

Hampi Bazaar Demolition II

How Maps Alienate People

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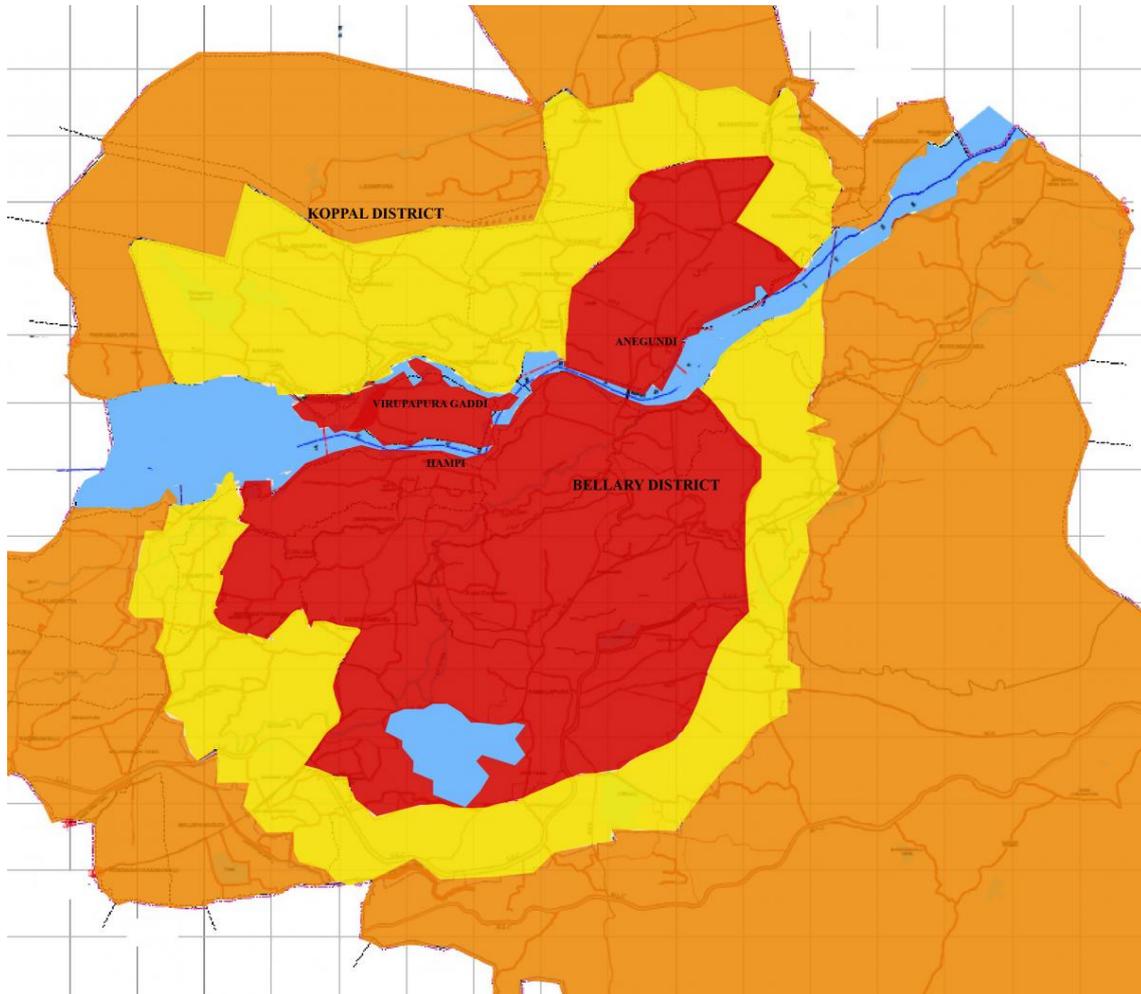
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The heritage boundary is no longer an exercise of scholarly discourse but an antagonistic boundary between human rights and world heritage.

