



# France within Bengal: Current Realities of the Shared Heritage in the city of Chandannagar

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## ABSTRACT

The European settlement along the bank of the River Hooghly is regarded as 'Mini Europe'. The Portuguese, the Danish, the Dutch, the British and the French all had left an indelible mark along the banks of the River. Located on the bank of the River Hooghly, Chandannagar richly manifests cultural, architectural and natural heritage. The town evolved and developed under the French rule, the legacy of which is vividly portrayed in both its tangible heritage structures and intangible ways of lives. However, the contemporary reality is different. Today the rich architectural structures are being destroyed, making way to real estate speculation. The rich heritage structures are getting overshadowed by the construction of multi-storied buildings facilitated by the forces of transnational capital. The primary aim of this article is to demystify Chandannagar's rich architectures while also highlighting the current realities of the town's built heritage, as heritage issues have become a crucial starting point for urban development. The study at the end applies SWOT analysis to understand the potential of the city of Chandannagar from heritage conservation perspectives. In this study, qualitative methodology is used, with methods such as KIIs and focus groups (with building occupants, government officials, and the CMC) used to capture a broad variety of issues related to the preservation and maintenance of heritage structures in the region.

**KEY WORDS:** Chandannagar; heritage; River Hooghly; urban.

## I. INTRODUCTION

India's relationship with France traced back to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century when Francois Bernier, a physician and a traveler came to India during the time of the Mughal rule. With the gradual expansion of the British rule in India, the architectural fabric of the country expanded gradually. On similar lines with the coming of the

French in India, themes, motifs and articulations found its own flowering in the port towns along the seaboard<sup>1</sup>. In 1673, the Compagnie des Indes Orientales established an enclave in Pondicherry and gradually French started establishing centers at Mahe, Kernal and in Chandannagar. It was probably in 1690 the enclave of Chandannagar was founded. The name Chandannagar was in fact first appeared in 1696 in the letter of Court of Director signed by Martin, Andre Bourreau Deslandes and Pele (Seth, 1963). In 1686 a person named Deltor a French official of Pondicherry came to Chandannagar to do trading activities (Seth,1963) thus it can be clearly assume that Chandannagar already developed as a trading center by the end of 1680. Around 1687 a French commander named Andre Bourreau Deslandes started business at Bandel in Hooghly, but coming across many inconveniences he shifted to Chandannagar and it was also known from the letter of the collector of Hooghly, Mr. E Sterling that after a year in 1688 French for the first time occupied Chandannagar permanently under an edict of Aurangzeb, the then Mughal Emperor of India (Hill, 1903). Deslandes was thus can be regarded as the founder of the city of Chandannagar. In 1702 the French referred Hooghly as '*le terrain de la Campagnie nomme Chandernagar*' (a piece of ground of the company named Chandannagar). Chandannagar can be considered the 'elder sibling' (Banerjee, 2012) of Kolkata While Calcutta was fabrication of Sutanuti, Gobindapur and Kalikata, Chandannagar was built up from Borkishonpur, Khalisani and Gondalpara (see Fig 1). The Hooghly River has meandered

<sup>1</sup> Urshita Gautam, 'France within India: Architectural ties to a common heritage' March 21, 2021

<https://www.architecturaldigest.in/content/france-within-india-architectural-ties-to-a-common-heritage/>



down in the lap of Eastern Chandannagar which resembles a part of the moon's orb and because of

this crescent like shape, the name 'Chandannagar' has been originated (Seth, 1924).

