



BHIMPHEEDI

HISTORICAL HERITAGE

Rana, Newar and Tamang Architecture

Spring 2018

Updated Fall 2019

BHIMPHEEDI AWASUKA



भीमफेदी आवासुका



BHIMPHEDI AND ITS HISTORICAL HERITAGE

More than one hundred years ago, the rulers of the **Rana** Dynasty, members of the Royal family, their entourage and many other travelers used to stop to rest in Bhimphedi. This was the safest village to stay before entering the hot Chitwan jungle, which in those days was still infested with malaria. Bhimphedi enjoyed a higher altitude and cooler climate than Hetauda, that's why malaria did not reach this village; thereby so many official **buildings** and **rest-houses** were built in the village.

Bhimphedi was an important commercial hub before the construction of highways; goods from India were carried to Kathmadu valley through this place. This is the reason why **Bhimphedi Bazar** has so many commercial **Newar houses** with shops in the ground floor and private rooms in the upper floors. But much earlier than this, Bhimphedi was originally a Tamang settlement, with many **Tamang** farmer's houses surrounded by their cultivated lands.

Because of these facts, Bhimphedi happens to have a rich heritage of beautiful **Rana**, **Newar** and **Rural** architecture. But unfortunately, most of these buildings are not protected. Some important Rana and Newar buildings, as well as beautiful rural houses, have already been tore down due to lack of awareness... and many more will disappear soon if nothing is done in this regard.

This document has been prepared with the sole aim to **raise awareness** about Bhimphedi's heritage, in order to promote **policies** and **actions** that will lead to the heritage **protection and preservation**.



WHO WE ARE - AWASUKA PROGRAM

We are **a group of architects** from different organizations in Barcelona that has been working intensely in Bhimphedi VDC for the last three years. Our presence in Bhimphedi is due to Amics del Nepal, a catalan NGO that has been supporting and managing a Children's Home in this village since 2002. After the 2015 earthquakes in Nepal, Amics del Nepal received many help-demands from the villagers and this was the reason why **Awasuka Program** was started.

The name Awasuka was created after the Nepalese words: **Aawaas Sudhar Karyakram**, which mean **Habitat Improvement Program**. The program has been developed by: **Amics del Nepal, Base-A** and **CCD**, Development Cooperation Center at the UPC University. The **main goal** of the program has been strengthening the population and provide them with technical, social and economic knowledge in order to give a better response to future earthquakes. **Secondary goals** of the program have been focused in activities to solve other problems related to habitat: the water treatment (awareness and workshops), the improvement of latrines and the construction of chimneys to foster healthier kitchens.

Through the program development, Awasuka has conducted some **research** on **local architecture**, mostly focusing in **traditional farmer's houses**, but also analyzing historical buildings and commercial houses at the Bazar. After this research Awasuka has built three prototypes using different construction techniques: block, wood and stone. This has enabled the program to conclude which was the most cost-effective technique for social housing, and also to confirm that **historical** and **traditional buildings** have a **high quality architecture**, a quality that modern RCC buildings in this village do not have.



WHY THIS DOCUMENT

Even though the preservation of historical heritage wasn't one of our goals, during these years in Bhimphedi we have witnessed **several facts** that have **affected our sensitivity as architects** and we can no longer remain silent about them:

- **Deteriorated state of conservation.** Many historical rana buildings like: the **Hospital**, Nepal **Telecom**, **Janajati Hall** and the houses at the **ChowkBazar** -in front of Hattisar compound gate- are in a very advanced state of degradation, some of them almost falling apart. **Elephant saddles** in Hattisar have not undergone any restoration process.

- **Demolitions.** Bhimphedi public **school** disappeared in 2016, a historical Rana building slightly damaged by the earthquake which could have been preserved through minor repairing and retrofitting works. Many **newar commercial houses** at the Bazar area have also been tore down without any regret.

- **New RCC constructions.** In several places like the Bazar and the Hospital compound, some RCC buildings have been built. These constructions have no relationship nor architectural dialogue with the traditional and historical ones; hence, they are not integrating well within the whole urban landscape of Bhimphedi.

