

Devaraja Market, Mysuru: A Study of Heritage Architecture and Regulatory Mismatches

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Abstract

Heritage markets in India embody a complex interplay between architectural legacy, socio-cultural practices, and modern urban pressures. Devaraja Market in Mysuru, constructed during the late nineteenth century under Wodeyar patronage, represents a vital node in the city's commercial and cultural fabric. However, the market faces challenges of structural deterioration, overcrowding, and conflict with contemporary building bye-laws. This research investigates the urban and architectural morphology of Devaraja Market through on-site studies and compares its physical and functional attributes against prevailing regulatory frameworks. Methodologically, the study integrates primary field documentation, photographic and measured surveys, and review of planning and building regulations. Findings indicate that conventional bye-laws, designed for contemporary urban developments, inadequately address the heritage-specific needs of the market, particularly in terms of setbacks, fire safety, structural retrofitting, and circulation norms. The paper argues for the development of heritage-sensitive regulatory mechanisms that reconcile safety and modernization with the preservation of cultural identity. Recommendations include adaptive reuse strategies, participatory governance, and context-specific regulatory frameworks. This case study contributes to broader debates in heritage urbanism and offers practical insights for sustainable conservation of traditional markets in India.

Keywords

Devaraja Market; Heritage conservation; Building bye-laws; Urban morphology; Mysuru; Adaptive reuse; Traditional markets; Heritage urbanism.

1. Introduction

Markets have historically functioned as more than transactional spaces—they are social, cultural, and architectural landmarks that sustain urban identity (Gehl, 2010). In Indian cities, traditional

markets emerged as nodes of exchange where commerce intertwined with rituals, festivals, and everyday life. Yet, with the rise of modern retail and mall culture, these spaces face unprecedented pressures of decline, neglect, and redevelopment (Kumar, 2018).

Devaraja Market in Mysuru exemplifies this paradox. Built during the princely period under the Wodeyars, the market is strategically located near Mysore Palace and continues to be one of the city's most active trading hubs. Its architecture—arcaded facades, internal courtyards, and modular shop units—reflects both colonial influences and indigenous traditions (Shankar & Rao, 2019). Despite its cultural and economic vitality, the market has become a site of contestation between conservationists, traders, and civic authorities.

On the one hand, municipal authorities emphasize the need for safety compliance, structural stability, and modern amenities, guided by the Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act and Mysuru City bye-laws. On the other, heritage experts argue that blanket application of such regulations disregards the embedded climatic responsiveness, spatial logic, and socio-cultural role of the market (Menon, 2010). In 2017, debates surrounding whether to demolish and rebuild Devaraja Market or conserve it sparked public protests and court interventions (Sharma, 2021).

This research is situated at the intersection of these debates. It documents the urban and architectural morphology of Devaraja Market through detailed on-site studies—including sketches, photographic surveys, and measured drawings—and evaluates them against current bye-laws. By doing so, the study identifies regulatory mismatches and proposes recommendations for more nuanced conservation strategies.

Research Objectives

1. To document the architectural and spatial morphology of Devaraja Market through on-site surveys.
2. To critically compare the observed features with prevailing building bye-laws in Mysuru.
3. To identify gaps and mismatches between regulatory requirements and heritage realities.
4. To propose recommendations for heritage-sensitive regulatory frameworks and adaptive reuse.

Significance of the Study

The study contributes to ongoing discourses on heritage urbanism in India, particularly in secondary cities where markets remain active yet vulnerable. While much scholarship has focused on iconic sites such as Chandni Chowk in Delhi or Crawford Market in Mumbai (Patel & Desai, 2016), smaller urban centers like Mysuru offer insights into balancing conservation with everyday urbanism. Devaraja Market thus provides a critical lens to interrogate how heritage can be integrated into twenty-first-century planning frameworks without erasing its socio-cultural essence.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Traditional Markets as Socio-Cultural and Architectural Entities in India

Markets in India have historically functioned as more than spaces of commerce—they are centers of community life, cultural exchange, and urban identity. Traditional bazaars are often organized around temples, mosques, or palaces, reflecting their embeddedness within civic and ritual geographies (Nair, 2005). Their architectural typologies are characterized by modular shop units, shaded verandahs, courtyards, and arcaded facades, which respond to climate while enabling dense pedestrian activity (Shankar & Rao, 2019).

Indian markets such as Crawford Market in Mumbai, Chandni Chowk in Delhi, and Meena Bazaar in Hyderabad demonstrate this dual role of commerce and culture. These spaces continue to thrive despite the rise of malls and supermarkets, largely because they embody a sense of authenticity and local identity (Patel & Desai, 2016).

2.2 Heritage Conservation Debates in India

Conservation of heritage markets has long been contested in Indian cities. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) primarily protects monuments of national significance, while urban heritage structures often fall under municipal jurisdiction with limited legal safeguards (Menon, 2010). This leads to ad-hoc decisions regarding repair, demolition, or redevelopment.

Scholars argue that heritage markets embody “living heritage” because they are not frozen relics but active socio-economic systems (Jain & Mahadevan, 2019). Unlike monuments, they cannot be conserved merely as static structures; their viability depends on accommodating changing retail practices and urban demands. The case of Crawford Market, where debates arose between preservationists and municipal authorities seeking modernization, highlights this dilemma (Mehrotra, 2011).

