

Professional Certificate Program

# Wooden Heritage Conservation



Batch – 02  
On-Site Program  
06 – 08 March 2025

At CEPT Campus and CEPT Conservation Site Schools  
'Kalidas Jethabhai House', Dharmaj and 'House at Nagarvado', Patan

**CPP**

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# ABOUT THE PROGRAM

India has a vast repository of diverse wooden built heritage across varied geographic regions. An example is the diversity of wooden architecture in Gujarat, which is representative of its cultural heritage of building in wood. A significant number of wooden buildings and structures are located in historic settlements and are endangered due to rapid transformation of the settlements. This 3-day workshop will introduce its participants to conservation approaches for wooden heritage that form integral and important cultural components of historic built environments.

The hands-on engagement with techniques of wooden conservation will be based at the CEPT Conservation Site Schools 'House at Nagarvado' at Patan and 'Kalidas Jethabhai House' at Dharmaj in Gujarat. The sites are exquisite examples of wooden heritage and have been adopted as Conservation Site Schools of Center for Heritage Conservation, CEPT Research and Development Foundation (CHC, CRDF) in mutual agreement with the owners of the properties. Both these sites are located within the historic core of the settlements and the initiatives aim to sustainably safeguard them.

The course will be supplemented with theoretical sessions by experts and practitioners on the approaches to wooden heritage conservation, non-invasive methods to assess decay and damage to the material, sourcing of wood for conservation in present times and addressing associated challenges. The course will include a visit to 'Laathi Bazaar' in Ahmedabad accompanied by a master craftsman for insights into contemporary processes of sourcing and processing of wood in conservation projects. Practice examples will be presented through hands-on demonstrations and case studies.

The program has been developed and curated by CHC, CRDF in consultation with CPP. The program content has been curated by Prof. Jigna Desai, Jayashree Bardhan, Nigar Shaikh and Ashna Patel from CHC. The program will be supported with material from CHC's work for the Endangered Wooden Architecture Programme (EWAP) Grant, hosted by Oxford Brookes University.



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# PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The workshop will be conducted over 3 days introducing the following:

1. Introduction to wooden heritage conservation
2. Damage assessment of wooden structures
3. Conservation strategies

## Module 1: Introduction to wooden heritage conservation

To be conducted at CEPT Campus

The first day of the workshop will be conducted at CEPT University campus. There will be a total of six sessions, including a program overview and an introduction to CEPT Conservation Site Schools. Other sessions will be on understanding the history of wooden architecture of a region through the example of Gujarat, historic wooden furniture and building elements of the region, the current context of wood as a material in historic structures, and examples of material deterioration. A visit to Laathi Bazaar will also be scheduled for the participants.

## Module 2: Damage Assessment of Wooden Structures

To be conducted at House at Nagarvado, Patan

On the second day, the participants will journey to Patan. On this day sessions will be delivered through practical demonstrations by way of hands-on engagement at the CEPT Conservation Site School, the House at Nagarvado at Patan. The house is a typical example of wooden architectural heritage in the settlement. Sessions will focus on methodologies for assessing wooden structures and demonstrating non-destructive tests (NDT) and minor destructive tests (MDT) for the assessment of various wooden elements.

## Module 3: Conservation Strategies

To be conducted at Kalidas Jethabhai House, Dharmaj

The third day will be designated for activities at CEPT Conservation Site School at Kalidas Jethabhai House in Dharmaj. The first two sessions on this day will be on safeguarding, structural assessment and repair strategies. The third session will have practice examples which will include demonstrations of repair techniques on prototype models. The fourth and fifth sessions will present an international example and Indian examples of wooden heritage conservation. The program will conclude with closing group discussions.

# PROGRAM FACULTY



**Nigar Shaikh**

Nigar Shaikh is a conservation engineer with an MSc. in Advanced Structural Analysis of Monuments and Historic Construction (SAHC), a double degree course from University of Minho, Portugal and Czech Technical University, Czech Republic. She has a Bachelors' Degree in Construction Technology (Hons.) from Faculty of Technology, CEPT University, Ahmedabad. Currently, she is pursuing a PhD at IIT-Bombay on hygric properties of historic lime binders. Her area of interest lies in risk assessment of built heritage, structural health monitoring, material characterization and working on reverse engineering of historic building materials. Nigar is an Adjunct Assistant Professor at CEPT University and the Program Lead for Material Characterization at CHC, CRDF. At CHC she provides expertise on structural conservation in varied research and advisory projects. Her expertise has been vital in CHC's Conservation Site School Initiative. She played a key role in developing CHC's 'Safety Handbooks' for conservation works at historical sites. She has previously worked on projects such as the restoration work of City Palace and Zanana Hospital in Udaipur, Laxmi Vilas Palace in Vadodara, etc.



