

Mutating barriers around the sustainable built environment: a study of Mysore, India.

Post-independence architecture of Mysore City is governed by a version of a well-planned European model neighborhood, with highly defined ownership boundaries. This is in sharp contrast to the free flowing community ownership that existed pre-independence. This poster explores the effects of this imposition of boundary on sustainable neighborhoods.

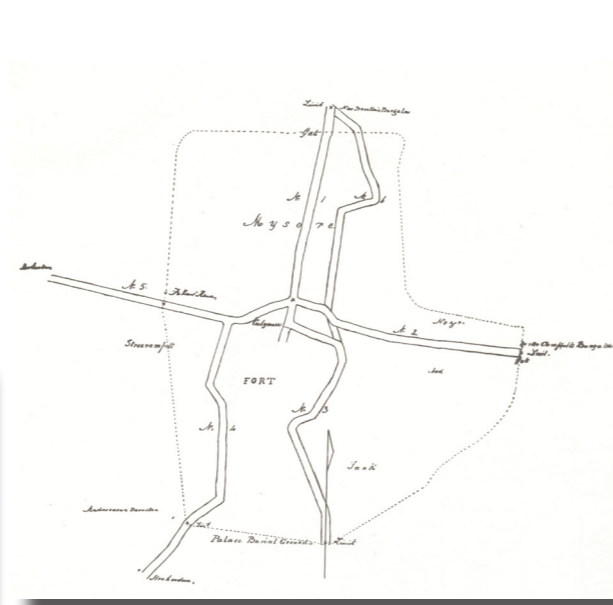
Mysore was a precursor of sustainable practices in the early 1900s. Changes in the political and administrative structures after independence (1947) radically transformed the development practices in India and specifically Mysore. Housing design in pre-independent India was based on vernacular architecture, featuring communal spaces, with inherent sustainable characteristics. The thick walls, small openings and multipurpose areas of these pre-independence buildings clearly demonstrate sustainable design practice. After independence came a move to more formal demarcated layouts, with each house featuring clear, identified spaces for different activities. Priority shifted from the community to the individual, and prevailing common spaces became obsolete. This poster illustrates that such a transition has negative consequences in relation to sustainable development.



'Agrahara' row-housing, as seen by Mario Miranda.

The built environment of pre- and post-independent India has shown transient boundaries of sustainable practices.

The effects of imposition of boundaries (building regulations, prevailing practices) on sustainable neighborhoods of Mysore city is explored by using Indicators; regulation, design, construction, material and socio-cultural aspects.



Mysore: 1865



1902



1939



2011 (proposed CDP)

pre-independence

building design and construction:



Highly climate responsive Sustainable built environment.

Raised podium (jagali) acted as informal meeting place.

Internally, a central hall was used for multi purpose with court open to sky.

Thick mud wall (later brick), timber truss with terracotta tile roofing.



post-independence

The standard house design is a set of rooms with a clearly identified function for each space.

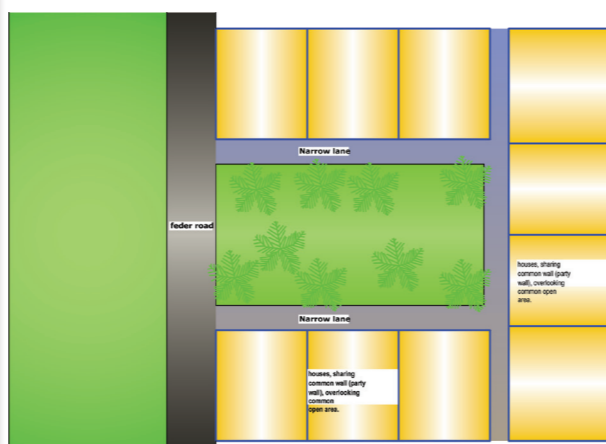
Well-lit and ventilated rooms overlook the open space left as part of the setback on each side of the site or plot.



Houses standing without any relation to each other and have moved away from the road.

Compounds demarcate the property of private individuals and open spaces.

planning and legislation:



Agrahara (Typical Layout)

Residential layouts had evolved from the prototype of the Agrahara (small Brahman villages) that were prevalent 150-200 years ago.

Residences were either linear with a shared party wall, or houses distributed around an open space.

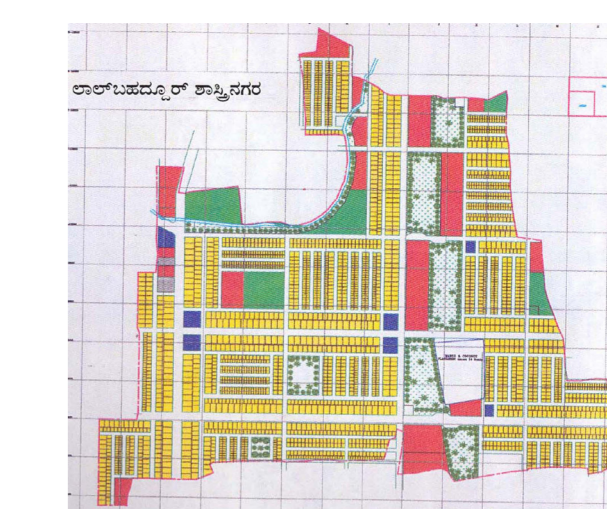


There is a very thin line to differentiate the end of the road from the beginning of the house.

Lalbahadur Shastrinagar (Typical Layout)

Economically driven layouts are developed as plots and in certain layouts model houses are constructed.

Roads, independent of houses, have pedestrian ways.



Layout is well worked out, with a hierarchy of roads, amenities and play areas.

Owners are allowed to build their individual houses based on the Bylaws set by the development authority.

Sl. No.	Area	Area (sq. ft.)		Area (sq. ft.)		Area (sq. ft.)	
		Plot	House	Plot	House	Plot	House
1	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
2	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
3	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
4	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
5	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
6	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
7	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
8	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
9	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
10	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

social and cultural:



Open spaces, Roads, and Jagali acted as interaction spaces and made the society interwoven and close-knit.

Jagalis, which are always in shade, were a perfect space for socializing and acted as a meeting area for the inhabitants.

People shared their leisure activities and entertainment with their neighbors in these informal spaces.

Consumer society in the driving seat: radical shift away from traditional values.

A society that is cosmopolitan and diversified has varied options for entertainment.



The movement away from extended families to nuclear families has also had a bearing on the need for social changes.

conclusion:

- Development regulations have become a barrier to creating a sustainable built environment.
- Regulations often come into conflict with ethical boundaries of sustainable practices.
- Earlier sustainable practices with in the built environment have been eroded by globalising imperatives.
- Moral and social responsibilities have to be accounted for while reconfiguring the boundaries of a sustainable built environment.

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Satish. B. K

Ph.D student
Department of Architecture
School of Arts, Culture and Environment.
The University of Edinburgh. satish.bk@ed.ac.uk

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