



## INTACH

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### CITY'S OLDEST CHURCH STANDS UNDER HER FAMILY TREE

For 72 years, Diana Brooks lived five generations removed from her roots in Delhi. This art historian and curator from England is the great-great-great granddaughter of the legendary Colonel James Skinner, who built Delhi's oldest standing church between the years 1823 and 1836. On her first visit to India now, Brooks was drawn 'home' by the church -- St James' at Kashmere Gate. She will visit the edifice on Tuesday morning. For her, the place has added importance, as some of her ancestors lie buried there. There is a sense of urgency about Brooks' visit. The idea being to make the pilgrimage "before it is too late".

**THE SKINNERS**  
Brooks has come armed with well-researched documents about Col Skinner and an almost 40-year-old, yellowing family tree beginning with David Skinner in 1713. Col James Skinner was one among the three sons and three daughters born to Hercules Skinner (a descendent of David Skinner) and a Rajput princess. "The Rajput wife was shocked at the thought of sending her daughters to school. What followed was the most horrendous thing... she committed suicide," said Brooks, sharing a piece of family history. Col Skinner's son, who was also named Hercules, had a daughter named Helen Mary Skinner. "She was my great grandmother, whom I distinctly remember," said Brooks. The Brooks still have 19th century India-made silver cups that they use during christenings. There are many family portraits, too. While the heirlooms kept the India connection alive, Brooks' mother made it a point to attend the annual reunions of British officers of Skinners' Horse, till she died in the year 1985. Brooks has no siblings but "many of the cousins are interested in knowing their family history." Vikram Chandra's Red Earth and Pouring Rain and William Dalrymple's The City of Djinns helped her a lot in her research. "Not to mention my friends Nigel Warrington and Lau Thorbjorn, who had come here in January 2009 and brought back a lot of photos of the church. Besides, Nidheesh Saxena of Pragema Travels did all the coordination and ground work for my visit here." And has her research thrown up any reasons for why the church was named after St James? "Oh well, there are a lot of St James' Churches in England, too. It is quite a popular name." St James' Church Brooks' refrain is, "I should have come here before. "After all, the church her great-great-great grandfather built is no ordinary building. St James' is a combination of classical European and late Mughal styles of architecture complete with stained glass windows. Col Skinner had formed a cavalry regiment that was named after him as Skinner's Horse Skinner was once severely wounded in battle. He prayed and offered to build a church if he survived. So, the church, a token of thanksgiving, was commissioned around 1823, and consecrated in 1836. The conservation body INTACH carried out major restoration work at the church from 1996 to 2001. The problems addressed included a leaking roof, large horizontal cracks in the outer dome and stained glass windows covered with inches of dust and grime. Among the donors for the conservation work was the Indian Army regiment of Skinner's Horse.

## **SOURCE**

**20<sup>th</sup> October 2009, Hindustan Times**

### **THREE CONSULTANTS TO DESIGN SIGNBOARDS FOR MONUMENTS**

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has roped in three different consultants to develop signages for 46 monuments being spruced up for the Commonwealth Games, starting on October 3 next year. The selected monuments are being given a facelift as they fall on the way to the Games venues, as part of an attempt to showcase Delhi's heritage. Heritage architects and conservationists say three different agencies working on the signages will go against uniformity in overall aesthetic look of the monuments. But a senior ASI official said distribution of work will bring in "healthy competition" and "better output". The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), Rachna Vishwanathan and Consultants, and Poonam Thakur of Srishti Consultants are developing the signages for ASI. INTACH, which has about 15 monuments, has already signed the contract; the other two consultants will be signed up this week, officials said. "Each of them have proposed their own design — we will implement them after the final proposal is approved," a senior ASI official told Newline. "This will create healthy competition and there will be better output. None of the designs have been approved so far." The official said INTACH's initial proposal has been passed but the consultants will have to make a prototype at one of the allotted monuments. The prototype design can be implemented at other sites only after it passes an ASI examination, according to the official. INTACH is also working on signages for 92 smaller monuments under the Department of Archaeology ahead of the Games and has worked out a design that proposes a combination of red sandstone and metal, INTACH's Delhi chapter convenor A G K Menon said. "We are using red sandstone, stainless steel, galvunum steel and heat stickers for signages," Menon said. "We will use a process of stoving to provide a coating on the surface of the signages to prevent scratches." The other design, proposed by Rachna Vishwanathan and Associates, will see signages in different shades of sandstone according to the monument's look. Vishwanathan, who earlier worked on the Qutub Minar Complex signage, will work on 12 monuments. "We will use red sandstone in most monuments, as they blend with the Mughal architecture," Vishwanathan said. "But we might use yellow or off-white sandstone with manual etching for some monuments." Vishwanathan said they will not use any metal.

