



JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL LAUREATES ACADEMY

www.rlaindia.org

INTEGRATED HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND TOURISM – LED URBAN REGENERATION OF NAGAR KASBA IN MIRKADIM, MUNSHIGANJ, BANGLADESH

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DOI: <https://www.doi-ds.org/doi/10.2025-88968269/JRLA/08202604>

ABSTRACT

Bangladesh possesses a rich architectural legacy, yet many historic settlements remain undocumented and increasingly vulnerable to urban transformation. Nagar Kasba, located at Mirkadim in the historic Bikrampur region of Munshiganj, is a neglected heritage precinct characterized by a linear arrangement of courtyard houses along a narrow alley. The settlement reflects layered historical development associated with the Sultanate, Mughal, and British colonial periods, while its surviving residences demonstrate a fusion of colonial elements, Mughal influences, local building traditions, climatic adaptation, and indigenous spatial practices. Historically occupied by affluent Hindu merchant families connected with the Kasba, the area experienced social and ownership changes following the Partition of 1947. Inadequate maintenance, contested ownership, encroachment, insensitive alterations, weathering, abandonment, and pressure for multi-storeyed redevelopment now threaten its architectural integrity and historic urban character. This study investigates how integrated heritage conservation and tourism-led

urban regeneration can contribute to the sustainable revitalization of Nagar Kasba. It documents the settlement's architectural features, spatial organization, historical evolution, present condition, and socio-cultural significance, while identifying conservation challenges and opportunities for adaptive reuse. The research further examines the potential of community participation, heritage-sensitive tourism, local enterprise, and public-realm improvement to generate economic benefits without compromising authenticity. The study proposes an integrated regeneration framework linking physical conservation, cultural continuity, livelihood development, visitor management, and institutional coordination. The findings aim to guide policymakers, conservation professionals, local authorities, property owners, and communities in safeguarding Nagar Kasba as a living heritage settlement and restoring its cultural identity, economic vitality, and urban resilience.

Keywords: Heritage Conservation; Heritage-led Regeneration; Sustainable Cultural Tourism; Historic Urban Landscape; Adaptive Reuse; Community Participation; Spatial Analysis; Nagar Kasba; Bangladesh

1. INTRODUCTION

Historic towns and settlements are important terms in Bangladesh that represents historical value of this country, it's architectural parts and cultural nomenclature. Nagar Kasba at Mirkadim is such type of settlements. That has a lot of small sizes and large sizes of houses with inner and outer courtyards. There is a small but linear lane between the housing colony. This housing is the mixing of Sultanate, Mughal and Colonial styles buildings. In these settlements there is a river port in this area. Hindu merchants were lived there. Now the settlement is changing fast. Many people are renovating the houses but not in a controlled and systemic way. Some new buildings are being constructed without care for the ones. The historic feel of the settlement is disappearing. Nagar Kasba has architectural and cultural value but not any research input. There are no plans to conserve it or make it a tourist attraction. As a result, the traditional houses, streets and community activities are slowly disappearing. People need to plan to save the Nagar Kasba. This plan should balance conservation with growth. It should involve the people and find new uses, for the old buildings. It should also create spaces and promote responsible tourism. This study will look at how to achieve this balance. It will suggest policies to conserve the Nagar Kasba and make it a thriving community again. Nagar Kasba is important. Protect it. The Nagar Kasbas history and culture are what make it special. People need to should conserve the Nagar Kasba for generations (Huq et al., 2017; Pendlebury, 2002; Tweed & Sutherland, 2007; UNESCO, 2011).

The word "Kasba" comes from the Arabic word "Qasaba", which means a building like a fortress, a town with walls or a big city. South Asia Qasba usually means a small town or a big village where people do business and government work. A long time ago during the Sultanate of Bengal a Qasba was a very important place for the government to control a region. These Qasbas were where government

officials, judges and police officers lived and worked. Most Qasbas were built near roads, rivers or big towns so it was easy to travel to them. In Bangladesh people have found at 37 old Qasbas. The Nagar Qasba and the Qazir Qasba of Munshiganj are two known Qasbas. Kasba means a town that has a history and where people do many things, like government work, business live in houses and social activities. This is a kind of town that has many important things in one place (A. A. Chowdhury, 2021). In this study, the term “Nagar Kasba” refers to a historic residential settlement in Mirkadim that developed in connection with local administration, river-port-based trade, and the social life of a prosperous merchant community. Its architecture, narrow alleyways, courtyard-based houses, and social use combine to create a distinct historic urban form (A. A. Chowdhury, 2021; Ghosh, 2023).

The pattern is referred to as ‘Street front houses’ mostly concentrated along narrow Hindu Para (street) or Nagar Kashba Street and previously were surrounded by canals/moat (khals). (Ferdousi et al., 2019, p. 134)

Street-front houses refer to residential buildings whose main facade, entrance, or building line faces directly onto the street. These houses are usually built close to the front boundary of a street or plot, and the facades of adjacent buildings create a continuous street view or street frontage. In architectural and urban analysis, frontage refers to the direct relationship of a building or plot to the street in front. In urban settings, street-front houses are defined as houses built in rows on either side of a narrow street, with the main façade and entrance facing the street, but the interior rooms are usually arranged around a private courtyard. This arrangement ensures internal privacy, light and air, and separate spaces for social activities within the family, while maintaining active communication with the street (UNESCO, 2011; Veldpaus et al., 2013).

Aim of this paper is to, assess the potential for architectural, cultural, and socio-economic revitalization of urban settlements through integrated heritage conservation and tourism-based urban regeneration.

OBJECTIVES

1. To document and evaluate the historical development, architectural features, spatial layout, and current conservation status of the urban settlements.
2. To identify the existing physical, social, economic, institutional, and ownership-related barriers to the preservation of the settlement's heritage.
3. To propose an integrated urban regeneration framework based on adaptive reuse, public participation, and responsible tourism.

The historical significance of the Kasba extends beyond its old buildings; its street dimensions, layout of plots, courtyards, entry porches, and community-focused lifestyle collectively create a distinctive settlement culture. Nonetheless, modern developments are slowly dismantling this cohesive framework. New routes, congestion, chaotic drainage, inefficient waste handling, and insufficient public amenities are complicating everyday life (Huq et al., 2017; UNESCO, 2011; Veldpaus et al., 2013).

