

A3 - 16.10.2013



**WELL
RESTORATION**



STORYTELLING



**BUKSH
MUSEUM**

ANALYSIS

PROJECT

ANALYSIS

SURVEY

ANALYSIS

PROJECT

ANALYSIS

SURVEY

ANALYSIS

PROJECT

ANALYSIS

Fieldtrip 1.
November -
December 2012

Fieldtrip 2.
March -
April 2013

Fieldtrip 3.
October -
December 2013

Fieldtrip 4.
April -
May 2014

Fieldtrip 5.
September -
November 2014

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KEY

Red text

= indicates changes made to the research intentions after the previous fieldtrip

~~Strikethrough text~~

= indicates items completed during previous fieldtrip (most objectives are never considered 'complete' and can always be improved upon. However, a few are not considered worth repeating / refining and this is indicated by the strikethrough text).

Intentions for Fieldtrip 3

These intentions were modified during each field trip: refer to the front of each field trip diary to see the progression of ideas.

Question 1. What are the relationships between architectural remains and culture at the scale of building, neighbourhood, Tajganj? (consider construction, maintenance, use over time and cyclical time, symbolic value, archive of understanding).

1a. How does this build up depth in the urban order?

Intention formed from desktop study and reflection on previous fieldwork:

Through conducting collaborative surveys, interviews and making exercises (taking time, building up slowly, building trust, starting with many informal on the spot conversations) **with core interest group (mainly guides), concentrating on the two identified chowk sites in the study area. A live 'participatory' project is needed to open up opportunities for different groups, counteract the bias of interview and mapping:**

1. Record the ways that the existence of a listed 'monument' affects its surrounding area.
2. Record the ways that the existence of an unlisted 'monument' affects its surrounding area.

3. Investigate how and why specific buildings have been repaired and modified over time - record ownership + role of owner.

4. Find out which local buildings are important to residents.

5. Engage in conversations about the history of the area generally, how people imagine that history and in what ways it is important (progress, renewal or fate?)

6. Engage in conversations about Mughal and Colonial times - do these feature in current identity stories?

7. Record the decision making structures that come into play when focussing on different places

(institutions of commitment).

8. Look at institutional horizons (conditions for living collectively) as a way of thinking about 'community'. Explore relationship (various exchanges) with rest of city.

Produce:

1. Conservation "vocabulary" - set of available materials and techniques in the area (come at this sideways, more openly how and why do people make particular things out of particular materials?)

2. Maps of Tajganj at different scales, picking out 'historic' fragments of importance.

3. Building studies (plan, section) of listed and unlisted buildings relating to community activity.

Through desktop survey and looking at records from this trip:

1. Create historic timeline of Tajganj and Agra (Explore the concept of 'community')

2. Research 'indian village' in relation to mughal city.

Research history of construction materials being used in Tajganj

Question 2. Compare ASI, CURE/RAY, local opinions about important culture and the architecture underpinning it, or vice versa.

Intention formed from desktop study and reflection on previous fieldwork:

Through conducting collaborative surveys and interviews and making exercises:

1. Investigate conflicts between the slum-upgrading programme and Agra's heritage protection programme for Tajganj.

2. Find out important memories and stories of local residents and compare these to what the 'official' heritage protection policies endeavour to protect.

3. Explore maintenance (and history of maintenance) of places, its relationship to civic commitment and political participation (add to building studies).

4. Explore, through active involvement, the process of 'self curation' with residents. How would tourists be guided through the area if residents were totally in charge?

Produce:

1. Comparative drawings of instances where architecture has perceived 'heritage' value at area/building scale.

~~2. Guidance documents for repair of unlisted sites with perceived 'heritage value'.~~

3. First of all, study a 'type' of place in detail, spend time in it, compare meaning for different residents.

Through desktop research:

Look further into area's history and why it is/could be valued by external 'experts' eg Mughal water technology.