## **SOURCE**

**20<sup>th</sup> October 2009, Indian Express**

### **DELHI ARCHAEOLOGY DEPT TO SPRUCE UP 92 MONUMENTS FOR GAMES 2010**

If infant flyovers are being polished for the Commonwealth Games, can venerable, 700-year-old monuments be left behind? Delhi government's department of archaeology has decided to restore 92 heritage monuments in the city that are not protected by the Archeological Survey of India (ASI). "Although we have identified as many as 250 monuments, 92 will be spruced up before the Commonwealth Games," said Keshav Chandra, director of department of archaeology. Delhi has over 1,200 heritage structures; the ASI protects 175 of them, which have been identified as those with national importance. It is the responsibility of the Delhi government and the civic bodies to take care of the rest of the monuments. Chandra said the focus in the first phase would be on monuments that are either visible from the road or are near the Games venues. The department has come up with a preliminary notification plan for 27 monuments in south Delhi. These include, among others, the Tomb of Muhammed Quli Khan in the Mehrauli archeological park, the magnificent ruins in south Delhi. The estimated budget for restoring the 92 monuments is Rs 6 crore and the deadline is June 2010. Chandra said they would now focus on a detailed survey of the monument and the area around, a conservation plan, horticultural development and lighting of the heritage structures. But the restoration may not be a breeze. An official who did not want to be quoted, as he was not authorised to speak to the media said ownership issues are expected to crop up. "Objections have already been raised by the Delhi Wakf Board over eight monuments in Mehrauli. We are negotiating with the body," the official said. These monuments will be protected under the Delhi Ancient and

and Historical Monuments and Archeological Sites and Remains Act 2004 (Delhi Act 9 of 2005). The government has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Delhi chapter of the Indian National Trust for Arts and Cultural Heritage, a non-profit pan-Indian body working for heritage conservation, for this project.

**SOURCE**

**21<sup>st</sup> October 2009, Hindustan Times**

**196 INDIAN LANGUAGES ENDANGERED, EXPERTS MULL REVIVAL**

Some 196 Indian languages are endangered, according to a recent Unesco study, and a worried lot of linguists, scholars and policy-makers are meeting in a two-day international seminar here Thursday to discuss how to save these language. "According to the Unesco Atlas of the World's languages in Danger, 2009, India has around 196 endangered languages, among the highest in the world," said Ms Kamalini Sengupta from INTACH Intangible Heritage Division, which is organizing the seminar. "Intach has decided to place endangered languages in our priority area. But to gain a proper perspective and move in a positive direction, the situation needs careful study," Ms Sengupta languages in India will be organized at the India International Centre Scholars like Kapila Vatsyayan as well as linguists and educators will all discuss issues threatening these languages. "Most languages which are endangered are out of the loop of the education system. And the shrinking of languages used in Indian education system is not only because of infrastructure and resource constraints but because of what the market demands," said Udaya Narayana Singh former director of the Central Institute for Indian Languages.

