



THE VIBRANT WALKWAY

Written and Contributed by

[Aangan](#)
[Architects and Urban](#)
[Initiatives](#)
Surat, Gujarat

Contact

aangan.architect@gmail.com

Dumas is an important landmark of Surat city known for being an important port, beach, fishing and recreation destination. This project is a case where Urban Design takes a leap in bringing forth memories of the place (the past) and celebrates the vitality and vibrancy of the city and its people (the present). The Dumas project was conceived as a street celebrating the identity of a long lost historic landmark.

What is the project about?

Dumas, an urban village, is an important landmark of Surat City, at the mouth of the river Tapi. Dumas has held a special place in the lifestyle of Surat since historic times. Touted as a relaxing destination with cottages and some amazing banyan trees, the coastal lifestyle of Dumas always attracted city dwellers for weekends to enjoy the beach, camel rides and the famous yam fritters. With the coastline distancing itself from the shores of Dumas, the place lost its purpose. The Vibrant Walkway brings back to life the city's historic destination.

The area of intervention was a 500 metres long vehicular stretch anchored with two important historic landmarks: the Langar- a historic anchor memorial commemorating World War II soldiers and the statue of the Ex-Prime Minister of India, Shri Morarji Desai. The proposed pedestrian walkway links these two anchor points gliding through the centre of the road with leisure, landscape and playful opportunities to rejuvenate and eventually culminate into the Plaza of Celebration. The Vibrant Walkway implicates how the people and communities influence the infrastructure in a public domain, so that the urban design becomes representative images of not only the city but also the people that occupy it.

Since Dumas has been a weekend getaway destination, the project called for proposing activities and involvement from locals in order to revive its recreational importance. The central walkway is a design decision driven by the proposed alignments of the Town Planning Scheme and the City Development Plan where the roads are to be widened on both sides. It was thus, that the idea of a central walkway came into being.

This central walkway – also acclaimed as the vibrant walkway by the city, is a journey towards the destination. It was conceptualised to depict vivid characteristics of the place – Dumas and the people of Surat. The street offers leisure, recreation, play and sport through a series of metaphoric urban installations which are of participatory nature. Vibrant as the Suraties are, the street celebrates this vibrancy through colourful urban design.

What is the impact?

The project gives its visitors an engaging space and a renewed purpose to visit Dumas. An indulging journey from one end to another encourages visitors to walk through the stretch. Interactive urban installations popping along the walkway informs visitors metaphorically about the cultural and heritage aspects of the place. It allows people to reminisce about elements of the past such as boats, oars, hammocks, beach waves and ghats which belong to the memory of Dumas as an important destination. Dynamic forms, playful colours, interactive nature and relativity has brought life to public recreation at Dumas. People sit, play, take selfies and interact all along with the series of thematic installation inserts. The urban design of the vibrant walkway has conscious and thoughtful decisions, and interventions to mitigate

contextual challenges like vandalism, structural safety and future planning prospects. The project showcases a much-needed approach to creating state-of-the-art public spaces by integrating art.

Project Funded by:

Surat Municipal Corporation

Stakeholders Involved:

Surat Municipal Corporation

Urban Initiatives

Aangan Architects

Structural Consultant S & V Engineers

MEP Consultant Shreeji Consultancy

Design Team: Prof.(Ar.) Vishal Shah, Ar. Prakruti Desai

About Urban Initiatives and Aangan Architects:

Urban Initiatives is a Consultancy firm & a Collaborative Platform rendering it's services in Urban Design and Urban Planning since 2005. Urban Initiatives is an organization based in Surat initiated by enthusiastic urban designer, urban planner & architects. Since its inception, the organization has initiated projects that focus on the quality of the built environment in a different context.

The members of this organization have experiences working with different kinds of organizations and on various kinds of urban projects in their individual capacities. The exposure of the members to multi-disciplinary sectors has been central to initiate this organization which can 'make difference to the quality of urban environment'.

Aangan Architects was instituted in April 2001 with a motive of creating sensible and responsive design collaboration in fields related to built environment; Architect & Urban Designer Vishal Shah the Founder Partner and Ar. Vishal Desai, Partner are heading the firm with Ar. Niti Shah & Ar. Prathama Desai providing an edge to Planning and Interior Design respectively.

Presently the firm is dealing into projects related to Residential and Institutional Architecture, interior architecture, Urban –Design and Landscape. Members of the organization are also actively involved in academics and collaborate with like-minded firms for important projects contributing to the betterment of the living environment. The organization has a wide consultant base for structural engineering, Landscape Design, Services and infrastructure design, arts and project management.

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