being (Bansal, R., & Upadhyay, A., 2021). This research will show how successful restoration projects boost local economies through heritage tourism, revitalise historic urban neighbourhoods, and create a sense of pride by examining case studies of these initiatives (Naeem, R., & Kareem, W., 2023). The research will look at the potential problems that come with restoring historic buildings, emphasising the necessity for a well-rounded strategy that combines traditional craftsmanship with modern conservation methods (Nayak, D., 2016). Havelis and historic structures serve as a reminder of the timeless significance of cultural heritage in a modern world that is changing quickly (Singh, M., 2024). These architectural treasures continue to improve lives and serve as an inspiration to coming generations (Goyal, K., & Menghani, J., 2024).

The research revolves around the management of cultural heritage and urban development. Many developing regions have emerged as a result of the city's growth. The main issue of sustainable development is maintaining cultural heritage while fostering urban growth, which frequently results in the isolation of historical buildings throughout such growth. The extreme circumstances must be balanced by modern advances. To support modernity, which incorporates the authenticity of the present, and conserve vernacular settings that support individuality and preserve the authenticity of the past. Managing cultural heritage with rapid urbanisation is a major challenge. Mandawa has deteriorated and is losing its charm due to people moving out for work. The historic outlook of Mandawa heritage is dwindling as a result of contemporary urbanisation, tourism, movie and song shoots, etc. The socio-cultural environment is under threat from population decline, mistreatment, negligence, and vandalism. The following two hypotheses form the basis of this paper.

1. There is an emphasis on the structures and a limited focus on conservation.

2. Preserving cultural heritage requires the authenticity of heritage buildings and architecture to be restored.

2. Literature Review

The degree of authenticity of heritage structures is determined by their significance. The restoration of heritage buildings is in the spotlight because of sustainable urban development, cultural identity, and architectural preservation (Srivastava, U., 2020). The complex issues surrounding the social, economic, and environmental effects of repairing these structures highlight the significance of heritage protection. To comprehend the value of restoring these historic structures (Yasmoon, Z., & Rahbarianyazd, R., 2023).

2.1 Historical and Cultural Significance of Havelis and Heritage Buildings

Havelis and heritage structures are frequently considered tangible representations of the historical, cultural, and socioeconomic context of their era (Hussein, W. H., 2022). Havelis, especially in states like Rajasthan, embody the architectural forms with a fusion of Mughal, Rajput, and indigenous customs. These buildings are symbols of cultural memory that support communities' sense of continuity and identity (Das, T., 2022). The worldwide importance of heritage conservation of historic buildings creates a link between the past and present. Preservation of societies' cultural fabric requires revival concerning aesthetic and historical considerations. Therefore, the preservation of these structures is essential; otherwise, they will be lost to modernisation (Arif, R. R. S., 2019).

2.2 Heritage Restoration's Economic Effects

The financial advantages of restoring historic structures and Havelis have been the subject of study, especially concerning heritage tourism. By attracting tourists drawn to historically significant locations, preservation efforts may greatly enhance local economies (Shah, A. A., Chandrasekara, D. P., & Naeem, A., 2023). Historical tourism in India: the restoration of buildings such as Havelis results in a rise in tourist arrivals, which creates jobs, boosts local economies, and promotes investment in the surrounding areas (Singh, R. P., & Niglio, O., 2022). Heritage preservation is financially feasible since its economic worth often exceeds the original expenses of restoration (Sharma, U., 2018). Historic restoration initiatives raise property prices and support urban renewal. Rehabilitating historic structures promotes urban regeneration and turns neighbourhoods into vibrant centres of the arts and economy (Singh, R. P., & Rana, P. S., 2019).

2.3 Implications of Heritage Revival on Society and Communities

Heritage protection has significant social effects on culture and finance (Jabeen, A., Hussain, N., & Munir, M., 2023). Historic structures serve as concrete representations, fostering a feeling of communal pride that emphasises an ingrained sense of continuity and belonging in communities via the preservation of historic structures (Senthil, R. B., & Ramya, M. S., 2016). Many case studies from the Shekhawati area show how the Haveli Renaissance has aided in social cohesiveness and communal empowerment (Gupta, N., 2018). Local artists and craftsmen are involved in the restoration process, which promotes traditional skills and generates employment possibilities (Samant, S., 2010). These historic structures promote interpersonal communication and cross-cultural understanding (Stubbs, J. H., 2009).