**SOURCE**

**22<sup>nd</sup> October 2009, Statesman**

**ASI AWAITS GREEN SIGNAL FROM RAILWAYS TO BRIDGE A HISTORICAL GAP**

Almost two years after the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) discovered that the 16th century Neela Gumbad was originally part of the Humayun's Tomb complex, it is still waiting for permission from Northern Railways (NR) to be able to connect the two monuments which are at present separated by a road. ASI is proposing to shift the road — used mostly by East Nizamuddin residents — to the eastern edge of Neela Gumbad plot, about 20m from the rail tracks. NR, which also owns the property, is using the land for storing track material. It has been dragging its feet over the issue for almost three years claiming "this is the only available land in Delhi for storing our track material and we cannot give ASI permission to construct a road here". ASI has now approached the chief minister. "The issue needs to be sorted out at a higher level. We have written to CM Sheila Dikshit and sought her intervention. She is expected to visit the site soon," said ASI director-general K N Shrivastava. Officials said the original entrance — giving access from Humayun's Tomb garden — to Neela Gumbad was blocked after construction of the road many years ago. "The blockage has led to significant monument decay and neglect," said sources. The original entrance will be reopened now. The separating road forms a loop around the tomb and connects East Nizamuddin with Gurdwara Dumduma Sahib. On the proposal to shift this road east towards the railway line, a senior NR official said: "We signed an MoU with ASI in 2004 for developing a green area and landscaping but nothing in the agreement talks about giving permission for construction activity. If we allow ASI to build a road on this land, it will come in the way of our expansion plans for Nizamuddin railway station. Our plans have already been affected by ASI's various rules on construction work within 100m and 200m of monuments. Also, we need this land to store our track material and other expensive railway equipment." ASI officials claimed shifting the road would only help railways. "This new road layout will make access easier for concrete sleepers and other goods to the railway tracks. We will also relocate the barracks of railway protection force to the northern end of the plot and build better facilities with no expenses to the railways," said an official. The conservation work in Humayun's Tomb complex is being undertaken by Aga Khan Trust for Culture under an MoU signed with ASI. In 2008,

Neela Gumbad proving the monument was originally part of Humayun's Tomb complex. Lakhs of visitors to this world heritage site are not able to see Neela Gumbad — a monument dating back to mid-16th century that showcases Persian influence on Mughal architecture — due to both ignorance and lack of connectivity.

**SOURCE**

**23<sup>rd</sup> October 2009, Times of India**

**STUDENTS PITCH IN TO PROTECT MONUMENTS**

In an effort to create awareness among the youth, the Archaeological Survey of India has roped in national and international youth organizations to mobilize students to promote heritage preservation. Over 500 students on Friday volunteered to be part of the 'Adopt a Heritage' programme conceptualized by ASI and supported by the United Peace Federation, National Youth Conventional Network, Youth Peace Federation of India. As a first step, an orientation programme was conducted on Thursday to motivate the young students while field work began today with around 650 students gathered at the Qutab Minar and later at Tughlaqabad Fortress for a massive cleanliness drive. The students cleaned up parts of the monuments and also watched how chemical cleaning is done. The drive will be carried out at the Red Fort tomorrow. "Apart from students of 23 colleges in Delhi, 17 international students participated in the cleanliness drive today. They will further pledge to protect the monuments. A large number of these students are part of the National Social Service Scheme and are expected to participate in the 'Adopt a Heritage' programme as a continuous process," said Sandeep Kumar, president of the World Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles, an international youth organization affiliated to the Universal Peace Federation of India. K K Mohammad, superintending archaeologist, Delhi circle, ASI said, "The 'Adopt a Heritage' programme is being organized for over a decade now. We have been successful with the project across the country and have involved several school and college students. Students participate in cultural awareness, cleanliness of monuments and pledge to protect and preserve the monument as their own property. This is a significant exercise as the youth can positively promote awareness regarding heritage conservation in the long run."

**SOURCE**

**24<sup>th</sup> October 2009, Indian Express**

**STUDENTS JOIN IN TO SAVE CITY'S HERITAGE**

ADOPT A MONUMENT Campaign kicks off at Qutub Minar monuments of Delhi and hates the way they have been defaced? Now, you can take responsibility and clean them. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), responsible for preservation of monuments of national importance across the country, has hit upon an idea to harness the potential of students to protect heritage. "Each school or college can adopt a monument in their neighbourhood," said K K Muhammed, chief of ASI, Delhi circle. "While students can do the general cleaning, the ASI staff will do the technical/chemical cleaning. "The 'Adopt a Heritage' movement kicked off in Delhi with volunteers doing some work at Qutub Minar on Friday. More than 500 student volunteers from various colleges of Delhi came together with 15 international volunteers from six countries to do some cleaning after a day's orientation programme on Thursday. Kota Nakai, a Japanese volunteer, said, "It has been a great sharing experience right since yesterday's orientation session." The movement is a joint effort by the Delhi circle of ASI, and Universal Peace Federation (UPF)-Asian Leadership Training (ALT), and the National Service Scheme (NSS). David Mclackland of the UPF said it was the students who came up with the idea. "During the brainstorming session, students suggested that we can carry out cleaning activity at a heritage monument. We then approached the ASI and here we are," he said. Although it is a first of its kind effort in Delhi, the ASI has carried out a similar experiment successfully in Madhya Pradesh in 2005."Don't think this is symbolic gesture," said Meyi Jamir, a second-year DU student. "We can always approach people across India and tell them how they can contribute individually to maintain and preserve our heritage."