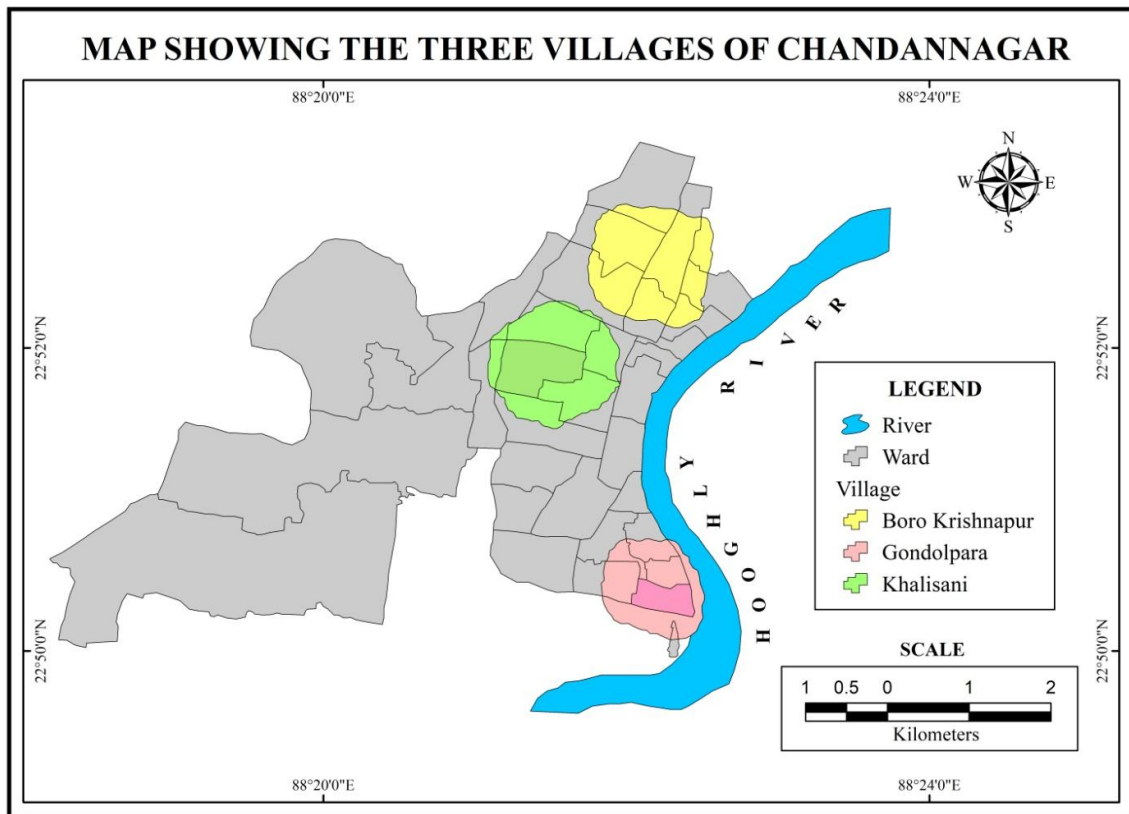


Fig 1: Chandannagar emerged from three villages namely Khalisani, Gondolpara and Borokrishnapur

In 1731, Joseph Francois Dupleix was appointed as the Governor General of Chandannagar and it was under him the city made immense fortune for itself. During his ten years tenure i.e., from 1731-1741 he transformed the place from a decaying town to a prosperous center of trade and commerce. Dupleix commercial relations extended over the greater part of western provinces and even reach Tibet, and his vessels navigated the whole of the Indian seas from Persian Gulf to the east of China (Toynbee, 1888). Chandannagar frequently changed hands between the British and the French many times till 1816, and finally after 1816, it remained under French occupation till Independence in 1947 and joined the Indian Republic in 1954. By 1800 the town's former commercial importance was gone and it was little more than a quite suburb of Calcutta. But despite of everything it was noted for its clean wide thorough fares with many elegant residences and structures along the river bank. When the whole of Bengal was under English rule as a province of British ruled India, Chandannagar was a part of it,

and it developed its own traditions under French rule. During the French occupation, Chandannagar had the unique luxury of experiencing a mix of indigenous and French culture, which gave the city a distinct cultural identity distinct from the surrounding urban centres. Located on the bank of the River Hooghly, Chandannagar richly manifests cultural, architectural and natural heritage. The town evolved and developed under the French rule, the legacy of which is vividly portrayed in both its tangible heritage structures and intangible ways of lives. However, the contemporary reality is different. The heritage houses and structures of the city are being destroyed, making way to real estate speculation. The built structures are getting overshadowed by the construction of multi-storied buildings facilitated by the forces of transnational capital and real estate speculation. The city has every possibility to emerge as world class cultural landscape if she can restore her former glory. But how? The primary aim of this article is to demystify Chandannagar's rich architectures while also highlighting the current realities of the town's



built heritage, as heritage issues have become a crucial starting point for urban development. In this research, qualitative methodology is used, and approaches such as KIIs and focus groups (with residents of the buildings, government officials, and the CMC) are used to capture a wide range of issues relating to the protection and management of heritage structures.

