

# GREEN TOWER

Heritage Restoration of Green Tower heritage building & Library



An Initiative by  
Morbi Municipal Corporation

Ar. Poonam Ashish Trambadia,  
Conservation Architects  
Ahmedabad



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## INTRODUCTION

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize inclusive growth that respects cultural heritage, environmental sustainability, and economic development. Among these, promoting and preserving local identity emerges as a critical SDG goal, intertwining social cohesion, economic opportunity, and environmental sustainability. Morbi, Gujarat—rich in historic architecture, vibrant public spaces, and traditional livelihoods—provides a unique canvas to showcase how integrating local identity with development can ensure long-term prosperity and cultural pride.

The Government of India's visionary initiative, "Virasat Bhi, Vikas Bhi" (Heritage as well as Development), inspires this approach by aligning heritage conservation with modern development goals. This project report details how Morbi's iconic public heritage, especially the Green Chowk area and its historic vegetable market, can become a living example of this visionary integration to enhance sustainable urban living and livelihood security.

## INTEGRATING LOCAL IDENTITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Preserving local heritage promotes tourism, creates jobs, and fosters community participation. It also strengthens social ties and environmental stewardship by connecting people with their land and traditions. Recognizing local identity as an SDG goal means not only protecting monuments but also safeguarding traditional markets, crafts, oral histories, and community knowledge, all contributing to a vibrant, sustainable city ecosystem.

### United nations sustainable goal 11.4 - 2030

Local identity encapsulates a community's cultural, historic, social, and environmental elements. It defines belonging, pride, and continuity—essential for a resilient society. In the framework of SDGs, local identity supports multiple goals: sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), inclusive economic growth (SDG 8), and reduced inequalities (SDG 10).



## The Vision of "Virasat Bhi, Vikas Bhi"

"Virasat Bhi, Vikas Bhi" embodies the balance between conserving India's rich heritage and pursuing progressive economic development. This vision, advocated by the Government of India, encourages cities like Morbi to localize development by blending historic preservation with modern infrastructure and social welfare.

The approach emphasizes:

- Restoration and adaptive reuse of heritage sites,
- Promotion of cultural tourism and local crafts,
- Enhancing public spaces to support social cohesion,
- Supporting traditional livelihoods,
- Capacity-building for communities to participate actively in heritage management.

Through these, "Virasat Bhi, Vikas Bhi" ensures that growth benefits all segments of society while honoring the past and enriching local identity.

### SITE AND MEMORIES OF THE CITY

There are many structures with heritage values in the Morbi city. Local authorities, Government and Private Stakeholders also show interest in heritage preservation and promotion.

- Mani Mandir (Willingdon Secretariat): A notable example of Rajput architectural workmanship, featuring a large central courtyard housing the Mani Mandir temple. A stunning temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, built in Indo-Saracenic architecture with intricate carvings and beautiful motifs. It's situated in the courtyard of Wellington Secretariat. The building is restored and serves as a local landmark.
- Darbargadh Palace: A colonial-style palace that served as the residence of Morbi rulers, now converted into a heritage hotel. It features a museum showcasing artifacts, weaponry, and traditional costumes.
- Historic Bridge and bronze sculptures : The historic stone masonry bridge connecting two sides of river banks have iconic sculptures of Horses and Bulls which marks the artistic inclination and inspires the citizen.
- Green Chowk: A town square with European-inspired architecture, featuring three entrances, including the Nehru Gate built in Rajput style with a clock tower.
- Green Tower: A tower inspired by the Eiffel Tower of Paris, symbolizing Morbi's progressive nature.
- Art Deco Palace: A palace built in the Art Deco style, featuring granite stone and exquisite designs, with 6 living rooms, 6 dining rooms, and 14 bedrooms. It is maintained by private owners.



- Nagar Darwaja - Morbi Clock Tower: A historical landmark surrounded by bustling markets and shops, offering a glimpse into local life.
- Lakhdhirji Engineering College: A notable institution housed in a former royal residence, showcasing impressive architecture.
- Historic market places : Serving as a regional hub, Morbi is also house to multiple market place. The local authorities maintain the historic vegetable market with timber trusses and organised marketplace for marginal earners.
- Morbi Railway Station : Recently the historic glory was restored and revived by the Railway authorities.