2.4 Preservation of Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development

Research on sustainable development and historical conservation has grown in importance. The repurposing of old buildings helps achieve sustainability goals and lowers the environmental effect (Glattli, L., 2021). The building materials and processes of these old structures are environmentally

friendly and are consistent with contemporary notions of sustainability (Chauhan, E., 2017). Combining sustainable tourism methods with historical protection guarantees long-term advantages for the environment and the surrounding community (Waqar, Z., 2022).

2.5 Challenges in Haveli Revival and Heritage Building

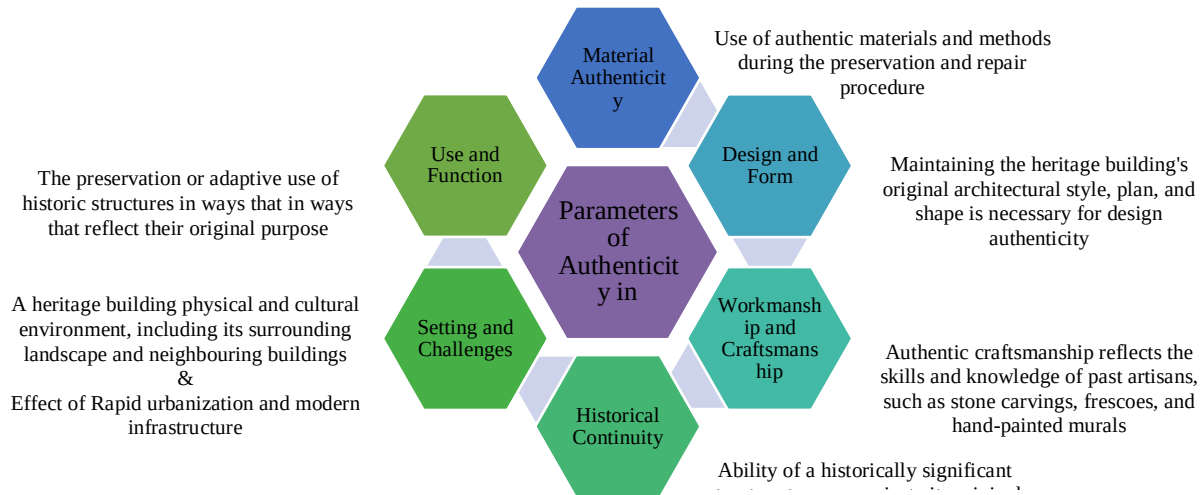


Figure 1: Parameters of Authenticity in Heritage Conservation (Source: Author)

There are several challenges involved in the restoration of historic structures and Havelis, with increased interest in heritage protection (Chauhan, E., 2023). The clash between modernisation and preservation is a critical problem (Das, H., 2005). Urban growth and demands can be dangerous to heritage assets, resulting in historically significant buildings being demolished or altered (Srivastava, U., 2015). The conservation process is difficult due to the absence of a comprehensive heritage policy and financing restoration initiatives (Dutta, B. K., & Bandyopadhyay, S.). The difficulty of striking a balance between contemporary requirements and historic architectural integrity is a big challenge (Singh, R. P., & Rana, P. S., 2017). The upgrades to the current infrastructure are required without compromising the historical significance and authenticity of heritage structures (Singh, R. P., 2011). The restoration of historic structures and Havelis is a multifaceted undertaking with environmental, societal, economic, and cultural implications (Singh, N. K., 2023). The significance of taking a comprehensive approach to heritage conservation, weighing community demands and sustainability to preserve historical authenticity (Chauhan, E., 2023). Through awareness of the complex effects of historic building revival, community empowerment and sustainable development objectives may be obtained while simultaneously safeguarding cultural legacies (Singh, R. P., 2015). This provides insights into how these structures may be conserved for future generations while meeting modern social demands and serves as a platform for future research into the potential problems associated with revitalising heritage buildings and Havelis (Dehejia, V., 2019).