## **SOURCE**

**24<sup>th</sup> October 2009, Hindustan Times**

### **STUDENTS GIVE HERITAGE A SHINE, SEND A MESSAGES**

Trash Removed From Area Around Qutub By Indian & Foreign Students, With brooms and dusters in their hands, over 650 students from across the country as well as other nations gathered at Qutub Minar on Friday to spread awareness about keeping heritage sites clean and tidy. The young crusaders could be seen clearing trash around the 13th century monument and telling visitors how crucial it was to preserve monuments. From Qutub, the group moved on to Tughlaqabad Fort. The cleanliness drive was organized by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in association with United Peace Federation, National Youth Conventional Network, Youth Peace Federation India and volunteers of the National Service Scheme (NSS) from various colleges of Delhi University. Apart from Indian students, there were participants from countries like Japan, Korea, Cambodia, Vietnam, Philippines and Thailand. Sandeep Kumar, president of W-carp, an international body under the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF), said: "Our aim is to train youngsters on events that need urgent attention like conservation of heritage or climate change. The organization has volunteers from various countries who are all trying to spread the message of commitment to our heritage and environment." For the 17 international students, the experience of being in India for the month-long project has been very promising. Yutaka from Japan said: "we have been in India for three weeks already and are learning a lot. We are committed towards heritage preservation and are all here to make a contribution." Freelance photographer Karan Kashyap, another volunteer, said he said was helping out with the documentation part of the project. Hundreds of students from DU were busy clearing garbage, wiping the surface facade of monuments in the Qutub complex and sweeping the ground. Komal Jain, a second year Maths Hons student from IP College, said: "We found all kind of trash like chips packets, cigarette stubs and used plastic bags. We hope the awareness drive is effective and visitors to monuments stop littering." The volunteers also took an oath to protect monuments. ASI Delhi circle chief K K Mohammed said: "We have been running the adopt-a-monument scheme for the past few years where students take on the responsibility of keeping these heritage buildings clean. On Saturday, the cleanliness drive will move to Red Fort." Volunteers were given a demonstration of chemical cleaning of monuments. The process of cleaning marble by using Multani Mitti was also shown to them. Students from Shyama Prasad Mukherji College, Laxmi Bai College, Ramjas College, IP College, Janki Devi College, DCAC, Ral Anand College and JMC participated in the drive. "Students and volunteers told tourists about the importance of not defacing monuments," said Mohammed. Lessons against Defacement

## **SOURCE**

**24<sup>th</sup> October 2009, Times of India**

### **NO BUTS IN THIS PARK**

BUTTERFLY PARK Experts, activists say it is good for Delhi's ecological health Of the species reported in Delhi three decades ago, many have vanished. Constantly denied a secure habitat, the small winged wonders were fast vanishing from the city. The Butterfly Conservatory at Lodhi Garden will definitely give a boost to their population in the Capital. "Spread over three acres of especially landscaped area which has been carved out of the 90-acre Lodhi Garden, the conservatory boasts of more than 35 trees and 48 species of nectar and larval food plants for butterflies," said K K Singh, deputy director (Horticulture) of NDMC. The conservatory is a joint effort of the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), University of Delhi's Centre for Environmental Management of Degraded Ecosystems (CEMDE) and Green Circle, a group of green activists. The inspiration for the Lodi Garden conservatory came from the success of the Aravali Biodiversity Park. CEMDE's C R Babu, who has been associated with the Aravali Park and has worked on this project, said: "Of the species reported in Delhi three decades ago, many have vanished." Babu said the Aravali park experiment was excellent. "When it started three years ago, there were barely 17 species and now we have as many

as 74 species there," he said. Lodhi Garden has everything -- sun, shade, dampness, air circulation and isolation (from public) -- to encourage butterfly population. "It can be a wake up tool for environment education," said Suhas Borker, founder member of Green Circle. "We go in for protection of tigers. But smaller things like butterflies are the bio-indicators of ecological health." Bikram Grewal, a bird expert and author of several books on birds, said they were an integral part of a long food chain. "Species like butterflies, bees and insects are also important pollinating agents," he said. Now, what could be better news than this for environmentalists and nature lovers? A butterfly park at Nehru Park in Chanakyapuri is in the pipeline.