The shift of younger people and the disintegration of older families are leading to many homes altering their functions, with some remaining unoccupied, while others are converted into storage spaces or used for business activities. Water saturation, moisture, and seasonal erosion are degrading the construction materials. Simultaneously, even with the tourism opportunities, unregulated commercialization may harm the genuine nature of local culture and environment. As a result, urban areas should be developed not only as preserved structures but also as dynamic living communities. Achieving this requires integrating small-scale infrastructure development, usage-based rejuvenation, community participation in decision-making, and careful tourism oversight. This can assist in creating a harmony between cultural heritage, quality of life, and the economy of the community (Afroz, 2022; Gotham, 2005; Landorf, 2009; Yung & Chan, 2012).

2. CONTEXTUALIZATION AND DESCRIPTION

Nagar Kasba is an ancient housing society. This is located at Mirkadim Municipality in Munshiganj (Ancient Bikrampur). The Co-ordinates are 23.56425° N latitude and 90.49451° E longitude; nevertheless, accurate boundary definitions and coordinates of specific heritage properties must be validated via GPS-based field surveys and cadastral mapping. This heritage settlement is located near to Kamalaghat, an ancient river-port site along the previous path of the Ichamati and Dhaleswari River. The remaining structures stretch along either side of a roughly 850-metre-long north–south road, forming a unique linear heritage area (A. M. Chowdhury, 2021; Ghosh, 2023).



Fig. 01 & 02 : Geographical Location of Nagar Kasba at Mirkadim in the Bikrampur Region; This Map is Prepared by ArchGIS and RS & Major river routes and early urban centers in Bengal

The civilization of the "Nagar Kasba" has developed around the rivers. This pargana is surrounded by the historical Dhaleswari, Padma, Meghna and Ichamati rivers, which are surrounded by numerous small and large canals, ghats and markets. The development of this pargana during the Sultanate period, which has been under Mughal and colonial rule from time to time, has existed until the present day. Here, in all eras, the communication system has played an important role in regional and international

commercialization and the development of settlements. Bikrampur served as an important political and cultural center from approximately the beginning of the 10th century to the beginning of the 13th century and its regional importance continued even after the rise of Sonargaon (A. M. Chowdhury, 2021; Ghosh, 2023).

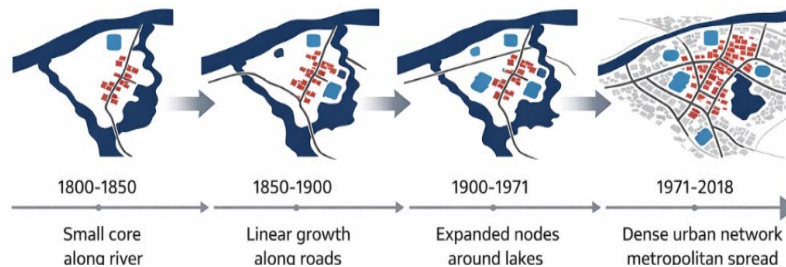


Fig.03 Shows: *Historical Evaluation of Nagar Kasba*

Nagar Kasba can currently be reached from the Dhaka–Munshiganj regional road by using Mirkadim’s municipal road system, which leads to secondary roads and narrow local paths. The adjacent heritage landscape encompasses Kamalaghat, Kazir Kasba, the historical Mirkadim river-port and marketplace, Idrakpur Fort, Baba Adam Mosque and Tomb, the homestead of Raja Ballal Sena, Rampal Dighi, and Panditer Bhita located in Bajrayogini. Collectively, these areas offer chances to build an interconnected heritage and cultural tourism path. However, road classification, public transport stations, pedestrian pathways, riverbanks, accessibility conditions, distances, and property lines must be confirmed through field observation and GIS analysis before the location map is deemed final (A. M. Chowdhury, 2021; Ghosh, 2023).



Fig .04 Shows: *Accessibility in Nagar Kasba from Various Angles, Including Primary and Secondary Roads and Street-front Houses.*

Kasbah communities in Bangladesh serve as significant administrative and regional hubs from the Sultanate era. Historical documents refer to units like Iklim, Iqta, Erta, Joar, and Kasbah. Approximately thirty-seven Kasbahs have been discovered, primarily close to modern district towns. Their placements, distances, connections to capitals, and formal titles imply that they operated as district headquarters. Management of governance was typically overseen by an administrative officer, Qazi, and Kotwal. Names like Qazi Kasbah, Kotwal's Kasbah, Town Kasbah, and Nagar Kasbah signify this function. Despite many declines during the Mughal period, their distribution reflects the administrative landscape, regional connections, and communication-driven governance of medieval Bengal (A. A. Chowdhury, 2021).



Fig.05 & 06 Shows: Sites and Site Surroundings of Nagar Kasba

The current character seems to have emerged primarily in the late 1800s and early 1900s through merchant firms, landowner properties, temples, mosques, plazas, entrances, and communal spaces. Arches, cornices, balconies, stonework, lime-surki, timber, and metal craft showcase regional customs and colonial impacts. Despite that, divided ownership, altered functions, unsuitable changes, moisture, and insufficient maintenance have damaged many buildings. The identity of Nagar Kasba is deeply connected to Mirkadim's extensive history of settlement, trade via waterways, and a river-centered economy. Figure 3 provides a preliminary timeline; dates, coordinates, and claims about dynasties need to be validated through inscriptions, documents, maps, photographs, family histories, architectural evidence, and reliable sources before being accepted (Afroz, 2022; Huq et al., 2017).

3. URBAN CONTEXTS, CONFIGURATION AND STUDY OF HOUSES

3.1 Documentation of Nagar Kasba

The documentation of Nagar Kasba includes the organized recording of its historical structures,

settlement layout, architectural characteristics, current functions, and physical state. Thorough documentation comprised field surveys, scaled drawings, photographs, interviews, and collaborative mapping that assist in recognizing different structures. That involves old houses, temples, mosques, squares, entry approaches, streets, water bodies, and various cultural sites. The document should contain important information. Which includes the location of the architecture, builder, current ownership, previous ownership, current and previous use, construction materials, art-technique, architectural features, archaeological-social-historical importance, architectural changes, problems, risky conditions and duration. In case of absence of inscriptions, ancient pictures, family records, inscriptions, designs, carved images, sculptures, immovable-immovable property documents and maps are essential to confirm the date and historical connection. Only these can give birth to the Nagar Kasba again. It is possible to provide a reliable basis through culture (Australia ICOMOS, 2013; Huq et al., 2017; ICOMOS, 1987; UNESCO, 2011).