**Ashna Patel**

Ashna Patel leads the Conservation Site School Initiative at CHC, CRDF, an initiative that adopts dilapidated and unprotected historic buildings and conserves them with a specific focus on community-led processes and pedagogical frameworks for engaging with real sites and scenarios. She is also a practising architect and co-founder at Fifth Column Design Studio, Vadodara. She has taught studio-based courses on Architectural Conservation and Urban Regeneration in the Master's Program in Conservation and Regeneration at the Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University. She has previously led undergraduate-level Design Studios and Architectural History and Theory courses as Visiting Faculty at Navrachana University and MS University, Vadodara. She is currently a PhD scholar at the Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University. Her research focuses on the role of tourism in regenerating historic cities in India. She holds a Bachelor's in Architecture from CEPT University and an MA in International Architectural Regeneration and Development from Oxford Brookes University, UK.

# PROGRAM FACULTY



**Jigna Desai**

Prof. Jigna Desai brings to the institute her experience in working with traditional urban environments and framing how traditional architecture may be understood, studied and transformed. Her current work focuses on formulating frameworks, tools and methods through which theoretical ideas of sustainability and conservation of living historic environments can be translated into practice while addressing the challenges of co-production of space and commodification of heritage. Prof. Desai is the principal investigator of the Endangered Wooden Architecture Program (EWAP) grant project 'Wooden Havelis of Gujarat' of CHC. The project is supported by Oxford Brookes University and funded by Arcadia. She recently discussed the project at the EWAP Conference at Oxford and presented on the topic - 'Reconsidering the term Vernacular in the context of Wooden Havelis of Gujarat'. Prof. Desai has worked on preparing the nomination dossier that led to the inscription of Ahmedabad as a World Heritage City by UNESCO in 2017 and has extensive experience in architecture and conservation research. She advocates community-based conservation and has partnered with several national and international institutions on heritage preservation initiatives. Prof Desai is an expert member of the International Scientific Committee on Historic Towns and Villages, International Council for Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and is an active ICOMOS India member. She is also a director of an award-winning practice - JMA Design Co that she co-founded with Mehul Bhatt in 1999.



**Saatvika Pancholi**

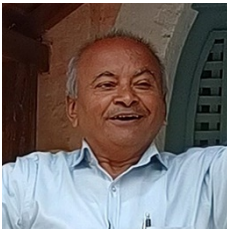
Saatvika is a Conservation Architect with a Master's in Conservation and Regeneration from CEPT University, Ahmedabad. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Architecture from Maharaja Sayajirao University, Vadodara. Her master's thesis focused on the earthquake resilience of the historic pol houses in Ahmedabad, which involved the structural understanding of the houses using quantitative and qualitative data. She is the project co-ordinator of CHC's Endangered Wooden Architecture Program (EWAP) grant and was involved in the extensive reconnaissance survey, archival research and decoding of wooden joinery details of havelis for the grant project. Saatvika has previous experience of working with sustainable materials with the award-winning firm, Wallmakers in Kerala. In 2018 - 19, she had her design firm, Chirping Birds Design Studio, which involved designing with local artisans and handicrafts. She also taught Design Studio at M.S. University, Vadodara, and History of Architecture at Devi Ahilya University, Indore.

