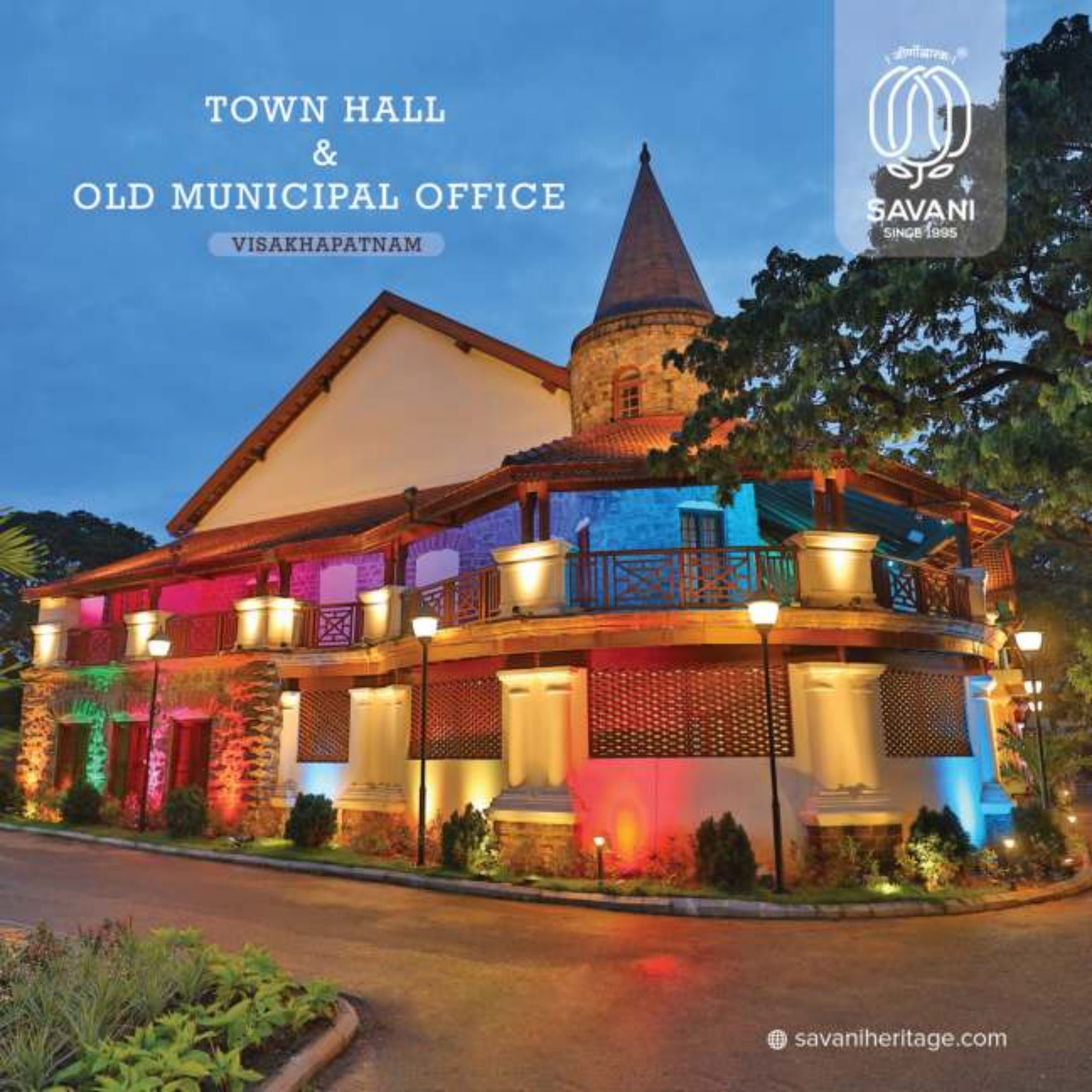


TOWN HALL
&
OLD MUNICIPAL OFFICE
VISA KHAPATNAM



About Us

The Savani Heritage Conservation Pvt. Ltd. is a Mumbai-based executing agency that has restored over 200 heritage structures. Our expertise in the field of heritage led us to retain both structures' authenticity and originality in order to do them justice. The Town Hall and Old Municipal Office project was our very first in the beautiful East Coast Town of Visakhapatnam, and we are grateful to have worked on the **Town Hall (TH)** and the **Old Municipal Office (OMO)**, which are historic structures with special significance in the hearts of history lovers. The Old Municipal Office building was constructed in the late 1930s by British India as an administrative building, the traces of which can still be seen today in the prison-like rooms on the ground floor. The building was used until 1947, after independence it was handed over to the G.V.M.C., which is now used as a municipal office. Many modifications were implemented during this time period to accommodate changes.

This multi-layered fabric creates the story of the building, adding to its heritage and significance. The Old Municipal Office building boasts off its modern structure which is a curious mix of both modern and colonial architectural styles. The structure is typically characterized with the European arch, flat cantilevers occupying in equal space and a majestic dome over the central staircase. The structure sits in a site of area of 1.7 acres and is made entirely out of cut stone. The OMO is also one of the first buildings to have a self-supporting steel and concrete enforced roof. The building is designed on a horizontal axis along two corridors. The rooms are placed on either side of these pathways with central staircase connecting both the axis. One can enter the building either through the central foyer or through a narrow passage in the rear side of the building leading up to the second corridor. All the rooms are opened to either of the one corridor making the building aligned in axial co-ordination.

The Town hall building which is also called as '**The Victoria Town Hall**' is built by Maharaja of Bobbili between 1901-1904, at that time to commemorate the golden jubilee of Queen Victoria. The building was inaugurated by R. H. Campbell, Collector and Agent, Visakhapatnam on March 8, 1904. In the period between 1929 and 1942, town hall became the meeting point for freedom fighters and social activists, an epitome of freedom struggle. In 1929, Mahatma Gandhi chose