

FORUM FOR A BETTER HYDERABAD

Nine years of Activism & Service

NEWS LETTER : 7 NOVEMBER - DECEMBER - 2009

(Private Circulation only)

Compiled by : R.K.Sinha

ACITIVITES :

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER - 2009

HERITAGE

MOULA ALI KAMAN

Forum's letter dt 17.11.09 to the Director, State Archaeology Dept. Hyderabad is self explanatory.

"We refer to our letter dated 29.6.06, a copy of which is enclosed for ready reference.

Moula Ali Kaman is the gateway to the famous Hazrat Ali shrine in Moula Ali. It is the practice of the devout to first stop at the Kaman, offer their respects, and then move on to the shrine of Hazrat Ali in Moula Ali. By various reports, the gate is 200 – 250 years old. (See the Hindu and the Deccan Chronicle of 29.6.06).



Sri M. Vedakumar is seen with local populace at Moula Ali Kaman

As of now, the structure is not a notified heritage building, but Hyderabad abounds in structures which have heritage features but are not yet notified as heritage building. Identification and notification of heritage buildings is an on-going process. That is why no structure which prima facie has heritage features and a long history of any important association, even if not notified as a heritage building, should be tampered with till full

investigations are made. Once a heritage structure is lost, it cannot be retrieved and is lost to the city.

On the initiative of several Civil Society Groups and respecting the sentiments of the local people, it was decided to restore the structure and the State Archaeology Department was entrusted with the task. Kindly advise us the present status of the work of restoration.

We urge upon you and others concerned to expedite the restoration work, without further delay. Please feel free to seek any assistance from us as may be needed."

ERECTION OF TRANSMISSION TOWER ON MOULA ALI PAHAD

It has been gathered that Police Commiserate RR Dist. had not taken permission from any department before erecting the tower. Case filed in the High Court by FBH, Save the Rocks Society and others is pending.

VILAYAT MANZIL

Demolition of a part of Vilyat Manzil

Since HMDA have not replied to Forum's letter dt 22.9.09, Appellate Authority under RTI Act in HMDA was approached on 17.11.09, to which also no reply has been received.



Vilayat Manzil (or) Deorhi Wali-Doula Begumpet (Present Country Club)

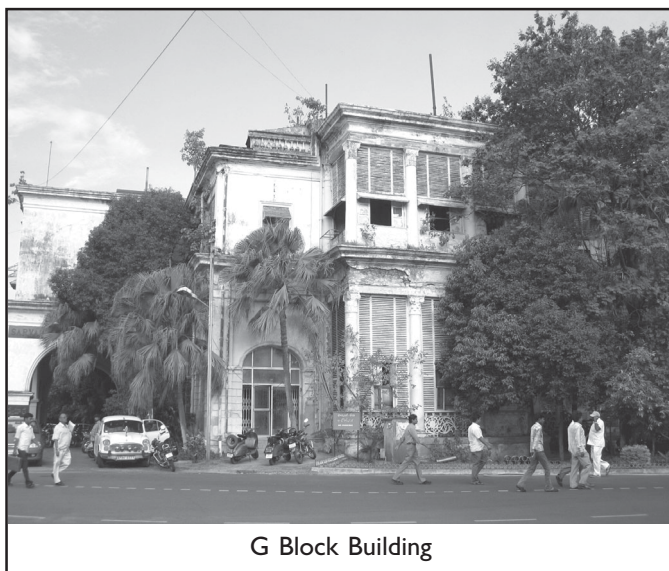
G-BLOCK IN SECRETARIAT PREMISES (Saifabad palace)

Extracts from Forum's letter dt 13.11.09 to Shri Ramakanth Reddy, Chief Secy. Govt of AP are given below. (copy of letter was endorsed to State Archaeology, HMDA, GHMC, and INTACH)

"We refer to our letters dated 10.4.08 and 28.8.08 on the subject. A copy each of the letters is enclosed. The building has since been listed as a heritage building jointly by INTACH and HMDA.

We regret that no decision to restore it has yet been taken.

The building is not maintained on account of non-allocation of budget for its maintenance for over several years. We request you, therefore, to urgently take up its restoration under the auspices of the State Archaeology, without further delay. We shall not be able to answer our posterity if such a nice building with historical architecture and associations is allowed to dilapidate due to our negligence. Please advise urgently in the matter."



G Block Building

Despite High Court order about two years back not to go ahead with demolition and despite technical advice that it can be restored, Govt. has again approached the High Court seeking permission for demolition.