The Map Is Not the Territory

When Hampi was granted the status of a World Heritage Site (WHS) in 1986, a buffer zone of one kilometre each to the east, south, and west of the site was established. No land on the north side of the Tungabhadra River was included in this early boundary, though a number of villages today are considered part of the core boundary^[1].



Simplified image of the Hampi World Heritage Area broken down into Core (Red), Periphery (Yellow), and Buffer (Orange) Zones adopted from whc.unesco.org.

Most residents of the core zone were engaged in small subsistence farming and agriculture (sugar cane, bananas, and rice).^[ii] According to informal interviews with older residents of Anegundi Village and Virupapura Gaddi Island,^[iii] apart from pilgrims coming to Hampi's living Virupaksha temple and a handful of hippies who, like the pilgrims, did not require or desire tourist infrastructure, Hampi was not a well-known travel destination.

In the mid to late 1990s, however, private bus companies established a second bus route between Goa and Hampi. This brought a different crowd, mainly young international tourists who were tired of Goa's crowded tourism destinations. Their presence gave rise to hostels, homestays that served non-vegetarian cuisine and alcohol—things technically deemed illegal in a sacred site.

This type of tourism blurred the more traditional boundary between hosts and guests maintained by the mass tourism industry. The newer tourists did not want to stay in hotels

but rather live among the locals in makeshift tourist accommodation. While this fostered opportunities for cross-cultural exchange, it also created friction between the tourists and the locals. There was an unmistakable contrast between permissible “western” behaviour and “Indian-ness”.

Indian tourists also travelled to Hampi in droves during the tourist season, putting strain on resources and personal relations. Thus, new settlements and spatial patterns begun to emerge in the core zone of the site as tourism grew.

In 1999, Hampi was placed on the list of “world heritage sites in danger” for two major reasons. The first was this “haphazard” pattern of informal urbanisation that was occurring in Hampi, particularly along the ancient bazaar near Virupaksha temple.

The second reason was the construction of two cable-suspended bridges across the Tungabhadra in two separate places. The first—a footbridge—would connect Virupaksha temple to Virapapura Gaddi Island and the other would connect Anegundi to Hampi. Although Anegundi, on the north side of the river, was not part of the original heritage boundary, the construction of the suspension bridge called this into question.

A buffer zone is, in itself, “not of outstanding universal value,” but may nevertheless “influence a WHS. The importance of the environment for the object must be properly recognised to be able to define a suitable perimeter as well as required protective measures for the buffer zone” (UNESCO 2009: 12). When UNESCO expressed concern over the construction of Hampi’s suspension bridges, it was not only the “visual eyesore” of “out of context development” that worried the committee, but also the implications of increased access to the site and whether the landscape could sustain such an increase without directly compromising the integrity and preservation of the site.

As stated, the construction of the bridge also called into question the adequacy of the current heritage boundary. While Anegundi does not inspire the same visual awe as the ruins within the core boundary of Hampi, it has equal heritage value. It is closer to Anjanadri (the birthplace of Hanuman) and contains many temples and monuments dating to the 10th century (Fritz, Mitchell and Rao 1984: 13).

The contemporary royal family (Deva Raya), who villagers believe to be direct descendants of the Vijayanagara dynasty, resides in Anegundi. Although the UNESCO reports around this time do not speak of the spatial implications of including Anegundi, the subsequent action did reorient public opinion on the WHS. By including the villages to the north of Hampi, UNESCO not only expanded the physical boundary of the WHS, but, also the conceptual understanding of the WHS.

The expansion to Anegundi coincided with an expanded understanding of the site, particularly its *associative value* that is based on its spiritual connection to the Ramayana. In other words, the construction of the suspension bridge provoked the need to rethink the

heritage boundary not only physically but also conceptually. Expanding both would, in theory, offer both enhancement and protection (UNESCO 2009: 16) therefore helping to safeguard the overall integrity of the WHS.