this building as a venue of his speeches. In 1939, Salt Satyagrah was kicked off from the beach opposite the town hall and the event is visited by many leaders like Digumarti Janaki Bai, Digumarthi Venkata Swamy, Tenneti Viswanath and Kolluru Suryam Gupta. The building has also been the stage for many secret meetings held by Gandhi with the leaders from the south. The building also became the platform for many cultural activities. It was in this hall that eminent personalities such as Rajagopalachari, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, C. V. Raman and Rabindranath Tagore had delivered lectures. Artists like Mangalampally Bala Muralikrishna, M. S. Subbulakshmi and Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu has made the town hall their stage.

We at Savani Heritage Conservation Pvt. Ltd. are grateful to the Commissioner GVMC, the AECOM and citizens of Vizag who have extended their support by being curious in the process of the restoration of the Old Municipal Office and Town Hall.



Before

FLAT ROOF

The Dome of the Old Municipal Office being the central element, its structural restoration was necessary along with the slab around it.

The slab in some places appeared damaged which had to be restored back to avoid further damage. Besides structural restoration, the waterproofing was also necessary to arrest the leakages and dampness in the rooms below.

The slab was made water proof by using the China mosaic technique which includes laying of Brick Bat Coba before tile chips.



After

FAÇADE

The Façade of the OMO displays an ashlar stone masonry with neatly dressed stones and intervened by beautiful louvered windows. Unfortunately, several interventions took place over the years and eventually the building fell into disrepair.

The façade underwent fabric and structural restoration. The lintels were structurally restored to safeguard the structure. Some blocked spaces and interventions were also corrected.

The previous cement pointing was racked out and repointing was done with lime. A layer of waterproofing was done to restrict the growth of ficus and allow breathability to the stones. The polished windows further enhanced the façade.

Before



After





Before

CORRIDOR

The Corridor is the first covered space which welcomes the visitors giving a glimpse of the restoration works internally. The stone masonry was treated, the flooring restored and repointing done with lime which was intervened with cement thereby affecting the stones. The lime being a traditional material bonds well with the stones.

