



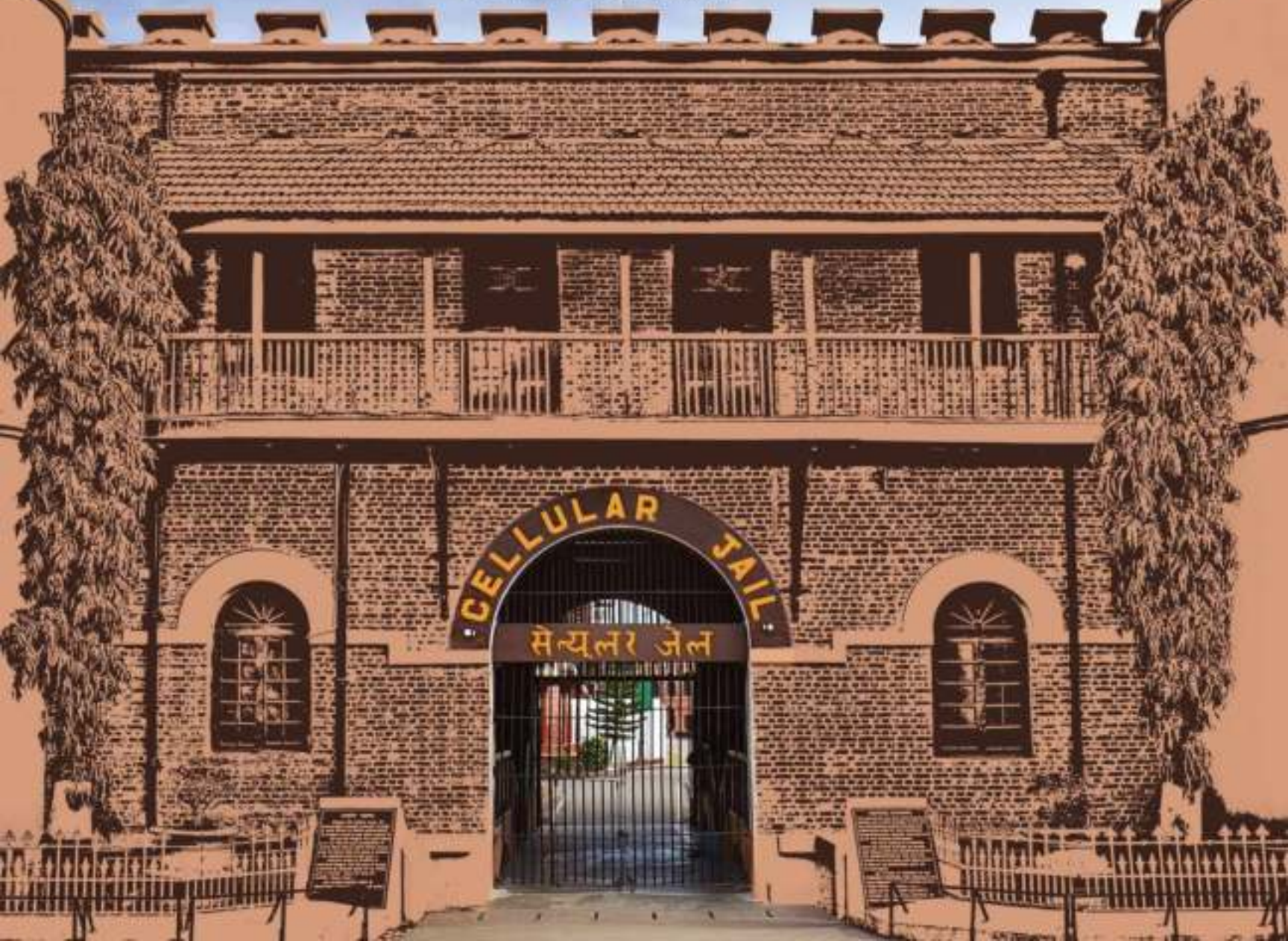
"Azadi Ka Tirth Sthal"

सेन्यलर जेल

Andaman & Nicobar Islands



SAVANI
SINCE 1995



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Our Story...

