

Architectural Conservation and Cultural continuity reinterpreting the Havelis of Mandawa

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Abstract

The physical and cultural heritage of Mandawa has become the focus of recent preservation efforts. The new urban developments of Mandawa now include heritage elements in their planning process which attracts worldwide interest and drives economic growth. Cultural heritage provides automatic belonging to people because it reveals their ancestral roots and family history. The cultural heritage preservation process faces challenges because developers need to maintain authentic elements as core values of cultural heritage. The research demonstrates why heritage building rehabilitation and redevelopment programs need support. The research examines how heritage integration with development projects has triggered a cultural revival. The preservation of Havelis and other historic buildings stands as a vital measure to protect the architectural and cultural traditions of past civilizations. The research examines the essential value of restoring these historical buildings while demonstrating their significance extends past their aesthetic appeal. The Havelis and heritage structures exist as architectural masterpieces which contain complete records of social history and cultural heritage. The process of restoration and rehabilitation creates a connection between historical periods. The practice enables contemporary populations to establish meaningful connections with their cultural heritage. The research examines the intricate value of these structures through their relationship with sustainable development and tourism and their impact on cultural identity. The research investigates how Havelis and heritage structure restoration creates economic expansion and strengthens local communities while safeguarding cultural heritage through specific examples and restoration projects. The research investigates how Mandawa residents interact with its built heritage through authenticity-based assessment. The research evaluates how the cultural Renaissance has created community bonds through its methods to protect buildings for future generations.

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 (Sant, 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 of new development (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

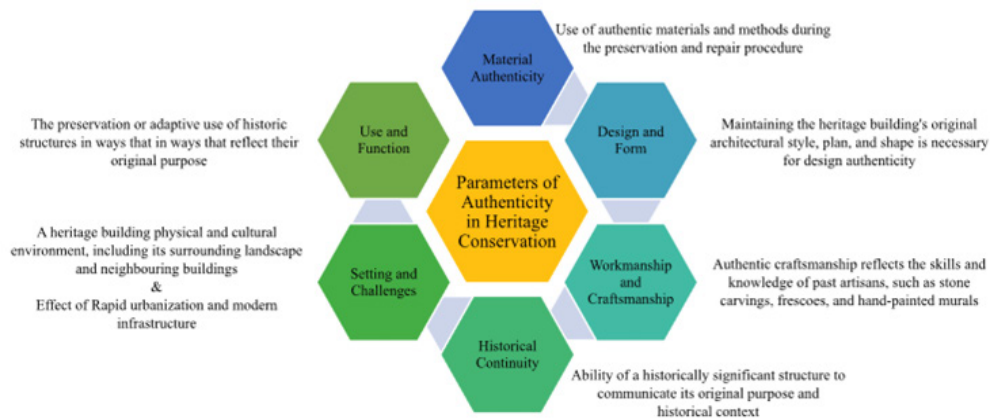


Figure 1: Parameters of Authenticity in Heritage Conservation (Source: Author)

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).

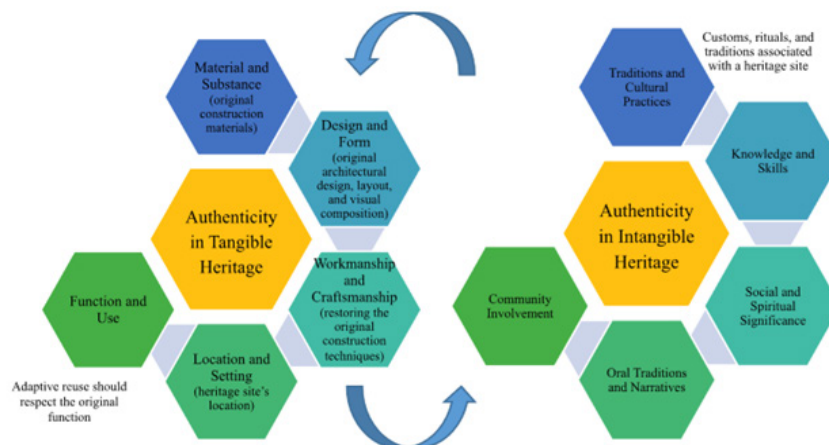


Figure 2: Integration of Tangible and Intangible Authenticity (Source: Author)

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 Methodology

The main research method employed in this study involved documentary research. The research collected data through semi-structured and structured interviews and survey methods in Mandawa and observation of cultural practices. The research team applied defined criteria to analyze documents. The researchers analyzed architectural documents through location surveys and historical photo analysis from literary sources. The building owners and Mandawa Haveli managers provided data to gain better understanding of Haveli. The required sample size for this study at 95% confidence level with 5% margin of error needs to survey more than 2 lakh 50 thousand people but the actual sample size is 384. The research team used the 5-point Linkert scale to evaluate all variables. The researchers used 1 to indicate strong agreement and 5 to show strong disagreement. The researchers conducted a pilot test before starting data collection to verify the measuring scale's accuracy.

The research conducted two separate surveys to achieve its objectives.