The Doors and windows which were in a bad condition, were completely restored back and were melamine polished. The iconic wooden railings were also restored and replaced where required. All timber elements were treated with anti-termite treatment and polished. For safety concerns, the structure also compliances with the fire and safety norms. The lit corridor brightens up the space giving an appealing appearance.



After

PORTICO

The portico which is the covered walkway which is supported on the columns. The portico space wonderfully creates an area for a mini gathering and offers a view. The portico is in response to the climatology where it cuts the rains and allows breeze during scorching summers.

Structurally, the lintel of the flat arches were damaged and had to be restored to safeguard the structure.

The stone masonry of the columns and arches was restored back by cleaning and application of lime pointing. The doors and windows of the portico area too were restored back and polished which were painted previously.

Before



After





Before

DOME

The Dome of the Old Municipal Office is one of its iconic element. To its utter dismay, the condition of the dome was not maintained well, the ventilator windows missing and the beams below the drum also damaged.

The paint layer of the dome area was also flaking. On the external side, the slab around the dome was restored and it possessed a structural threat.

Once the work commenced, the beam were restored, the ventilator windows were affixed and the entire area was repainted with a suitable paint which was breathable. Later this internal side of the dome was lit to enhance the entire area.



After

STAIRCASE

The timber steps leading to the ground floor which was in a state of disrepair due to under usage. The timber which was in a good condition was restored back after a thorough cleaning and polishing.

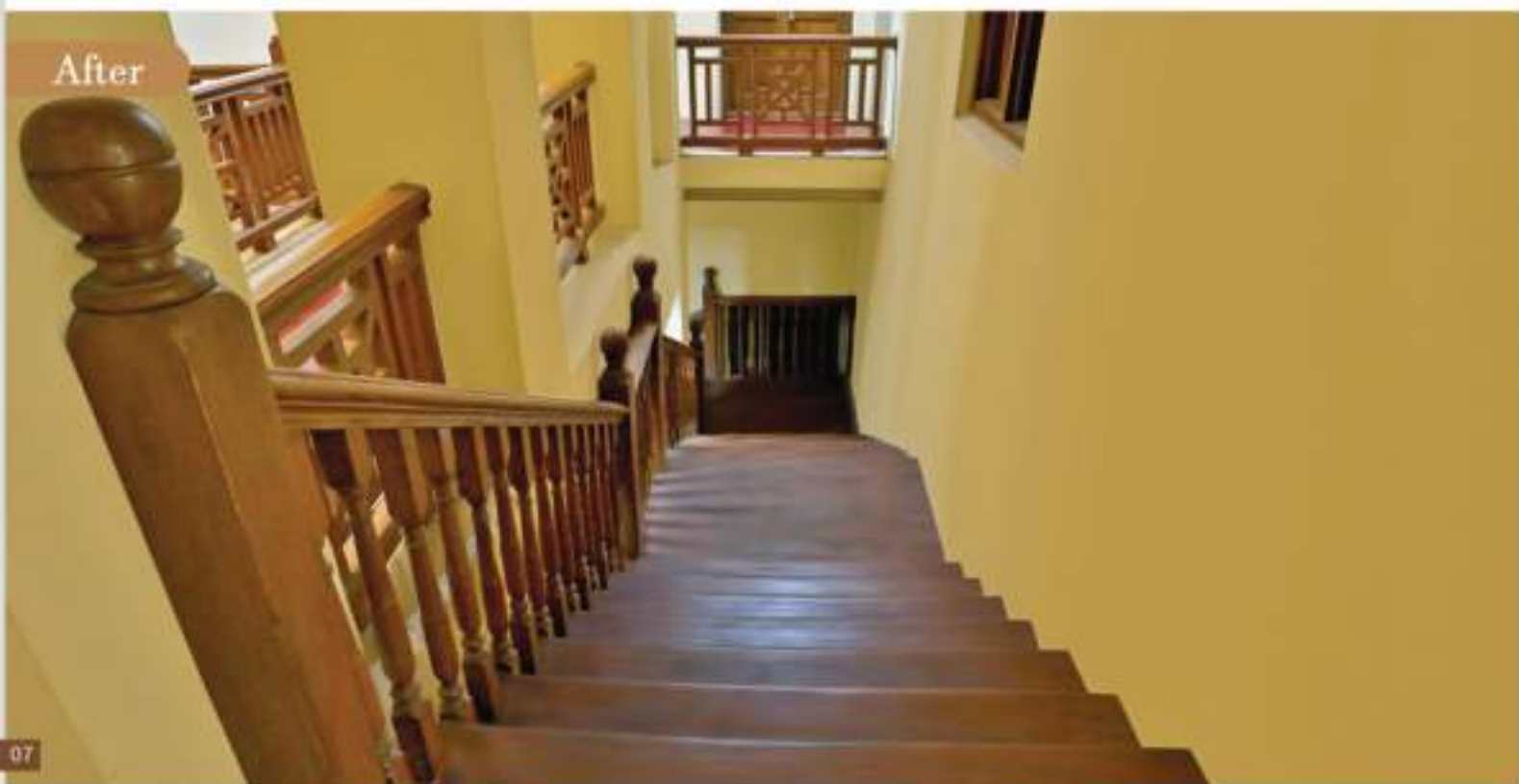
The paint was scraped off from the railings as the paint is not suitable for the wood and its removal was deemed necessary.