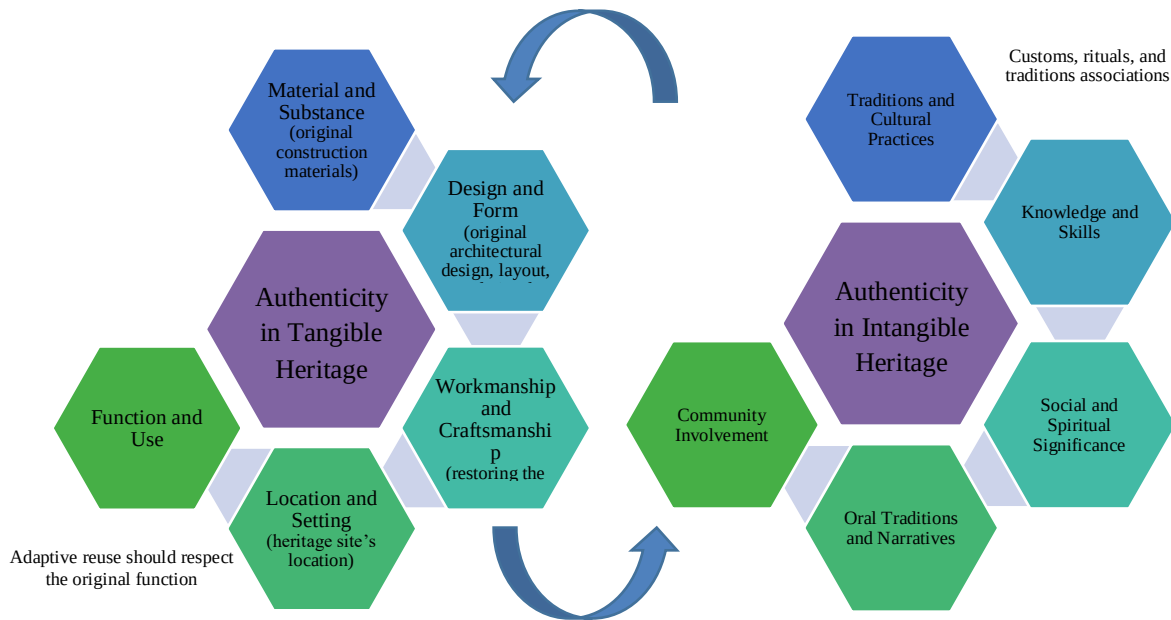


Figure 2: Integration of Tangible and Intangible Authenticity (Source: Author)

To maintain the authenticity of these heritage structures, both tangible and intangible elements must be considered. Authenticity is more than maintaining a building's physical elements; it also involves maintaining cultural customs and social connections (Addy, A., 2020). Heritage sites maintain their cultural significance by protecting physical structure (tangible) alongside cultural practices and traditions (intangible) (Hanafi, W. H. H., 2023).

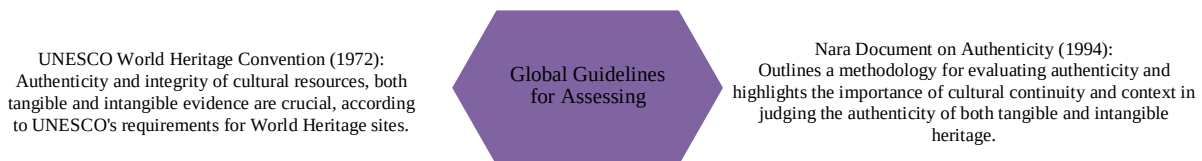


Figure 3: Global Guidelines for Assessing Authenticity (Source: Author)

To preserve cultural heritage authentically, a well-rounded strategy incorporating both tangible and intangible is needed (Pandey, V., & Sen, J.). Cultural practices, knowledge, and community are just as important to maintain as their physical characteristics, such as their materials, architecture, and workmanship (Saiyed, A. A., Basalingappa, A., & Sinha, P. K., 2016). Both factors are taken into account and may guarantee the preservation of historical places like Havelis for future generations to offer knowledge of their value.

The objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To understand the lack of area conservation and excessive focus on buildings as a strategy for heritage conservation in Mandawa.
2. Understanding the reestablishment of authenticity of heritage buildings and architecture is essential for the preservation of cultural heritage in Mandawa.

3. Research Hypothesis

This research explores the potential that a location's legacy can be adequately preserved through the restoration of individual structures. By outlining the connections between Mandawa urban and heritage development as they relate to the revitalisation of the historic neighbourhood. The theoretical framework focuses on area conservation and authenticity. The research helps create a foundation that may be applied in further research to evaluate the degree of authenticity attained in the rebuilt structures.