## II. GLIMPSES OF THE INDO FRENCH ARCHITECTURES OF THE TOWN

Chandannagar also known as *Petite France en Inde* is the best example of the physical representation of the confluence of the Indian and French cultures to form an Indo European expression, which can be seen not only in the physical structures but also in the creation of the modern ideas (kar et.al, 2020 ). Several temples with Bangla porch style architecture, vast water bodies surrounded by greeneries (dighi) and traditional educational institutions are some of the examples of pre colonial architectural legacies. The city's urban architecture was similar to that of the most French settlements during colonial times, with public buildings aligned along the water front, a spacious public promenade, lush greeneries and grid iron patterns of the streets. The typical colonial structures like residences of administrative heads, official buildings, churches, educational institutes often had spacious timber louvered screened balcony, Tuscan, Corinthian columns and domed roof are very much visible around the city of Chandannagar (ATA, 2012).

**Chandannagar Strand**-The Strand is considered as one of the most iconic features of Chandannagar. Strand was built in the year 1920s in honour of famous Durga Charan Rakshit the recipient of the French award, Legion d'honneur and it is adorned with an elephant head and intricate floral designs. The boulevard is lined with lights and surrounded by lush green tress making it a popular tourist destination. Buildings of historical importance are located along the Strand of Chandannagar. Although the Strand is not being included in the heritage lists of West Bengal Heritage Commission (WBHC) but the architectural details of the Strand added a new dimension to the Hooghly Stretch in Chandannagar.

**Institut de Chandernagore** -Institut de Chandernagore, commonly known as Duplex Palace is one of the oldest museums of West Bengal. The Institut de Chandernagore is never declared as heritage by West Bengal Heritage Commission but interestingly the building considered being one of the oldest built structures

of the city of Chandannagar that is preserving the old relics of the French colonial history for more than 250 years and considered to be one of the shared heritage buildings of both the countries (France and India). The Archaeological Survey of India declared the property of the Institut as protected monument of national importance. The museum occupies the major part of the main building with valuables, 18<sup>th</sup> century maps, archival documents, paintings, sculptures and coins occupying ten big rooms. Apart from the museum the Institut also has a vast library which is practically the storehouse of the French language and literature<sup>2</sup>.

**Sacred Heart Church (l' Eglise du Sacre Coeur)** -One of the important tourist attractions in Chandannagar is the Sacred Heart Church commonly known as Chandannagar Church. The Sacred Heart Church is a finest example of French architecture and is situated close to Chandannagar Strand and also it is located in an extremely prime location at the intersection of the north south and east west axis of the Ville Blanc<sup>3</sup>. The church has some of the oldest and well maintained and stained glass in all of Chandannagar. The congregation was planned by a French Architect Jacques Duchatz and was established and introduced by Paul Goethals on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1884. The congregation has stood for more than two centuries, stamping the perfection of French engineering. It is a good place to visit for history buffs and sightseers alike. The architectural designs and pillars of churches are among the most strikingly beautiful in all of architecture.

**Liberty Gate** The Liberty gate is located in Chandannagar on G.T Road on the way to Bhadreswar. When Chandannagar was ruled by the French under British India, two gates were built to serve as the entrance to the French territory. One of the two gates was built on the north side, on the way to Chinsurah, and the other was built on the south side, on the way to Bhadreswar. Only the gate on the southern side, known as the Liberty Gate, survives today. On July 14, 1937, on Bastille Day, this gate was built. French Revolution's motto -Liberte, Equalite, Fraternite, which means Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, is engraved on one of the wall of the gate.

