

TRANSFORMING URBAN LANDSCAPE IN INDIA

A Compendium of 75 Public Spaces





Noida Biodiversity Park

Noida, Uttar Pradesh

Status: Completed in 2021
Site Area: 303 Hectares
Location: Sector-91, Noida, Uttar Pradesh
Client: Noida Authority
Consultants: Shaheer Associates, S.J.A. Consultants

Aim: The Noida Authority had a parcel of land measuring about 75 acres in Sector 91, Noida. The Authority mandated it to be developed as "Noida Biodiversity Park" as per the Master Plan.

Project Overview: The Noida Biodiversity Park was envisaged to play an important role in imparting nature education particularly to school and college students besides the ecological researchers and nature lovers. It was also meant to be an ecological resource not only for the people of neighbouring sectors but also for residents and children from Noida, Greater Noida and beyond.

Project Details: Over 80 native and naturalised tree species, as well as more than 120 shrubs, herbs, and other saplings were planted in the park. A rich wetland environment was developed, along with a rich reservoir of native and naturalised flora. As a result, plants, small creatures, insects, birds, and butterflies form a distinct ecosystem here.

Process: The different components of the Biodiversity Park are illustrated through the various parts of the Flower, which every school-child knows and relates to from a young age. The 'Receptacle' denotes the Entrance and the Parking. The outer 'Sepals' signify the Public Areas – amphitheatre, exhibition spaces and picnic gardens. The Biomes (forest ecosystems) in their miniature form are recreated in the six 'petals' of the Palash flower. The 'Bee flight' or the peripheral path (about 3-km long) passing through the various valleys is the golf-cart track, permitting movement across the various biomes. A winding path representing the helix of the 'DNA' is laid about the main central path, aligned across the various biomes in a series of 7-m wide straight path

segments with shifting axes and pavilions (resting place) in between. The low-lying linear stretches of seasonal ponds signify the swathes of 'Nectar' or the elixir of life (water). There is a peripheral jogging path and a cycle track, each roughly 6-km long, meandering through the various biomes.

Highlights: There has been a significant increase in evapotranspiration due to the planting of over 8000 big trees, 100,000 shrubs, and 4.5 lakh ground coverings. Massive amounts of carbon sequestration and oxygen generation, as well as biomass production, are possible due to the amount of planting and afforestation that has been done. This park serves to manage water scarcity by attaining 100% groundwater recharge from the 110 acres of available land area, with 85% of the intended wooded Green Area.

Challenges: Noida Biodiversity Park is planned as an exposition of the biodiversity that may be possible to exist in the various biomes that could be suitably recreated in the soil type and climate of Delhi NCR, particularly the four natural divisions (namely, Kohi, Bangar, Khadar and Dabar) observed in the region besides grasslands, wetlands and other subsidiary plantations like groves of culturally significant plants and trees, fruit-bearing tree orchards, bambusetum and medicinal and herbal plants.

Outcomes: The park with its proposed ecosystems is envisaged to provide an opportunity to learn about species of plants, seed germination, bioremediation, ecosystem redevelopment and food webs through indoor and outdoor exhibition spaces.



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.

- 1. Arbour in the floral garden & machaan in the backdrop
- 2. Celestial garden
- 3. (Navgraha Vatika)
- 4. View of entrance
- 5. Entrance court



Epicuria: Nehru Place Metro Station

Nehru Place, Delhi

Status: Completed in 2015
Site Area: 141 Hectares
Location: Nehru Place Metro Station, Delhi
Client: V-Cubed Private Limited
Consultants: S.J.A. Consultants (Landscape and Urban Design)

Aim: The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) had proposed to develop its properties at major metro stations to offset the running cost of the metro services. The Nehru Place metro station in Delhi was also leased out in accordance with the same policy.

Project Overview: Nehru Place developed in the 70s and in commercial terms, it is arguably one of the most successful district centres. The emergence of the metro network has further enhanced the connectivity of the district centre with the city. Further, proximity to the Bahai House of Worship and the Ring Road (a major arterial road) has made the metro station one of the more important transit nodes. The site is located opposite the district centre along the southern edge of the district park. It is the main arrival point for the district centre as well.

Project Details: The design of the open spaces and the proposed system of terraces was evolved on the basis of the existing topography and the landform with a minimum cut and fill. More than 50% of the tree species that were planted are timber species which provide shade and are low on water requirement. Sunken courts provide a spill-out space in addition to an active recreational and gathering space for the public. A small amphitheatre has also been provided for cultural activities. The metro entry doubles up as an interactive urban plaza. The semi-circular steps nestle a multipurpose interactive space for recreation, gatherings, promotions and street plays.

Process: What should be the design approach for such an important node? There were two options: to develop the property for commercial gains, as had already been done at several locations such as Shahdara,

ISBT, Inderlok, which have struggled to take off. Or, to create a landscape with focus on urban open space as part of the public domain which offers multiple choice to users.

Highlights: There is zero rain water outflow from the site. It is harvested with recharge wells in both the courts, terraces and the west of the rear entry. Friendly access has been provided for people with disabilities with focus on safety. The entry experience has been enhanced through the landscape treatment. LED lighting has been used throughout the area. Grey sewage treatment plant (STP) water is used for landscape maintenance.

Challenges: Since it is an important commercial hub and a major connectivity point, the concept had to be utilitarian and functional besides giving visibility to the metro station as being not just a transit node but also a major activity hub cashing in on the already available footfalls.

Outcomes: The intervention exploits the urban potential of the transit node. This could easily have been developed as a commercial entity on a Mall Model, however, the possibilities created utilising the existing open spaces for 'place making' offers multiple choices which has not only been appreciated but is also visible through the vibrancy created by the users. The project exhibits enough flexibility to accommodate necessary incremental transformations over a period of time as is evident from the chronological pictures. It also opened up possibilities of cultural activities and outdoor art exhibitions in a vibrant urban environment.



- 1. Stepped sunken plaza
- 2. Water feature in the plaza
- 3. View from metro entry bridge looking towards east
- 4. Open-air seating area
- 5. View from metro entry bridge looking towards west