**SOURCE**

24<sup>th</sup> October 2009, Hindustan times

**SIRI FORT TO GET GREEN MAKEOVER**

Months after the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) was hauled up by the courts for demolishing the green cover near Siri Fort sports complex, the agency has come up with a recovery plan. As part of the landscaping, the agency is planning to plant more than 4,000 trees. This is besides the extensive greening that will happen along the Siri Fort wall. The wooded area will also have seating arrangements, food outlets and garden-beds dotting the landscape. A DDA official said, "The landscaping plan includes protection of all existing trees, besides plantation of over 4,000 new trees. More than 700 saplings have already been bought by the horticulture department for the green nursery we are setting up at the stadium site." The trees, which are expected to be planted from next month as the site clears up partially post-construction, will cover the area along the Siri Fort wall, a protected heritage site. At present, only around 200 trees remain from the earlier green cover. DDA sources admitted not many of the fauna could be saved, with only 200 of the almost 800 plus trees that were cut being transplanted around the stadium complex. "The landscaping will ensure the area is green again. The complex is 10.91 acres, with the stadium taking up 26,500 sqm — less than 50% of total area. The rest is all going to be landscaped," said the official. As part of the landscaping, DDA's horticulture department plans to plant neem, pipal, siris, chitvan and amaltas. "All plants have ayurvedic qualities and are known to check air pollution," said the official. The height of the new trees being planted have been kept at 8 feet so that the building is camouflaged, as per directions from authorities concerned, said DDA sources. The agency also plans to light the wall during the Games. Sources claimed the paved paths within the wooded area would ensure walking tracks are available, specially since the entry for spectators to the stadium would be via the landscaped part of the complex. Admitted Neemo Dhar, DDA spokesperson, "we are going to do plantation and the necessary permissions have been taken from all authorities concerned. The concept and exact planning is being done." DDA is also planning to build a foot-over bridge along the Siri Fort road, which will lead to the stadium complex. This was done as the ASI refused to allow a permanent entry along the Siri Fort wall, which is 3m above the ground, said officials. The FOB, which will be retractable, will allow spectators to park and ride from Sadiq Nagar, where a school and a park will be turned into a parking spot.

**Preparing For The Games**

DDA to plant more than 4,000 trees in the new stadium complex at Siri Fort sports complex Landscaping plan also has seating arrangements, eateries and garden-beds Stadium entry through an FOB on Siri Fort road, which will be retractable. This will avoid disturbing the heritage Siri Fort wall A dedicated entry for sportspersons and officials through the Siri Fort sports complex on August Kranti Marg Stadium's underground parking will not be functional during the Games due to security reasons.

**SOURCE**

25<sup>th</sup> October 2009, Times of India

## UPCOMING PARKING LOT THREATENS HERITAGE TOMB

The existence of a small, unnamed tomb on Sher Shah Suri Marg is being threatened by the construction of an underground parking for the Delhi High Court. The tomb may not have a name, but is a Grade I (highest, as notified by the Delhi Government Gazette) value heritage structure that features in the list of 141 heritage monuments in the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) jurisdiction, notified a few weeks ago. The monument neither features in the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) list nor that of the Delhi government's of protected monuments. On Sunday, HT visited the spot where the dilapidated but beautiful tomb is perched atop a small mound. The area round the mound has been dug from three sides for construction work. A fully automated six-level underground parking is proposed here. The lot will accommodate 1,500 cars. The Delhi government is funding the project, which has an estimated initial cost of Rs 123 crore. Officials say the proposal will now require clearance from heritage bodies."(After the notification), if a plan for redevelopment of such a property is to be sanctioned by the NDMC, it will have to get clearance from the Heritage Conservation Committee (HCC)," an official said on conditions of anonymity. NDMC spokesperson Anand Tiwari had a different take. "No objection certificate for construction has been given by the ASI, subject to certain conditions for protecting the monument," he said. However, there is no explanation as to how ASI comes into the picture as this is not an ASI protected monument. Chennai-based Consolidated Construction Consortium and Samjung Tech Consortium (design and build) are carrying out the construction work. Delhi Metro is the consultants. The land originally belonged to L&DO, which was with the National Sports Authority of India. It was transferred to the High Court. K C Mittal, former HC Bar Association president--during whose tenure this project was initiated--said, "We have taken permission from the Central Vista Committee too. So far as this monument is concerned, it would not be disturbed and even the surroundings would be developed properly." Mittal was very clear about the need of the "parking." "You have to see the larger public interest," he said.

