

OPEN IDEAS NATIONAL COMPETITION 2021 - IMPROVING LIVABILITY OF SMALL HOUSES – SEASON II

Press Release

Introduction

The Open Ideas National Competition 2021 on Improving Liveability of Small Houses (Season II) organized by INHAF (Habitat Forum) in partnership with Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA); INI Design Studio Pvt. Ltd and The Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) seeks to engage practicing architects, interior designers, planners, engineers, and students of these faculties; related Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); Government agencies, professionals working on slum upgrading and slum rehabilitation, and others with innovative ideas in developing proposals on improving the liveability of small low-cost houses or apartments being constructed by public agencies and private builders under PMAY (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana) and other affordable housing schemes and projects.

The Competition also intends to cover current and past In-situ Slum Improvements Projects and Slum Rehabilitation Projects to seek ideas on improving project design, planning, financing, and implementation.

The competition seeks to present the challenge of designing small houses to the design professionals who, for various reasons, tend to keep away from such projects. It also aims to draw attention and raise awareness that:

1. The inadequate size dictated by affordability constraints could be stretched through planning, design, and detailing innovations.
2. People-centric project planning should include psychological, social, cultural, and lifestyle factors as also the participative/ consultative practice.
3. Sustainability features, especially water and energy conservation, and waste management should be integral to the project design.
4. Buildings should be aesthetically pleasing and add to the city landscape, and
5. Emphasis should also be on the people/community' aspects of living.

The competition also seeks ideas on making the building bye-laws more realistic and sensitive to the needs of small apartments and low-cost buildings. It also asks competition participants to identify and present innovative ideas and solutions created and adopted by residents in their homes to improve liveability.

The competition sought to engage with aspiring architects, designers, and professionals to re-think and re-orient their approach to address the challenge of small houses by offering better-designed small houses and liveable spaces.

The competition was launched in February 2020 but had to be withdrawn due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Was re-launched in April 2021 with the submission deadline being September 2021 dictated by the pandemic. 400 contestants signed up. Finally, 34 submitted entries. From the submissions received, the jury selected three winning proposals and two honorable mentions.

The following are the winners and honorable mentions:

Winning Proposals

First Place: **“Loci of Commons - Reinstating a sense of community in affordable housing”**

Participants: **Naksha Satish, Hrushikesh Shah, Shrey Gupta, Sandra Maria George, Ajay Chovatia, and Malay Kota**

Unique ID: **INHAF-20210252**

Site Location: **Motera, Ahmedabad**

This project is situated on the outskirts of Ahmedabad, in Motera. It is a housing proposal in the EWS-II category, being developed by the Ahmedabad Urban Development Authority. Lying just within the proposed affordable housing zone, the project's proximity to the highway creates great potential for growth and housing. However, public infrastructure needs to be made more accessible.

Thus, this entry proposes to reflect all aspects of living – the corner of the complex is allocated for commercial uses. Here, it is not the builder, but the people who had their smaller shops with houses to locate their work within the housing provided. This enables livelihoods to sustain, have an exchange system and account for missing amenities in the context.

Second Place: **“BDD Chawl Redevelopment”**

Participants: **Nechal Maggon, Agrima Manglik , Prachi Bedia , Mallika Gupta , Jaya Khurana**

Unique ID: **INHAF-20210267**

Site Location: **BDD Chawl, Worli**

Located in Worli, Mumbai, the Bombay Development Directorate (BDD) Chawls facing the sea and located on prime real estate land were initially designed to accommodate prisoners. Later, these tenements were inhabited by mill workers and converted into middle-class housing popularly known as the chawl. Chawls are now occupied by a mix of economic groups ranging from Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) to Middle-Class Groups (MIG), demonstrating a compact living of different ages, castes, religions, occupations, and such.