3.2 Condition of the Historical Structures

During the colonial period, affluent merchants constructed the double-courtyard houses of Nagar Kasba. After original owners migrated to India, ownership became fragmented through occupation, transfer, purchase, inheritance, and absentee tenancy. Several properties are divided among heirs, while owners live in Dhaka or abroad and rent shares to traders, students, service holders, and shopkeepers. This fragmented tenure, combined with limited space and changing household needs, has encouraged uncontrolled alteration and redevelopment. Courtyards have been occupied by toilets and extensions; internal walls, doors, and windows have been added, removed, or blocked; and parts of structures have been dismantled to create new rooms. Wealthier owners have replaced buildings with multistoried developments, whereas lower-income residents often lack resources for appropriate maintenance. Rising land values, commercialization, population growth, and weak institutional oversight are accelerating transformation. Fear of legal restrictions discourages owners from recognizing their properties as heritage, placing the settlement's architectural identity at serious risk (Afroz, 2022; Hasan et al., 2022; Huq et al., 2017).

3.3 Urban Contexts and Settlement Lay-outs of Nagar Kasba

The historical urban structure of Nagar Kashba was developed through a combination of river-based trade, agro-based economy, water management and social activities. The Dhaleswari River, Kamlaghat, internal canals, ponds, markets, warehouses and residential buildings did not function as isolated elements, but as part of an integrated urban system. As the settlement developed following the natural landscape, its layout was organic, environmentally sensitive and water-dependent (UNESCO, 2011; Veldpaus et al., 2013).

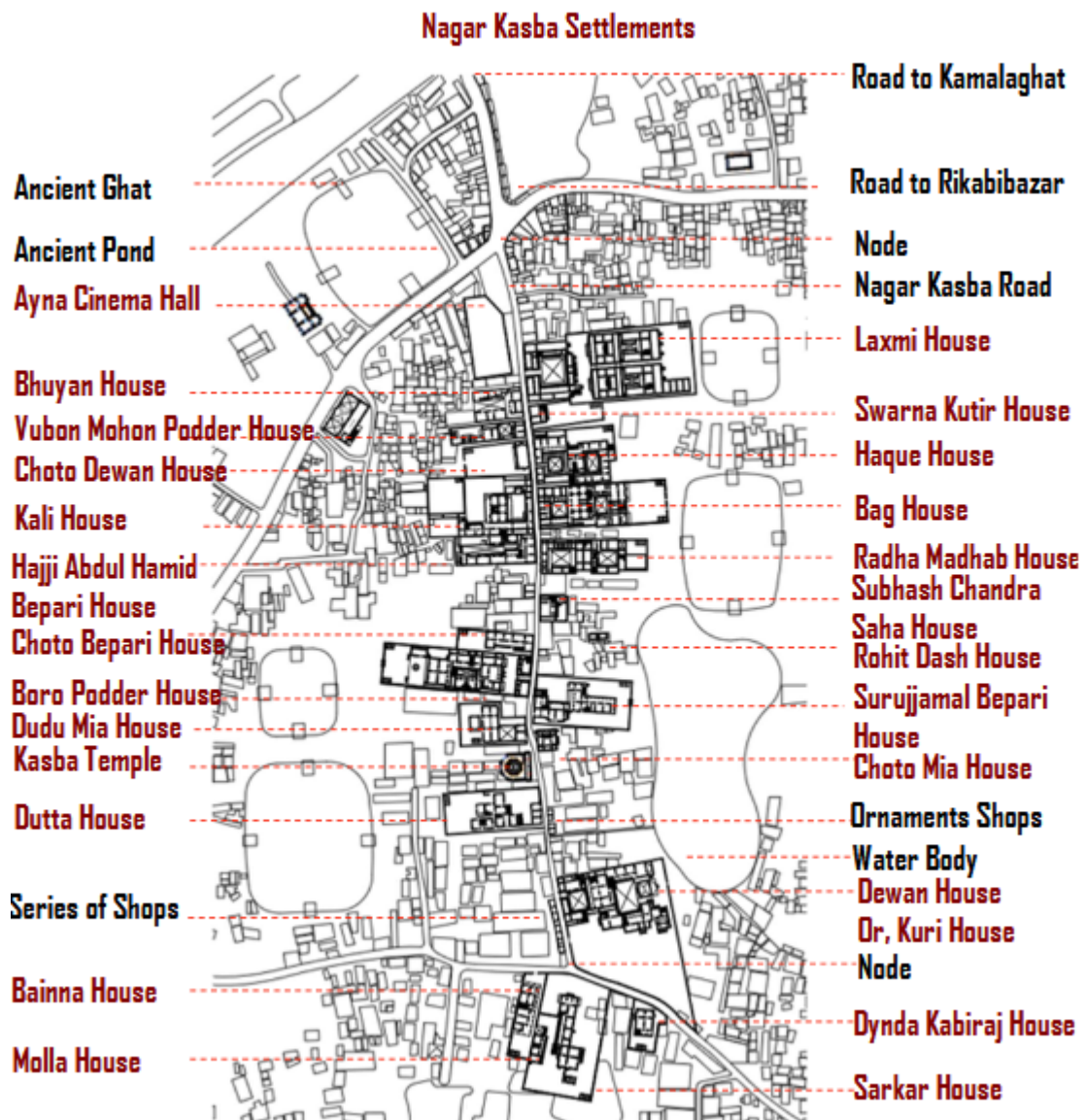


Fig.07 Shows: Master Plan of Ancient Nagar Kasba at Mrikadim, Munshiganj (Ancient Bikrampur)

Nagar Kasba exhibits a layered settlement pattern shaped by river-based trade, local topography, water management and gradual urban growth. Its spatial structure developed around the river ghats, markets, warehouses and road junctions that formed the principal commercial core. Large courtyard houses belonging to merchants and landholders, together with mosques, temples and social gathering spaces, were located close to this center. Beyond them, smaller residences, neighborhood clusters, ponds, gardens and open spaces extended towards agricultural land, wetlands, canals and low-lying areas, creating a gradual transition between urban and rural landscapes (A. M. Chowdhury, 2021; UNESCO, 2011).

The road network did not follow a regular grid. Instead, main roads, narrow lanes and connecting paths evolved in response to rivers, canals, ponds, landforms and existing buildings. A principal route from

Kamlaghat connected the market, ghats and residential quarters. Many houses had formal entrances facing the main road and secondary entrances opening onto rear service lanes. This dual-access arrangement separated household services, goods movement, waste disposal and workers' circulation from public and family activities. The hierarchy of river routes, main streets, neighborhood lanes and service alleys therefore created a clear stratification of movement (UNESCO, 2011; Veldpaus et al., 2013).