The Cellular Jail, recognized as the National Memorial, was opened in 1906, during British rule in India. The emerging era of the Indian Freedom Revolution began with "Kala Pani", meaning the death penalty for freedom fighters, also known as "water of death", due to the geographical location of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It was not just a horrific death sentence; it was an act of inhuman atrocity and cruelty against humanity. No one could escape the torture of hell throughout that historically stained century's disastrous period.

The structure consisting of the colonial jail is a 3-storied construction of Burmese bricks in the shade of puce. The Panopticon type architectural layout of the jail, with the tower, served as a single point of vigilance to keep an eye on the prisoners of the 7 gigantic wings and 663 cells of the prison. Today, we can find three wings out of seven. The rest of the wings' area is to accommodate a hospital. With time, the weather took a toll on the structure, as, geographically, the islands receive heavy rainfall and the corridors act as a barrier. Several factors, such as brutal interventions and weathering, had caused the structure to deteriorate and damage several elements and locations.

The extensive task of restoration and repairs of the cellular jail was undertaken by Andaman P.W.D. under the guidance of A.S.I. and Stambh Consultants. Proudly, "Savani Heritage Conservation Pvt. Ltd." received the opportunity and responsibility for the restoration of the national monument. We have strived to restore more than 150 heritage monuments and are obliged to work on a historic monument of national importance known as "Azadi Ka Tirth Sthal". It is the presence of the visitors that brings value to the heritage structure, ultimately leading to the efforts to maintain and care for the structure. We at Savani Heritage Conservation Pvt. Ltd. believe that restoring Cellular Jail is equivalent to paying homage to freedom fighters that were once imprisoned and have strived to gain independence for India. With this memorial, future generations of independent India will always remember their forefathers as heroes of freedom, and the saga of their sacrifice will be immortal for ages.



Built in 1906, the Prison was governed from the admin building, which stands today at the entrance. The front elevation of the Cellular Jail, which is the face of the monument, as it is the first structure viewed by the visitors.

The National Memorial's administration wing entrance is guarded by two towers, which are connected linearly to the admin block. The admin block, which was painted, was scrapped off to expose the original brick layer, which was consolidated with ethyl silicate to safeguard the brick facade. The roof and the windows of the admin block were also repaired by scarping off the paint layer and polishing later.

The visitors have to pass across the towers to enter the site.





The Cellular Jail is a National memorial monument located at Andaman. The building, which served as a colonial jail, is three-storied and constructed out of Burmese bricks in the shade of puce.

The architectural layout of the jail is based on the concept of the Panopticon, where all seven wings merge into a single tower. The tower served as a single point of vigilance to keep an eye on the prisoners. The ensemble originally consisted of seven wings, out of which only three wings exist today to accommodate a hospital.

Considering the climatology, the islands receive heavy rainfall and the corridors act as a barrier while the local bricks were used to construct the structure.

After



The corridors are one of the chief architectural elements of the Cellular Jail. These were incorporated to connect the seven wings and to keep constant vigilance on the inmates and monitor their activities. The corridor functioned as a barrier to tackle the local geographical conditions where very heavy rainfall is received during the monsoons.

The corridor was intervened in the meanwhile during the maintenance when it was rendered with cement and painted. After studying the archival images, it was understood that the bricks were originally exposed. Later, during the restoration, the bricks were exposed back to the original to retain the authenticity. The exposed brick surface had to be consolidated using ethyl silicate.

These bricks were also treated with water proofing treatment to retard the growth of the vegetation. Besides, the M.S. grills of the corridor were also restored as they were corroded in some places due to exposure to the sea breeze. The grills were painted later with anti-corrosive paint.

Before



After



Before



During the maintenance of the Cellular Jail, the fabric as well as the structure were exposed to brutal interventions such as paint layer. The brick wall was exposed and consolidated with ethyl silicate.

The ceiling of the corridor was interfered with by R.C.C. and beams. The ceiling of the corridor was structurally intervened such that the 'I' section had R.C.C. beams underneath, which were critically cracked.

The Jack Arch of the corridor was structurally strengthened and the Jack Arch was exposed. The restoration of the jack arch to its original location is an attempt to preserve its authenticity.

