

# NABA BAJAAR নব বাজার

## CONFLUENCE OF CULTURE AND COMMERCE

The smells, sounds, and sights of Chittaranjan Park are strikingly unique from the rest of the city around it. It gives a glimpse into the civic life of the Bengali diaspora and early settlers of the EPDP association who made this once barren land in South Delhi a home for 2147 families. The market is the beating cultural heart of the community- a symbol of familiarity and a reminder of home for those who were displaced post-partition. The project addresses four parallel social structures that lend themselves to our spatial design:

### HISTORY AND CONTINUITY

ITIHAS ইতিহাস

DHARABAHIKOTA ধারাবাহিকতা

Inspired by the ongoing oral history archiving and multi-generational events of local organizations, the place-making strategy translates these stories into the physical landscape-- sidewalks, market, pandals and public spaces. Street furniture, informational signs and material palettes used in these elements heighten the sensory experience and visual identity of the neighborhood.

The 'History Wall' in the J Block corner park commemorates the origin and transformation of CR Park since 1954 and highlights the roots of the people who built the community. Reimagined as a memorial park, the vertical elements activate the street corners and improves permeability to the park from the street level. Placement of the history wall also engages visitors and residents with the history of the community as they approach the market. Proposed materials and programming further adds to the continuity and reference to collective history.

### COMMUNITY AND CONVERSATION

ADDA আড্ডা

PARA পাড়া

'Adda' (conversation, but more) and 'Para' (neighbourhood, but more) define the structure of society in Kolkata. Para epitomises the perfect combination of the physical concept of a neighbourhood with the psychological construct of a community. Similarly, Adda combines the concept of conversation as a form of talk and a place in the community associated with it.

We wanted to retain the ephemeral quality of the streets while creating functional spaces around the market. The place-making component facilitates an already existing convivial and conversational culture, through a mix of 'adda pods', pop-up book shelves, seating spaces around the market, kiosks, and reactivated play areas for multi-generational use. The enhanced circulation around the shops imitate the character of "rowaks" (narrow platforms outside a dwelling house), providing resting spaces to engage in the art of banter.

### CULTURE AND CELEBRATION

PUJO পুজো

MONDIR মন্দির

Temples and markets have been quintessential for public gatherings in traditional Indian cities. The close proximity and axial relationship of 'Kalibari Complex' and the 'Market 1 Complex', creates an urban condition that brings together food, public spaces and festivities within a 5-minute walking radius from residential zones. The Durga Puja celebration is a socio-cultural experience and a symbol of Bengali Pride. The architecture of the Pandal—a temporary enclosure of an open space, showcases the artistry and craftsmanship of local fabricators, sculptors and artists. 'The Pandal' is proposed as a tool to reclaim & redefine the market's front edges, accommodating flexible programming year-round.

The definition of 'culture' in this context includes not just the intangible, but material and spatial characteristics as well. Our

surface treatments—murals and decors are inspired by textile patterns of ‘Kantha’ and ‘Jamdani’ cotton, integrating ‘tactile’ features into the landscape. Blank walls and dingy spaces become a canvas for curating traditional crafts and murals, paying homage to the Bengali material culture.

## MARKET AND GASTRONOMY

BAJAAR বাজার

KHABAR খাবার

The bazaar and fish market attracts visitors from all over Delhi to find ingredients specially sourced for Bengali cuisines. It is a confluence of commerce and culture, where relationships between shop owners and residents, transforms the use of their shopfronts and narrow sidewalks into meeting points--much like a modern day Agora. At present the market’s access points and the internal spaces are not optimized. The exterior facade is also in a state of deterioration, lacking any visual identity. The market redesign aspires to provide an immersive and comfortable experience for visitors and residents alike. It includes spatial upgrades for the sustenance of this unique cultural landmark.

The reorganisation and cladding of the market facade alludes to the terracotta temples of Bengal. The architecture uses proportion and materiality of the temples within the context of a contemporary Indian market with an elegant, simplified geometry of the ‘chala’ temple roofs. Ample ventilation and sunshine filtering through the porous roof and vertical flutes add to the lightness and vibrancy to the bazaar.

## Funding and Programing Ideas

Being a bottom-up initiative the competition sets a precedent for such resident led collective action. To build and sustain this effort the following ideas of place management can be explored.

- Forming a dedicated neighborhood alliance represented by shop owners, RWA's, youth groups, and local CSO's enables resource sharing and maintenance support.
- 'Brick Crowdfunding' is a project fundraising tool that allows mid-level donors to have bricks engraved on a dedicated wall or walkway recognizing their contributions.
- Tap into place-based networks to program/co-create spaces.
  - Institutional partnerships and youth programming.
  - Local theater and Artists: Spoken word street theatre.
  - Neighborhood Diaries: History Tours for visitors, Oral History public installation, story maps.
  - Workshop on traditional cuisines and ingredients.
  - Pandal Committee organising design competitions during festival season.

## Market and Traffic Issues

The design provides better retail environment with more light drastically improving the shopping experience. The fish market is redesigned and the vegetable market is used as a buffer between the temple and the fish market. Traffic is improved by getting rid of the blind corner, dividers are provided, the plaza is made completely pedestrian and parking is relocated.

While our proposals provide short-term, incremental ideas, we're hopeful that this phase would catalyse a larger dialogue on future upgrades to the market complex, to position itself as an iconic landmark. Our market redesign proposal hopes to fuel this dialogue. The vision for CR Park's neighborhood and the (Bengali) community is one that rebrands itself as a 'Cultural Heritage District' that draws from the past but looks towards the future.