Water bodies formed an essential component of the settlement's infrastructure. Ponds, canals, reservoirs, wetlands and the adjacent river supported drinking, bathing, domestic work, religious rituals, firefighting, irrigation, drainage and local transport. During the monsoon, ponds, canals and lowlands retained excess water and reduced flood pressure, while stored water supported agriculture and household needs during the dry season. Some canals also functioned as natural boundaries, transport corridors and protective elements (A. M. Chowdhury, 2021; Mukherjee et al., 2022).

The built environment demonstrates strong adaptation to the local climate. Houses were commonly constructed on raised plinths or filled land to reduce flood risk. Courtyards, verandas, high ceilings, arched passages, windows and multiple openings improved daylight, ventilation and humidity control. Kitchens, toilets, gardens, livestock areas and household production spaces were generally placed behind the main residential blocks. Ponds, vegetation and open spaces further moderated the local microclimate (Alam, 2021; Mukherjee et al., 2022).

Land use was multifunctional, combining residential, commercial, religious, agricultural and water-based activities. Dense plots near the market contrasted with larger elite properties, many of which were later subdivided through inheritance. Plot fragmentation produced new walls, entrances, temporary structures and incompatible additions, disrupting original layouts and spatial continuity. Markets, ghats, pond steps, religious buildings and courtyards remained important public spaces for trade, ceremonies, cultural events and everyday interaction. These spaces also strengthened collective identity and informal social surveillance (Tweed & Sutherland, 2007; UNESCO, 2011).

Today, Nagar Kasba faces rapid transformation caused by population growth, property subdivision, uncontrolled construction, road encroachment, pond and canal filling, altered building uses and poor maintenance. Courtyards and open areas are increasingly occupied, reducing ventilation, drainage and visual continuity. Because documentary evidence is limited, the original number of heritage buildings cannot be confirmed. Field surveys identified only twenty-one surviving structures, most in severely deteriorated and structurally vulnerable condition. Effective revitalization therefore requires area-based conservation rather than isolated building preservation. Heritage zoning, waterbody restoration, adaptive reuse, pedestrian-friendly streets, local enterprise, cultural tourism and community participation could help sustain Nagar Kasba as a living historic urban settlement (Huq et al., 2017; UNESCO, 2011; Veldpaus et al., 2013).

3.4 Infra-Structure Development

Infrastructure development in Nagar Kasba responded to riverine trade, local commerce, environmental conditions, and residential needs. The Dhaleshwari River, Kamal Ghat, canals, ponds, narrow roads, and service lanes formed a transportation and water management network. River routes initially carried people, agricultural products, and goods, while internal roads connected the ghat with markets, warehouses, religious sites, and homes. During colonial times, routes were widened or reorganized to improve access. Ponds and canals supported drinking water, domestic use, drainage, irrigation, and seasonal storage. Raised homesteads, service lanes, open courtyards, and natural drainage helped the settlement adapt to environmental challenges. Recent encroachment, canal filling, pond loss, poor drainage, and unplanned construction have weakened this infrastructure and disrupted Nagar Kasba's historic character (Ghosh, 2023; Mukherjee et al., 2022).

3.5 Study of the Houses

Nagar Kasbah was a traditional settlement of rows of aesthetic residential buildings built in the British colonial and Indo-European architectural styles. Most of the buildings were two-storeyed but not very large in size. During the colonial period, the elite merchants built these double-courtyard buildings. Ferdousi et al., 2019, p. 137) None of the buildings are completely intact today; however, some traces of their original architecture, decoration and construction features are still visible in most of the buildings. However, due to uncontrolled renovations, additions and changes in the later period, it has become difficult to identify the original structure and architectural style of some buildings (Afroz, 2022; Huq et al., 2017).

Based on size, shape and spatial arrangement, the residential buildings of Nagar Kasbah can be mainly divided into two types—1. Courtyard-centered houses 2. Bungalow-type houses. One of the characteristics of the courtyard-centered houses of Nagar Kasbah is the presence of two separate courtyards. The first or outer courtyard was used for public and semi-public activities, while the second or inner courtyard was reserved for family and private activities. Bungalow-type houses do not have the presence of an internal central courtyard. They are usually single-storey or double-storey buildings with open courtyards in front or behind. No specific consistency or uniform plan is observed in the layout of these buildings (Alam, 2021).





Fig. 08 Shows: Different Types of Houses at Nagar Kasba Such as – Surujjamal Bepari House (Back Side), Bag House, Haque House, Dyanda Kabiraj House, Surujjamal Bepari House (Front Side), Rohit Dash House, Boro Podder House, Kali House, Dutta House and Bainna House.

3.6 Spatial Arrangement and Functional Structure

The common physical features present in the buildings of the urban city play an important role in understanding their architectural and spatial arrangement. In particular, the courtyards defined the various functions and functional areas of the house. In most courtyard-centered houses, the front block facing the street was used as the main entrance. It also served as a place for holding public or semi-public events. The rooms located around the front courtyard were usually used as temples, guest rooms, living rooms and dining rooms. At the same time, processions, folk music, folk dances and various social and cultural events were organized in this courtyard. The second or inner courtyard was connected to the front part by a connecting path. It was mainly used for the private activities of the family. The bedrooms and other private rooms were built facing this courtyard. Canopied walkways formed by rectangular or circular arched pillars surrounded the courtyards. These paths provided access from one room to another as well as protection from the sun and rain. Behind each house was a service area adjacent to the boundary, where the kitchen, the kitchen-adjacent garden, toilets and other household facilities were located. These parts behind the house were connected to each other by a narrow alley. Most houses had two separate entrances at the front and back, so it was possible to travel from both directions. There were ponds for the joint use of the residents along the settlement path. Beyond this, a canal surrounded this residential area of the elite merchants. On the one hand, the canal served as a waterway for the transport of people and goods, and on the other hand, it played the role of a natural moat to ensure the security of the settlement. As a result, a well-organized combination of residential, social, cultural, domestic and security activities can be observed in the overall spatial layout of the urban settlement (Alam, 2021; Tweed & Sutherland, 2007).



Fig.09 Shows: Main Entrance of Laxmi House, Swarno Kutir House, Bhuyan House, Vubon Mohon Podder House, Haque House, Choto Dewan House, Kali House, Haji Abdul Hamid House, Radha Madhab House, Subhash Chandra House, Choto Bepari House, Boro Podder House, Surujjamal Bepari House, Dudu Mia House Elevation.