VICTORIA MATERNITY HOSPITAL

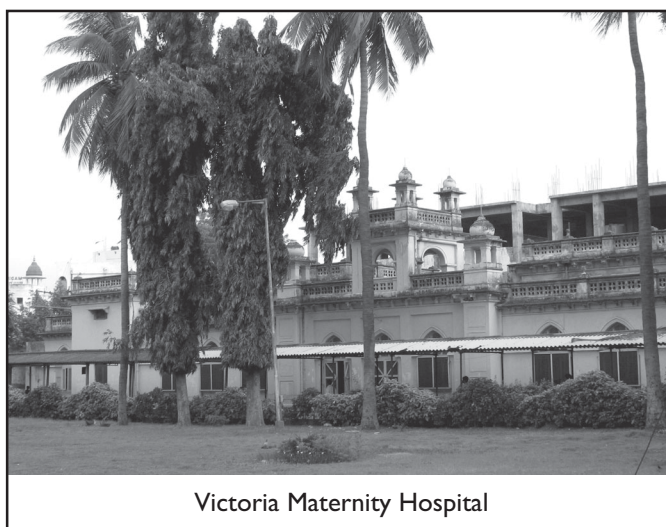
(Grade IIB Heritage Bldg No.73 Code 2.81)

There is a proposal to denotify the above named building at Asaf Jahi Road near AP High Court. As per some records, Victoria Zenana Hospital was founded in 1902. Some other records (Bustan-e-Asifia) mention foundation stone for the hospital was laid on the bank of Musi river on Friday 9th February 1906 by the Prince of Wales.

The flood of 1908 in Musi washed away many parts of the hospital and all patients lost their lives. It was rebuilt after 1911 during the reign of Nizam VII. Dr M Chenna Reddy inaugurated a new OT on 11.10.78. The old buildings of the hospital have Mughal architecture and small domes on the tops.

The Hospital with many heritage features continues to retain its heritage value.

FBH have written on 12.12.09 to the Chief Information Officers of HMDA, GHMC, MA&UD- AP Govt seeking information and requesting the authorities to refrain from delisting the Hospital from Heritage list.



Victoria Maternity Hospital

REVIVAL OF HERITAGE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Text of letter dt 21.12.09 to Shri B.P.Acharya, Commissioner HMDA (copy endorsed to Principal Secretary- MA&UD, GoAP)

"We welcome you on your assumption of new assignment and look forward to continued co-operative working in regard to the various civic issues.

We would like to bring to your attention the urgent need to revive the Heritage Conservation Committee (HCC) which on expiry of its term was not renewed nor a fresh one appointed. We brought this to your notice a number of times, yet the HCC was not formed. Meanwhile, a number of heritage buildings are disappearing owing to absence of a protective shield for the protection of heritage buildings.

We append the text of the letter (dt 29.7.09), which is self-explanatory, to the then Commissioner, HMDA on the subject. We also met him and we understand the proposal for formation of the HCC is in an advanced stage. Kindly expedite the decision.

In this connexion, the Tamil Nadu High Court directed the Tamil Nadu government by an order on Saturday, 19.12.09 to form a Heritage Conservation Committee as several petitions were being filed complaining of demolition of heritage buildings”.

ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

YSR MEMORIAL in Nallamala Forest

Forum's letters dt 16.9.09 did not receive any response from any Govt dept. Forum have again written to the Chief Information Officer in the depts. of MoF&E, PCCF (Wild Life), & PCCF AP Govt. seeking following information under RTI Act:-Copy of project report with layout; Expenditure under different heads; Conditions imposed if any by Forest Dept.; Site development already undertaken.

No reply has yet been received.

YSR MEMORIAL & PARK IN HYDERABAD (adjacent to IMAX theatre near Hussainsagar)

Group of Ministers of AP Govt have suggested the 4-acre land to be used (after taking over from present users), where late CM's services can be captured through models, miniatures, installations, etc and display of his life history & achievements. GO Rt No.4738 dt 01-10-09 has already been issued. This project goes against the very spirit of AP High Court Order dt 15.6.01 in WP No.23768 of 2000, viz. Sustainable development and Ecological balance. The project also goes against the Supreme Court Interim Orders staying further developmental activities around Hussainsagar, apart from ignoring ground realities of traffic congestion, associated air & noise pollution, and new source of pollution of Hussainsagar.

Forum have therefore represented to the Chief Secy., Secy. MA&UD, HMDA, GHMC, BPA, APPCB on 22.12.09 for scrapping the project. Based on the information collected on the project. Legal opinion will also be obtained.

OHRIS HOTEL ON THE BANK OF HUSSAINSAGAR

Forum's application under RTI Act has been returned by BPPA with the advice to approach Tourism Department

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Extracts from FBH letter dt 29.12.09 to the Minister for MA&UD AP Sectt. (Same letter also sent to Commissioners HMDA & GHMC, and Principal Secy. MA&UD.