# GUEST EXPERTS



**Jay Thakkar**

Jay Thakkar is a Senior Associate Professor and Head of Exhibitions at CEPT University. He is also a Co-founder and Ex-Director at the Design Innovation and Craft Resource Centre (DICRC) at CEPT University, Ahmedabad, India. He has acquired his Masters in Visual Communication from the Birmingham Institute of Art and Design (BIAD), United Kingdom and a Diploma in Interior Design from the School of Interior Design, CEPT University. He is actively functioning in the creative and cultural industry and has worked on various art, design, craft and projects in India, Europe and Australia. He has been affiliated with different institutes and organisations in India, UAE, Europe, and Australia. In academia, he teaches at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels (related to multidisciplinary design, vernacular and traditional architecture, crafts and furniture) and has published and presented papers, delivered lectures, organised field research, developed multiple courses, strategised design curriculums and mentored many students. He is the principal investigator for the international research project - Vernacular Furniture of India. Jay Thakkar has co-authored 'Sahaj: Vernacular Furniture of Gujarat' (2018, with Mitraja Bais, Samrudha Dixit and Ben Cartwright), 'Prathaa: Kath-Khuni Architecture of Himachal Pradesh'(2013, with Bharat Dave & Mansi Shah) and 'Matra: Ways of Measuring Vernacular Built Forms of Himachal Pradesh' (2008, with Dr Skye Morrison) and has also authored 'Naqsh: The Art of Wood Carving of Traditional Houses of Gujarat – Focus on Ornamentation' (2004).



**Fulchand Suthar**

Fulchand Suthar has been working as a carpenter for 35 years based in Ahmedabad. He has been into his ancestral occupation of furniture making. He has his own business of furniture making known as F.M. Furniture. He has experience of working with the architecture firms JMA Design Co. and Indigo Architects based in Ahmedabad. He was involved in the projects across Gujarat and Maharashtra. He was involved with Center for Heritage Conservation (CHC), CRDF (CEPT Research and Development Foundation) as research collaborator in the Endangered Wooden Architecture Program (EWAP), giving his expertise on wooden construction, joinery and details.

# GUEST EXPERTS



**Mehul Shah**

Mehul Shah has been working as a Structural Engineer after completing his master's in CASAD. He was a core faculty member at the School of Building Science and Technology, CEPT University, and then continued as a visiting professional in different faculties at CEPT University, mainly involved in guiding students in the area of structural concepts and earthquake-resistant design. He is also a visiting faculty at National Forensic Sciences University teaching students of the Forensic Structural Engineering master's programme. He is involved as a Professional in the area of Earthquake Structural Engineering, investigation, repairs, and rehabilitation of structures, and structural conservation of heritage structures. He has been involved as an external structural expert in several of CHC, CRDF's educational initiatives.



**Clara Rellensmann**

Dr. Clara Rellensmann works at the Chair of Architectural Conservation at the Brandenburg University of Technology (BTU), Cottbus-Senftenberg, Germany. She holds a Masters in World Heritage Studies from BTU and a Bachelor of Arts in European Studies from the University of Passau, Germany. In 2010/11, she held the Mercator Fellowship on International Affairs and subsequently worked as a consultant for the UNESCO offices in Bangkok and Yangon until 2016. For her doctoral thesis, in association with the DFG Research Training Group 'Cultural and Technological Significance of Historic Buildings', she researched the Buddhist site of Bagan and identity politics in Myanmar. Her PhD research on 'Appropriating Sacred Spaces - Heritage Politics in Myanmar' has recently been published by Springer. Prior to joining academia, Clara gained several years of professional experience in the cultural heritage sector, having worked for museums and cultural institutions in Costa Rica, Bahrain, Germany, Laos, Thailand and Myanmar. Clara Rellensmann is a member of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies and a member of the ICOMOS International Committee on Risk Preparedness. From 2020 to 2017, she served as a board member of ICOMOS International and in 2019/2020 as an expert on the World Heritage Panel. She is a founding member of Haus Döschnitz e.V, a transdisciplinary adaptive re-use project in South Thuringia, Germany.

# GUEST EXPERTS



**Khushi Shah**

Khushi Shah is a conservation architect with two decades of professional experience in the field. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Architecture from M. S. University, Vadodara (2002), and a specialisation in Heritage Conservation (DSA-Architecture et Patrimoine) from Ecole de Chaillot, Paris (2007). Some of her significant professional engagements include: Restoration and Regeneration of Indra Kund and its Chowk, Delwara, Rajasthan; Preparation of World Heritage nomination dossier for the Historic city of Ahmedabad as part of CEPT University team; and Restoration of traditional pol houses in the historic city of Ahmedabad as a team member for the Indo-French cooperation project (2003-2005). She was also engaged as a Visiting Faculty at the Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University from 2010 to 2023, where she tutored studios and courses on architectural conservation, urban conservation, structural conservation, and traditional building materials as well as conservation processes and practice and was in-charge of Conservation Lab (2017-2020).