### THE GREEN TOWER BUILDING

The Green Tower of Morbi is an iconic structure known for its striking green appearance and its blend of architectural influences. Built in 1888 and inspired by the Eiffel Tower of Paris, the tower was envisioned by Maharaja Lakhdhirji, who aimed to create a landmark that would reflect both grandeur and modernity for the town.



Figure 1: Historic image of the clock tower building

## Location

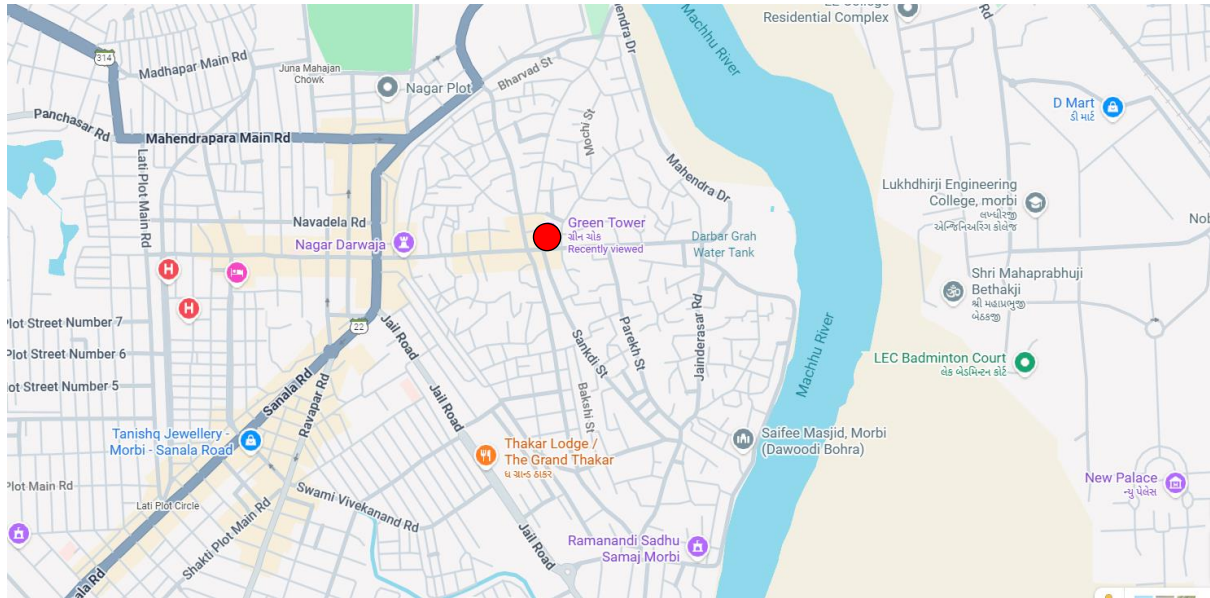


Figure 2: Location of the Green Tower Building

The Green Tower is situated within Old Morbi, positioned at a nodal point of convergence for major streets. The tower is embedded within the dense fabric of the traditional marketplace.

## Architectural Features

- The tower is constructed predominantly in the European architectural style, topped by a three-storeyed cast iron frame structure with a dome at its summit.
- Elements of Rajput architecture are visible in surrounding structures, such as arches and motifs, highlighting the fusion between Eastern and Western aesthetics.
- The structure's cast iron dome and framework add an industrial-era elegance, reminiscent of late 19th-century Europe, while the contiguous gates and decorative elements evoke traditional Indian royal and civic architecture.
- Historically, the tower's first floor housed a library and has been continuing to be used till date.

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The Green Tower is more than an architectural feature—it is a symbol of Morbi's ambition and cosmopolitan outlook during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Its presence in the town center underscores both an aspiration towards modernity, as embodied by the Eiffel Tower, and the unique synthesis of Western engineering with local traditions in city-making.