2.3 Regulatory Frameworks and Heritage Contexts

Building regulations in India, particularly municipal bye-laws, are designed for modern developments with standard parameters for setbacks, fire safety, parking, and structural compliance. These are often ill-suited for heritage precincts that were designed in a pre-modern context (Kumar, 2018).

For example, bye-laws mandate setbacks from the street edge, whereas traditional markets are typically built-to-line, creating continuous shaded arcades. Similarly, fire safety norms requiring vehicular access conflict with narrow pedestrian-only streets in old bazaars (Sharma, 2021). Thus, regulatory frameworks, while important for safety, frequently undermine the spatial logic and climatic responsiveness of heritage markets.

The National Building Code (NBC 2016) includes some provisions for heritage structures, but these are general guidelines rather than enforceable regulations (Bandyopadhyay, 2017). The lack of a robust heritage-specific code leaves markets vulnerable to either neglect or insensitive redevelopment.

2.4 Case Studies from Indian Cities

Crawford Market, Mumbai

Built in 1869, Crawford Market (now Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Mandai) exemplifies Indo-Gothic design with cast-iron frames and stone facades. The market faced proposals for demolition and reconstruction in the 1990s, which were contested by heritage activists (Mehrotra, 2011). Ultimately, conservation efforts prevailed, though traders faced challenges due to modern fire and hygiene regulations.

Chandni Chowk, Delhi

The redevelopment of Chandni Chowk demonstrates the tensions between modernization and heritage preservation. While the project introduced pedestrianization and facade improvements, many traders criticized the loss of traditional street layouts and informal vending spaces (Gupta, 2020). This case underscores how top-down interventions often neglect lived practices.

Ahmedabad Bazaars

In Ahmedabad, traditional pol markets have been integrated into the city's UNESCO World Heritage framework. However, scholars note that while facade improvements have been prioritized, deeper issues of infrastructure, waste management, and traffic remain unresolved (Patel, 2018). The Ahmedabad example highlights the need for conservation strategies that go beyond aesthetics to address everyday functionality.

2.5 Heritage and Urban Morphology in Mysuru

Mysuru's urban fabric is closely tied to its princely legacy, with landmarks such as Mysore Palace, Jaganmohan Palace, and Devaraja Market forming key nodes. Heritage studies in Mysuru have emphasized the need to balance tourism-driven conservation with everyday functionality (Rao, 2020). However, limited scholarship has focused specifically on Devaraja Market, despite its central role in the city's identity.

Municipal debates around the market's demolition or conservation illustrate the regulatory gap: while engineers cite structural vulnerabilities, conservationists emphasize its cultural and architectural significance (Sharma, 2021). This highlights the urgent need for empirical, site-based research to inform policy.

2.6 Research Gap

While there is a rich body of literature on heritage conservation in India, few studies systematically compare on-site morphology of markets with contemporary regulatory frameworks. Existing scholarship either emphasizes architectural value (e.g., Crawford Market studies) or focuses on policy-level debates (e.g., NBC, heritage listings). The lived realities of traders, spatial practices, and regulatory mismatches remain underexplored.

This research addresses that gap by conducting a detailed documentation of Devaraja Market and juxtaposing its features with bye-laws. In doing so, it contributes to the discourse on heritage-sensitive regulations that balance safety and modernization with cultural preservation.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study adopts a qualitative case study methodology (Yin, 2014), combining on-site architectural surveys with comparative regulatory analysis. Case studies are particularly appropriate for heritage contexts, where layered histories, socio-cultural practices, and spatial morphologies interact in complex ways that cannot be reduced to quantitative indicators alone (Creswell, 2013).

The research design integrates three complementary components:

1. On-Site Documentation: Direct observation, sketches, and photographic surveys of Devaraja Market to capture architectural morphology and spatial practices.
2. Measured Drawings and Spatial Analysis: Preparation of scaled drawings from site notes and photographs to understand circulation, shop modules, and facades articulation.
3. Regulatory Review: Critical comparison of observed features with Mysuru municipal bye-laws, Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act provisions, and select clauses from the National Building Code (NBC 2016).

This triangulated approach allows for both empirical grounding and policy-level critique.

3.2 On-Site Documentation

3.2.1 Photographic Survey

Photographs were systematically taken of the market's exterior facades, interior courtyards, and arched passages. These images captured material conditions, patterns of use, and signs of deterioration.