The committee's response was that there was urgent need for comprehensive conservation, management, as well as a development plan to be initiated by national authorities. In the 1999 report it is acknowledged that:

The Observer of India expressed his Government's appreciation to the Committee for its concern over the state of conservation of Hampi. He stated that the protection of the extraordinary site of Hampi, the result of centuries of interaction between man and nature, was no easy task. However, the Observer underlined that the integrity of Hampi, comprising approximately 40 kilometers of villages, banana fields, rice paddies, the river, rocks and monuments, must be preserved. The Observer informed that the problem of preservation of the archaeological remains was a classic example of the conflict between heritage conservation and development, and that innovative solutions would have to be found in solving this problem...corrective measures would have to be undertaken to remove the threats facing the site (WHC-99/CONF.209/22 1999: 32-33).

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and UNESCO noted the "corrective" measures of the state [\[iv\]](#) a year later, and, in addition to technical assistance, began providing financial assistance as well. [\[v\]](#) However, Hampi was kept on the UNESCO world heritage endangered list with the logic that until a comprehensive management plan materialised, the conflict between heritage and development was a threat to the WHS.

In 2002, the Karnataka Legislative Assembly responded with [The Hampi World Heritage Area Management Authority \(HWHAMA\) Bill](#), a bill recognising the need to "preserve its (Hampi's) cultural identity and to ensure sustainable development of the Hampi World Heritage Area..." ([HWHAMA 2002](#)) The bill was divided into five objectives:

- The conservation of the cultural heritage and natural environs of Hampi and its surroundings.
- The preservation of historical and cultural identity of Hampi as a World Heritage Centre.
- Preventing uncontrolled development and commercial exploitation of the area.
- Sustained development of the area which is conducive to the above objective.
- For matters incidental thereto (1).

Now, the bill presents many points for discussion but I would like to begin by highlighting the definition of cultural heritage used:

‘Cultural Heritage’ means and includes Sri Virupakshewara Temple, Krishna Temple, Achutaraya Temple, Vittala Temple, Hazararama Temple, monolithic sculptures of Ganesh, Ugranarasimha and Veerabhadra and the Jain Temples, Mohammadan tombs, mosques and other monuments that are being conserved by the Archeological Survey of India and the State Archaeology Department (3).

What should strike the reader is the fact that cultural heritage is defined according to a handful of static monuments. In other words, those early concerns from ICOMOS in the 1980s (“ICOMOS...would suggest that a new definition of the cultural property of Hampi, which would take into account the whole of the natural and archaeological resources of the site and not just several monuments...” (ICOMOS 1983: 2) are completely ignored. Even more puzzling is that while the conceptual definition of cultural heritage seems severely stunted in meaning, under the bill, the definition of heritage grows in square kilometres. It is in this bill that the core, periphery and buffer zone are first established. The bill lays out the following:

--- Core Area Zone: 41.80 sq km notified by the state as protected area under notification No ITY 137 KMV 84, dated 22 October 1988.

--- Buffer Zone: 33 sq km of area extending up to 1 km, beyond the limits of the core area zone all sides.

--- Peripheral Zone: 31.0 sq km of area extending upto 1 km beyond the limits of the buffer zone on all sides.

The bill contains five statements of objects [sic] and reasons, ranging from preventing uncontrolled development and commercial exploitation, the carrying out of the development plan, to coordinate activities within and among local authorities such as the Karnataka Urban Water Supply and the Karnataka Slum Development Board, to protect public property, and, lastly, to “promote understanding of and to encourage proper research into the archeological, historical, and environmental values of Hampi world heritage site ([HWHAMA 2002](#)).”

Nowhere in the objects [sic] and reasons is the term culture used. Perhaps it is because it is assumed that cultural heritage is in fact only the archaeological property within the WHS. In no instance does the bill recognise that Hampi is a *living* heritage site and that entire villages are included within this heritage boundary. Hampi is defined according to static monuments and static boundaries as opposed to fluid and dynamic exchanges between people and landscapes, natural and built environments.