<sup>2</sup> Institut de Chandernagore, November 2, 2020 <http://institutedechandernagor.gov.in/>

<sup>3</sup> The town of Chandannagar was divided into two parts white town and the Black town, the parts where French lived refers to be a white part or *Ville Blanc* and the parts where native's lives refer to be *Ville Noir*.



**Nritya Gopal Smriti Mandir-** Nritya Gopal Smriti Mandir is located at the Bagbazar area of Chandannagar. The Chandannagar Library is another name for it. The Chandannagar Library was established in 1873 by Jadhunath Palit. Together with Mahendranth Nandy and Motilal Seth, he formed a theatre club. They sold the theatre's instruments and used the proceeds to build the library. Initially the library was located at a rented house it was Harihar Seth (famous person in Chandannagar) who took an active role in the rebuild of the library at the later stage. In 1915, a working committee was created to oversee the library's upkeep, and in the early nineteenth century, Harihar Seth named the current library building after his father, Nitya Gopal Smriti Mandir. The structure was built in the neoclassical style, which was inspired by European architecture. It is a huge north-facing brick building with elegant decoration and a hall for social functions. The name Nitya Gopal Smriti Mandir is carved into the structure's top. The entire structure is made up of a dome structure with arches and pilasters. It has one of the district's largest collections of French, English, and Bengali books. Today, at the confluence of the Bagbazar area, the Nritya Gopal Smriti Mandir building stands as a mark of history and heritage.

**Nandadul Temple-** The south facing temple of Lord Krishna is located near Chhabighar bus stoppage on G.T Road about 2km from Chandannagar Station Road. Nandadul Temple was designed by Indranarayan Roychoudhury and completed in 1740, is a fine example of ancient Indian sculpture that was built during the French time. It is Bengal's largest do-chala (double sloped roof) temple, standing 52 feet by 21 feet on a rectangular foundation. The dividers are secured with icons and carvings, and it is one of only a few temples in the territory. An interesting feature of the temple is that there is a secret tunnel below the ceremonial bed that apparently leads to a huge underground chamber that is directly connected with the River Hooghly.

**Chandernagore College-** Chandernagore College was established in the year 1862. The first and most distinguishing characteristic is that it is a twice-born institution. The institution grew out of the St. Mary's Institution, which was established in 1862 by the Jesuit priest M. Maglior Barthet and began teaching the First Arts (F.A.) Course in 1891. The College, however, was suspended indefinitely from 1908 as a result of the nationalist activities of 1905. Following a 23-year gap, it was re opened in 1931. One distinguish characteristics

of this college is that its name has been changed many times. In 1862 when established by the missionaries it was known as 'Ecole de Sainte Maire' but when undertaken by the French government it came to be called as 'Ecole Publique de Garcons'. After the gap of 23 years when it was reopened in 1931 the French Education Department renamed it as 'Dupleix College'. Finally, in 1948, when Chandannagar was designated as a "Free City" following Indian independence and the end of French colonial rule, the College was given the name 'Chandernagore College', which it retains to this day.<sup>4</sup>

**Prefecture of the Police and Clock Tower-** Both Prefecture of Police and Clock Tower is located at the Strand road in Chandannagar. The main building was renovated while the prefecture remained intact. During the early French days cannons were placed on the front side of the prefecture to resist the attacks from the enemies. The prefecture was paralleled by wide tree lined avenues with one storey building just adjacent to it. The building now serves as the office of the Assistant Commissioner of Chandannagar Police Commissionerate. The prefecture thus in the year 2006 was declared as heritage by the West Bengal Heritage Commission (WBHC).

Located in the Strand Road the Clock Tower built in 1880 now broken down in parts but still standing proudly retains the glory of the French people. This single-story building, painted beige with maroon outlines, now serves as a police station. The single storey is extended in a bungalow theme, while the two-story element rises from the middle arch frame. The clock placed in the tower was gifted by Joseph Daumain St Poucarin in 1845. The building's name comes from the old clock that sits in the middle of the structure. It resembles a tall tower that displays the time in roman numerals. The cross of Christ is perched high over its head. The picturesque elegance of the clock tower is further enhanced by the presence of a large old banyan tree in front of it.