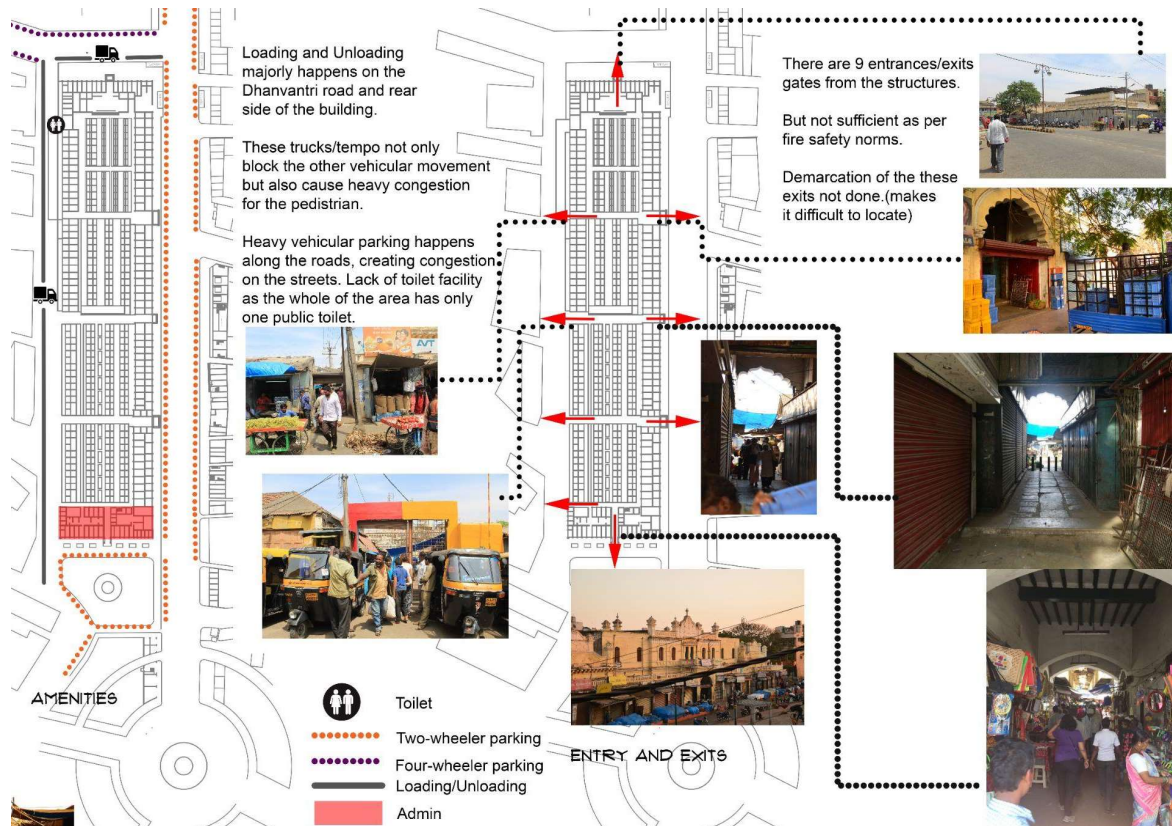


Figure 1. Photographic survey of Devaraja Market facades (Source: Author, 2018).
Interior arcade showing shop modules and vaulted roof (Source: Author, 2018).

The photographic survey also documented the juxtaposition of heritage architecture with contemporary retail practices, such as modern signage, electrical fittings, and plastic tarpaulins.

3.2.2 Sketches and On-Site Notes

Hand-drawn sketches were prepared to supplement photographs, focusing on details such as facades rhythm, shop proportions, and roof profiles. Sketches allowed for interpretive insights, especially in areas inaccessible for measurement.

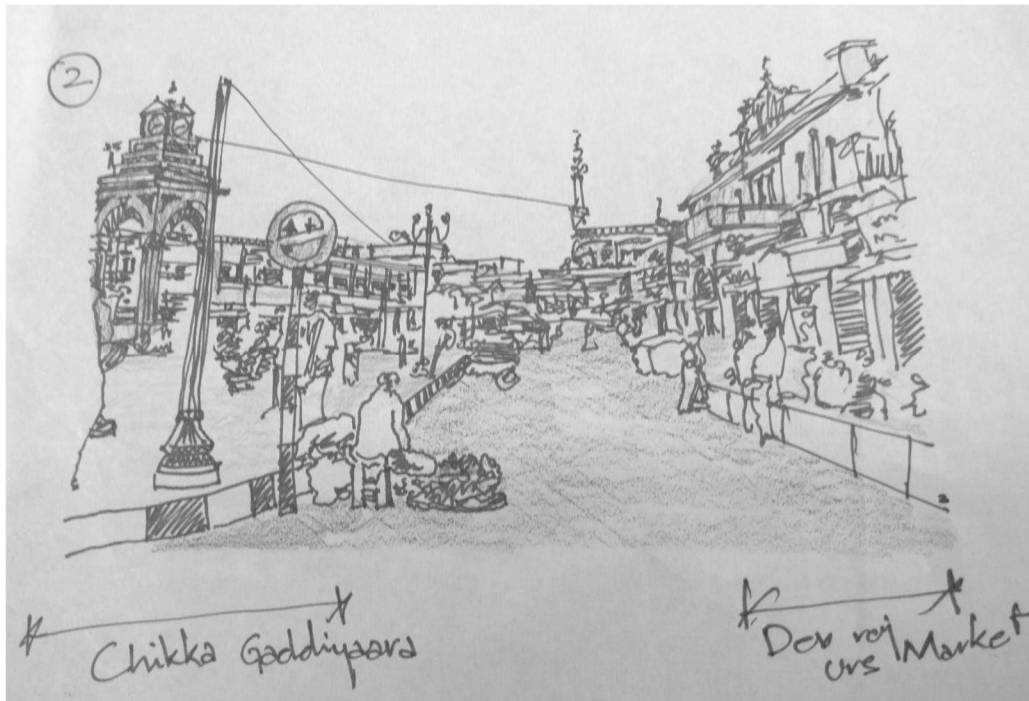


Figure 2. On-site sketch of facades elevation showing arcade proportions (Source: Author, 2018).