UNESCO’s 2003 Periodic Report observed threats to the authenticity and integrity of the site such as new, modern religious complexes, increased agricultural growth, encroachment

in informal residential settlements and unregulated “modern” tourist accommodations. The report also creates some confusion; there is a recommendation in the report that the site boundary be extended from 47 sq km to 105.90 sq km and be divided into core, buffer, and peripheral zones, the exact demarcation we find in the 2002 HWHAMA Authority Bill. Again I would like to reiterate my first argument: the concept of a heritage boundary is not well understood and difficult to establish.

Even more curious than the authority bill from 2002 and the periodic report from 2003 is the fact that the recommendation to extend the boundary was acknowledged but not implemented by the local authorities. And so it came up again in 2004 and 2005 and Hampi remained on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Added to the 2005 list of concerns was an observed lack of local community participation in the decision-making process regarding conservation and development (28COM 15A.24). In August of that year a series of consultancy meetings (funded by the World Heritage Fund) was held in Bengaluru to help assist in the development of a management planning process. In 2006, the Integrated Management Plan (IMP), developed by Nalini Thakur, one of India’s respected heritage conservation experts, was presented to ICOMOS. The committee found “The pre-final IMP to be a most comprehensive integrated management plan and model of excellence,” (30COM8C.3).

The IMP for Hampi is a 600-page document about the preservation of Hampi’s cultural landscape through a democratic planning process. The IMP starts with the premise that Hampi is more than just a collection of temples and monuments and that the area’s heritage, culture, and resources extend much further than the present WHS boundary (Thakur 2004: 16).

Because heritage is about people, place, and time, boundaries of tangible and intangible elements must be addressed in a thoughtful, inclusive manner in order to arrive at holistic, long-term sustainability of the WHS and those who live within it. Divided into seven chapters, the IMP addresses both conceptual (for example, redefining Hampi as a World Heritage Cultural Landscape) and concrete issues. Highlights include:

- Lack of real participation in the management and lack of real participation of local people in heritage management (Chapter 3)
- Integrative linked management (Chapter 4)
- Prioritisation, phasing, funding (Chapter 6)
- Sector-specific plans such as housing plans, visitor management plans (Chapter 6)

I would like to emphasise that the IMP effectively addresses my concern regarding local level awareness of heritage and in particular, the multiplicity of heritage boundaries. Awareness, understanding, and appreciation for boundaries are achieved through an

educational framework that, in turn, facilitates a participatory planning process.

ICOMOS and the Heritage Committee's only reservations about the plan were with regard to traffic in the core area, the recommendation to move forward with the Anegundi suspension bridge, and Thakur's somewhat tolerant view toward the informal tourism development around Hampi bazaar. Overall, however, it was thought that "once the IMP is adopted and adequately implemented, it can become a model not only for similar sites in India, but also for those in other countries," (Kammeier 2007: 16). That year (2006) Hampi was removed from the list of endangered monuments.

Growing Heritage or Growing Tension?

In this section I will discuss the way in which the decision to not implement the IMP led to an even greater disconnect between scales of authority and local residents. Failure to initiate communication or state intentions to residents within the heritage site led to ambiguous boundaries. This exacerbated the dichotomy between heritage conservation and development and led to the demolition of Hampi bazaar, a tangible violation of human rights.

The Master Plan

Although the IMP was created, circulated, and approved by the international committee, the HWHAMA did not adopt it. Rather, in 2006, a master plan was created for Hampi. This 187-page document was a strange amalgamation of pre-existing documents, everything from tourist brochures, census tables, and a touch of Thakur's IMP. I believe the master plan is concrete evidence of the problem expressed by ICOMOS, namely, that the preservation of archaeological remains becomes a conflict between preservation and development.