**House of Seth-** The house of Harihar Seth is located in Palpara, ward no 8 of Chandannagar Municipal Corporation in Hooghly District. Harihar Seth is one of the eminent personalities whose contribution towards the modern day Chandannagar is considered to be remarkable. The house of Harihar Seth is a two-storied mansion and is the

<sup>4</sup> "Website of Chandernagore college", January 21, 2021, <https://chandernagorecollege.ac.in/departement.php?dept=history>



standing mark of history and heritage. The buildings bear unique architecture with marble finish floors, doors and windows are made up of timber (teak wood) and louvered for ventilation. The building has central courtyard surrounded by rooms and running verandah, the entrance to the building is connected to the main courtyard. The courtyard acts as a community space during religious rituals and social festivals, and at other times an introverted open space for the inhabitants and visitors and provides natural light and ventilation to the surrounding rooms. In 2018, the house was declared as heritage by the West Bengal Heritage Commission (WBHC).

**Rakhit Bhawan-** Rakhit Bhavan is located at Lalbagan area in Chandannagar, was built in 19th century by Durga Charan Rakhit. The house of Rakhit bear unique architectural decoration with decorative pillars and beautiful curved railings made of cast iron and stucco plaster and wide arches. The building was declared as heritage by WBHC in 2017.

**Registry Building-** The Chandannagar Registry Office is located at the intersection of the popular Strand Road. It was constructed in the year 1875. This structure dates from the nineteenth century and is an example of French colonial architecture. The structure is made of brick and lime, has a flat roof, and decorated French windows with a large veranda on the first floor.<sup>5</sup> It is thought to be the first courthouse designed by the French in Chandannagar. During the French administration, the Registry Building played an important role in the lives of Chandannagar people, as it was where many lawsuits and marriages were registered.<sup>6</sup> This structure was designated as a moderately significant building in need of urgent restoration due to its dilapidated state.<sup>7</sup> The Registry building was declared as a heritage property by the West Bengal Heritage Commission (WBHC) in 2017.

**Prabartak Sangha-** Sree Mandir Prabartak Sangha is located in the Boraichanditola of Chandannagar. The Sangha is a charitable

organisation that specializes in social work. It was founded in 1920 by Motilal Roy, a revolutionary who was influenced by Sri Aurobindo and initiated into his spiritual journey. The Sangha now ventured into business, ran educational institutions, established hostels for orphan children and developed cultural centers to spread the founder's messages. During the French rule, the Sangha was also a common hideaway for Indian freedom fighters. Rabindra Nath Tagore, Nazrul Islam, Subhas Chandra Bose, and Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy all paid their respects to the site and its founder.<sup>8</sup> One building of the Sangha that is Goswami Ghat is declared as a heritage property by West Bengal Heritage Commission (WBHC) in 2019. The Sangha has maintained its social work to this day, and it has a large library that holds a collection of many old French papers.

**Church of Sister Cluney and French Cemetery Cathedral-** The Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluney, established in 1807, are a Roman Catholic religious order. Its members work on a number of charitable projects all over the world, but they are particularly dedicated to missionary work and providing education to the poor. With the similar objective in 1861 they established St. Joseph Convent. It was considered as one of the oldest female educational institution in Chandannagar. Inside the Convent complex, there is a chapel that was built in the year 1860 at the site where an earlier chapel was erected in 1720. The chapel has domed roof is Romanesque in design. The entrance door has the date 1720 (when the first chapel was built here) on its metal framework.<sup>9</sup>

The Cemetery located in the Grand Trunk Road is the final resting place of many notable Frenchmen, including Duplessis, the founding father of French Chandannagar, and Henry 'Storm' Piddington, the pioneering meteorologist.<sup>10</sup> The cemetery was located underneath Eglise St. Louis, Chandannagar's first church, which was established by Augustan monks in 1688. There are total 150