Thus, all the timber members were sustainably polished. Further, the side walls were also repainted after cleaning the previous flaking of the paint.

Before



After





Before

ROOM

The restoration for OMO was not just for the external face but also internally! The condition of the room was in a very critical condition due to under maintenance and paint layers applied over and over the walls which was a brutal intervention affecting the breathability of the stones and ultimately flaking of the plaster.

The internal revitalisation of this room was done by first scarping out all the paint off the walls, restoring the flooring. Later, the walls were painted with breathable paints, doors and windows restored and polished.

The light fixtures were fixed a new to brighten up the user space in the newly added ceiling for additional beautification.



After

OFFICE ROOM

The office room was in a bad state owing to the under maintenance of the structure. The leakages and dampness had caused the slab to deteriorate and pose a threat to its users. An integrated restoration focused on exposing the stone masonry, repointing of lime and re-plastering using lime plaster.

This has brought the original layer of the office space. Besides, the slab was restored and covered with ceiling with illumination.

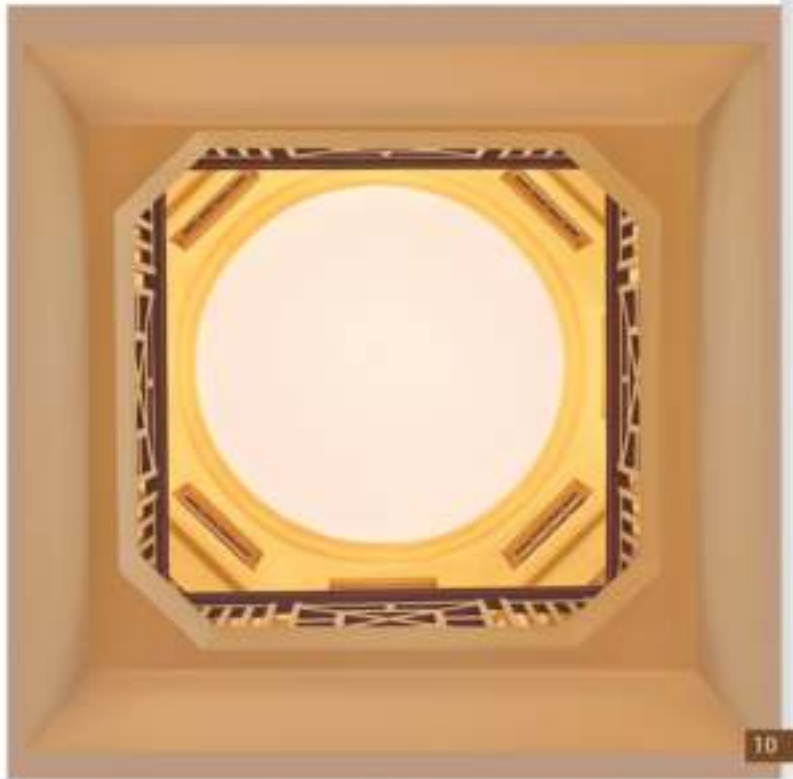
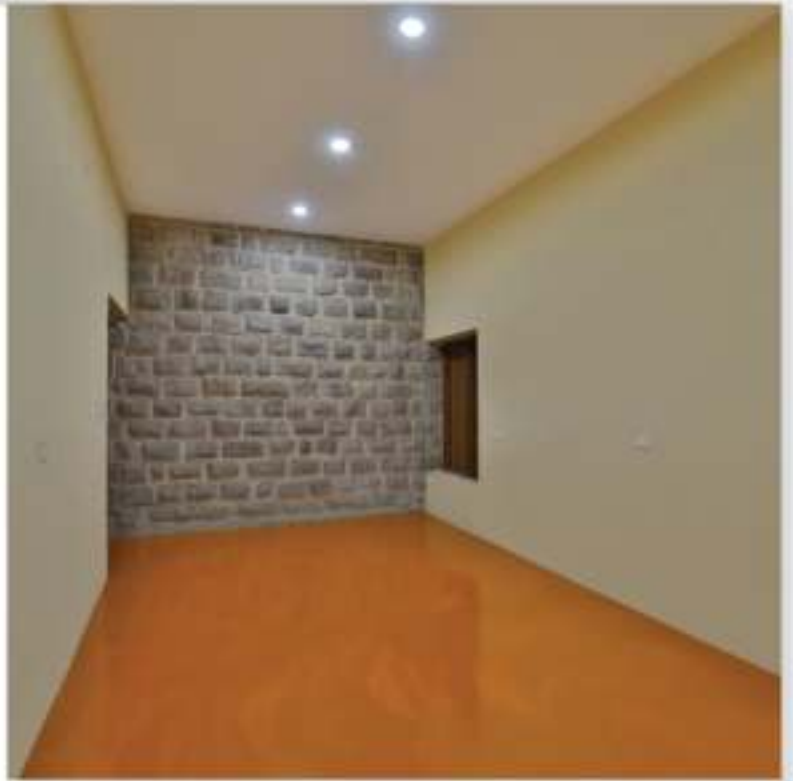
The painted doors and windows were also polished. The floor which had Indian Patent Stone was worn out and a layer of epoxy was poured over. This way the flooring was regained without adding additional weight to the floor.

Before



After





The introduction of Landscape elements such as an amphitheatre, lampposts, paved pathways and green patches has pleasingly enhanced the surroundings.