4. Research Methodology

Documentary research was the primary approach used in this research. The data was gathered by conducting semi-structured and structured interviews, a survey was conducted in the Mandawa region, and watching cultural customs. Documents were examined using clear definitions. The data was compared with architectural documents, surveying the locations and historic photos that were gathered from the literature. The data was collected by the building's owners and managers of Mandawa Haveli to better understand Haveli. The required sample size at the confidence level is 95% and the margin of error is 5%; the population size is over 2 lakh 50 thousand, and the sample size is 384. All factors were rated on the 5-point Linkert scale. A score of 1 for strongly agree and a score of 5 for strongly disagree were assigned. Before the actual data collection, a pilot test was carried out to assess the measuring scale's validity. The research performed a survey that was split into two categories:

1. To investigate people's perceptions of heritage conservation. Structured interviews were performed among government and commercial sectors for expert viewpoints of those engaged in heritage management.
2. To investigate and understand how people see Mandawa historic structures and their perceptions of authenticity. Mandawa residents live with these heritage buildings, and changes to the neighbourhood affect their daily lives.

The site's owner was able to give verbal information but was unable to produce any supporting documentation. The absence of information on pre- and post-building plans affected the planned assessment of the site's validity. Onsite visits were conducted at various times to determine a comprehensive grasp of the ancient region.

It was discovered that the Cronbach's alpha value (Table 1) was 0.74. A multiple-choice Likert scale is deemed appropriate if its Cronbach's alpha score is higher than 0.7. Thus, it was determined that the measurement scale utilised for the study had face validity. Participants from Mandawa, such as owners, guides, visitors, tourists, and residents, provided a total of 396 replies. Since 384 was the minimum sample size needed for this investigation, the responses collected were adequate.

$\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k \sigma_y^2}{\sigma_x^2} \right)$			
Variables	Description	Values	Internal consistency
α	Cronbach's Alpha (reliability coefficient)	50	Acceptable
K	Number of items (questions in the questionnaire)	17.24	
ΣS_y^2	Sum of item variances (variance of each item, then added together)	63.21	
S_x^2	Variance of the total score (variance of the sum of all items)	0.74	

Findings

Lack of Conservation

Few havelis in Mandawa have been protected by the authority and owners as part of conservation efforts or for business interests. But as very few initiatives have been taken in conservation, spaces surrounding them have grown organically. They are changing without respecting their heritage essence, altering the area's identity. Historic buildings are at risk from the rapid urbanisation and shifting land use patterns that are occurring. Development pressure might result in havelis being altered or demolished. The pattern of redevelopment is more with a contemporary urban philosophy than a traditional understanding of the site. The conclusion is derived from a few observations leading to the conclusion that the historic areas, particularly in Mandawa are losing their "essence" as a result of the rehabilitation of the building conservation technique.



Figure 4: Mandawa, Rajasthan, India (Source: Author)



Figure 5: Open Art Gallery, narrow lanes in the heart of Mandawa city (Source: Author)

The narrow lanes in the heart of Mandawa city and a multitude of historic haveli, which were constructed during the 18th and 20th centuries, are eminent. But their deteriorating condition and negligence are properly visible.



Figure 6: Brilliant frescoes, Open Art Gallery, Mandawa city (Source: Author)
Brilliantly detailed frescoes that show scenes from everyday life and are frequently indicative of the historical period in which they were painted adorn the exterior of the havelis.



Figure 7: Brilliant frescoes, Open Art Gallery, Mandawa city (Source: Author)

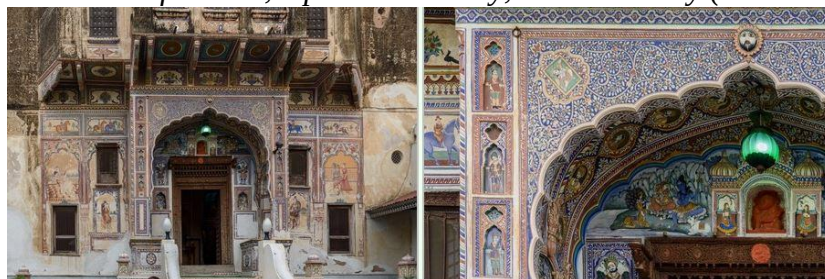


Figure 8: The beautiful frescoes decorating Haveli (Source: Author)

The cooperation and involvement of the local community are frequently necessary for successful conservation. Conservation efforts may be hampered by a lack of interest in or understanding of the cultural heritage.