# PROGRAM CALENDAR

Day and Time	Description	Mode
Day 1: 06 <sup>th</sup> March 2025	Introduction to Wooden Heritage Conservation <b>To be conducted at CEPT Campus</b>	
10:00 am to 10:30 am	<b>Program overview and introduction to CEPT Conservation Site Schools</b> <b>Faculty: Ms. Ashna Patel</b> This session will outline the course and its objectives in context of the CEPT Conservation Site Schools program and its wooden heritage conservation initiatives. It will provide an overview of the wooden heritage of Patan within its historic context, the Site School at Patan, followed by an introduction to work carried out at two previous Site Schools at Dharmaj - 'Mukhi Delu' and 'Kalidas Jethabhai House'.	On-campus
10:30 am to 11:15 am	<b>Wooden architecture of Gujarat</b> <b>Faculty: Prof. Jigna Desai</b> Wood is not native to most parts of Gujarat and yet one sees the most exquisite wooden havelis built here. This session will present a history of the making of wooden architecture of Gujarat and its significance in the histories of the region. The processes of making will also put forth the part to whole relationships of the urban morphology and the house type along with the agencies of various members of the communities involved.	On-campus
11:15 am to 12:00 pm	<b>Historic wooden furniture and building elements of Gujarat</b> <b>Guest Expert: Jay Thakkar</b> The region of Gujarat has a variety of furniture and decorative building elements that are an integral part of historic and traditional houses. The design and artistic details of such furniture and other elements derive from the communities, families and individuals inhabiting them and the material knowledge of the region. This session will give some examples.	On-campus
12:00 pm to 12:45 pm	<b>Current context of wood as a material</b> <b>Faculty: Ms. Saatvika Pancholi</b> This session will include a discussion on wood required for structural and for non-structural purposes, explained through examples of historic wooden houses and contemporary examples. The session will outline the types of wood currently used in the industry, methods of sourcing various types of wood and associated challenges.	On-campus
12:45 pm to 01:30 pm	<b>Material deterioration of wood</b> <b>Faculty: Ms. Nigar Shaikh</b> Historic wooden structures show numerous types of deterioration depending on the cause. This session will elaborate on the various types of decay, causes of decay and the visual characteristics of these types of decay on wooden elements.	On-campus
01:30 pm to 02:30 pm	<b>Lunch Break</b>	
03:00 pm to 05:30 pm	<b>Visit to the Laathi Bazaar</b> <b>Faculty: Ms. Saatvika Pancholi ; Guest Expert: Mr. Fulchand Suthar</b> This session will be an on-site understanding of wood as a material through a visit to the 'Laathi Bazaar' at Ahmedabad. It will enable participants to understand processes of sourcing, seasoning and distribution of wood. The visit will include visual identification and differentiation of types of wood based on colour, figure, texture, grain, etc.	On-site