From a planning perspective, I would argue that a living world heritage site should not have the same mission as a traditional master plan. The implicit message of the HWHAMA master plan is that growth and development, with the exception of international and domestic tourism, are threats to Hampi's tangible heritage and therefore inherently bad. This translates into the museumification of Hampi, with no place for 60,000 residents. By treating the world heritage area as a static site as opposed a living landscape, the HWHAMA master plan fails to find balance between heritage preservation and socio-economic development.

Take the example of Anegundi. According to the master plan, Anegundi had a population of 3,497 in 2001; in 2011 the population grew to 3,750 residents [\[vi\]](#). The population is projected to increase to 4,000 by 2021. And yet, as the table illustrates, land uses that support a developing, growing village are discouraged.

	2006	2021
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Residential	52.57%	31.36%
Commercial	1.40%	1.83%
Community open space	2.18%	.30%

Boundaries in Conflict

The main bazaar begins at the entrance of Virupaksha temple; it is approximately 10 metre wide and roughly 750 metre long. During the Vijayanagara era, it was a ceremonial street for chariot festivals (Verghese 2002: 42). Throughout most of the 20th century the bazaar remained a colourful but relatively calm street. Some residents of Hampi village had permission to set up small shops to sell puja items (given the proximity to Virupaksha temple), but, since the late 1990s, the bazaar increasingly became a site of haphazard development that catered primarily to international tourists. Examples include guest houses, cyber cafes, restaurants, and ayurvedic massage parlours.

The seemingly ad hoc nature of the bazaar and its location within the sacred centre was of great concern to large-scale stakeholders including UNESCO, the ASI (expand), and the state government. Although almost all of the construction around the mandaps [vii] was illegal, it seemed that very little was being done at the local level, particularly that of the gram panchayat, to regulate or prevent further developments of this nature. [viii].

There are a total of seven gram panchayats for the 29 villages within Hampi's world heritage area. Theoretically, infrastructure and social services to the village are augmented through local tax revenue. [ix] From this view, it is in the panchayat's interest to permit residential and commercial construction that fosters more tourism as it increases revenue for the village. The inability for a boundary to be agreed on between state, national, and international authorities trickled down to ambiguity for the local level. What was deemed okay for development at the gram panchayat level was often declared unacceptable for heritage at the state, national, and international level. Failure to incorporate members of the gram panchayat into earlier discussions around the heritage boundary led to a failure to know of, understand, and appreciate the purpose of such a boundary.

In late July of 2011, the deputy commissioner of Bellary District (and member of HWHAMA) issued an oral warning to the 1,500 residents of Hampi village that demolition of their shops and homes was to begin in 24 hours. Such a warning can usually be petitioned to the respective high court. If a claim is made, nothing can happen until the high court hears the case.

However, claims must be received before 5 pm in order to be recognised. The deputy commissioner made the announcement at 6 pm on a Friday evening and so no petition could be made. Early Saturday morning members of the local police department as well as officials on local and state levels came with bulldozers and began demolishing.



Hampi Bazaar one year after the demolition.

Over 320 families lost their residences and livelihoods. Although the 2002 legislative bill would, technically, give power to the authority to engage in such an action [\[x\]](#), the human rights dimension of such action was and continues to be questioned. Of the 320 families, many of which had been on the land for more than two decades, only 11 had legal documents to the land, further complicating the actions and repercussions and whether or not the state was legally obligated to provide some kind of compensation. Although the Karnataka High Court argued in favour of compensating 327 of the affected families, the rehabilitation process has been, at best, slow. For over two years these families have lived in makeshift tents a few kilometres from the destroyed bazaar.



Resettlement camp for those displaced by the demolition of the bazaar. Taken in July 2012, over one year after the demolition occurred. At the time, families were still waiting for the High Court decision regarding monetary compensation.