As **architects**, we believe it is **our duty and responsibility** to manifest these problems, in order to **find solutions** to defend the architectural heritage of this village. Buildings and Urban Spaces should be preserved and renovated in order to return to Bhimphedi the personality and character it enjoyed in the past.



SIMALTAR

SHREE 5 RESIDENCE COMPOUND 1996



SIMALTAR

SHREE 5 RESIDENCE 1996

Rana Architecture



SIMALTAR

SHREE 5 RESIDENCE 1996

Rana Architecture



BAZAR

COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS 1996

Newar Architecture



BAZAR

COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS 2018

Newar Architecture



BAZAR

COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS 2018

Newar Architecture



BAZAR

COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS 2018

Newar Architecture



BAZAR

DHARMASALA (Later School) 2016

Rana Architecture



BAZAR

DHARMASALA (Later School) 2016

Rana Architecture



BAZAR

DHARMASALA (Later School) 2016

Rana Architecture



BAZAR

PHOHORA DURBAR (Purano Kharaghar)

Rana Architecture



This building was intended to accommodate members of the Rana family and their guests who passed through Bhimphedi on their trip to the Tiger Hunts in Chitwan. Later, the building became a public library. Nowadays it is no longer a library but it is still used for many public purposes.



Although its conservation state is very poor, it is still **safe**. However, **it will be demolished soon** if no preservation policy is set up before that happens.

BAZAR PHOHORA DURBAR & NEPAL TELECOM

Rana Architecture



Public Space & Buildings

These **two buildings** stand in the village center and are articulating a very interesting *urban space*.

Currently this space is extremely fragmented and the buildings are not well-maintained. All of this should be renewed and redesigned as a new **urban center** for Bhimphedi.



BAZAR

HOSPITAL COMPOUND

Rana Architecture



BAZAR

HOSPITAL COMPOUND

Rana Architecture



BAZAR

HOSPITAL COMPOUND

Rana Architecture



BAZAR

OTHER BUILDINGS

Rana Architecture



Bank Building, Police Headquarters & Shree 3 Residence

The Bank Building is featured in the two upper pictures, front façade at the left and back façade at the right. The Police Headquarters can be seen on the lower left corner.

The Shree 3 Residence is not featured; it stands inside the jail compound and pictures are not allowed. However, it is the most beautiful building in Bhimphedi, with metal pressed ceilings, a glazed gallery and a theater with private access from the rooms.

CHOWKBAZAR COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

Newar Architecture



CHOWKBAZAR COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS Newar Architecture



CHOWKBAZAR COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS Newar Architecture





The Tiger Hunts

The rulers and their staff used to arrive to Bhimphedi on foot or on horseback and they spent the night in the different Rana buildings. The next day they started riding their elephants on elegant saddles and headed down to Chitwan, where the tiger hunts took place. At that time Hetauda was a very small settlement in the middle of the jungle.

Elephants and saddles were kept in a building called **Hattisar**, which we can still visit today. All the historical saddles are still stored in this incredible place, but their state of conservation is not very good and they need urgent restoration.