The two entrances to the Town Hall display their own styles. The area in the foreground of the amphitheatre will serve as a place for performances of various shows. The amphitheatre will act as a leisure place from where one can adorn the structure.



BIRDS EYEVIEW

The drone image offers an exquisite bird's eye view offering a visual treat. The pre and post restoration images clearly indicate the restoration efforts. The pitch roof, the walls, the doors and windows as well as the surroundings were landscaped.

The leakages through the pitch roof had seeped into the walls below. The plight of the structure made it unfit for the users.

Thus, the structural and architectural issues were addressed which has revitalised the structure.

Overall, the Town Hall is one of the jewel of the Vizag which has witnessed a number of historic events.

Before



After



After





Before

CORRIDOR

The corridor at the entrance of the Town Hall was in a bad condition with damaged railings, severely deteriorated roof and tiles, dusty floor, all a result of under maintenance.

The walls were painted whose layer was also flaking. Later the flaking paints were scraped off and a fresh layer of lime plaster was applied with added natural additives. Simultaneously, the roofs were restored and made watertight. As the previous tiles were shattered, the new tiles had to be placed.

The timber trusses were treated with preservative treatment for making them termite proof along with the eaves board. The flooring, timber railings and windows were repaired.



After

CORRIDOR

The roof of the Town Hall is a very unique design flaunting a different type of roofing, especially towards the circular corner and the conical roof.