Sketching as a method facilitated closer engagement with spatial details, reinforcing arguments for conservation of architectural character.

3.3 Measured Drawings and Spatial Analysis

Measured drawings were derived from a combination of tape measurements, photographic scaling, and interpretive reconstruction. These drawings included:

- Plans showing stall modules, circulation alleys, and courtyards.
- Elevations of the primary facades along key street edges.
- Sections illustrating roof profiles and volumetric relationships.

Spatial analysis focused on:

1. Circulation Patterns: Identifying congestion points, service alleys, and pedestrian flows.
2. Shop Typologies: Documenting the modularity of stalls (approx. 2.5–3 m wide), their aggregation into rows, and their integration with arcades.

3. Climate Responsiveness: Assessing features such as shaded verandahs, natural ventilation through courtyards, and orientation relative to prevailing winds.



Figure 3. Measured plan of Devaraja Market (Source: Author, 2018).

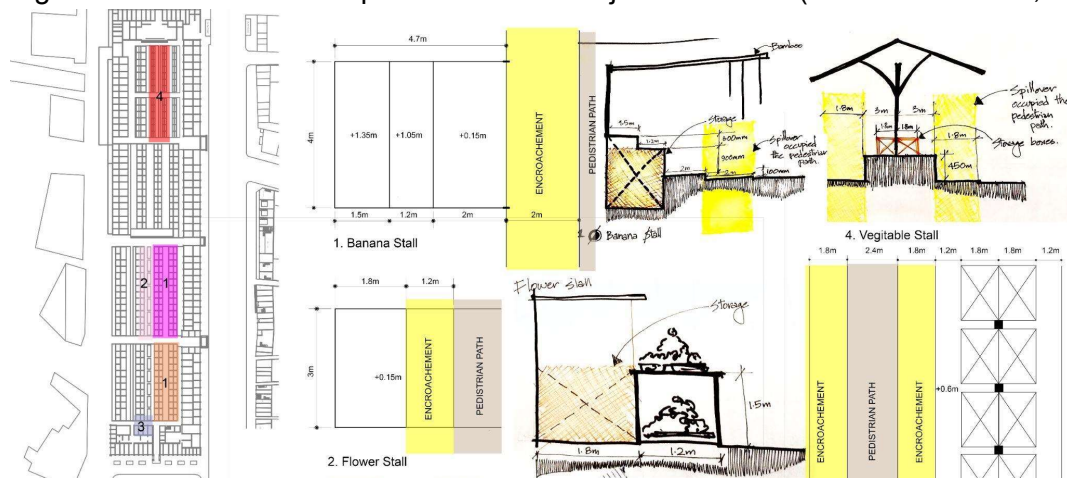


Figure 4. Cross-section showing arcade and roof truss (Source: Author, 2018).

3.4 Regulatory Review

The regulatory review was conducted in three stages:

1. Mysuru Municipal Bye-Laws: Relevant clauses on building height, setbacks, fire safety, circulation widths, and sanitation were examined. For instance, bye-laws requiring a minimum setback of 3 m from road edges were compared against the market's built-to-line condition.
2. Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act (1976): Provisions related to public markets, safety, and municipal responsibilities were analyzed. These emphasize hygiene and structural safety but do not account for heritage-specific conditions.
3. National Building Code (NBC 2016): Select heritage-related guidelines were reviewed. The NBC provides general conservation advice but lacks enforceability, leading to gaps between intent and implementation (Bandyopadhyay, 2017).

The regulatory review allowed identification of mismatches—for example, while bye-laws mandate minimum widths for fire tender access, Devaraja Market's alleys are pedestrian-only, reflecting a different spatial logic.

3.5 Analytical Framework

The study employed comparative morphological analysis (Kropf, 2009), juxtaposing the market's observed spatial form against regulatory expectations. This enabled systematic identification of:

- Convergences: Where bye-laws align with market conditions (e.g., ventilation, light through courtyards).
- Divergences: Where bye-laws contradict heritage morphology (e.g., setbacks, vehicular access).
- Implications: Potential risks (structural, safety) and opportunities (adaptive reuse, participatory management).

3.6 Limitations

Several methodological limitations are acknowledged:

1. Access restrictions limited detailed measurement of certain areas.
2. Structural assessment was based on visual inspection, not engineering tests.
3. The comparison with bye-laws focused on formal regulations, while informal practices (e.g., temporary stalls, encroachments) were considered qualitatively rather than quantitatively.

4. Case Study: Devaraja Market, Mysuru

4.1 Historical Background

Devaraja Market is among the most iconic heritage structures of Mysuru, strategically located near the Mysore Palace and within the city's historic core. Established during the late nineteenth century under the Wodeyar dynasty, the market reflects the princely vision of creating organized retail spaces that could serve both local residents and royal households (Rao, 2020). Unlike informal bazaars that grew incrementally, Devaraja Market was conceived as a planned urban market, with arcaded facades, modular shop units, and internal courtyards.