Question 3. What are the local/collective understandings of the conflicts between various interpretations of 'heritage value'?

Intention formed from desktop study and reflection on previous fieldwork:

Through holding activities relating to the topic which engage people with different interests and enthusiasms - provide multiple ways to get involved:

- Build collective involvement/understanding in relation to sites of contention due to conflicting 'heritage' values.
- hold open ended activities where residents can bring in information they feel is relevant.
- Aim for truthful (less polite) discussion, which

will take trust-building first.

- Ask about previous encounters with ASI - what is the opinion of the ways they protect buildings?
- With residents, compare the 'self-curation' activity with other tourism and heritage plans for Tajganj.

Produce:

Records of event: both material outcome of making and interviews/discussions with participants.

Surveys and Interviews: Actions

Two chowks sites were chosen and surveyed and physical surveys carried out. The physical surveys extended into the surrounding area as much as possible within the time of the fieldtrip.

Interviews with CURE's girls' savings groups/craft groups were conducted. Workshops were carried out with the girls, asked them to invite friends and family. At this point we started getting requests to conduct more workshops in other participants' houses.

'Heritage houses' on the chowk. Asked to look round, take pictures, especially from the rooftop, leading to discussion about the surrounding area with various family member groups. They might

then introduce us to more.



Diwanji ka Mohalla temple chowk

Bilochpura mosque chowk

Surveys and Interviews: Resistance & Accommodation

How do you get across a completely new idea or task to people, especially if it is open-ended, or the subject/field of study isn't a known institution? One needs a lot of trust from participants to be vague with your instructions: people are more likely to get involved and commit if objectives are clear.

A completely different and thorough set of survey information was given/ allowed to be collected after proper introductions were carried out by the mosque committee. This allowed a much closer look at some of the ruined colonial houses in Bilochpura.

The realisation has been formed that heritage values of the ASI clash with the current condition of densification in Tajganj and also the reality of change that has already come to pass - eg. the road has already been raised which has already damaged most of the colonial houses at ground floor level.

More enquiries were made regarding people's livelihoods, especially in Bilochpura sheds light on the city condition of Tajganj inside the main roads, and the importance of these roads has become more clear.



After a relatively formal meeting with the Bilochpura Mosque Committee (left) led by the Maulvi, I was given much greater access to privately owned buildings such as that on the right, in order to create a much more detailed survey of the area.

Surveys and Interviews: Reflection on Method

Theme: Broaching complex subject matter

Researching local history was a task residents could accept and see merit in.

Theme: Time

Slowly trust was built as people started to understand my intentions



A meeting to discuss the Mughal well in Diwanji ka Mohalla

Storytelling, Plaques Game: Actions

All the people met through the described 'introductions and rapport building' in fieldtrips one and two were asked to meet in the chowk. We (consistent collaborators and myself) gave out 'plaques' – sheets with a decorative frame - this was an extra communicative non-verbal tool (it gave people who were unsure/arriving late etc confidence to copy others as the task was clear). We asked people to write local stories and myths on them, then blu-tack their story to a relevant building or site.

Self-curated 'pop-up' exhibitions led by the consistent collaborators were hosted in close connection with the mosque committee.



Participants were invited to write or draw stories about their neighbourhood onto 'plaques' that were then displayed in the chowks.

Storytelling, Plaques Game: Resistance & Accommodation

1. Both games, in both chowks, were delayed for a) muharram and b) mourning. The time of day/year should have been taken into account – different groups with different interests occupy shared places at different times. Certain behaviours were found to be inappropriate in shared space at certain times.

Observation of time and rhythms became a crucial consideration: leaving enough time to allow for events, making sure in advance (as much as possible) what events may take place in the project site, constantly time mapping to get a better feel for rhythms becomes part of method.

2. The first exercise attempt in Diwan ji did not grab people's interest. I wanted adult answers, but the 'game' didn't feel adult. It felt a bit silly. People were reluctant to get involved due to a lack of gravity/importance (note. this is different from something not being fun. However, being made to 'perform' is not fun for most people, and shy people feel excluded). I ignored the existing institutions built up for discussion – a certain decorum.