Stock-taking after expiry of BPS / CDS-Some observations and suggestions

“A principal avowed objective of the CDS/ BPS scheme was to do away, once for all, all unauthorized constructions in GHMC / HMDA/ area and the areas of the other local municipalities, by regularizing those that conformed to certain prescribed requirements, and by eliminating those that did not, and to take effective steps so that in future, no further irregular construction takes place. Yet, a year after the closure of the scheme, we observe that this objective has been defeated. We make the following comments and suggestions re Buildings constructed in violation of the extant building regulations. In this connexion, we refer to our discussion with the Secretary, MA&UD, cum Commissioner, HMDA on 10.12.09.”

For detailed observations and suggestions, please see the Forum's website .

Some of the suggestions in brief are

- Detection on a sample basis e.g. multistoried apt. complexes from which some of the flat owners have applied.
- Deterrent action with promptness on cases detected by the authorities.
- Civil Society Organisations to be involved, so that they can confront municipal officials/ public representatives.
- Ward Committees/ Area Sabha Committees to be formed as per GHMC Act, bereft of partisan considerations/ vested interests.
- GO to be issued to take measures like exemplary heavy fines/ cancellation of licence against any builder who violates building regulations.
- All buildings above a prescribed value and a ggd percentage of others to be checked/ supervised.
- New constructions/ additions after expiry of last date of application under the scheme should be demolished wholly or partly.
- High Court should be approached in advance to issue instructions to lower courts not to grant stay against orders of competent authority under the scheme; such power to be only with the High Court.

“In this connexion, we have also to point out that the following undertakings given to the Court on behalf of the government, in respect of W.P. No 1069 of 2008 were not complied with:

Counter affidavit dated 9.2.2008 on behalf of Pr. Secretary to Government, MA&UD: Paragraphs 4, 6

— a, b, h, k, m. 10, 13. In similar vein, undertakings dt 6.2.09 Commissioner, Vijayawada Municipal Corporation in 7.8.9. I were not complied with. We would like to have your specific comments in respect of such undertakings. The affidavits are copied and enclosed for your ready reference. The statements made by the Secretary, MA&UD to the A.P. High Court in its counter affidavit dated 9.2.08 do not reflect the true state of affairs and remain were statement of intentions. For example, in reference to paragraph 6 thereof, in how many cases has there been any enforcement of the “stringent provisions” of G.O. no 86 dt 3.3.2006? Such as, non-connection of electric power, water supply, drainage & sewerage; inspection by Fire Services Department and abiding by their report; Issuance of occupancy certificate; “summary demolition” of violated portion of a building; administration of warning followed by de-licensing of habitual violator builders; check by Enforcement Authority against violations; constitution of Building Ombudsman? None of these provisions have been enforced, and there seems lack of a will to do so. The violation, contrary to the counter-affidavit dated 6.2.08 by the Commissioner of Vijayawada Municipal Corporation do “hamper the basic idea of urban planning”.

“The whole exercise in BPS so far seems to be only a game for raising money, without fulfilling its ostensible purpose of making Hyderabad and the State clean, once and for all, of unauthorized constructions. Hyderabad continues to be infested with illegal structures. On the contrary, the BPS and its lack of enforcement has encouraged start of further unauthorized constructions as no substantial action has been taken against the violators in a visible manner. There is consequential damage to civic amenities, such as use of road, drainage, sewerage, water supply, open space, environment, etc. The balance between ‘compassion’ for the violators and the clean living environment for the law-abiding citizens has been lost in favor of the former.

In this connection, we refer to the Hindu report dated 30.8.09, captioned “Stop political support for illegal constructions – Builders have scant respect for regulatory laws: Supreme Court”.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Sri.M.Vedakumar attended World Heritage Week Celebrations conducted by The Director, Salarjung Museum on 19.11.2009
- Seminar on Right to Information Act at Hyderabad Central University on 2.12.09 was attended by Sri.M.Vedakumar and Sri.O.M.Debara

- A meeting for recognition of Golconda Fort as World heritage site was convened by Forum for A Better Hyderabad on 3.12.09 attended by Dr. M. Mandal, Dr.V.K. Bawa, Sri.M.Vedakumar, Sri.O.M.Debara and Smt.Turaga Vasantha Shobha.
- Sri.M.Vedakumar attended INTACH Regional Meeting of South Zone Chapters at Madurai on 7.12.09 & 8.12.09
- Dr.M.Mandal, Sri.M.Vedakumar and Mr. O.M.Debara met Principal Secretary, M.A & U.D regarding Heritage Conservation Committee formation on 10.12.2009.
- Dr.M.Mandal, Sri.M.Vedakumar and Mr. O.M.Debara went to HMDA to observe the Revised Draft Master Plan display on 21.12.2009



Mr.V. Raghavan is lighting the lamp at World Heritage Week Celebrations at Salarjung Museum



Dr.M.Mandal, Sri.O.M.Debara, Dr.V.K.Bawa, Sri.M.Vedakumar and Smt.Turaga Vasantha Shobha are in interaction about Golconda Fort for recognition as World heritage site