Over the decades, the market evolved as the city's primary wholesale and retail hub, specializing in flowers, fruits, vegetables, and traditional items used in rituals. It remains deeply embedded in Mysuru's cultural calendar, particularly during Dasara festivities, when the market overflows with decorative items and ceremonial goods (Sharma, 2021).

Today, however, the market faces severe challenges of structural deterioration, congestion, and regulatory conflicts. Civic authorities have raised concerns about safety, while conservationists and local traders resist demolition, citing its heritage value.

4.2 Architectural Character

Architecturally, Devaraja Market blends colonial planning principles with indigenous design traditions. Its built form is characterized by:

- Arcaded facades: Continuous verandahs with arches create shaded pedestrian zones.
- Courtyards: Internal open spaces provide light, ventilation, and spatial relief.
- Modular Shops: Standardized units, typically 2.5–3 m wide, organized in rows.
- Roofing System: Pitched tiled roofs supported by timber and steel trusses.
- Material Palette: Local brick masonry with lime plaster, wooden joinery, and Mangalore tiles.

4.3 Spatial Morphology

4.3.1 Layout and Circulation

The market is laid out as a rectangular block with three main longitudinal wings and several cross-passages, creating a grid-like structure. Circulation is primarily pedestrian, with narrow alleys (1.5–2.5 m wide) connecting courtyards and external verandahs.

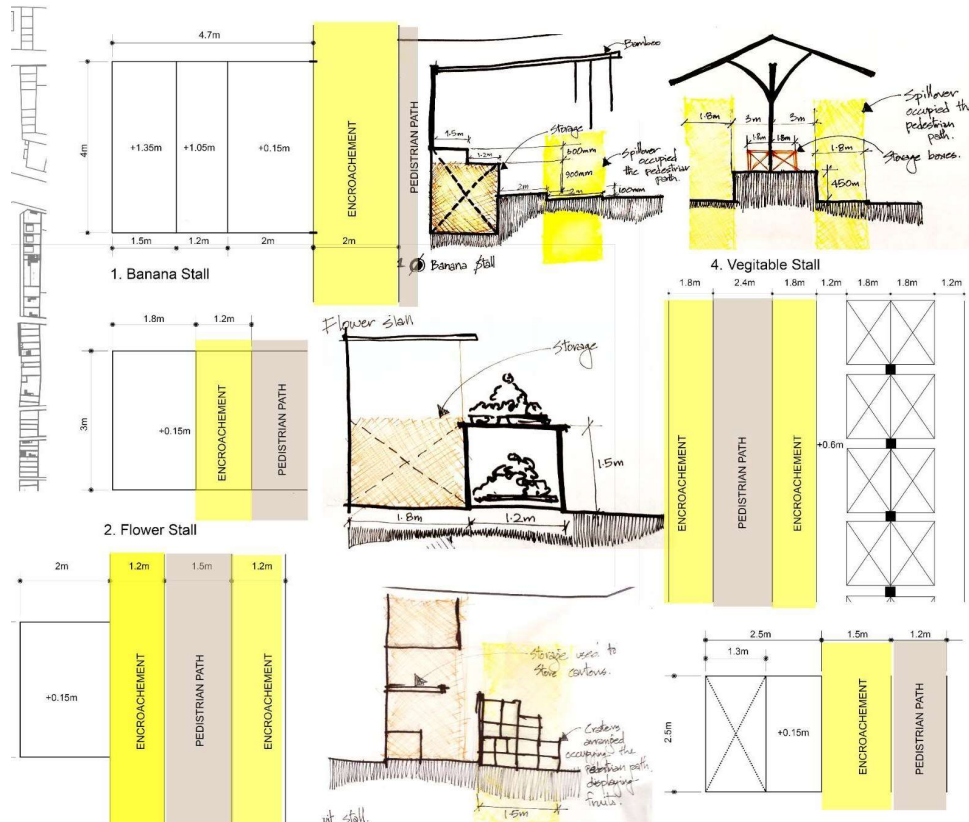


Figure 5. Measured plan of Devaraja Market showing stalls, alleys, and courtyards (Source: Author, 2018).

Observations reveal significant congestion during peak hours, particularly in alleys where vendors extend goods into circulation space. Despite this, the pedestrian scale fosters vibrancy and social interaction.

4.3.2 Sections and Volumetrics

Sections illustrate the relationship between verandahs, shop modules, and the roofing system. The arcade height (approx. 4–5 m) creates a sense of openness, while trussed roofs allow for air circulation.

4.3.3 Courtyards

Internal courtyards (approx. 10–15 m wide) act as light wells and spillover spaces. These areas are critical for natural ventilation but are currently encroached upon by temporary stalls and sheds.

4.4 Observed Conditions

4.4.1 Structural Condition

Visual inspection revealed cracks in masonry walls, deflection in timber trusses, and localized roof collapses. Some sections exhibit water seepage due to poor drainage and broken tiles. These conditions reinforce civic concerns about safety (Mehrotra, 2011).

4.4.2 Material Degradation

Lime plaster is eroded in several areas, replaced by cement patches that are incompatible with original materials. Timber members show termite infestation, while metal elements are corroded.