3.7 Building Ornamentation

The houses in Nagar Kasba feature decorations blending European, Mughal, and Bengali styles, mainly on entrances, verandas, columns, and windows. They display segmental arches, carved timber doors, patterned shutters, and verandas with arches around courtyards. These decorations indicate the wealth of merchant families and were crafted using brick, lime plaster, and timber by local craftsmen. Despite damage, they reveal skilled craftsmanship and architectural richness, representing a unique mix of styles that make Nagar Kasba houses special and a valuable heritage. Many are weathered or repaired poorly, but their beauty endures.



Fig.10 Shows: Building Ornamentation and Decorations Systems in Nagar Kasba

4. CONCEPTUALIZATION AND DESIGN FRAMEWORK

4.1 Conceptual Analysis

"Nagar Kasba" is a narrative style blending buildings, streets, waterways, social ties, remembrance, forgetfulness, and daily life to depict a lively community. Its goal is to revive the town's name and cultural legacy, connecting the community with its history by protecting and creatively transforming structures, streets, public spaces, cultural practices, and local economy. The aim is to link history and modernity so residents and visitors can experience the town's spirit while maintaining safety, comfort, cleanliness, accessibility, and quality of life (Pendlebury, 2002; Tweed & Sutherland, 2007; UNESCO, 2011).

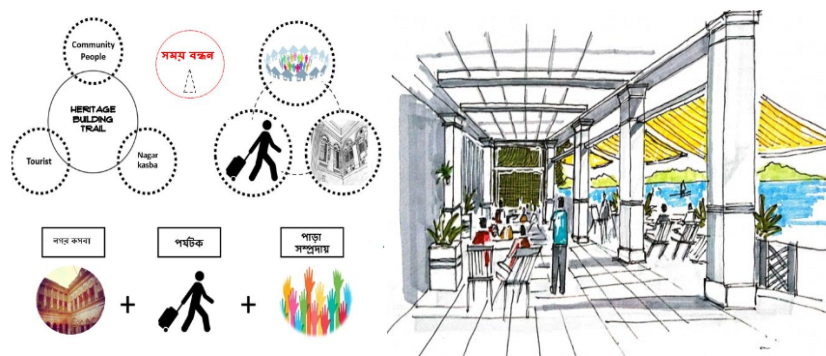


Fig.11 & 12 Shows: *Conceptualization Diagram and Perspectives of Nagar Kasba Studying*

Consequently, the proposal does not regard Nagar Kasba as an unchanging museum. Instead, it promotes a living-heritage approach where historical structures continue to be socially important, economically advantageous, and culturally meaningful. The project aims to maintain the spirit of Nagar Kasba by promoting local identity and traditional spatial features while guiding its future growth. The proposed initiative aims to rejuvenate Nagar Kasba into a lively heritage zone where historical buildings, cultural practices, community events, public spaces, and local enterprises are maintained and improved through sustainable and inclusive tourism. The framework emphasizes minimal physical intervention, respect for authenticity, community benefits, adaptive reuse, pedestrian accessibility, cultural sensitivity, ecological improvement, and incremental implementation. Conservation must preserve original materials, spatial dynamics, and cultural practices while permitting meticulously managed alterations (Australia ICOMOS, 2013; Li et al., 2020; UNESCO, 2011).

4.2 Design Frameworks and Strategy

The proposed spatial framework includes a core conservation zone containing the most significant heritage structures, an adaptive-reuse zone for vacant or underused buildings, a public-realm improvement zone along major pedestrian routes, a cultural-event zone around ritual and gathering spaces, and a modest tourism-service zone near accessible entry points. Water bodies and ghats should form an environmental protection zone, while surrounding areas should function as compatible-development buffers. Building-level interventions should be determined by condition and significance. Measures may include emergency stabilization, preventive maintenance, structural repair, façade conservation, removal of incompatible additions, courtyard restoration, and controlled adaptive reuse. New development should respect existing height, scale, frontage, materials, and street character (Arfa et al., 2022; Australia ICOMOS, 2013; Yung & Chan, 2012).

Tourism products should remain small-scale and locally managed. Priority uses may include a community museum, interpretation center, research and documentation facility, craft workshop, library, culinary space, heritage café, artist studio, and guided heritage trail. A limited guesthouse or cultural-performance venue may be considered only where access, privacy, structural capacity, and community acceptance are suitable. Large resorts and intensive commercial activities should be excluded because they may weaken authenticity, increase land pressure, and disturb residential life (Gotham, 2005; ICOMOS, 2022; Landorf, 2009).



Fig.13 Shows: Proposed Master Plan of Adaptive Revitalization of Nagar Khasa



Fig.14 Shows: Proposed Master Plan of Adaptive Revitalization of Nagar Kasba

A connected pedestrian heritage trail should link important houses, religious buildings, courtyards, cultural spaces, ghats and water bodies. Directional signs and interpretation panels should communicate local history without obstructing historic façades. Public-realm improvements should include accessible pathways, shaded resting areas, sensitive lighting, waste collection, landscape restoration, traffic control and emergency access. Ghat rehabilitation and water-body protection should address drainage, pollution, erosion, ritual use and ecological quality. The pathway, streetscape and perspective views in Figure 10 are conceptual visualizations rather than construction documents; alignment, dimensions, materials and access arrangements require measured survey, engineering review and community approval (ICOMOS, 2022; Landorf, 2009; Mukherjee et al., 2022).

Implementation should proceed in phases. During the first two years, priorities should include documentation, emergency repairs, formation of a community heritage committee, awareness programs, signage, and a pilot walking route. Between years three and five, selected buildings may be adaptively reused, public spaces upgraded, visitor facilities introduced, and local enterprises supported. During years six to ten, the Programme may expand into a complete conservation network connected with the wider Munshiganj tourism circuit. Governance should involve the municipality, heritage authorities, property owners, community organisation, tourism agencies, universities, and responsible investors. Regular monitoring should assess physical condition, community participation, local economic benefits, tourism pressure, and the prevention of inappropriate alterations (Aas et al., 2005; Khan, 2020; Landorf, 2009).