The rafters of the pitch roof carry most of the load and thus its stability is most important. The timber rafters were decayed and in bad condition. The rafters which were in better condition were reused and only those which were in a bad condition were replaced. These members were treated with anti-termite treatment and later polished.

The deteriorated tiles of the roof were also replaced. The stone walls were repointed with lime and the doors and windows restored.

Before



After





Before

ROOM

The room in the Town Hall is a beautiful example of vernacular architectural style displayed from the elements such as the tapering columns with pedestal, rafters, lime concrete flooring and the segmental arched windows. Woefully, the condition of the room prior to restoration was very critical due to under usage.

The walls were painted as opposed to plastering. The restoration focused on the re-plastering of the walls with lime. The damaged timber rafters were restored and replaced as per the existing conditions.

The epoxy flooring (bi-epoxy) in the shade of yellow and the light fixtures overall lights up the entire space. The ceiling boarding and the rafters were polished.



After

HALL

The Town Hall, which is an example of the traditional style of architecture with its pitch roof, beams and trusses. The retention of this style was possible only by restoring the place.

The condition of the roof was critical and leaky. Besides, the plastered walls and flooring were dusty and damaged. The roof was initial element that was targeted to be restored. Following that, the walls were re-plastered using the traditional lime plaster method.

The doors and windows were repaired as required. Towards the end, the existing wooden flooring was restored and polished. Finally, the addition of new light fixtures breathed new life into the hall.

Before



After





Before

LANDING

The landing space of the staircase is made up of timber members. The wooden planks and the railing was checked for any defects and decay once it was cleaned.

The timber members were treated with anti-termite treatment and later polished to avoid infestation and improve its longevity.

The condition of the railing was relatively good and it was cleaned and repainted in black with oil paint once anti-rust was applied. Small pockets such as this add to the wholeness of the space.



After

REAR FAÇAD

The rear side Facade of the Town Hall stands out strikingly from the rest of the fabric owing to European appearance which is a difference from the masonry wall.

Over the years, the intervention such as addition of parapets insensitive paints and lack of repairs had brought a dullness to the structure. Some of the windows were also missing or were painted. The windows were replaced, a necessary intervention to suit the heritage.

Towards the end, landscape patch was introduced which compliments the structure subtly.

Before



After





Before

FAÇADE

The Town Hall holds a special place in the history of the Visakhapatnam. The beautiful building is an example of climate responsive architecture.

The three major elements viz the stone, timber and lime give the structure its face. The pitch roof and its conical element is a very eye catching as a top spire. The pitch roof at various levels was treated to curb leakages and avoid dampness.

Overall, the facades were applied water proofing layer to avoid algal and ficus growth.

A holistic restoration has saved the Town Hall and serves as an example of the historic times that is an important event for Vizag.



After

ENTRANCE PORCH

The entrance of the Town Hall is its face and briefly describes the building. The amalgamation of the European architectural elements along with the Indian elements adorn the entrance. These elements required special restorative methods to retain. The façade is a beautiful display of timber along with the plastered surface, sadly which was painted and showed flaking.

The beam of the balcony was repaired as a part of structural repairs. While a special focus was put on the plastering of the entrance. The fabric which was originally plastered was painted and which had to be scraped off. The lime re-plastering was done using the natural additives to strengthen the lime and the technique used was Araish Plaster. Thus, the grandeur of the entrance was achieved.

Before



After





HALL

The internal condition of the hall was as grave as the external. The roof caused leakages due to its deteriorated condition. The walls of the hall were damp due to moisture trapping which was a result of the painted walls as opposed to the lime plastering. The floor was also in a very bad condition.

The restoration of the internal hall focused on mending the pitch roof to curb the menace of dampness. Meanwhile, the walls were plastered using the Araish Plaster. The flooring was repaired with epoxy. The windows were specially polished with melamine. The stage which is the central attraction was repaired as it stood in a very shattered manner. The timber rafters too were restored and the lighting fixtures and fixed anew.



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