Consistent collaborators suggested that it would be better if we approach a 'community leader' figure in the bastis to ask permission to carry out the plaques game. From these sources we were guided in decorum, sent to the people whose



Drawings made at the time of the events showing areas in pink that were 'off limits' to the exercises at certain times for certain reasons.

EXERCISED EVERY DAY.

- 100% commitment to appropriate behaviour + silence at prayer times.
- Strong commitment, some activity continues (cleaning, children, reading)
- Some commitment, but also passers-by, non-moslem continuing activities

permission it was felt was needed, whose guidance it was felt was needed – social structures of decision-making started to reveal themselves and then we had to decide how much to work with that, and how much to cut across it.

3. Limits to display and content - in Diwan ji, papers were cleared away. In Bilochpura, again paper was seen as 'trash' and we couldn't pin it to the Mosque. We had to take it down by prayer time. Some stories were seen as inappropriate for more open areas.

4. Limits to behaviour during event - gathering and reading the exhibition during prayer time was not allowed, for example.

After learning from these flaws, the method was altered to ask for the heads' help hosting the plaques game. So a three stage game (asking permission, inviting people, then hosting a game in approved location) a four stage game (asking for permission/help, having a meeting with the relevant heads, getting participants to invite more people to contribute, working with young people on the exhibition).



Learning from the first exercise in Diwanji ka Mohalla, the second exercise in Bilochpura incorporated more stages, including a relatively formal meeting with the mosque committee, and less formal meetings with families at home.

5. Participation - everyone could be included in the game due to the 'publicness' of the places involved, and the physical/ environmental needs of older people.

Certain young people had become interested and attached to the process. I asked them to put up a pop-up display of the work. In conjunction with the guides, they were in charge of the exhibition, taking advice, and following the rules of older participants.



Consistent collaborators created pop-up exhibitions in the chowks displaying the stories and local legends that people had written about.

Storytelling, Plaques Game: Reflections on Method

Theme: Time

Better results were achieved when working in response to 'local time' rather than my own 'project time' (pre-conceived project schedule).

Theme: Broaching complex subject matter

There is no benefit to simplifying tasks - people became more involved when we committed to taking the research seriously.

Theme: Thoroughness/ inclusion

Not everyone participated in big public events, hanging back and observing. Lots of people's attendance doesn't equal inclusiveness.

Theme: The core team was deeply involved in all tasks and they discussed issues with people who were less involved.



Filling out plaques and displaying them in Diwanji ka Mohalla temple chowk.

Storytelling, Making Signage: Action, Resistance + Accommodation

Zardozi (beaded embroidery) is carried out by young women in Muslim bastis. These women in particular were not able to be so involved with the exhibition creation. We therefore hold workshops with the young women in Bilochpura that we knew did zardozi.

Listening - picking up on points of genuine interest/enthusiasm - we approached the women about applying the skills they picked up in zardozi to making designs for street signs and furniture. They wanted to use their henna drawing skills instead. So we started with a henna workshop. They invited friends, friends of friends, and we found that in the younger generation of women across the basti (and then after that we found

across Tajganj) henna was widely practiced and enjoyed. What this meant was that most women had a high level of skill at painstakingly detailed drawing, and on top of this recognised a certain language of popular symbols that was at once traditional but also at the mercy of fashion, preferred designs were constantly changing and being updated.

Judging levels of confidence, we started drawing on hands. Slowly we moved to hand shapes on paper, then to other designs on the paper, slowly talking about the different shapes of furniture the designs could be applied to.

I tested a scraffito technique and scratching



Bilochpura women creating zardozi in their homes (left) and showing me their henna designs (right).