<sup>5</sup> "Website of West Bengal Heritage Commission", February 3, 2021 <https://wbhc.in/home/landing>

<sup>6</sup> Shiv Sanjay Singh, 'Building in Former French colony await restoration', The Hindu, March 4, 2020, sec. Kolkata. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/kolkata/buill-dings-in-former-french-colony-await-restoration/article26207063.ece>

<sup>7</sup> Heritage Chandernagore, March 22, 2020, [http://heritagechandernagore.com/maps/phpsqlsearch\\_map.html](http://heritagechandernagore.com/maps/phpsqlsearch_map.html)

<sup>8</sup> Heritage and People of Chandernagore, February 18, 2020, [www.heritagechandernagore.com](http://www.heritagechandernagore.com)

<sup>9</sup> Anshika Jain, 'The French Riviera on the Hooghly', June 12, 2020, <https://www.livehistoryindia.com/story/amazing-india/the-french-riviera-on-the-hooghly/>

<sup>10</sup> Mallika Mohta, 'Chandannagar- An Archetype of the French Footprint in India', March 12, 2021, <https://www.indianfolk.com/chandannagar-archetype-french-footprint-india/>



tombs, the architecture of the tombs are unique. The Cathedral located in the cemetery was declared as heritage property in 2006.

#### **Patal Badi and Thistle Hotel (Sub divisional Court in Chandannagar)**

Patal Bari, which translates to "underground building," is one of the town's most intriguing structures of the town located in the Strand road in Chandannagar. Since a large portion of the structure is below ground level, including below the level of the Hooghly, which it lies right next to, what we see above ground is just a small portion of the structure.<sup>11</sup> This unusual structural structure kept the building cool throughout the summer and flooded during the monsoon. There is a folk memory among the senior staff at Chandernagore College such as Professor Basabi Pal, about 350 metres north of Patal Badi, that there was a pipe that allowed river water to ingress to the parts of the basement of the college to cool the building during the hot season. It would appear that this system is either no longer functioning or that it has been intentionally disabled during maintenance works. Many greats, including social reformer Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore, visited here. The house is now owned by Ashim Kha of nearby Bansberia.

Thistle Hotel formerly known as *Hotel de Paris* was founded in 1878 by the French. It's a one-story colonial structure with a prominent position on the Strand. The building has a wide flight of stairs leading to a spacious verandah with deep timber louvred screens and a decorative parapet, which is supported by Tuscan columns. It is now function as the Sub divisional Court of District Magistrate.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid



Chandannagar Strand



Institut de Chandernagore



Sacred Heart Church



Liberty Gate



Nriya Gopal Smriti Mandir



Nandadulal Temple



Chandernagore College



Clock Tower



Prefecture of Police



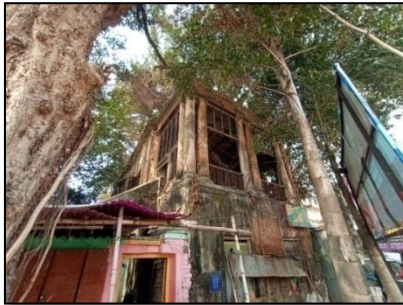
House of Seth



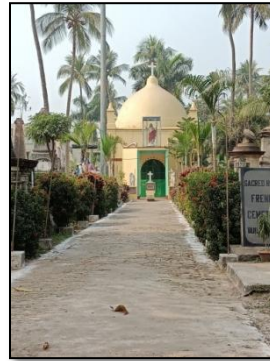
Rakhit Bhawan



Prabartak Sangha



Registry Building



Cathedral at French Cemetery



Church of Sister Cluney



Patal Badi and Chandernagore Sub divisional Court  
Source: Field visit

### III. CURRENT REALITIES OF THE SHARED HERITAGE OF THE TOWN

Chandannagar was proclaimed a free city in 1947 despite the fact that the French administration remained in place but only held a symbolic force. The De facto transfer took place in 1949, and the last French administrator G.H Tailleur left Chandannagar leaving the town completely independent to France. De'Jure Transfer took place in 1952 and finally the administration of Chandannagar was handed to the West Bengal Government on October 2, 1954, and Chandannagar Municipal took the charge of the town on February, 1956. The town of Chandannagar thus becomes a municipal town within the ambit of Calcutta Metropolitan District. Today because of rapid urbanization many public and private built structures in the city are thus demolished and replaced with modern structures. The age old post