### SOURCE

26<sup>th</sup> October 2009, Hindustan Times

## STEP WELL INTO A WATER- RICH DELHI

**BAOLI COMEBACK** Wells that hydrated Mughal homesteads are being restored to refresh 21st century households Delhi's stepwells are stepping into the future. Centuries ago, these elegant, steeply sunken baolis collected rain water and gave relief to dusty Dilli. In three weeks' time, some of them will be hydrating New Delhi. In an attempt to promote water conservation in the Capital, the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) has successfully revived water channels at two baolis, and plans to start resurrecting another in the coming week. The Hindu Rao Baoli, located near the ridge road in North Delhi is next on the ASI's list after it successfully revived water channels at a baoli at the Red Fort and the Agrasen ki Baoli in Central Delhi. Restoring the baolis was not just about fortifying crumbling, medieval walls, but also about bringing the groundwater back in channels that have remained parched for decades. "Depletion of groundwater due to commercial and human activities have led to fluctuations in the city's water table over centuries," a senior ASI official who did not wish to be named, told Hindustan Times. "We had to resort to methods like creating and modifying the physical slopes originally designed to charge these storage sites with rain water, as well as minutely altering the surrounding areas' topography," added the official. Experts feel such measures may not solve the city's water problem entirely, but would go a long way in ensuring a better future for water-conservation. "Reviving traditional means of water-conservation in a city facing a water crisis is certainly an important strategy," said A.K.G Menon, Convenor of the Delhi Chapter of INTACH. A significant architectural component of the North Indian plains, baolis are found in states like Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan and even Madhya Pradesh. Some have also been unearthed in the Western states of Gujarat and Maharashtra. "Given the geographical and climatic features of the country's northern and western regions--the dryness and heat--as well as the terrain's flatness, these step wells, some of them eight feet below the ground, were a man-made response to combat natural limitations "

## **SOURCE**

**26<sup>th</sup> October 2009, Hindustan Times**

### **HC MULTI-LEVEL PARKING HITS HERITAGE HURDLE**

A multi-level parking lot for Delhi High Court lawyers coming up next to the National Stadium has run into trouble with NDMC's heritage wing. The civic agency says it is likely to stop the ongoing construction work as a heritage structure a 16th century tomb stands right in the middle of the frenzied construction activity. Now that listed NDMC heritage sites have been notified, any development work around these sites require approval of the heritage conservation committee. Officials said it is Delhi High Court which will need to get the approval. The tomb, dating back to Sher Shah's period, stands on a raised platform at the construction site where DMRC is building the three-storeyed parking lot under a contract agreement with Delhi High Court. A senior NDMC official said: "The land allottee Delhi High Court will have to re-apply for permission to build the parking lot as under the recently notified NDMC heritage list, any redevelopment plans around these listed structures would require approval from the heritage conservation committee. No approvals have been granted here." DMRC officials, meanwhile, said that the land was transferred from LNDO to Delhi High Court for construction of a parking lot and they were merely the contractors for the project. "In any case, the monument does not fall in the construction zone," said an official. K C Mittal, former president of Delhi High Court Bar Association under whose tenure the parking lot project started, said: "The monument where the parking lot is coming up is unprotected. Both ASI and the central vista committee have given permission for the work so there is no problem. The monument is in a small portion and no one will touch it. The surrounding area will also be beautified. This parking lot is all underground and there is no construction on the surface level." Conservationists, however, claimed that with the construction of a three-storeyed underground parking lot, the foundation of the monument could be damaged. Sources said that Delhi High Court was earlier refused permission for the parking lot by the heritage conservation committee. It did not re-apply. Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has given an NOC for the project which falls in the regulated area for the Sher Shah Gate. It has also imposed a condition that the monument has be carefully preserved. "The site is located within 200m of Purana Qila, a regulated zone. We have given permission but put conditions that the monument at the site remains undamaged and the agency constructing the parking lot will conserve the monument under the guidance of ASI if required. Our permission could be withdrawn if any of the terms of our agreement are violated," said a senior ASI official. Interestingly, the monument also figures in the list of monuments to be notified by Delhi government's state department of archaeology. "The monument is yet to be notified and is under process. Notification should be done in the next few weeks. When it was brought to our knowledge that development work is going on near this tomb, we visited the site to ensure that the portion around the monument is kept as it is. A joint meeting will be held with ASI and DMRC in this regard," said a senior official from the department. Officials said that they would monitor the work to ensure that adequate distance is kept between the monument and the construction. "Otherwise after the notification, we can take action under the Delhi Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 2004," said an official.

