

Varanasi Riverfront Urban Initiative/ India

India

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Abstract

Varanasi, situated by the Ganges is a city that has strong river edge where only the historic edge is protected and the stretch beyond Assi Ghat is not thought about. The proposal focuses to create a restorative scheme for public spaces and landscapes and strives to be an “Anandvana” that it was once referred to with forest and groves. A total of 4km stretch of highly erosive slopes are restored using landscape development and various existing ghats are connected using pedestrian walkway and public spaces along river edge. Two major zones are proposed which includes public parks, ghat facilities and socio-cultural buildings that would engage the public in creating awareness about the river and the initiatives to improve

ecology of the River Ganga. The Vision Plan covers a larger area between the 4km long edge stretched between Assi Ghat and Vishwa Sunder bye-pass parallel to Ganga. The current proposal visualizes the city for next 25 years highlighting the constraints, potentials and suggestions for holistic development of urban area. The idea of Varanasi Anandvana as “Panchvati” or the five forest concept is based on a restorative landscape scheme which comprises of 5 sacred trees of India, i.e. Pipal, Amla, Bael, Ashoka and the Banyan. The main approach to design is regenerative / renewal rather than a tabula rasa approach. To give a fresh direction to city development a contemporary approach has been adopted based on environmental, ecological and social surveys

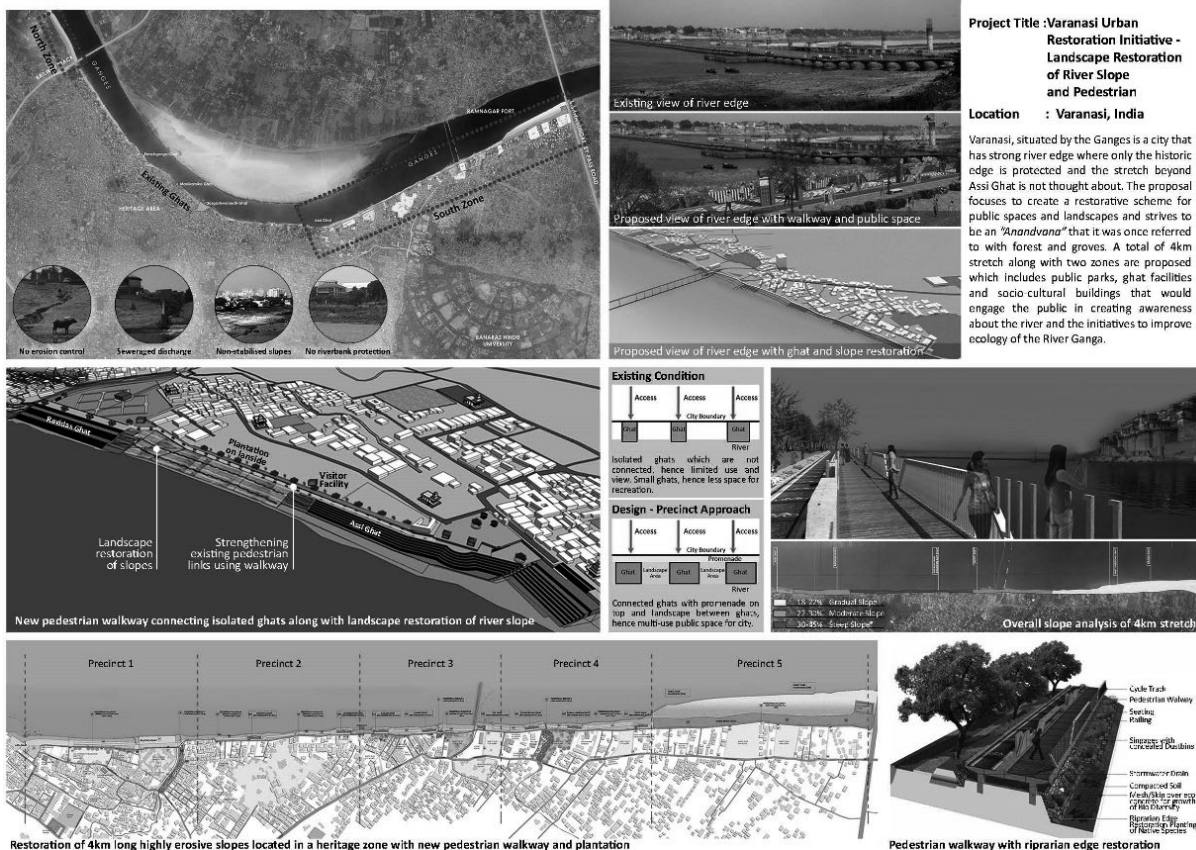


Figure 1: Riverfront Restoration_ Public Space Intervention Source. Nishant Lall / NilaA