Approximately, 16 acre of land near Kaddirampura Village, which is over 18 km from Hampi bazaar, has been allocated to the families. During interviews with members of the affected, many expressed concern over their future livelihood. There are no tourists in Kaddirampura Village and the new land is not agricultural (the livelihood of many prior to tourism). The 1.3 lakh compensation given is not sufficient for building both a home and buying land to cultivate.



The proposed site for relocation.

Awareness before Understanding

A violation of boundaries is never about the boundary itself but rather what was on either side of it. While my discussion of Hampi's lineage into world heritage status and the demolition of the bazaar are by no means complete, my purpose is to suggest that boundaries are as fluid as they are static. In the case of the demolition of Hampi bazaar, we see the way in which the boundary between historic monuments and everyday life was a constant push/pull between residents and authorities. What is even more disturbing is that two years later, more demolitions occurred, this time across the river on Virupapura Gaddi Island, a significant distance from any of the heritage structures. These actions suggest that Hampi's world heritage boundary is less about heritage and lesser about residents, and more about contested political boundaries and power structures.

Would greater awareness among local residents regarding the conceptual reasons for boundaries such as core and buffer zones have provoked a desire to better understand why such boundaries were in place? Or would the desire to capture the economic opportunity tied to a pushing of boundaries trump that will to understand? This is just one example that relates to my own ambiguity regarding defining the difference between awareness and understanding. Does one need awareness before understanding? Will better communication between heritage experts, political authorities, and local residents avoid the destruction of these past four years?



Demolition of homes, shops, and guest houses in Virupapura Gaddi Island in October 2013. Photo Credit: Hulugappa Mandligeri.

The boundary around knowledge needs to be re-examined. Like our ever-expanding understanding of heritage, so must our understanding of what constitutes knowledge be continually pushed. Boundaries help us define and identify. They allow us to step into something and better appreciate a particular transition. Nevertheless, the boundary between expert opinion and local knowledge must be carefully rethought. Perhaps we need a more integrative buffer, but the fact remains that within an enormous living heritage landscape such as Hampi, there are many boundaries at play. Until these boundaries are better understood and communicated between stakeholders of various scales, management of Hampi will be top-down in structure and create confusion and conflict among residents, tourists and the state government.

Notes

[i] This is evident in the 2006 Master Plan as well as the GIS maps available through WHS and HWHAMA. See for example <http://202.138.105.9/hwhama/index.php>, last accessed on 21 July 2015.

[ii] In 2010, a Tourism Strategy report was done by the Heritage Conservation Initiative Consultants based in Hyderabad for the government of Karnataka Tourism Department and HWHAMA. It was found that “41% of total business owners at the HWHS were farmers before starting their activities in the tourism sector” (qtd in *Indé Design*, 38, 2010).

[iii] July 2012.

[iv] “The Committee noted that the Task Force Chairperson had informed the Director-General of UNESCO that the decision by the State Government had been received favourably by the general public in India” (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/2371>).

[v] Hampi received financial support from the UNESCO Extra-Budgetary Fund for US\$17,370 in 2001-02 for the site managers of Hampi World Heritage site to the UK. In 2003, \$75,000 was given as emergency assistance to elaborate a management plan for Hampi (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/1251>). The site continued to receive funds in 2005-06 for 14,000 euros.

[vi] Projected number at the time of the plan. These numbers are coming from the Indian census.

[vii] Pillar structures.

[viii] I would like to discuss this point in great detail in the future, particularly as it relates to my first point/argument about unclear understanding between authorities of various scales.

[ix] There are other sources of tax collection but property taxes make up the majority of the panchayat’s source of revenue.

[x] “The Authority shall be a body corporate by the name aforesaid having perpetual succession and common seal with power subject to the provisions of this Act, to acquire hold and dispose of property both movable and immovable and to contract and shall be the said name sue or be sued,”(5) and “Chairperson shall have special powers to act on his own and direct measures for effective realization of the object in cases of urgency where there is no sufficient time to convene a meeting of the Authority, but he shall place the subject before the Authority at its immediate next meeting and seek ratification” (14).

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