Storytelling, Making Signage: Actions Resistance + Accommodation

designs into coloured plaster. This allowed the women to directly scratch henna designs into the finished product, which they enjoyed - it was realised that after having the women's designs carved into stone, and realising this limited their creative involvement with the furniture as stone carving was recognised as a male activity.



Bilochpura marble workers carve the women's henna designs into red sandstone.

Storytelling, Making Signage: Reflections on Method

Theme: Thoroughness / inclusion/ and Active Involvement

Iteration was incredibly important to attract more participants to workshops and for people to engage more deeply through having time between workshops to reflect.

Using an existing skill is easy, but developing it in a new way to meet city/global heritage standards is tricky. Conflict between this local idea of what is wanted by them, and ASI/CURE idea of 'appropriateness'. It is really a TASTE issue.



Bilochpura women scratch their own designs into plaster to make tiles, which are then displayed in the mosque chowk (showing the level of appreciation residents had for these tiles, as the paper plaques were not allowed to be placed in the chowk).



Storytelling, Making Seats: Actions, Resistance + Accommodation

The local mistry (who works on building repair and extensions in Diwan ji Mohalla - not anything to do with heritage) participated in this workshop with us. He chose his favourite design from a number of precedents that I showed him simply by typing 'concrete seat' into a Pinterest search.

From this point the process moved forward as resistances were encountered and new possibilities presented themselves.



Creating concrete furniture (left) and displaying it (right) in Diwanji ka Mohalla.

Theme: Potential clash between ultimate quality/ craftsmanship and inclusion.

Preference for a complex design - again conflict between developing skill with crafts-people and inclusion of many.

Cost of materials that are used traditionally by craftsmen is high, and cost of the raj mistry is also high - makes it hard to apply local skill to local place.

It became apparent that the preferred way of working was to roughly cast concrete in crate slats using reinforcement bars for structure. After this, the object would be made neat by plastering with cement. This cement plastering requires a

lot of skill and time, and we wanted to produce an object that could be replicated by the youth boys' group and other residents in the area so that they could learn about mixing good quality concrete and lime plaster. The mix was also a very unattractive (according to all participants) dark grey, using a lot of cement.

I suggested we move to casting in oil cans in order to concentrate on perfecting good quality and attractive concrete mixes, and use surface treatments such as embedded tiles or scraffito decoration.

Casting in oil cans showed that there was not a good level of understanding about mixing colours



Making the first concrete seat with Diwanji mistries exposed their preferred method of using concrete: to create a rough cast using a formwork made of crate pieces, and then to plaster a smooth finish over the top afterwards.

with concrete, (and why would there be, in a place where concrete is always plastered over?) and we worked on this together.

The aggregate was too big, so there were some imperfections in the finished surface. This caused the masons to feel that they wanted to cement plaster the finished product rather than just leave it as a casting, and this cemented layer was weaker and more crumbly than the original mix, reducing the time that the product will look nice for. Using recycled cans seemed like a sustainable option, but because of grooves and dents in their shape, the cans had to be cut off, so couldn't be reused. It would actually be more sustainable to create one mould out of the sheet metal used for making

round pillars (prevalent in the area) which could be reused.

We decided together to do several pours, with different mixes, to create test furniture that acted as a number of colour swatches for future furniture.

Using broken waste white marble tiles (a waste product of the area's marble industry) for the top of the seat created a strong and durable seat surface

We mastered some attractive colour mixes with natural materials surkhee, sands, and reduced the amount of cement needed by using lime.



Colourful furniture made by the Diwanji mistries.

The masons then started using much brighter colours and dyes (new materials) which they preferred, as did most residents (to subtler traditional dyes). This is not what ASI/tourism department would consider appropriate.

Placing the furniture in the study area with participants results in a considerable increase in collaborators and suddenly claims of the place become apparent to the group and discussions begin regarding privacy, ownership of space, and the structures of maintenance.

Over a few months, permanent shaded benches are constructed in the same place as the seats were placed by community.