Figure 9: Unkept Havelis of Mandawa (Source: Author)

Mandawa is known as the "Open Art Gallery" because of the abundance of artistically painted Havelis. Each Haveli has its creative personality, making the entire region visually appealing to tourists and art fans. The Mandawa Havelis are historically and culturally significant because they depict the prosperous days of the merchants. The Havelis represent the luxury and grandeur of these merchants, who were recognised for their successful trade and appreciation of the arts. The preservation of Mandawa's cultural heritage depends on the authenticity of the historic structures. Three sections comprise the study findings used to validate this research. And how the rebirth of both tangible and intangible heritage has gained importance recently. This revival of heritage style will be examined by using a restoration example of one heritage building by a private owner. To understand the practice of building conservation in Mandawa, a few interviews were conducted in the first section of the study findings. It also includes a survey of Mandawa residents, tourists, heritage experts, and government and conservation authorities regarding the importance of restoration and its main conclusions. The third section provides an analysis of Mandawa's older neighbourhoods. This section highlights the neighbourhood of Mandawa's restored buildings. It seeks to illustrate the harm posed by poorly matched developments, which, if left unnoticed, might cause Mandawa to lose its identity.

Summary of key findings

Twenty interviews with public and private sector representatives produced different results. According to seven participants, authenticity means restoring historic elements like comparable colours and patterns to harmonise the surroundings in the previous styles. While also respecting the outer design in terms of façade treatment. Eight panellists stressed the economic benefits of restoring designs in order to evoke sentimental nostalgia and draw in locals in order to boost commerce.

Survey: Organized one hundred and two individuals

The perspectives from the survey collected from 102 individuals on Mandawa heritage building restoration and its significance:

11.8% of people think that Mandawa's historic heritage is in excellent physical condition.

41.2% support preserving historic buildings as part of modern construction.

93.1% of people think Mandawa's heritage buildings are not being adequately maintained

Almost everyone noticed signs of deterioration or neglect, like cracks, fading frescoes, and broken structures in Mandawa's heritage buildings.

The restoration efforts in Mandawa have been effective or not effective in maintaining the physical condition of heritage sites and have the most fascinating response. 49% of respondents think

restoration has not been done adequately, whereas 1% don't think so. It's noteworthy from the comments that the restored buildings contribute to the ambience and, in some ways, represent the past, and the need to protect our heritage.

Conclusion

Two theories were the main scope of this study.

1. There is insufficient conservation with an emphasis solely on buildings;
2. The restoration of historical structures and architecture is crucial for the preservation of cultural assets.

The research supported both hypotheses. The historic town of Mandawa is acknowledged for having a vital role in Rajasthan's history. The goal of the research was to learn the community's views of historic structures and their preservation. According to the structured survey, 87% of respondents agreed that they felt a sense of belonging to their cultural heritage. People identify the historic symbolic value of their heritage even if they are unsure of its historic architectural authenticity. Mandawa locals can distinguish between newly constructed buildings designed in historic style and older structures. Therefore, while working with heritage structures, it is important to maintain the authenticity of these Haveli.

The government wants to elevate Rajasthan's historical and cultural significance in the worldwide heritage sector and encourage the integration of heritage development into urban planning. Government officials provide insight into the strategy for fostering a cultural Renaissance. While few traditionally built havelis are highly influenced by the privately renovated haveli. Yet no systematic research has been conducted to keep Mandawa's historic significance intact. All Havelis are not taken into consideration for heritage protection; instead, the conservation of a few listed buildings is the primary focus. The area around these historic haveli symbolises the local development of the built environment. This strategy must be expanded to save these haveli using the area conservation concept.

However, there were significant limitations to this study. First, the literature is limited since less research has been done in this sector. Secondly, gaining a general understanding of the government's perspective is difficult because there is little coordination involved. There are significant limitations in the promotion of redevelopment that consider heritage building conservation into account. The architectural documentation of the heritage structures was unavailable, making it very difficult to verify authenticity. People were unwilling to produce official paperwork and were more receptive to conversational accounts. This research has important limitations. Therefore, further thorough research in this area needs to be done.