4.4.3 Functional Modifications

Traders have introduced ad-hoc modifications, such as mezzanine lofts, aluminum shutters, and signage. While these reflect adaptive resilience, they disrupt the architectural integrity of facades.

4.4.4 Socio-Cultural Role

Despite its physical deterioration, the market remains a living heritage space. It is integral to rituals, festivals, and daily practices of Mysuru residents. Traders and customers exhibit strong attachment, resisting proposals for demolition (Jain & Mahadevan, 2019).

4.5 Comparison with Bye-Laws

4.5.1 Setbacks and Street Alignment

Bye-laws mandate front and side setbacks (typically 3–5 m for commercial buildings). Devaraja Market, however, is built-to-line, creating continuous street frontage. While this enhances pedestrian experience, it conflicts with regulations.

4.5.2 Circulation Widths

Bye-laws require minimum widths of 3.5 m for vehicular access (NBC, 2016). The market's alleys are narrower (1.5–2.5 m), designed for pedestrians. This mismatch raises concerns about fire safety and emergency access.

4.5.3 Fire Safety Norms

Contemporary codes mandate fire exits, hydrants, and smoke detectors. Devaraja Market lacks these facilities, though courtyards provide potential for retrofitting. Traders rely on informal fire-fighting measures, which are inadequate by current standards.

4.5.4 Structural Compliance

Bye-laws require buildings to conform to seismic and wind load codes. Devaraja Market's load-bearing masonry and timber trusses predate such standards, creating vulnerabilities that need structural retrofitting rather than demolition.

4.5.5 Sanitation and Waste Management

Municipal bye-laws emphasize sanitary facilities and waste collection. Observations reveal inadequate drainage and waste disposal, with open courtyards often used for dumping.

4.6 Summary of Findings

The comparison highlights a fundamental tension: bye-laws designed for modern developments are incompatible with heritage morphology. While safety and sanitation concerns are valid, wholesale demolition disregards the cultural, architectural, and climatic value embedded in the market's form.

Devaraja Market illustrates the need for heritage-sensitive regulations that adapt safety norms without erasing historic urban character.

5. Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Morphology versus Regulations

The spatial form of Devaraja Market reflects a historical logic of compactness, shaded circulation, and pedestrian-scale design. These characteristics are typical of Indian bazaar morphology, which scholars describe as “incremental, adaptive, and socially embedded” (Prakash, 2011; Mehta, 2014). By contrast, modern building bye-laws derive from rationalist planning paradigms imported during colonial and post-independence periods, emphasizing setbacks, plot ratios, and vehicular access (Banerjee & Chakrabarti, 2017).

This contrast creates a fundamental mismatch:

- Bye-laws assume individual plots and street hierarchies, whereas heritage markets function as integrated blocks with internal circulation.
- Bye-laws prioritize vehicular fire access, while traditional markets emphasize pedestrian permeability.
- Bye-laws regulate structural safety via codified standards, while traditional markets rely on redundancy and passive climatic comfort.

Table 1. Summary of morphological mismatches between bye-laws and Devaraja Market. (Source: Author, 2018)

Aspect	Bye-law Requirement	Devaraja Market Reality	Implications
Building Structure	RCC framed structures, seismic compliance, modern load-bearing standards	Load-bearing brick masonry walls, lime plaster, tiled roofs	Classified as unsafe/non-compliant; risk of demolition if codes are rigidly applied
Circulation & Access	Minimum 3.5–6 m wide access roads, ramps for universal access, service entries	Narrow historic streets, arcaded entries, pedestrian focus	Limited emergency access; non-compliant with universal design norms
Fire Safety	Hydrants, staircases, ≥ 1.5 m corridor widths, multiple fire exits	No hydrants, few fire exits, congested narrow corridors	High fire hazard risk; fails compliance; evacuation difficult
Sanitation & Waste	Modern drainage, closed waste systems, adequate toilets	Outdated drainage, open waste, limited toilets	Poor hygiene and health standards; frequent regulatory violations
Parking Norms	On-site parking as per floor area ratio (FAR)	No on-site parking; pedestrian/public transport dependent	Infeasible to retrofit parking; regulatory non-compliance
Plot Coverage & FAR	Regulated setbacks, coverage, and FAR	Continuous built-up form with arcades and courtyards; no setbacks	Market morphology violates zoning norms; formal redevelopment pressures

Materials	RCC, steel, cement concrete mandated	Brick, lime plaster, Mangalore tiles	Non-standard under current codes; conservation requires exemptions
Heritage Value	Bye-laws generic, limited heritage exemptions	Cultural, social, and architectural landmark	Risk of erasure if bye-laws dominate over heritage considerations

5.2 Safety and Structural Integrity

Authorities often justify demolition of heritage markets by citing structural safety risks. Indeed, observations reveal deteriorated masonry and truss systems (see Section 4.4.1). However, literature shows that such deterioration is not inherent to the morphology but stems from neglect and incompatible repairs (Mehrotra, 2011; Nair, 2020). In other words, safety can be addressed through conservation engineering—retrofit, reinforcement, and material compatibility—rather than demolition.