Finishing techniques allude to local skills: marble pieces on the left and henna designs on the right.

Other crafts-people, not known about at the start of the research, started to make themselves known throughout the two years. This was not 'heritage' identified out by outsiders but identified in our interviews with local residents.



Placing the furniture was not easy: finally two locations were agreed upon by the participants.

Storytelling, Making Seats: Reflections on Method

Theme: Thoroughness / inclusion/ and Active Involvement

My method developed to play to people's strengths rather than selecting only people with skills that suit a predefined 'product'.

Theme: Design authorship/leadership

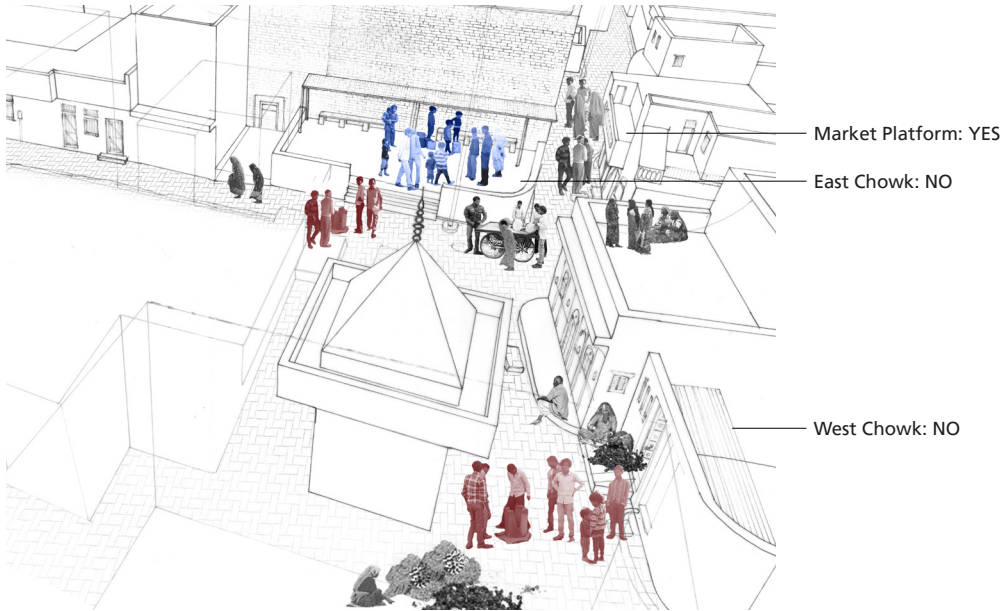
Taste is often at the centre of the differences between heritage intentions of different groups, and upon this prejudice/ snobbery is built.

Theme: Role of objects in building understanding

There is only one outcome in a made object and the outcome is clear to see. There can be no misunderstandings: the result is plain to see and on seeing it, people know whether they like it or not, and more importantly, when it is put

down somewhere it is actually there, and all the resistances are apparent – you can manipulate a sketch or a plan so that it appeals to everyone. When you actually put a seat down, if it's in the wrong place, that is immediately clear and people can move it around until they are happy with it (same with how it looks).

The seats were a metaphor for the presence of tourists. When a seat was down, it was much easier to imagine how one would feel if a person was also there, without a person actually being there. A chair can be moved without any rudeness to anybody (as long as I had built up enough trust for people to feel as though they were not being rude to me by moving the chairs). Through this



1:1 'measuring exercise' of experiencing the chairs together in different places, making judgements and moving them, our local curatorial group (which also started with young enthusiastic people but gathered a crowd quite quickly due to the feat of strength of lifting a concrete chair!) could get a consensus on appropriate stopping points for the tourist trail with a great degree of transparency to other local residents who could easily chip in opinions.

Theme: Thoroughness / inclusion - some people don't get involved until the furniture placing event.

Theme: Making - it took creative making to achieve proper discussions, expose conflicts.