After



Each cell, which was a solitary confinement, had only one small opening on one of the walls. The M.S. cell grills secured the lockup and were restored by applying anti-corrosive paint after removing the rust. The cell walls and ceiling were plastered with cement during the maintenance over the original brick layer. After scarping off the paint layer, the bricks pointing were corrected with lime and consolidated with ethyl silicate.

The bricks were made locally on the island, and since the cells were meant to confine the inmates, their beautification was not taken into consideration, and hence they were left without any plaster. The Savarkar cell at the Cellular Jail is one of the most visited cell to pay homage to Freedom Fighter Veer Savarkar. The lighting system was also corrected while each cell underwent a holistic restoration and repair under a vigilant eye.



After



Before



After

Before



The internal walls of the cells were plastered during maintenance, which can be termed as intervention. It has been found out from the earlier references that the walls were not plastered.

Besides, the walls and the ceiling were also plastered and painted. These layers were scrapped off to expose the original brick finish. The bricks at some locations were retrofitted, which were severely deteriorated.

After exposing the bricks, the pointing was done with lime. After the pointing, the walls of the cells were applied with a layer of water repellent.

After



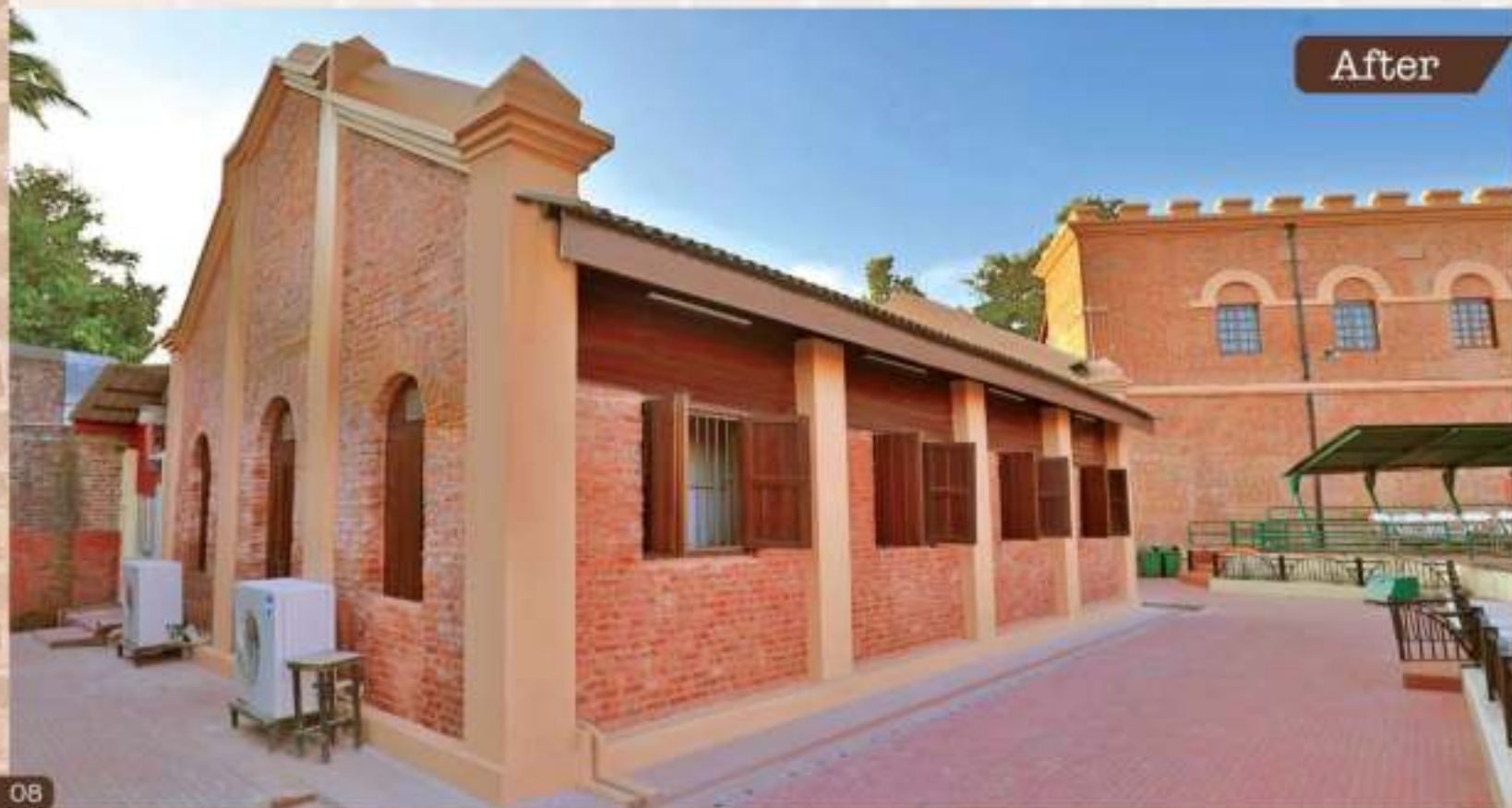
The *Rasoi Ghar*, or the kitchen block 1, was used to cook food for the residing officers and the inmates of the jail and is a part of the original plan. The sloping roof of the structure was replaced.