- The study examined how people feel about protecting cultural heritage sites. The research team conducted structured interviews with government and commercial sector experts who work in heritage management.
- The study examined Mandawa historic buildings through resident perceptions to determine their authenticity levels. The heritage buildings in Mandawa serve as home to its residents who experience direct impacts from neighborhood transformations.
- The site owner provided verbal information but failed to present any supporting evidence. The lack of pre- and post-building plans information prevented the researchers from performing their planned site validity assessment. The research team conducted multiple site visits at different times to achieve a complete understanding of the ancient area.

The Cronbach's alpha value reached 0.74 according to Table 1. A multiple-choice Likert scale demonstrates appropriate validity when its Cronbach's alpha score exceeds 0.7. The researchers established that the measurement tool used in the study demonstrated face validity. The research team received 396 responses from Mandawa participants who included owners and guides and visitors and tourists and residents. The collected responses exceeded the minimum required sample size of 384 for this research.

$a = \frac{k}{k-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum S^2_y}{S^2_x} \right)$			
Variables	Description	Values	Internal consistency
k	Number of Items	50	Acceptable
S^2_y	The sum of the item's variance	17.24	
S^2_x	variance of the total score	63.21	
a	Cronbach's alpha	0.74	

Findings- Lack of Conservation

The authority together with owners have protected only a few havelis in Mandawa through conservation programs and business development initiatives. The lack of conservation initiatives has allowed the surrounding areas to develop naturally. The area's identity suffers from the lack of heritage respect during these changes. The fast-paced urban development along with changing land uses threatens to damage historic buildings. The increasing development pressure threatens to transform havelis through destruction or modification of their original structures. The redevelopment pattern follows modern urban design principles instead of preserving the traditional character of the site. The building conservation technique's rehabilitation method has caused historic areas including Mandawa to lose their fundamental character according to several observed changes.



Figure 4: Mandawa, Rajasthan, India (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.

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.

The town of Mandawa earned its title as the “Open Art Gallery” because numerous artistically painted Havelis fill its streets. The unique artistic expression of each Haveli creates a beautiful visual experience for visitors who appreciate art and tourism. The Mandawa Havelis serve as historical and cultural landmarks because they showcase the prosperous times of merchant traders. The Havelis showcase the opulent lifestyle of merchants who achieved success through trade while demonstrating their artistic taste. The preservation of Mandawa’s cultural heritage depends on maintaining the original state of its historical buildings. The research validation depends on three sections of study findings which are presented in this paper. The recent rise in importance of both physical and cultural heritage preservation has become a major focus. The research will analyze heritage style revival through a case study of a private owner who restored a heritage building. The first section of study findings includes interviews that aim to explain the conservation practices of building preservation in Mandawa. The survey results from Mandawa residents and tourists and heritage experts and government and conservation authorities demonstrate the significance of restoration work and its essential findings. The third section of this research examines the historical sections of Mandawa’s residential areas. The research focuses on the restored buildings located in Mandawa’s designated neighborhood area. The research demonstrates how inappropriate development projects threaten to erase Mandawa’s distinctive character when left unaddressed.



Figure 5: 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 6: Brilliant frescoes, Open Art Gallery, Mandawa city (Source: Author)



Figure 7: The beautiful frescoes decorating Haveli (Source: Author)



Figure 8: Unkept Havelis of Mandawa (Source: Author)

Summary of key findings

The research involved twenty interviews with public and private sector representatives who provided distinct findings. Seven participants defined authenticity through the restoration of historical elements which included matching colors and patterns to create a harmonious environment that resembles previous styles. The participants also wanted to maintain the original design elements through their approach to façade treatment. The restoration of designs according to eight panel members would create economic advantages through nostalgic sentiment that would attract local residents to increase commercial activity.

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 findings validated both research hypotheses. The town of Mandawa in Rajasthan holds special importance because it played a significant role in the region's historical development. The research aimed to discover how local residents view historic buildings and their preservation status. The structured survey results showed that 87% of participants expressed their connection to their cultural heritage. People understand the symbolic meaning of their heritage even though they remain uncertain about its actual historical architectural accuracy. The residents of Mandawa can tell apart between new buildings made to look historic and actual ancient structures. The preservation of authentic Haveli structures requires special attention when working with heritage buildings. The government of Rajasthan aims to boost international recognition of its cultural heritage while making heritage preservation an integral part of urban planning initiatives. The government officials share their approach to create a cultural revival. The traditional haveli design shows minimal influence from privately owned haveli renovations. The protection of Mandawa's historical value requires systematic research to preserve its heritage. The protection of heritage buildings focuses on a limited number of listed structures while ignoring all other Havelis. The historic haveli area represents the natural growth of the built environment in this local context. The current strategy needs expansion to protect these haveli structures through area-based conservation methods. The study encountered multiple major restrictions during its research process. The available academic literature remains restricted because scientists have conducted minimal research in this specific field. The process of understanding government perspectives faces challenges because the involved coordination efforts remain minimal. The current promotion methods for redevelopment lack sufficient heritage building conservation elements. The absence of architectural documentation for heritage structures made it extremely challenging to confirm their authenticity. People showed greater interest in sharing their experiences through casual conversations instead of providing formal documents. The research contains essential restrictions which affect its overall validity. Additional extensive research must be conducted to study this subject further.

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