Table 01. Intervention-Priority Matrix for Nagar Kasba

Proposed intervention	Heritage urgency	Community benefit	Tourism value	Cost level	Implementation phase
Emergency structural stabilization	Very high	High	Medium	High	Short term
Building documentation and heritage inventory	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Short term
Pilot heritage trail and interpretive signage	Medium	High	High	Low–medium	Short term
Adaptive reuse of selected heritage buildings	High	High	High	Medium–high	Medium term
Improvement of public spaces and historic ghats	Medium	High	High	Medium	Medium term
Integration with regional heritage-tourism circuits	Low	Medium–high	High	Medium	Long term

The matrix prioritizes immediate structural stabilization and comprehensive documentation because the continued deterioration of heritage buildings may result in the irreversible loss of historic fabric. Low-cost initiatives, including a pilot heritage trail and interpretive signage, can be implemented concurrently to improve public awareness and visitor understanding. Medium-term interventions should focus on adaptive reuse and the improvement of public spaces and ghats, creating benefits for residents while enhancing the attractiveness of the area. Regional tourism-circuit integration is proposed as a long-term measure, as it requires prior conservation, improved visitor facilities, institutional coordination, and connections with nearby heritage destinations (Arfa et al., 2022; Australia ICOMOS, 2013; Vafaie et al., 2023).



Figure 15 and 16 Shows. Integrated regeneration proposal: (a) filtered conservation and adaptive-reuse zoning, (b) conceptual heritage pathway, (c) proposed street improvement and (d) adaptive-reuse perspective. All three-dimensional views are conceptual scenarios and require measured survey, structural review, community approval and detailed conservation design.

5. CONSERVATION

The available evidence supports a preliminary diagnostic account rather than a complete statistical presentation. Site observations and analytical diagrams reveal recurring physical, functional and spatial patterns, although the numerical distribution of buildings, users and stakeholder responses remains

subject to field verification. Nagar Kasba contains an interconnected group of historic residences, temples, mosques, gateways, courtyards, ghats, water bodies, shops and community spaces. Residential properties constitute the principal architectural layer, while religious buildings remain active landmarks within the neighborhood. Common architectural features include brick masonry, lime-based plaster, timber doors and windows, ornamental ironwork, arches, cornices, verandas, internal courtyards and decorated façades. Their significance is both tangibles expressed through material, craftsmanship and settlement form and intangible reflected in family memory, religious practice, festivals, neighborhood identity and long-standing social relationships (Tweed & Sutherland, 2007; UNESCO, 2003, 2011).

Observed conditions range from minor surface defects to serious structural deterioration. Recurring problems include roof leakage or collapse, moisture penetration, vegetation growth, erosion of plaster and brickwork, damaged timber elements, structural cracks and incompatible repairs. Figure 5 visualizes the preliminary three-category survey; the final inventory will apply the five-grade condition scale and will distinguish deterioration from loss of authenticity caused by extensive renovation. Buildings with high significance and severe risk should receive first priority for emergency stabilization and detailed structural assessment (Afroz, 2022; Australia ICOMOS, 2013).

The area remains predominantly residential, supported by active temples, mosques, shops and community facilities. A smaller group of buildings appears vacant, partially occupied, underused or informally occupied. The strongest adaptive-reuse candidates are structurally recoverable properties with suitable access, adequate internal space and limited ritual or privacy restrictions. Appropriate functions may include community learning, cultural interpretation, crafts, small local enterprises and controlled visitor services (Arfa et al., 2022; Bullen & Love, 2011; Vafaie et al., 2023).

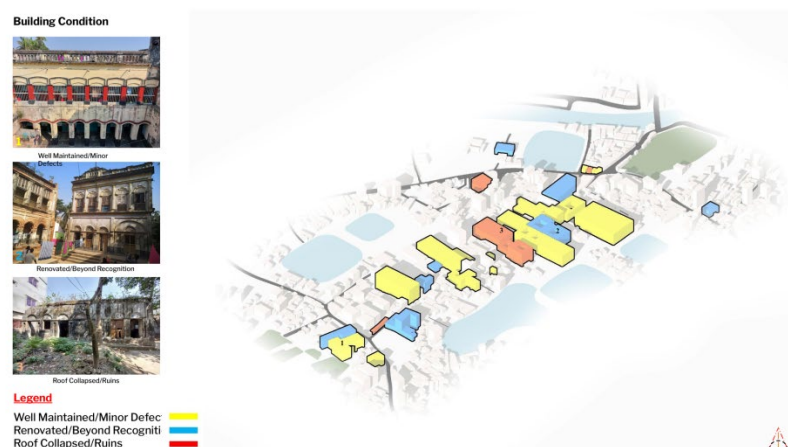


Figure 17 Shows. Preliminary building-condition mapping and photographic examples. The presentation's three categories are retained only for initial diagnosis; the final study will apply the five-grade condition scale defined in Section 4.3. Source: adapted from the authors' presentation.

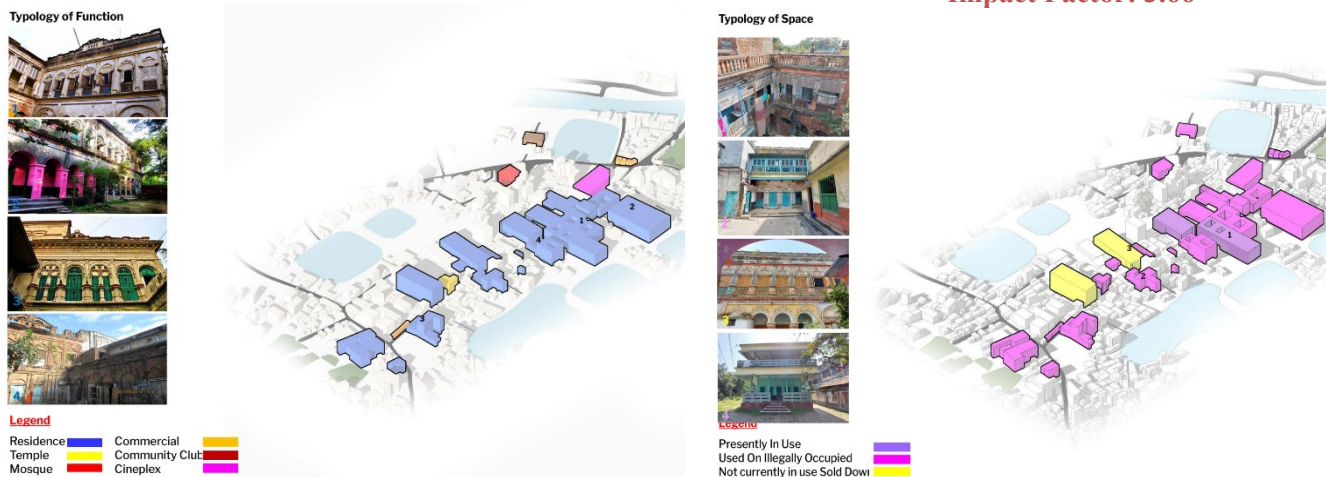


Figure 18 Shows. Preliminary functional typology and use-status mapping: (a) present building functions and (b) occupancy/use status. Categories and individual building assignments require verification through the complete inventory. Source: adapted from the authors' presentation.