The façade was restored where the plaster and the paint, which was an intervention, had to be scraped off to maintain uniformity with the other wings.

The door and windows paint were also scraped off and repainted in the shade of brown. The pitch roof of the structure had to be replaced with AC Sheets changed timber members and the gutter around the structure was cleaned to channelise the flow of the rainwater.



Before



After

Before



The rear side of the Admin block of the Cellular Jail, unlike the other wings, also underwent a façade restoration. One of the windows that was blocked was revived by reopening it.

These openings were repainted after scraping off the previous paint in the shade of brown. The plaster and the paint were scraped off to retain the original brick finish fabric. The cornices and other plain areas were replastered.

The paint over the brick façade was scraped off and exposed. The mass seating area in the vicinity is meant for the light and sound show.

After



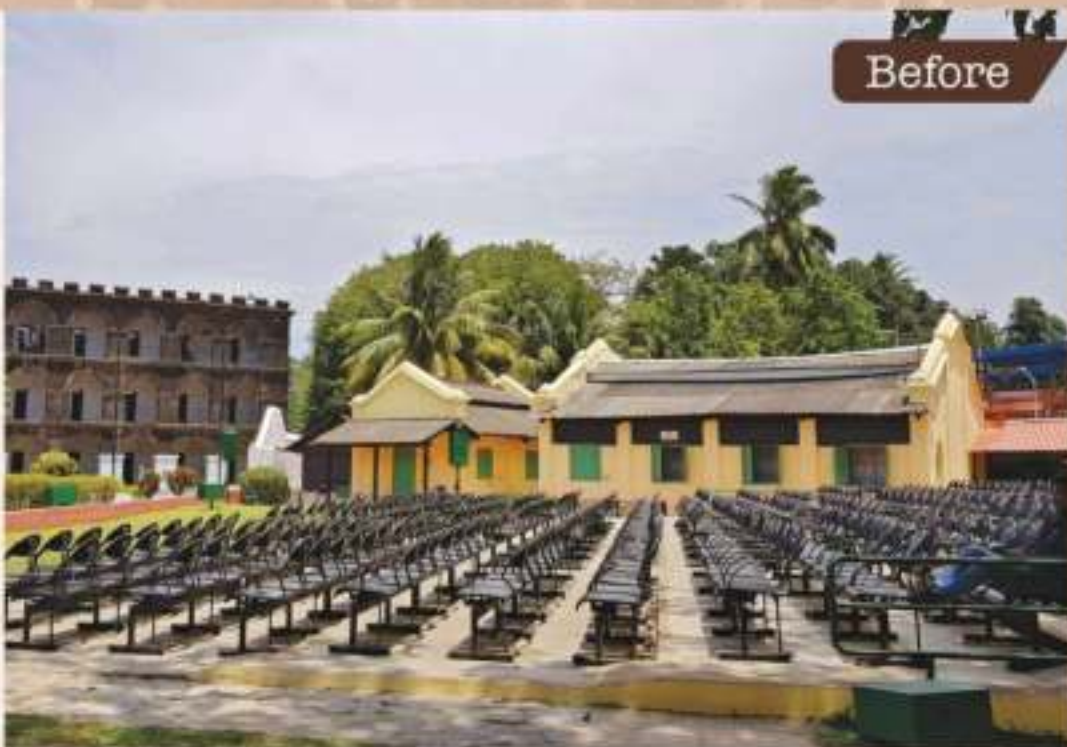


The *Rasol Ghar*, or the kitchen blocks 1 & 2 across the seating area, stood in an under-maintained condition.