Theme: Complicated topic - different bastis used different methods to engage with the topic.

Theme: Hosting - the idea of making the seat came from earlier exercises when we found that residents had a saying 'guest is god' – and would not say a bad word about tourism or tell us which parts of the town were off limits to the tourist trail (possibly also because of the perception that where tourists go, money follows).

The seats could represent the presence of future tourists enough to bring about the rejection of the trail going into certain places (that had not come up as an issue in purely verbal discussions) - and could be rejected bluntly, because they were not people (guests).



Seats placed in the Protected Area in Diwanji ka Mohalla

Photographs, Drawings

Temporary wedding structures placed along Poule Mandi Street in Diwanji ka Mohalla.





Birthday party with Linkworkers on the Main Road in KFC (left), and craft workshop in Diwanji ka Mohalla (right).

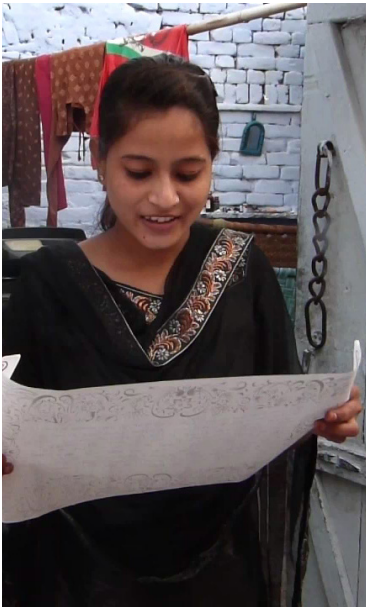
Flower market in DkM, and exhibition of plaques in the flower market (right).

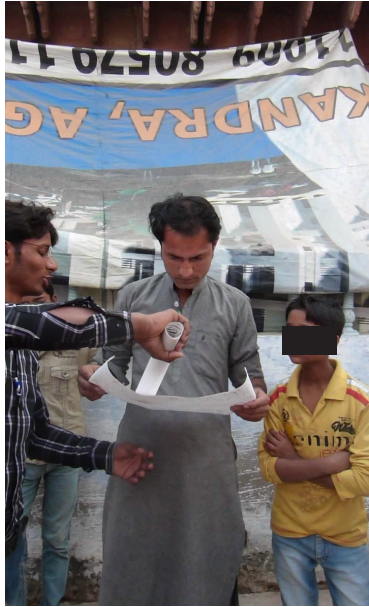




Residents in Diwanji ka Mohalla show me photos of their work - this is a photo from one of many florists in the area.