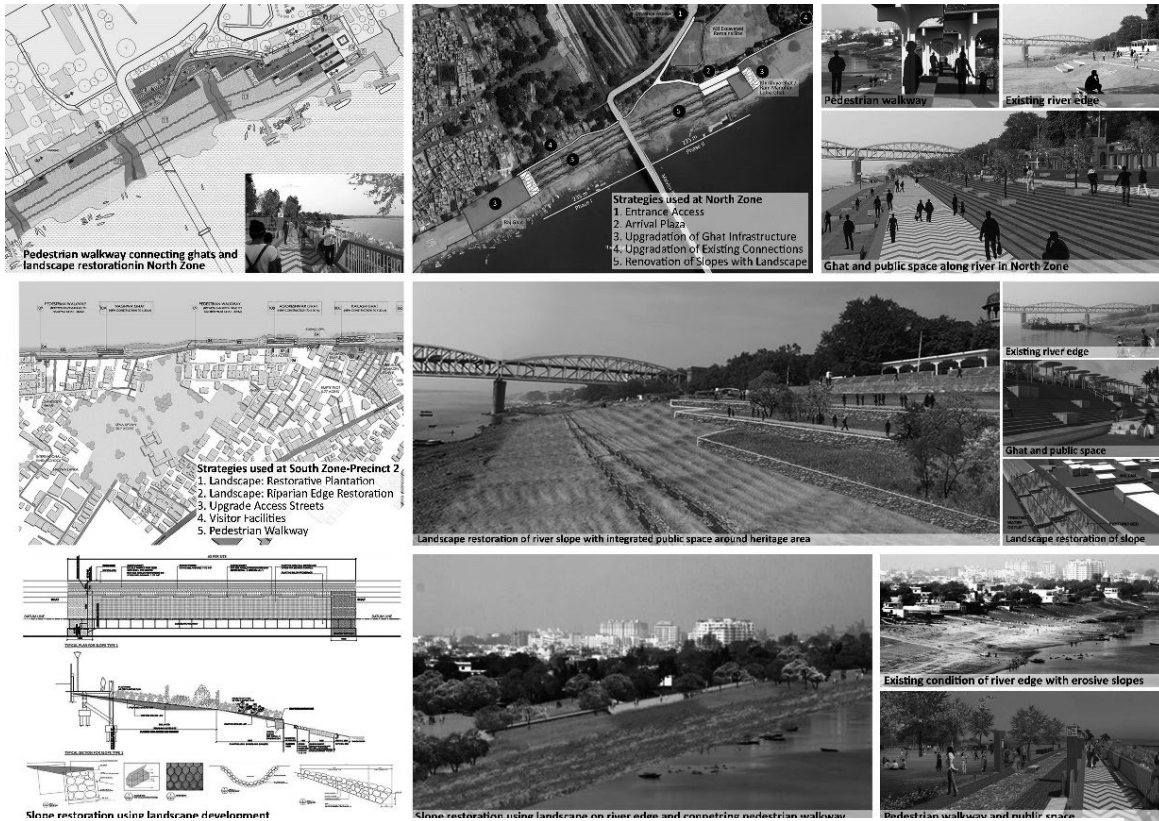
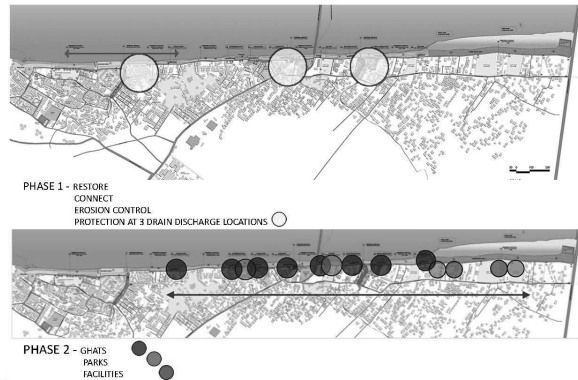
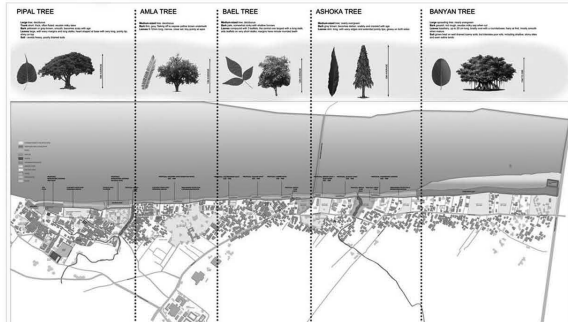


Figure 2. Public Space Network Source. Balaji Mohan/ Nilaa

VISION PROPOSAL & STRATEGIES



FEATURES & ELEMENTS



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Ghat Styles: Inspired by Chattris of Varanasi & Folded Hands



Ghat Styles and Pavilions are inspired by the unique legacy of Banarasi Culture including Architecture of Ghats and weaving culture as well as symbolism about water motifs in India. The structure forming the ghat are thought as a medium to reconnect contemporary architecture to the art and craft.

Figure 3: Public Shade Structures and Landscape Source. Balaji Mohan/ Nilaa