During the restoration, the façade was restored where paint was scraped off and the bricks were consolidated using ethyl silicate. The roof was replaced with similar AC sheets, and timber members were replaced. The paint of the door and window was scraped off and repainted in the shade of brown. The brick surface was exposed after consolidating with ethyl silicate. Whereas the plain surfaces were plastered.

The light and sound show arrangement in the foreground is one of the chief attractions amongst tourists of all ages.

Before



After



Before



Each cell of the Cellular Jail had only a single small opening to allow ventilation and minimum light.

Originally, the *chajja* must not have been present. However, to protect the cells from rain water, it was decided to retain the *chajja*. Besides, the cells are fitted with light fixtures for the convenience of the visitors. The material of the *chajja* was changed, which corroded.

Besides, the brick fabric on the rear side was exposed as original, consolidated with ethyl silicate and later treated with water repellent coating.

After



The locking system of the cell is a very interesting aspect of the prison architecture. The cell locking arrangement was done in a way that the AL drop is concealed inside the brick masonry, making it impossible for prisoners to escape. The rusting of the M.S. AL drop was caused by weathering in some locations. Furthermore, there was also a bulging of the bricks near the door.

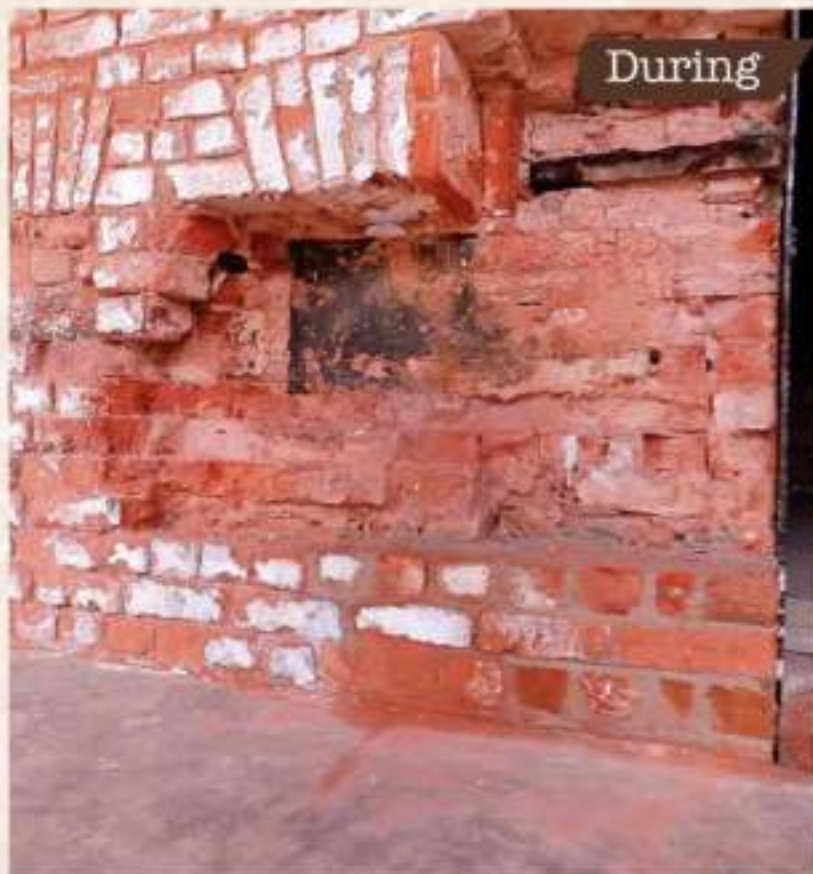
The AL drops were treated with anti-corrosive layers and later painted with black paint. Also, the M.S. flap of the food receiving counter was repaired. The walls in some places had bulges in them, probably due to the dampness. The bulge was treated after the removal of the bricks from the place and refitting with new bricks. The plaster and paint over the AL Drop wall were scraped off to expose the joints between the bricks and to check for any AL Drop.