Narrow lanes, irregular plots, closely positioned frontages, internal courtyards and water-related spaces define Nagar Kasba's historic morphology. Restricted street width, discontinuous paths, service congestion, incompatible extensions and the loss of open space reduce accessibility and legibility. Figure 7 records the existing street character and identifies historic façades, entrances, commercial edges, vegetation and later alterations that should inform heritage-sensitive public-realm design (UNESCO, 2011; Veldpaus et al., 2013).

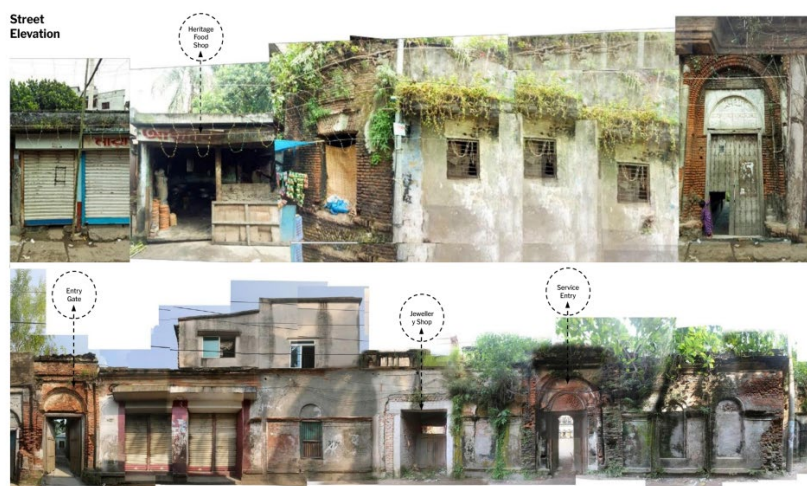


Figure 19 Shows: existing street character and urban layout, with historic façades, entrances, commercial edges, vegetation, and later changes. Source: authors' field documentation in the design study.

Religious festivals, processions, mandap-based activities, ghat rituals, fairs, local foods, clothing traditions and neighborhood events sustain Nagar Kasba as a living cultural landscape. Figure 8 presents

a preliminary cultural calendar organized by mandir/mandap, ghat, rally and open-space programs. Festival dates, routes, crowd levels and the use of privately owned or religious spaces must be confirmed with community representatives because several events follow lunar or locally determined calendars. Tourism programming should support these traditions without disrupting worship, privacy or local access (ICOMOS, 2022; UNESCO, 2003).

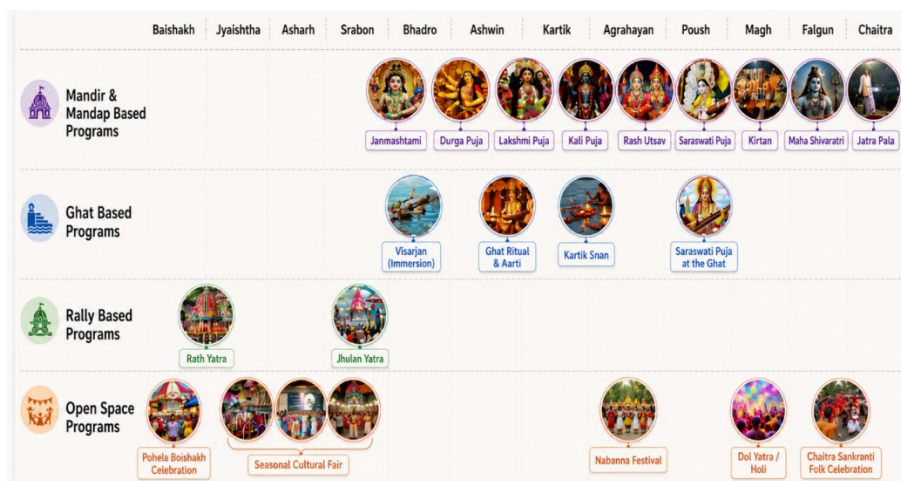


Figure 20 Shows Preliminary cultural festival calendar showing mandir/mandap, ghat, rally and open-space programs across the Bengali year. Dates, routes and participation patterns require community verification. Source: adapted from the authors' presentation.

Contemporary heritage conservation has moved beyond protecting isolated monuments toward an area-based understanding of historic settlements. UNESCO's Historic Urban Landscape approach views streets, plots, buildings, waterways, memories, social practices, and economic activities as interconnected layers of urban heritage (UNESCO, 2011). Heritage-led regeneration can repair structures, improve public spaces, encourage walking, support enterprise, and restore neighborhood identity. However, uncontrolled investment may increase rents, displace residents, commercialize cultural assets, and weaken local authenticity. Sustainable cultural tourism should balance visitor experience with community rights, management, traffic control, and fair distribution of benefits, as emphasized by ICOMOS. Heritage trails, interpretation, local crafts, food, and festivals can strengthen this relationship through resident participation. Adaptive reuse also enables historic buildings to accommodate housing, museums, libraries, craft centres, or small businesses while retaining significant architectural features (Arfa et al., 2022; Bullen & Love, 2011; Yung & Chan, 2012). Effective regeneration depends on collaboration among owners, residents, artisans, authorities, conservation professionals, religious institutions, and tourism stakeholders (Aas et al., 2005; Gotham, 2005; ICOMOS, 2022; Landorf, 2009; Veldpaus et al., 2013).

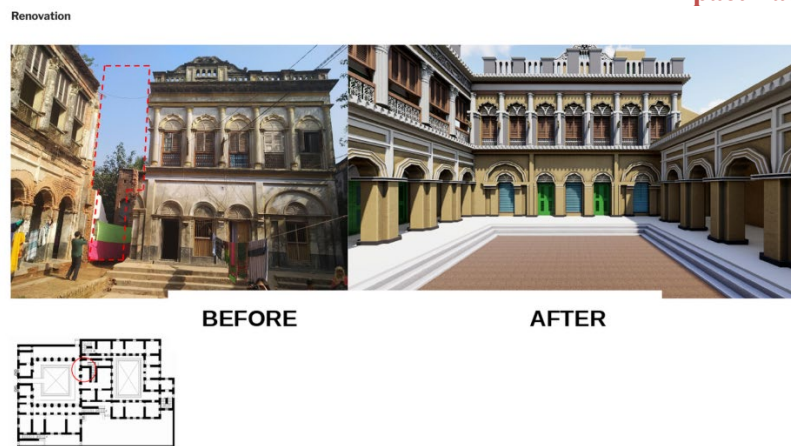


Figure 21 Shows Haque House Corrected before-and-after visualization of a selected courtyard elevation. The existing photograph is labelled *Before* and the computer-generated proposal is labelled *After*.

