

2020 THE ESTATE STUDIO PKA

In all likelihood, Studio PKA's 21st-century plan to revitalise Ballard Estate's public spaces would have made the district's master planner, Scottish architect George Wittet, ecstatic. The century-old business district on reclaimed land featured a series of breeze-welcoming and light-filtering courtyards,¹ into which the Mumbai-based studio sought to slip an array of landscape and pedestrian-centric interventions. Amphitheatres, outdoor seating, cafes, accessible lawns, public toilets and a work plaza were just some of the gestures proposed to activate the otherwise abandoned oases, overrun with trash and rogue vegetation following decades of neglect.² Twenty-foot-wide setbacks between dozens of Edwardian-style buildings — one of the generous spatial features which led the Bombay Port Trust in 1930 to

describe Wittet's scheme as "one of the finest business estates in the East"³ — were to become an inviting fusion of hardscape and softscape, with selected areas doubling as exhibition alleys displaying the work of local artists. Studio PKA's historically sensitive vision for the future was all set to make a splash when the Coronavirus pandemic swept the globe, forcing planned advocacy efforts onto the back-burner temporarily.

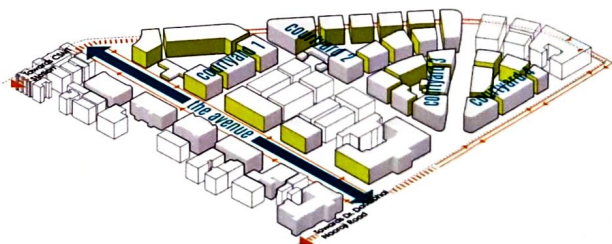
¹ Author Unknown, "DEVELOPING BOMBAY. A Future Business Centre," *The Times of India*, July 14, 1916.

² Puran Kumar, Founder & Principal, Studio PKA, Concept Note: The Estate, September 2020.

³ Author Unknown, "NEWEST COMMERCIAL BUILDING IN BOMBAY: A Ballard Estate Block of Model Design," *The Times of India*, March 30, 1938.

"THE URBAN DESIGN PROPOSAL SEEKS TO ACCENTUATE AND REVITALISE A PUBLIC SPACE THAT HAS BEEN DISCONNECTED FROM THE PUBLIC REALM OVER TIME."

PURAN KUMAR, 2020





< The proposal centred around four triangular courtyards and a north-south arterial road on the western edge of Ballard Estate.

^ A screening lawn featured outdoor art exhibitions.

> A sunken amphitheatre and semi-covered outdoor cafe were to be nestled under the shade of an existing banyan tree.