Thus, the unique feature of the cell lock up was restored and repaired without replacing the original locks.

Before



During



After



Before



The ceiling of the corridor carries the load that is generated by the movement of the visitors. With the increase in the number of visitors, the load on the corridors increased and the additional load-carrying structural elements were introduced. During the maintenance by the jail authorities, the additional R.C.C. beams were introduced, which were an intervention.

Over the years, these beams began to corrode due to the prevailing humid and sea breeze conditions, which accelerated the rusting of the reinforcement. After an in-depth archival study and documentation, it was discovered that a jack arch exists above the intervened R.C.C. beams and slab. The 'I' sections of some of the jack arches were replaced because they were corroded. Before initiating the work, the slab was supported with temporary supports. The R.C.C. beam was removed and the original jack arch was restored. Further, the corridor jack arch 'I' sections were retrofitted by adding a plate 32mm x 65mm as wide as a flange in place of a concrete beam, an inclusion which was later removed. Finally, the ceiling, along with the walls, was exposed as original, with lime pointing done all over the walls and ceiling.

After



Thus, the structural soundness of the structure is as necessary as the facade restoration. Therefore, the structure was restored holistically to make it sound, which will increase its longevity.

The terrace of each cellular wing has a flat terrace with merlon-like elements on the side. During the maintenance, the terrace was waterproofed, which was only a temporary solution. This caused dampness in the walls below, which further affected the walls.

Thus, the intervened layer was removed later at the time of restoration. The terrace waterproofing works were carried out afresh, and later a layer of new waterproofing was laid all over the terrace as guided by the consultant.

Thus, the terrace caused leakage and dampness in the cells and corridors and was waterproofed. Besides, the merlons were also repaired, repainted and waterproofed.

Before



After



Before



The cell wings are made up of one ground floor and two floors above. The Façade of the cells are arranged in a linear pattern, emerging from a central location. Two of the seven linear wings are part of the hospital in the vicinity. The Phase – I wings which were restored were the block on I, VI partially and VII completely. The semi-circular arches transfer the load as the structure is load-bearing. The arches form a distinctive façade feature of the structure. These arched openings also act as a semi-open barrier to allow the exchange of air and light. These arches have M.S. grills for safety purposes, which were rusted and were restored by applying an anti-corrosive coating and later black paint. Prior to restoration, the façade had black crusts all over, which was a result of algal growth.

After



At the time of restoration, the façade was cleaned thoroughly with the help of water jet mist and consolidated with ethyl silicate. Later, repointing was done in between the bricks, and finally, water repellent was applied to restrict the ficus and algal growth.

With time, the weather took a toll on the structure, as, geographically, the islands receive heavy rainfall and the corridors act as a barrier. Semi-circular arches and jack arches support the entire stretch of the corridors.

The wings of the Cellular Jail have a typical liner style, stretching in length for over 40 m. Constant exposure to the heavy rains had caused algal and ficus growth, which further, after drying, caused black crusts all over the facade of the cell wings. The cornice was re-plastered as observed from the archival image.

The façade was treated to make it water-proof, and the *chajjas* were also replaced. The roof of the workshop area was repaired, which stretches over a length in a linear way.

Before



After



Before



The Panopticon architecture of the prison where the wings radiate outward from the central watch tower. The image shows a junction between two wings, one behind the other. The central tower is visible in the background. No two wings face each other, and each of the seven wings radiates out from a core. Prior to the façade restoration, the façade was in very deteriorated condition with a thick layer of black crust present all over the façade. The heavy rains all over the island caused the bricks to soak up the water and cause dampness in the passage as well as inside the cells.