office of the town has been converted into private banquet hall and small restaurant Shalimar operates in one corner of the building. Most of the old structures are being demolished and replaced with new apartment blocks. In a similar vein, the old G.T. road is rapidly transforming into a commercial centre, with many buildings being redeveloped as commercial and residential buildings. Unplanned commercialization has led into congestion in some of the major spines like G.T Road and Strand Road. Traders from nearby places, affluent local merchants, local landlords, wealthy residents, etc. have built many large mansions and villas. Some of them are still inhabited, some are standing as ruins, and some are getting demolished as rebuild. Whatever the state is, these structures tell stories of a bygone era which deserves to be documented thoroughly before they disappear with the moment in time (Das et.al, 2020).





Townhouses with shops at the ground floor and residential above are common along the G.T Road. The G.T Road is changing fast into commercial hub and several historical buildings are re-developed into commercial buildings and apartment blocks.

Source: Field visit

The Institut de Chandernagore which is considered as one of the most important heritage building in Chandannagar over times re development has taken place and parts of the Institut was demolished and replaced with modern structure such as the Rabindra Bhawan. On similar lines Nritya Gopal Smriti Mandir which is a declared heritage property in Chandannagar are facing similar crisis. In recent time one part of the building was re- developed and rented to a reputed cellular company. The building's upkeep and maintenance are minimal, which hastens its demise.<sup>12</sup>



Nritya Gopal Smriti Mandir



Registry Building  
Source: Field visit



Rabindra Bhawan

<sup>12</sup> Lina Bose, Chandannagar Shared Heritage is Disappearing  
<https://cafedissensuseveryday.com/2021/05/12/chandannagars-shared-heritage-is-disappearing/> accessed 12 May, 2021



The Chandannagar Registry Office which is located at the intersection of the popular Strand Road. It was constructed in the year 1875. This structure dates from the nineteenth century and is an example of French colonial architecture. In contemporary times the registry building thus got demolished and awaits restoration. Apart from the public buildings, many private houses were built by the zamindars those who had close associations with the French. Initially, the houses followed the traditional Indian planning around the courtyards and gradually towards the end of the 19th Century, European features such as drawing rooms, dining rooms, ballrooms and individual bedrooms were incorporated in the design of these houses. These historic homes are therefore a tangible expression of this confluence of thought and intermingling of cultures. The House of Seth and Rakhit Bhawan are the examples of the private declared heritage properties in the city of Chandannagar. In the House of Seth over the years multiple ownership issue had been developed within the house among the tenant who is still living here for many decades. The tenant occupied two to three rooms and paying Rs.50-100 per month as rent. Because of this tenant issue one part of the house restored and maintained and other part remain in poor condition. On the other side owners of Rakhit Bhawan expresses their dissatisfaction by saying that maintenance cost is huge, honestly getting difficult for them to maintain. The house of Rakhit is getting difficult to be

restored by their present owners because of lack of economic affordability. Despite of lack of proper knowledge system many parts of the house are constructed some are removed and even demolished for the sake of erecting new structures. Present generation owing the property feel the loss of sense of belonging to their inheritance because they are just dissatisfied by the absence of modern facilities in their properties so many left the house and settled down in the flats of nearby places. Today because of the conflict of development and conservation, preservation of heritage property in Chandannagar took a back seat in terms of priority. The owners of the present generation living in the heritage houses thus started considering their properties as liabilities rather than assets.

Today because of development and conservation the preservation of age old buildings of the city took a back seat in terms of priority. Problems of multiple ownership is considered to be one of the major issues of the old houses around the city for that purposes some portion of the building is restored, painted and maintained while the remaining portion holds a very poor condition. Many times the owners of the houses has to restore the historic fabric of the house by their own initiatives but still there exist challenges that restrict their initiatives like faulty restoration and incompatible additions spoiled the authentic character of the house.