Since 2015, the redevelopment of these BDD chawls was pushed through along with others in Dadar and Lower Parel, with each assigned a private contractor. This redevelopment project is of significant importance in societal upliftment as it intends to provide safe and secure habitats, develop critical support infrastructure and improve the surrounding environment, thus raising the quality of life. It shall serve as a model for other Chawl redevelopment projects in the future. The project also aims to increase the economic output through the provision of commercial centres within the precinct.

The proposal by TATA consultants for the redevelopment of B.D.D Chawls in Worli is based on the concept of building intimate courtyards and creating a sense of belonging in the Chawl Community. Despite their strong conceptualization, it seems to be inefficiently reflected in the design proposal.

Hence, this redesigned proposal takes forward the initial conceptualization, translating it into the built environment efficiently by incorporating the valuable essence and everyday life patterns of the inhabitants. We aim to recreate the Chawl lifestyle while further upgrading it according to the needs and aspirations of the residents.

Third Place: **“Hallali ”**

Participants: **Uravu Eco Links, Wayanad, Kerala**

Unique ID: **INHAF-20210306**

Site Location: **Hallali Slum, Mandaya, Karnataka**

This project is located in Mandya, Karnataka which is close to Mysore. The land belongs to the Municipal Corporation. Residents are said to have migrated from Tamil Nadu and other nearby rural areas, two generations ago, mainly in search of job opportunities. Many factories in Mandya are seen as potential domains for the same. Redevelopment of this settlement began in 2015 as the built structures had dilapidated. Meanwhile, people were relocated to temporary settlements by the Slum Development Authority of Mandya. These structures were made of G.I. sheets, wood, steel pipe and concrete blocks. People have been waiting for the finishing of newly built houses.

The basis of our design lies in understanding the current lifestyle, routines, home-making, work patterns, and socio-economic setups of the group to thoroughly analyze their behaviour towards the newly provided premises.

Based on these observations, the proposal draws inspiration from the chawls of Mumbai. In particular, its spatial structure including central open spaces, shared corridors and kholis, that has stood the test of time and ensured a better social lifestyle for its inhabitants.

Honorable Mention

1. “Humara Ghar, Humara Sapna: People’s Plan for Gulshan Chowk”

Participants: **Indo-Global Social Service Society ; EMARA Architecture and Urbanism, Delhi; Ujaala Mahila Sanghatan, Gulshan Chowk, Baljeet Nagar, Delhi.**

Unique ID: **INHAF-20210167**

Site Location: **Gulshan Chowk, Baljeet Nagar, Delhi**

Gulshan Chowk is a 200-household community as part of the bigger settlement of Baljeet Nagar in Delhi. A relatively recent community that evolved in the post-2010s, this settlement came about in the left-over sections of the hillock of Anand ‘Parbat’ that used to be a quarry in the 1980s. Like any other informal settlement, this community too has grown gradually. Over time, debris was used to level the hillock and water tanks to evolve into the present-day settlement. The community is inhabited mostly by Dalits from districts of rural Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Uttarakhand. Men work in the factories nearby and women work as domestic workers.

The biggest challenge for the community came in the form of a demolition that was carried out by authorities in 2017, where the ‘landowning’ agency wanted to take back control and evicted the community from the site. The resolute Gulshan Chowk residents fought back using engagement with elected representatives and petitions to re-establish their community brick by brick into a better state than its pre-eviction level development. It is in this context that this empowered community wishes to consolidate its development gains and move towards a better Gulshan Chowk.

The proposed design aims to act as a catalyst for an inclusive in-situ up-gradation approach, led by people, to create a liveable, resilient, and secure Gulshan Chowk. The concept rides on the fundamental premise that the people of Gulshan Chowk are capable enough to drive change in

communities, and all that they require is direction and assistance from architects and planners who can help them evolve local solutions to the challenges faced.