After

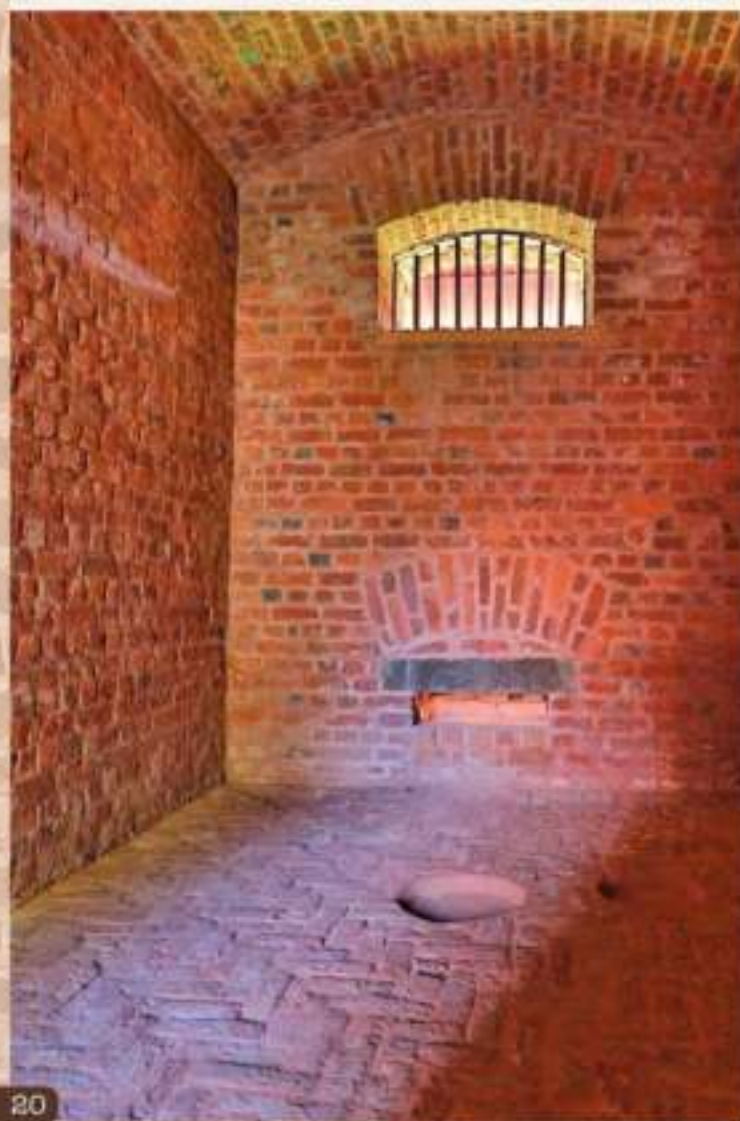


As the restoration began, the black crusts all over the façade were gently cleaned with water jet mist and a brush. The consolidation of the exposed brick facade was necessary and was done using ethyl silicate. Originally, the façade must have been exposed bricks as the purpose of the building was to only keep the inmates. Thus, after exposing the original brick layers, the cornices were plastered. This plaster and the brick pointing were done using lime mortar to replicate the original layer and to retain the authenticity.

The cracks caused in the vaulted brick roof were a severe concern for the cell.

Such cracks were stitched with the help of S.S. pin stitching and strengthened with helifix.

The bricks were retrofitted and consolidated using ethyl silicate.



An attempt was made to manufacture the brick from the local soil and later baked. The size opted was 190 mm x 90 mm x 90 mm, similar to the old brick sample. This experiment enabled us to understand how the bricks were traditionally made out of which the entire Cellular Jail was constructed.



The herringbone pattern of the flooring, which is unique to the cells of the jail, were deteriorated and worn out over time. The missing and damaged bricks were refixed and finally, the layer was finished with the help of the lime mortar with natural pigment added to it to match the floor.



The museum at the Cellular Jail displays the life-size model and images of the martyrs who were inmates and have sacrificed their lives for the betterment of the nation.

The images of the past depict the horrifying scenarios, and one can pay homage to these martyrs by visiting the place.



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शीघ्र झुका कर, गर्व से, आज उन्हें नमन करते हैं।



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