## **SOURCE**

**26<sup>th</sup> October 2009, Times of India**

### **BSZ MARG SET FOR MAJOR OVERHAUL**

The busy Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg in central Delhi is all set for a major overhaul with the historic Khooni Darwaza standing on it restored to its pristine glory, if conservationists have their say. As part of the Delhi heritage route project, conservationists looking to reinvent the capital's historic significance, have proposed to make the place pedestrian friendly to enable visitors to walk and absorb its charm. The proposal includes showcasing the Khooni Darwaza that lies hidden in the hustle and bustle of the busy road by moving the large parking area opposite it to an alternative site. The MCD is in talks over the

issue with INTACH which is playing a central role in reviving heritage sites across the capital. "Now we have given a proposal to showcase it given the fact that the heritage route goes through it. The monument is hidden, so we are to reorganize and rework it," said AG Krishna Menon, Convenor of the Delhi Chapter of INTACH. Besides a number of media offices, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg also houses the Maulana Azad Medical College and the office of the Bureau of Indian Standards. "Right now Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg is little more than a parking lot, an absolutely unsuitable place to enjoy. We are saying let us move the parking places somewhere else, restrain it for pedestrians only and make it a lively public place," he said. Parking is a major consumer of space at the road, which is a hub of offices and the proposal to reinvent it includes a plan to shift the parking lot. "We have done the concept, we are now doing the detailed project report which is to be given to the MCD," Menon said. The overhaul will be part of the project to showcase the heritage route and conserve and revive the monuments on it, a section of them ahead of the Commonwealth Games. "We are currently in talks with them with regard to their proposal, but its final shape is yet to be decided," said an MCD official.

**SOURCE**

**26<sup>th</sup> October 2009, Pioneer**

#### **CHANDNI CHOWK NO MORE; DUAC CLEARS NEW PLAN**

Food courts, Mughal era getup for the pavements, British style street furniture and heritage walks are among the proposals mooted in the Chandni Chowk Redevelopment Plan, which was approved by the Delhi Urban Arts Commission (DUAC) in a recent meeting. The aim is to develop the Walled City into a public place free of its present clutter while retaining its heritage ambience. The Chandni Chowk development plan has been mooted by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. Among the recommendations are introduction of low floor, open-tram transportation system with controlled movement and accessibility from both sides. Also included in the plan is a 1.3-km tram line between Red Fort and Fatehpuri Masjid for which the corporation is exploring the options of going into partnership with a private firm. The Rs 15-crore Chandni Chowk plan is the only one that is expected to be completed by the 2010 Commonwealth Games. The sanctioned money though does not include the expenditure for trams which, according to some estimates, may cost upwards of Rs 200 crore. Use of cars will be discouraged and entry and exit to Chandni Chowk will be made one-way -- entry will be from the Old Delhi railway station side and exit from the Red Fort side. Cycle-rickshaws and pedestrians will be encouraged to popularize here. The underlying message of the efforts, explained another official of the corporation, is to ensure that Chandni Chowk is meant for "the people and not for cars". On the cards are 12 heritage walks, many of them starting from Jain Mandir to the Fatehpuri Masjid, Hardayal Library and Jama Masjid. There will also be one from Red Fort to Chandni Chowk. As per the plan, the Parade Ground parking will be turned into multi-level parking and an additional underground multi-level parking would be made. On holidays there will be food courts but overall efforts will be made to acquaint visitors with the overwhelming variety of food that dots the lanes of Chandni Chowk.

**SOURCE**

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**Should you have any comments or suggestions, you could reach us at**

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