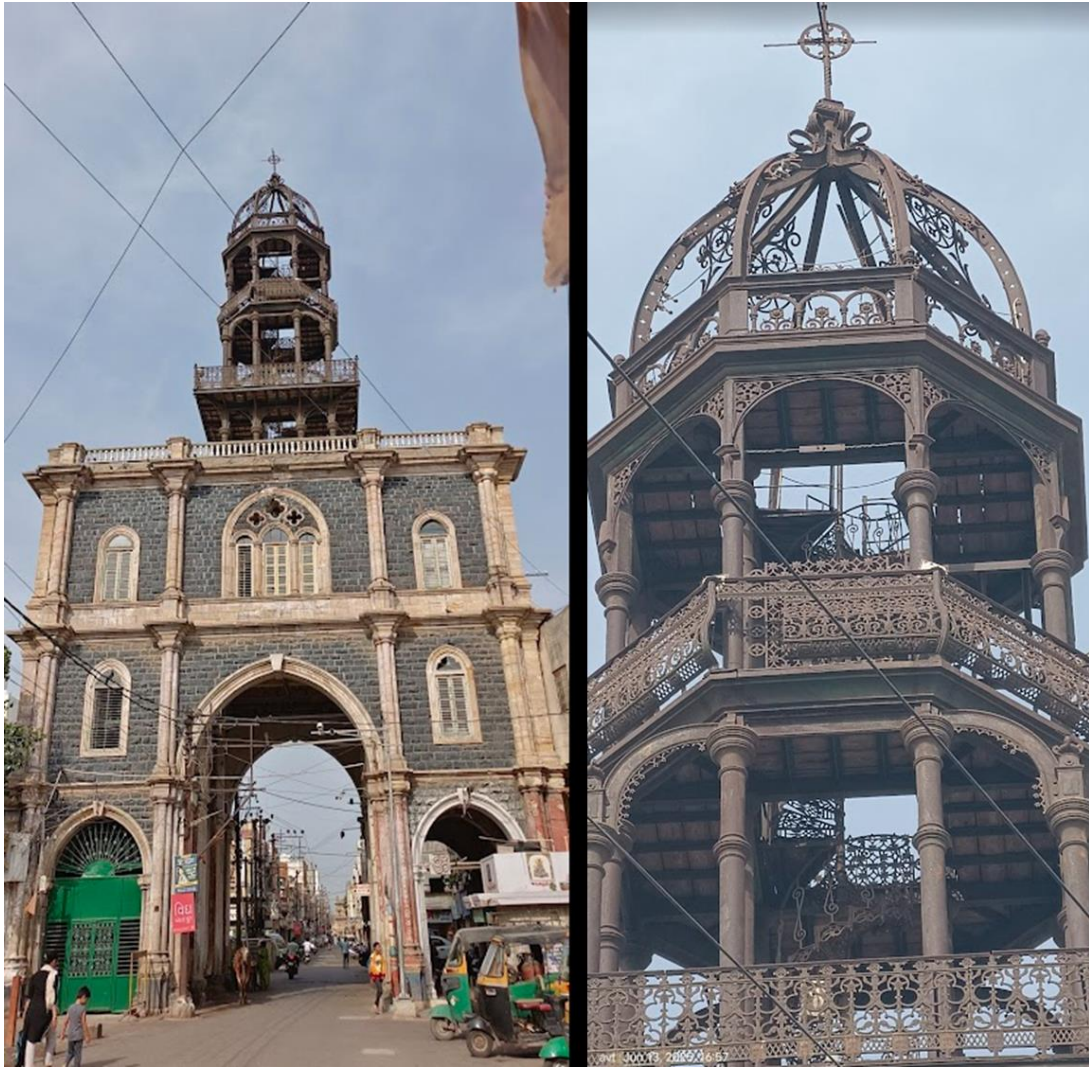


Figure 3: European Renaissance architecture and Exceptional example of cast Iron works in the tower under decay

## INITIATIVES FOR INTEGRATING HERITAGE AND DEVELOPMENT IN GREEN CHOWK

To realize the vision of "Virasat Bhi, Vikas Bhi" in Morbi's Green Chowk, the following integrated policies and actions are recommended:

### 1. Heritage Conservation and Restoration

- Undertake scientific restoration of heritage monuments using traditional materials with modern techniques for durability.
- Develop adaptive reuse strategies giving new life to heritage buildings as museums, community centers, or cultural hubs.
- Establish legal frameworks protecting heritage zones from unplanned urbanization.



## 2. Livelihood Support and Market Modernization

- Upgrade infrastructure in the historic vegetable market — better sanitation, drainage, and storage facilities.
- Provide skill development and microfinance support to vendors and farmers.
- Implement market branding that highlights its heritage value, attracting local and tourist consumers.
- Formalize vendor rights to ensure security and reduce exploitation.