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Annexure-1

Name:

Gender: (1) Male, (2)Female, (3)Prefer not to say

Age: (1)Below 20, (2)20 to 30 yrs, (3)30 to 40 yrs, (4)40 to 50 yrs, (5)50 yrs and above

State/UT: (Note: Kindly mention the state you are from/ choose Rajasthan in case you are visiting in Mandawa)

1. What is your affiliation with Mandawa? (1)Local resident (2)Tourist (3)Heritage expert (4)Government/Conservation authority

2. How often do you visit or engage with Mandawa's heritage sites? (1)Regularly (weekly/monthly), (2)Occasionally (once a year or less), (3)First-time visitor

3. On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the overall physical condition of Mandawa's historic heritage buildings? (1 being Poor & 5 being Good)

Poor (2)1, (2)2, (2)3, (2)4, (2)5 Good

4. Which specific elements of Mandawa's historic heritage do you believe are in excellent condition?

(1)Havelis' external facades (e.g., frescoes, paintwork), (2)Interiors (e.g., murals, furniture, room structure), (3)Roofs and structural integrity, (4)Streets and urban landscape, (5)Public spaces, (6)None of the above

5. On a scale of 1 to 5, Do you believe that restoration efforts in Mandawa have been effective in maintaining the physical condition of heritage sites? (1 being Strongly Agree & 5 being Strongly Disagree)

Strongly Agree (1)1, (2)2, (3)3, (4)4, (5)5 Strongly Disagree

6. In What condition are the following architectural elements in the present scenario. Are they being treated well (1 being Strongly Agree (in good condition) & 5 being Strongly Disagree(in bad condition))

(A)Frescoes on the Havelis (B)Stone carvings and decorations (C)Woodwork (doors, windows) (D)Structural integrity of buildings (e.g., walls, foundation) (E)Public spaces around heritage buildings (F)Frescoes on the Havelis (G)Stone carvings and decorations (H)Woodwork (doors, windows) (I)Structural integrity of buildings (e.g., walls, foundation) (J)Public spaces around heritage buildings

(1)Strongly Agree, (2)Agree, (3)Neutral, (4)Disagree, (5)Strongly Disagree

7. Have you noticed any signs of deterioration or neglect in Mandawa's heritage buildings (e.g., cracks, fading frescoes, broken structures)?

(1)Yes, (2)No

8. Do you think Mandawa's heritage buildings are being adequately maintained?

(1)Yes, (2)No, (3)Maybe

9. How aware are you of ongoing conservation or restoration projects in Mandawa?

(1)Very aware, (2)Somewhat aware, (3)Not aware at all

10. On a scale of 1 to 5, In your opinion are local authorities and organizations managing the preservation of Mandawa's heritage sites? (1 being Strongly Agree & 5 being Strongly Disagree) Strongly Agree (2)1, (2)2, (2)3, (2)4 ,(2)5 Strongly Disagree

11. On a scale of 1 to 5, Do you think more efforts should be made to improve the physical condition of Mandawa's heritage sites? (1 being Strongly Agree & 5 being Strongly Disagree) Strongly Agree (2)1, (2)2, (2)3, (2)4 ,(2)5 Strongly Disagree

12. What are the most important actions needed to maintain or improve the physical condition of Mandawa's heritage buildings?

(1)More frequent maintenance (2)Restoration of specific damaged buildings or Havelis (3)Better enforcement of preservation laws (4)Increased public awareness (5)Training for local craftsmen on traditional restoration techniques (6)All of the above (7)Other:.....

13. What is your overall opinion on the physical condition of Mandawa's historic heritage in comparison to other heritage sites you have visited?

(1)Much better, (2)Better, (3)Similar, (4)Worse, (5)Much worse

Thank you for your participation! Your insights will help contribute to the ongoing efforts to preserve Mandawa's rich cultural and historical heritage.

This questionnaire is designed to gauge public perception and gather detailed feedback on the physical condition of Mandawa's heritage, focusing on both the strengths and areas that may require improvement.

Do you have any additional comments or suggestions regarding the preservation and condition of Mandawa's heritage sites?