2. “Unconventional Revival”

Participants: **Anmol Chhina & Krishna Vivek**

Unique ID: **INHAF-20210353**

Site Location: **Yerwada, Pune**

Through this design proposal, Yerwada is imagined to have not just its physical environment developed but in fact a comprehensive approach adopted for the overall development because life is beyond the four walls. The affordable living criterion provides an area ranging from 25 to 40 square metres. The concept is to have an incremental approach where a built area of 25 square metres will be given and the dwellers can extend up to 40 square metres as and when. This proposal, therefore, focuses on flexible living conditions. Another concept emphasizes the fact that growth is not 2d but rather 3d. Thus, a mezzanine renders additional space in the same area, allowing healthy and controlled growth. Dwellers prefer to spend their time in the open which raises the need for ample open and interactive urban spaces which was again missing from the existing situation. Thus, comprehensive development with context to urban level is introduced. Last but not least, the site is located in a flood prone zone as per the Regional Disaster Management report, 2015. Thus, horizontal and vertical zoning is done attributing to this knowledge such that the commercial, retail and interactive spaces are located at the ground floor and the residential cluster begins from the first floor. This is in response to flooding during heavy rains which is quite a common site. The Total Site area is 3.41 Acres having 495 dwelling units. The existing density thus equates to 145dwt Ha.

According to PMAY policy, there is a requirement for a free-sale component on the site to cross-subsidize unit costs. The south side, easily approachable from the main road and ongoing metro is earmarked for free sale/commercial development. The ratio followed in our design proposal is 60:40, the former allotted to the rehabilitation component, unlike the 50:50 ratio that is the norm followed by the municipal corporation.

Jury Members

1. **Anand Bhatt**, Architexturez Imprints, New Delhi
2. **Bijal Bhatt**, Mahila Housing Seva Trust, Ahmedabad
3. **Hariharan Chandrashekhar**, BCIL, Bengaluru
4. **Jayesh Hariyani**, INI Design Studio, Ahmedabad
5. **Kirtee Shah**, Habitat Forum (INHAF), Ahmedabad
6. **KT Ravindran**, Chairman, Architectural Advisory Committee, INTACH
7. **Medha Samant**, Annapurna Pariwar, Pune
8. **Pavan Bakeri**, Bakeri Group, Ahmedabad
9. **Sandeep Virmani**, Hunnarshala Foundation, Bhuj
10. **Shirish Beri**, Shirish Beri & Associates, Kolhapur
11. **Syed Khwaja Abid**, ex-national Secretary, NASA

Jury Comments

The jury members were impressed by the efforts put in by the contestants as well as the quality of analysis and the ideas proposed. The jury members are aware that participating in the competition required identifying projects, visiting sites, interacting with the residents and

communities, and studying residents' solutions and innovations which were difficult under Covid induced restrictions.

The jury also appreciated the unusual nature of submissions required which included (a) undertaking SWOT analysis of an existing project and redesigning it (b) suggesting changes in the building bye/laws in support of the proposals, and (c) presenting two case studies of innovations done by the residents to improve the livability of their houses. This made the solution search ground-focused and realistic.

The jury members also pointed out that the effort involved in designing and conducting the competition deserved a better response in terms of the number of contestants.

Thank you.

Results and Publications

Results can be viewed on

1. Competitions @ INHAF (<https://www.inhaf.org/season-ii/>)

The winning teams shall be contacted individually regarding the prizes and other details. The honorable mentions shall receive a certificate of recognition.

Contact

Organizers

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Habitat Forum (INHAF)

Habitat Forum (INHAF), an Indian non-profit registered in 1999, is a network of professionals, civil society organizations, people engaged in academic and research work, and others working in the human settlement's development field, both rural and urban. Committed to better human settlements, especially the conditions of living of the poor and the low-income groups, it engages in studying development action and advocates required changes, focused on inclusivity, sustainability, and equity. Informality, urban and rural housing, poverty, urbanization, the role of professional education, and that of civil society in development planning and action are its main areas of work.

For more information, the [Competition Brochure](#) is enclosed.