## 3. Community Engagement and Capacity Building

- Involve local communities, especially women and youth, in heritage documentation and management.
- Build local committees for ongoing heritage conservation and market governance.
- Run awareness campaigns linking heritage preservation with community welfare.

## 4. Cultural Tourism Promotion

- Develop heritage walking trails encompassing landmarks and the vegetable market.
- Organize cultural festivals celebrating local crafts, food, and traditions.
- Promote digital storytelling and virtual tours to reach wider audiences.



Figure 4: Decay of wooden elements





Figure 5: Iron elements exhibit rusting and corrosion

## WORKS PROPOSED AT GREEN TOWER

### 1. Enabling Works

Enabling works are preliminary activities that prepare the site for conservation work. This includes setting up scaffolding, installing temporary protection, and conducting surveys to identify potential risks or hazards. Enabling works ensure a safe and efficient conservation process.

### 2. Dismantling and Removal

Dismantling and removal involve carefully taking apart and removing existing structures, materials, or components to make way for conservation work or to restore the original condition. This process requires attention to detail to avoid damage to surrounding elements and to preserve historic materials.

### 3. Multiple Intervention Structural Work

Multiple intervention structural work involves making repairs, replacements, or modifications to existing structural elements to ensure stability and safety. This may involve repairing or replacing damaged or deteriorated structural members, strengthening existing structures, or modifying structural elements to accommodate new design requirements.

#### **4. Structural Stone Work**

Structural stone work involves repairing, replacing, or conserving stone elements, such as walls, columns, or arches. This work requires specialized skills and techniques to preserve the historic integrity of the stonework.

#### **5. Wood Work in Flooring, Furniture, and Openings**

Wood work in flooring, furniture, and openings involves repairing, replacing, or conserving wooden elements, such as floors, doors, windows, or furniture. This work requires attention to detail to preserve the historic integrity and aesthetic appeal of the wooden elements.

#### **6. Structural Strengthening Works**

Structural strengthening works involve enhancing the stability and durability of existing structures by adding reinforcement, repairing cracks and defects, or installing new structural elements. This work requires specialized knowledge and skills to ensure that the structure can withstand loads and stresses.

#### **7. Cast Iron Work Restoration and Revival**

Cast iron work restoration and revival involve repairing, replacing, or conserving cast iron elements, such as railings, balconies, or decorative features. This work requires specialized skills and techniques to preserve the historic integrity and aesthetic appeal of the cast iron work.

#### **8. Natural Material Preservative Treatments**

Natural material preservative treatments involve applying treatments to protect natural materials, such as wood or stone, from decay, rot, or insect damage. This work requires attention to detail to ensure that the treatments are effective and do not damage the historic materials.

#### **9. Heritage Finishes and Aesthetic Upgrade**

Heritage finishes and aesthetic upgrade involve restoring or replicating historic finishes, such as paint colors, plasterwork, or decorative elements, to enhance the aesthetic appeal and historic integrity of the building. This work requires specialized knowledge and skills to ensure that the finishes are accurate and consistent with the building's historic character.

## **10. Signage and Site Works**

Signage and site works involve designing and installing signs and other site features to provide information and direction to users. This work requires attention to detail to ensure that the signs are clear, legible, and consistent with the building's historic character.

## **11. Interior Furnishing and Revival Works**

Interior furnishing and revival works involve restoring or replicating historic interior elements, such as furniture, fixtures, or decorative elements, to enhance the aesthetic appeal and historic integrity of the building. This work requires specialized knowledge and skills to ensure that the interior elements are accurate and consistent with the building's historic character.

## **12. Landscape Works**

Landscape works involve designing and maintaining outdoor spaces, such as gardens, lawns, and hardscapes, to enhance the aesthetic appeal and historic integrity of the building. This work requires attention to detail to ensure that the landscape design is consistent with the building's historic character.

## **13. Illumination**

Illumination involves designing and installing lighting systems to enhance the aesthetic appeal and safety of the building. This work requires specialized knowledge and skills to ensure that the lighting design is effective and consistent with the building's historic character.



To realize the vision of "Virsat Bhi, Vikas Bhi" in Morbi's Green Tower Building, the following integrated policies and actions are recommended:

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