Plaques exercise, Bilochpura





Plaques exercise, Bilochpura

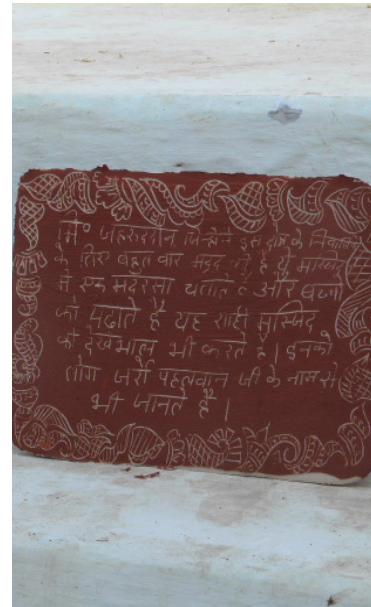
Urs, Shahi Masjid, Bilochpura





Sites considered to be architectural heritage, Bilochpura

Plaque display, Bilochpura





Plaque display, Bilochpura

Plaque display, Bilochpura

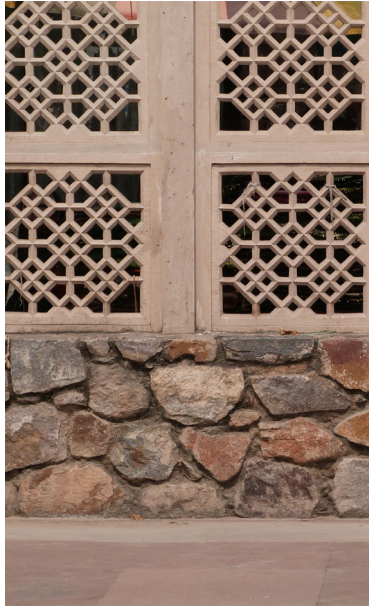




Plaque display, Bilochpura

Visit to Nizamuddin Basti, New Delhi





Visit to Nizamuddin Basti, New Delhi

Visit to Nizamuddin Basti, New Delhi





Visit to the Red Fort, Agra

Visit to the Red Fort, Agra





Visit to the Red Fort, Agra

Discoveries about the Urban Order

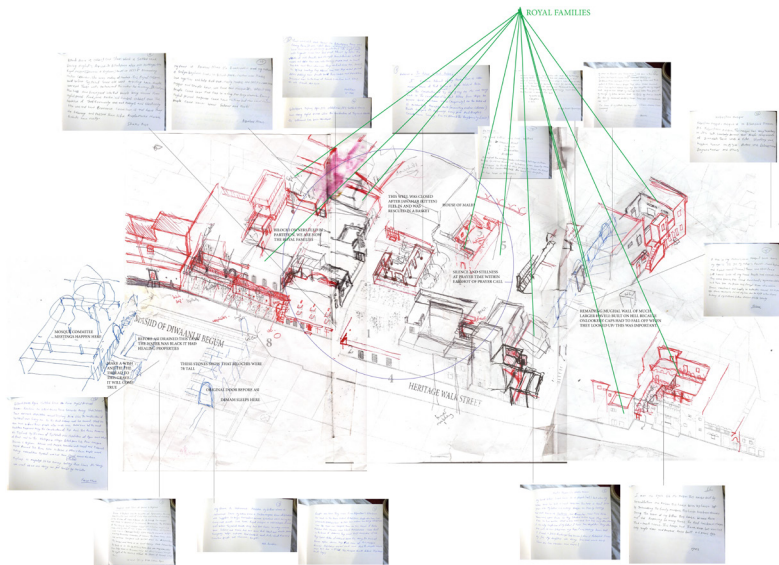
The relationship between urban and architectural order started to become clear after proper surveys and conversations - I could start to get an idea of 'the whole' from the fragments. I also started to see these things in relation to decision making structures like the mosque committee.

Building studies start to demonstrate ASI/local conflict.

There was no shared space where one could act 'freely' (ie freedom from, as opposed to freedom to). There is a deep rooted understanding of appropriateness in different spaces, at different times.

Particular power structures and committees in each basti were uncovered, showing just how different the two neighbouring bastis are. The plaques game showed up a different set of local 'heritage' priorities in different groups of people, and showed that many commitments to place were acted out through institutions set up for the purpose.

I have uncovered architectural features with a peripheral role in supporting memory - street patterns, bazaar, chowks, stairs... the obvious diversity of the area is apparent, start to understand 'depth'



Field sketch of Bilochpura, with stories from residents.

Material 'appropriateness': Tourists/CURE like the things that have been made by the women; residents sometimes prefer the more 'official' and mass-produced looking things. The ASI choose a 'heritage-appropriate' palette that they themselves have worked out (pastiche, victorian looking streetlights etc).

'Heritage' craft skills are something that has developed and diversified in Tajganj over centuries, and decades, incorporating new ideas, new 'heritages' from migrants. This is not recognised as cultural heritage in the way that the souvenir-making crafts such as marble work are.

Conflict between the ASI or the tourism department's heritage values, and local values becomes much more clear after this exercise, and through this the urban order also becomes much more clear.



Comparison: street furniture and signage at an ASI Protected Monument (left) and furniture created by Tajganj residents (right).



Field sketch of the furniture placing event.