Heritage Buildings in Chandannagar are suffering from host of structural, architectural, financial and tenant issues.

Source: Field visit

Without financial aid in the form of a grant, a tax exemption, or a soft loan, these structures' survival chances are low. The public buildings were in a fair state of maintenance where as the private one suffers from host of issues like neglect, negligible maintenance or repair.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Although urban sprawl and expansion is considered as one of the major threat for the city of Chandannagar but it has much more to offer. In Chandannagar along with the hard (tangible) and soft (intangible) component the ecological aspect of



the town is also gaining prominence. The Hooghly stretch itself is a reflection of enmeshed realities between the river and the space. The Jagaddhatri Puja in Chandannagar is by far the largest social occasion which brings together people from the region into Chandannagar and presents itself as an opportunity to develop sustainable tourism opportunities around the living tradition of the town. The Jagaddhatri Puja at Chaulpotty (Rice Market) in Loxmigonj is probably the historic example of the ancient community Jagaddhatri Puja. Apart from Jagaddharthi Puja the city is also famous for its another intangible heritage that is 'Jalbhara Sandesh' (famous sweet of Chandannagar). In Chandannagar, both the French and the Indian authorities play the role of the most influential stakeholders of the heritage sites. Chandannagar can be a tourism destination in India if the owners of the heritage buildings are able to refurbish their own properties and manage to get enough support. One possible way will be to invite people from outside to stay in their traditional homes. If well planned and managed, the tourism industry can generate important benefits in the living conditions of the community generating employment and opportunity.

Chandannagar had its genesis during the French rule and as such it has got all the features of a colonial, city. The essential trait of this colonial

city however does not fit well with other cities of British colonies. This city still manages to preserve some of its French cultural ethos, particularly in educational and cultural activities. Thus to attain sustainable development for the town it is very much important to protect and conserve the historic fabric of the town that will help to promote the unique character of the town. The city of Chandannagar are facing rapid urbanization the owner custodians are also replaced at a rapid pace by becoming less resilient to change and thus not capable to preserve their own built structures. The absence of structured approaches need to be look as an opportunity where along with State, participatory approaches should come from each living in the city to preserve the rich architectures of their own town. The people of Chandannagar own the area, and they are the most important stakeholders in its preservation. Instead of throwing ideas at them, the main goal should be to communicate with them. Despite the fact that Chandannagar has progressed over time, a sense of French nostalgia pervades the region. The city's heritage buildings must be protected in a comprehensive manner. With its architectural edifices and lively tangible and intangible facets, the city has every potential to become a heritage city.

**Table 1**  
**SWOT analysis of the field area Chandannagar**

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural significance</li> <li>• Social significance</li> <li>• Ecological significance</li> <li>• Economic value</li> <li>• Recreational potential of the place.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage protection system is unable to influence the process of rapid urbanization along the stretch of River Hooghly</li> <li>• Indifference of society and lack of public awareness</li> <li>• No interest of owner to protect and restore heritage objects</li> <li>• Unattractiveness of abandoned heritage objects</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape relics such as abandoned ghats, manor residences with park can be used for recreation</li> <li>• Heritage buildings can be used for cultural tourism</li> <li>• Along with hard built infrastructure, soft intangible heritage such as Jalbhara (sweet), Jagadharti are equally important must gain prominence</li> <li>• Rich architectural structures can enrich cityscape</li> <li>• Integrating heritage (both tangible and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preservation and re-use problem of heritage objects caused by urbanization process</li> <li>• Risk of loss of abandoned or inappropriately maintained heritage sites</li> <li>• Heritage can lose its identity and gain an urban character because of unwise innovations</li> <li>• Decline of heritage significance in the landscape because of the rapidly changing environment</li> <li>• Decreasing possibility of the continuity of historical functions</li> </ul>



intangible) in the socio economic activities of the contemporary city

SWOT analysis of the field area Chandannagar for understanding the potential of the city from heritage conservation perspectives (Source: Prepared on the basis of field survey)

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