HATTISAR

ELEPHANT SADDLE MUSEUM

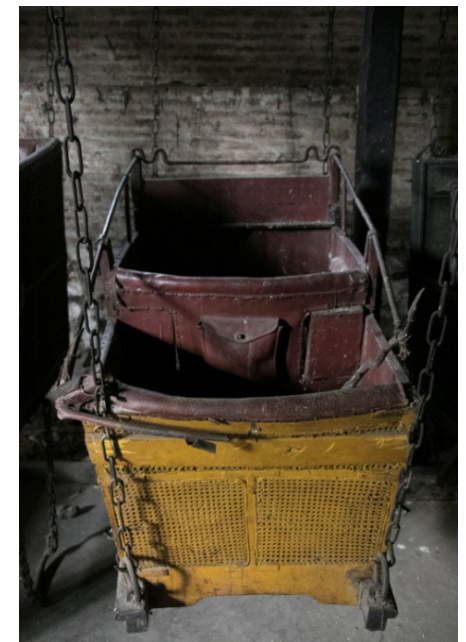
Rana Architecture



HATTISAR

ELEPHANT SADDLE MUSEUM

Rana Architecture

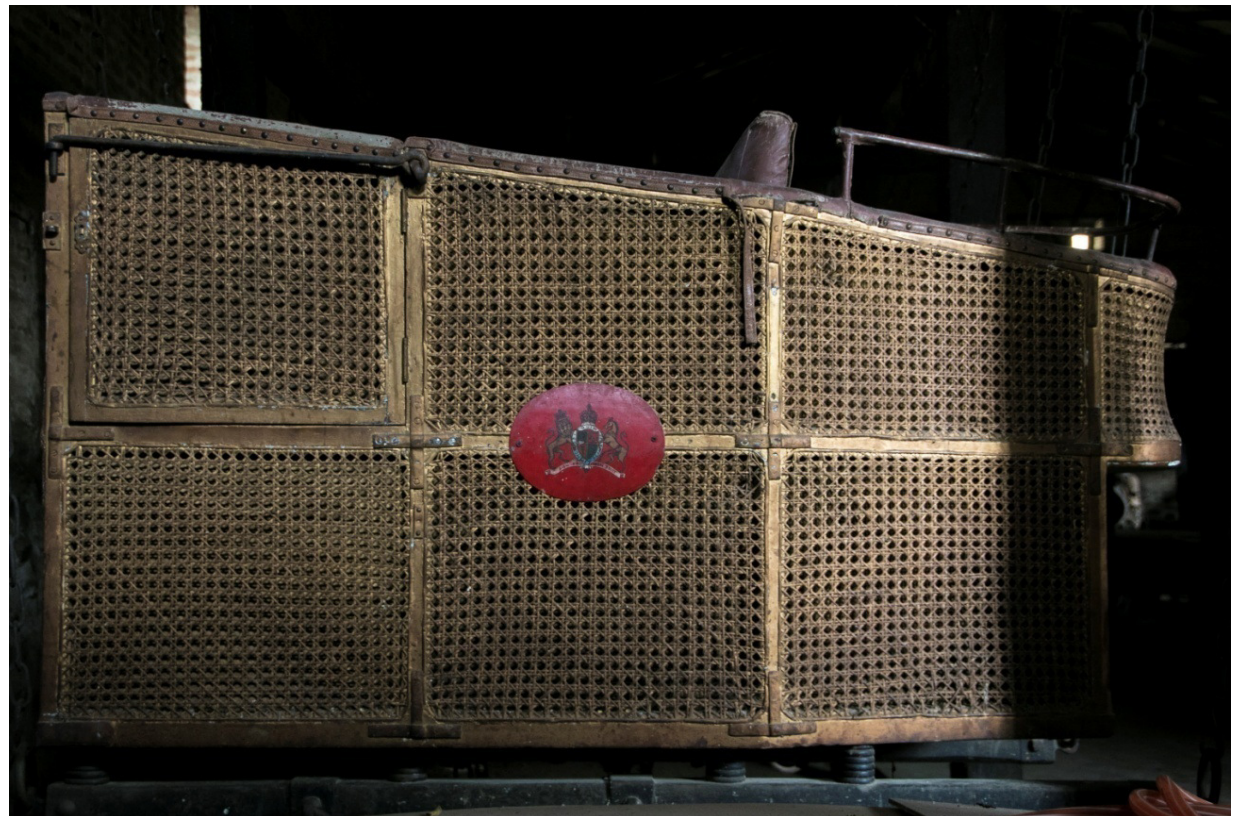


HATTISAR

ELEPHANT SADDLE MUSEUM

Rana Architecture

One of the howdahs (saddles) has the United Kingdom coat of arms, it was probably built in British India and used by many English dignitaries. Queen Elisabeth II was most surely the last person to use it, as can be seen in a British Pathé newsreel of 1961, the last time she and her husband visited Nepal.



CHOWKBAZAR

FARMERS' HOUSES

Rural Architecture



AWASUKA TEAM



Program developed by

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“Bhimpheedi Historical Heritage” - Spring 2018

Arnau Montoya Salvadó, Photographs

Monica Sans Duran, Idea and Texts