For instance, conservation projects in Chandni Chowk (Delhi) and Town Hall Market (Ahmedabad) demonstrate that retrofitting with steel frames and lime-compatible mortars can significantly enhance structural stability while retaining historic form (Choudhury, 2019).

Thus, the discourse of “unsafe structures” is often a policy shortcut, substituting heritage-sensitive interventions with blanket clearance.

5.3 Cultural and Climatic Relevance

Markets like Devaraja are not just retail nodes; they embody living heritage. Scholars note that heritage morphologies create “cultural anchoring” for urban communities, providing continuity across generations (Singh, 2018; Jain & Mahadevan, 2019). Traders’ resistance to relocation stems from this embeddedness.

Climatically, the arcaded verandahs, narrow alleys, and tiled roofs respond to Mysuru’s hot semi-arid climate by maximizing shading, cross-ventilation, and evaporative cooling (Rajagopalan & Lim, 2011). These features align with contemporary passive design principles, yet bye-laws rarely account for such environmental intelligence. Instead, they prioritize universalized setbacks and FARs that dilute climate responsiveness (Rao, 2020).

This raises a paradox: heritage morphologies are often more sustainable than modern replacements, yet are threatened precisely because they don’t “fit” regulatory templates.

5.4 Comparative Insights from Other Indian Cases

The Devaraja case resonates with conflicts observed in other Indian cities:

- Chandni Chowk, Delhi: Redevelopment emphasized traffic management but compromised pedestrian vibrancy (Mehta, 2014).
- KR Market, Bengaluru: Attempts to modernize created vertical structures with poor ventilation and underutilized upper floors (Rao, 2020).
- Mahboob Chowk, Hyderabad: Heritage market degraded due to lack of regulatory flexibility, with traders informally extending stalls into streets (Singh, 2018).

These cases highlight that uniform application of bye-laws erodes traditional urban economies and often produces dysfunctional built forms.

5.5 Heritage and Legal Framework

India has fragmented heritage regulation. The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act (1958) covers only monuments >100 years old, excluding many “living” heritage markets like Devaraja. Local municipal bye-laws lack heritage sensitivity, treating these structures as outdated risks rather than assets (Menon, 2016).

Some cities (Jaipur, Ahmedabad) have experimented with heritage byelaws and adaptive re-use guidelines (UNESCO, 2017), but these remain exceptions. Mysuru, despite its heritage branding, has no comprehensive regulatory framework for integrating heritage markets into urban growth strategies.

This legal vacuum fuels the demolition vs. conservation binary, sidelining adaptive strategies.

5.6 Towards Adaptive Regulations

The analysis suggests a need for hybrid regulatory models:

- Performance-based codes that allow heritage morphologies to comply via retrofitting rather than demolition.
- Special heritage zones where bye-laws recognize the legitimacy of built-to-line, pedestrian-scale morphologies.
- Incremental conservation through phased retrofitting, rather than wholesale clearance.

- Community participation, ensuring traders and users co-create guidelines that balance safety with cultural continuity.

These approaches echo international frameworks such as the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach promoted by UNESCO (2011), which emphasizes integrating heritage into broader urban planning rather than isolating it.

5.7 Synthesis

The Devaraja Market case demonstrates that morphological resilience and regulatory rigidity are at odds. While bye-laws focus on standardized, risk-averse templates, heritage morphologies embody adaptive intelligence, cultural continuity, and sustainability.

Rather than viewing them as incompatible, cities must develop context-sensitive regulatory mechanisms. Otherwise, India risks losing both the architectural character and socio-economic vitality of its traditional markets.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

The preceding analysis highlights a recurring tension between heritage morphology and contemporary regulatory frameworks. Devaraja Market, with its arcaded facades, internal courtyards, and culturally embedded trading practices, embodies a living heritage system that resists standardization. At the same time, genuine concerns regarding structural safety, fire hazards, and sanitation cannot be dismissed. The challenge, therefore, is not whether to conserve or modernize, but how to reconcile these imperatives through adaptive regulatory and design strategies.

This chapter presents a set of recommendations, organized at three interrelated scales: policy and regulatory frameworks, design and technical interventions, and community participation and governance. While rooted in the Mysuru context, these recommendations are transferable to other Indian heritage markets, particularly those in hill towns and secondary cities facing similar dilemmas.

6.2 Policy and Regulatory Recommendations

6.2.1 Heritage-Specific Bye-Laws

Mysuru requires heritage-sensitive bye-laws that acknowledge the unique morphology of traditional markets. Such bye-laws should:

- Permit built-to-line development, arcades, and high plot coverage within heritage precincts.
- Replace rigid setback and FAR norms with performance-based guidelines focusing on ventilation, circulation, and safety.
- Integrate climatic responsiveness (arcades, pitched roofs, shaded streets) as compliance measures, rather than anomalies.

Examples from Ahmedabad's walled city heritage bye-laws and Jaipur's heritage cell demonstrate that municipal-level innovation is feasible (UNESCO, 2017).

6.2.2 Creation of a Heritage Market Zone in Mysuru

Devaraja Market should be designated as a special heritage market zone within the Mysuru Master Plan. This designation would allow regulatory flexibility, tax incentives for conservation, and dedicated funding for retrofitting.