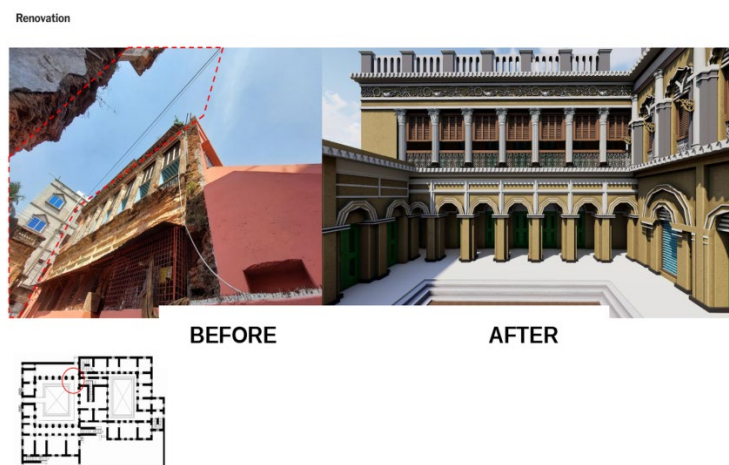


Figure 22 Shows: Haque House Corrected before-and-after visualization of a second façade/courtyard view. The intervention remains conceptual and requires significance and structural assessment.

The architectural configuration of Nagar Kasba reflects a distinctive combination of colonial, Indo-European, and local Bengali traditions. Most buildings were modest one- or two-storey residences arranged along narrow roads, ponds, canals, and service lanes. Two major residential types are identifiable: courtyard houses and bungalow-style houses. Courtyard houses generally contained two open spaces: an outer courtyard used for guests, cultural programmes, religious rituals, and semi-public activities, and an inner courtyard reserved for family life and private functions. Rooms, verandas, and arcaded corridors were organized around these courtyards, ensuring natural light, ventilation, and controlled circulation. Bungalow-type buildings lacked internal courtyards and usually had open yards at the front or rear. Kitchens, toilets, gardens, and other service spaces were positioned behind the main

residential blocks and connected through narrow back lanes. Raised plinths, thick brick walls, high ceilings, shaded verandas, and multiple openings helped the buildings respond effectively to flooding, heat, humidity, and seasonal rainfall (Alam, 2021; Australia ICOMOS, 2013).

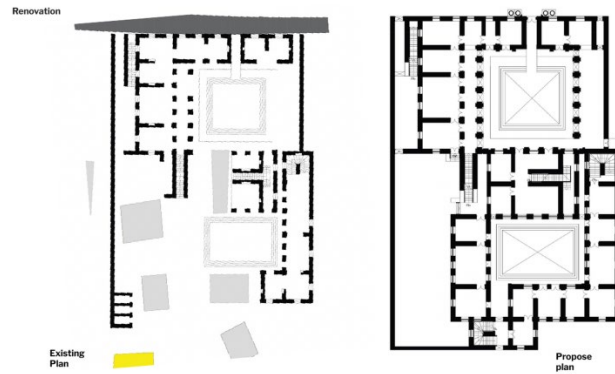


Figure 23 Shows: Existing and proposed plans of Haque House for a selected adaptive-reuse case. Building name, floor level, north arrow, scale, room labels and retained/new/removed elements should be added.



Figure 24 Shows: Proposed east elevation of the selected Haque House adaptive-reuse case. Scale,



Figure 25& 26 Shows: Section Shows Spatial Analysis and Functional Structure of Haque House

6. DISCUSSION

Nagar Kasba is special because of the way all the old buildings and other things like homes and temples and small streets and markets and water all work together. Nagar Kasba community life is also very important. When people move away or inherit properties or families get smaller it can cause problems like empty buildings and neglect and people changing things they should not change. Sometimes people get rid of the courtyards. At the time people are changing houses into shops and buildings where people can live and work and this shows how people are living and working in different ways now. Nagar Kasba is changing and this is not about old buildings it is about the whole area and how people live and work there. So, when we try to preserve Nagar Kasba, we need to fix the buildings and make the streets and other infrastructure better and find new uses for old buildings and make sure people can still make a living and be part of the community. We can also have people come and visit Nagar Kasba to help pay for the upkeep. We can have walking tours. Sell local food and have places where people can learn about Nagar Kasba. We can also have community events. People do not careful too many people coming to visit can cause big problems, like people being forced to move away and property prices going up and people not being able to live in Nagar Kasba anymore. So we need to make sure that everyone works together to make sure Nagar Kasba is protected. This includes the people who live in Nagar Kasba and the people who own property and the government and the people who take care of buildings and schools and tourism companies and people who invest money. We need to make sure people have the money and the expertise they need. That people are not forced to move away. Nagar Kasba shows us that we need to protect the buildings and the way people live and work and make sure everyone is treated fairly and that the local economy is strong (Aas et al., 2005; Gotham, 2005; ICOMOS, 2022; Landorf, 2009; UNESCO, 2011; Yung & Chan, 2012).

7. CONCLUSION

Nagar Kasba is an important place that people seem to have forgotten about in Mirkadim. It shows us what the buildings and streets were like a time ago in the whole Bikrampur area. The houses with courtyards, the narrow roads, the old materials, the decorative things and the mix of cultural influences all come together to make a unique old city landscape. Nagar Kasba is in trouble because of things like decay people owning different parts of the land people leaving, others taking over changes that do not fit in and pressure to redevelop the area. All these things are threatening the nature and survival of Nagar Kasba. The study says that we should not just fix up the buildings but also think about the whole area and how people live there. We need to preserve the things find new uses for old buildings get the community involved help people make a living make public spaces better and get different groups to work together. If we are careful tourists can. Help local businesses, like food shops and craft places without disturbing the people who live there. We can also use buildings for cultural and social things. If we all work together Nagar Kasba can stay true to what it's help the local people be stronger and show others how to preserve old places, like this in Bangladesh (Huq et al., 2017; Li et al., 2020; UNESCO, 2011; Veldpaus et al., 2013).

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