Day and Time	Description	Mode
Day 2: 07 <sup>th</sup> March 2025	<b>Damage Assessment of Wooden Structures - House at Nagarvado, Patan</b> <b>To be conducted at Patan</b>	
10:30 am to 01:30 pm	<b>Methodologies for assessment of wooden structures</b> <b>Guest Expert: Mr. Mehul Shah</b> The theoretical session will be an introduction to the various methodologies available for assessment of wooden structures such as visual assessment, non-invasive methods of testing, and laboratory analysis.	On-site
01:30 pm to 02:30 pm	Lunch break	
02:30 pm to 05:30 pm	<b>Demonstration of NDT and MDT for assessment of different wooden elements, – House at Nagarvado, Patan</b> <b>Faculty: Ms. Nigar Shaikh</b> In this session participants will get a hands-on experience of using various Non-Destructive Tests (NDT) and Minor Destructive Tests (MDT) for wooden built elements at the CEPT Conservation Site School. Assessment techniques such as Tap test, Ultrasonic Pulse Velocity, Rebound Hammer and Borescope Study will be demonstrated.	On-site
Day 3: 08 <sup>th</sup> March 2025	<b>Conservation Strategies</b> <b>To be conducted at Dharmaj</b>	
10:00 am to 11:30 am	<b>Safeguarding and structural assessment strategies for wooden structures</b> <b>Faculty: Ms. Ashna Patel</b> This session will discuss and demonstrate the processes of safeguarding and conserving the historic wooden buildings in Dharmaj through the case of the CEPT Conservation Site School, Kalidas Jethabhai House. Participants will get an opportunity to examine ongoing conservation work at the site followed by a discussion on the negotiations and processes involved in adapting wooden built heritage for sustainable future use.	On-site
12:00 pm to 01:00 pm	<b>Wooden Heritage Conservation – theory session on repair techniques</b> <b>Faculty: Ms. Nigar Shaikh</b> The participants will be introduced to repair strategies for conservation of wooden structures and techniques employed in the conservation of Kalidas Jethabhai House shall be shown at the site.	On-site
01:00 pm to 01:30 pm	<b>Practice Examples</b> <b>Faculty: Ms. Nigar Shaikh</b> This practical session will include demonstrations of repair techniques on prototype models of decayed or damaged wooden elements.	On-site
01:30 pm to 02:30 pm	Lunch break	
02:30 pm to 03:00 pm	<b>Practice Examples Continued</b>	On-site
03:00 pm to 04:00 pm	<b>An international example: Participatory wooden heritage conservation efforts in Germany</b> <b>Guest Expert: Clara Rellensmann</b> This session will provide an example of an ongoing project of wooden heritage conservation in Southern Thuringia, Germany. The session will address the regional historic wooden building typology and present the participatory approach of conservation efforts in the project. This lecture will open opportunities for participants to discuss contextual variations in conservation of wooden heritage.	On-site
04:00 pm to 05:00 pm	<b>Indian examples: Experiences of wooden heritage conservation</b> <b>Guest expert: Ms. Khushi Shah</b> This session will discuss the variety of timber joinery and construction techniques of traditional wooden buildings in western India with approaches to their conservation based on the expert's experience in documentation and restoration of wooden architectural heritage.	On-site
05:00 pm to 05:30 pm	Discussion and Conclusion	On-site

# ADMISSIONS AND APPLICATIONS

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**Application Process** Online applications have already commenced. To apply to the program visit the CPP website <http://cpp.cept.ac.in/> Applicants should complete the online form consisting of 250 words of interest statement for joining the program and must attach their CV/resume.

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**Application Deadline** 10 February 2024  
(Applications are open. The deadline for this program is indicative. All applications will be considered as they are received, and seats will be allotted on a first come first serve basis. Admissions will be closed once all seats are full.)

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**Program Dates** 06 – 08 March 2025 (On-site and On-campus)

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**Who can Apply?** This program is open to professionals, site managers, researchers and tutors working in heritage conservation, heritage management, architecture, design, civil and structural engineering or any other field allied to built-environment.

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**Fees** INR 20,000/- + GST  
  
This is inclusive of welcome kit, working lunch on all program days, travel to the sites in a shared AC vehicle, and exclusive of lodging and boarding.

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**Certificate** Participants will receive a certificate from CEPT University on successful completion of the program with a minimum of 80 percent attendance.

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Image Credit: Komal Gandhi, CHC-CRDF || CPP Participants getting a hands-on experience of testing methods

# About CPP

CEPT Professional Programs (CPP) aims to bridge the gap between academics, practice, policy-making, and implementation through short certificate programs. The mission of CPP is to support individual and organizational learning by creating opportunities to acquire new skills and capabilities, thus allowing professionals to stay relevant in the current knowledge based global context. It will achieve this by offering professional development, continuing education, and up-skilling opportunities for professionals and in-service persons across disciplines concerned with urban development and the built habitat.

CPP draws from the expertise and capacity of the accomplished faculty at CEPT University, enhanced further by experts and practitioners from the field. Its programmes are built on deep research, vast consultancy projects and innovative pedagogies. CPP offers a repertoire of short programs and topic focused programs across disciplines of architecture, design, planning, and management with immersive learning approaches combining interactive lectures, case studies, and peer-to-peer exchanges.



Image Credit: Nishra Shah, CHC-CRDF  
Wooden furniture in the House at Nagarvado, Patan



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