A parallel can be drawn to Chandni Chowk (Delhi), where redevelopment plans created a pedestrian-priority zone, although with mixed success (Mehta, 2014). For Mysuru, the approach must be tailored to retain both trade continuity and architectural character.

6.2.3 Integration with Smart City Missions

Many Indian cities, including Mysuru, are implementing Smart City projects. Heritage markets should be explicitly incorporated into these programs, not as isolated "beautification" projects but as functional urban cores. Smart infrastructure—such as underground utilities, Wi-Fi access, and improved lighting—can coexist with traditional morphologies if sensitively embedded.

6.2.4 Legal Protection and Incentives

Current legal frameworks exclude "living heritage" less than 100 years old from protection. The state government should expand heritage listing criteria to cover markets like Devaraja. At the same time, incentives for shop owners—such as reduced property tax for compliance with conservation codes or low-interest retrofitting loans—can encourage participation.

6.3 Design and Technical Recommendations

6.3.1 Structural Retrofitting

Instead of demolition, Devaraja Market should undergo conservation engineering:

- Steel or RCC frames inserted within masonry walls to enhance seismic safety.

- Use of lime-based mortars compatible with historic masonry (Mehrotra, 2011).
- Replacement of deteriorated timber with treated hardwood or engineered wood for roof trusses.

A phased retrofitting plan, beginning with the most vulnerable wings, can ensure continuity of trade during works.

6.3.2 Fire Safety and Services

Fire safety is a key mismatch between bye-laws and heritage morphologies. Recommendations include:

- Installing sprinkler systems and hydrants within courtyards.
- Providing multiple micro-exits instead of mandating 9–12 m wide fire tender access roads, which are incompatible with market grain.
- Upgrading electrical wiring through concealed conduits, minimizing visual disruption.

6.3.3 Sanitation and Waste Management

Markets like Devaraja face criticism for unhygienic conditions. Solutions should combine invisible infrastructure upgrades with behavioral change programs:

- Greywater recycling units in courtyards for cleaning and horticulture.
- Segregated waste bins integrated into shopfronts.
- Partnerships with local NGOs or cooperatives for daily waste collection and composting.

6.3.4 Adaptive Reuse and Mixed Functions

To enhance viability, parts of the market can be adaptively reused:

- Upper floors could house cultural centers, handicraft outlets, or exhibition spaces.
- Night-time programming—such as food courts or cultural bazaars—can extend use while distributing footfall.
- Pop-up retail formats can be introduced in underutilized corners.

Such adaptive strategies align with global precedents like Borough Market (London) and Khan Market (Delhi), where heritage morphology coexists with contemporary consumption.

6.4 Community and Governance Recommendations

6.4.1 Participatory Planning

Traders, local residents, and heritage activists must be included in decision-making. Establishing a Devaraja Market Heritage Committee comprising representatives from the Mysuru City Corporation, traders' associations, heritage experts, and NGOs can ensure balanced decisions.

6.4.2 Awareness and Capacity Building

Conservation efforts fail when stakeholders lack awareness. Workshops for traders on topics such as fire safety drills, waste management, and heritage branding can build ownership. Students from the School of Architecture, Mysuru can collaborate in documentation and awareness drives.

6.4.3 Economic Sustainability

Markets survive when economically viable. Recommendations include:

- Branding Devaraja Market as a “heritage shopping destination” under Karnataka Tourism.
- Developing heritage walks linking Mysore Palace, Devaraja Market, and KR Circle.
- Providing micro-finance schemes for shop owners to upgrade interiors without altering facades.

Such measures ensure that conservation does not remain an elite agenda but sustains everyday livelihoods.

6.5 Generalizable Lessons for Indian Heritage Markets

While rooted in Devaraja Market, these recommendations resonate with broader Indian contexts:

- Chandni Chowk: pedestrianization must balance traffic with trader needs.
- KR Market (Bengaluru): verticalization of markets rarely works; horizontal grain is more resilient.
- Mahboob Chowk (Hyderabad): absence of regulatory flexibility leads to informal encroachment.

Thus, the Indian heritage market debate must move from a demolition–modernization binary to a continuity–adaptation spectrum.

6.6 Synthesis

The key insight from this chapter is that heritage markets cannot—and should not—be forced to comply with rigid modernist bye-laws. Instead, adaptive regulations, sensitive retrofitting, and participatory governance can create a middle path. For Mysuru, adopting such measures would not only preserve Devaraja Market but also strengthen the city's identity as a cultural capital. For India more broadly, this case advocates for contextual urbanism, where heritage is not a burden but a living resource.

7. Conclusion

This research demonstrates that Devaraja Market's morphology embodies socio-cultural continuity, climatic intelligence, and urban resilience. However, the mismatch with standardized bye-laws creates tension between conservation and modernization.

Findings suggest that demolition is not the only solution. Instead, adaptive regulations, retrofitting, and participatory governance can reconcile heritage preservation with safety and modernization.

At a broader level, the study contributes to debates on heritage urbanism in Indian secondary cities, highlighting the need for context-sensitive planning. Future research should expand to other markets across Karnataka and India, building comparative datasets to inform national-level heritage policy.

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