

Renovation and Restoration of Connaught Place

Although the project for renovation and restoration of Connaught Place was envisaged in April 2004, it was plagued by undue delays. The original estimated cost of Rs. 76 crore (as of May 2005) went up nearly nine-fold to Rs. 671 crore by July 2007, with a huge increase in scope of work. In our opinion, it is likely that this increase in scope and cost was driven, at least partly, by the launch of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) by GoI in November 2005 and the subsequent inclusion of this project under JNNURM.

The approved DPR for the project was submitted only in February 2008, and it was, therefore, unreasonable to expect that the project could have been completed in time for the Games, especially in view of the constraints of traffic management and considering the importance of Connaught Place to Delhi's traffic. NDMC chose not to follow the approach of dividing the project into manageable packages, so organised as to minimise traffic disruption across the whole of CP, and taking up those project components which could have been completed in time. Instead, the project was divided into packages spanning the whole of CP, with all activities getting underway around the same time. Apart from the pilot project for facade restoration of 'C' block (which was completed in August 2008), the project remained incomplete at the time of the Games. We also found significant deficiencies in contract management, with consequent avoidable expenditure.

25.1 Introduction

Connaught Place (CP) and its surroundings have a historical legacy and have emerged as the Metropolitan City Center, as per the Master Plan for Delhi 2021. In April 2004, Chairman, NDMC directed NDMC to initiate action for restoration of Connaught Place before CWG-2010. The chronology of subsequent events is summarised below:



Table 25.1 — Chronology of events relating to restoration of CP

Timeline	Events
April 2004	Direction by Chairman, NDMC to initiate action
May 2005	Cost estimate for project prepared for Rs.76 crore
November 2005	Engineers India Limited (EIL) appointed as Project Management Consultant (PMC)
February 2006	Cost estimate and milestones for project implementation by EIL approved by Council
July / November 2007	DPR and revised cost estimate of Rs.671 crore prepared by EIL/ approved by Council
February 2008	DPR sent to GNCTD and MoUD for funding under JNNURM
	Redevelopment plan sent to DUAC for approval
April 2008	Administrative approval of Rs 615.20 crore by NDMC for the project, and EIL appointed turnkey consultants DUAC clearance received
November 2008	DUAC clearance received

25.2 Undue Delays

The project was plagued by undue delays. The decision to initiate action was taken in April 2004. The DPR, however was submitted only in February 2008 and DUAC clearance received in November 2008. It was, therefore, unreasonable to expect that the project could have been completed in time for the Games. Further, the constraints of traffic management, considering the importance of CP to Delhi's traffic, made this task even more difficult.

In our opinion NDMC should have divided this project into manageable packages, so organized as to minimize traffic disruption across the whole of CP and then taken up only those project components, which could have been completed by June 2010 (before the onset of the monsoon). NDMC, however, chose not to follow such an approach.

25.3 Huge expansion in scope of work

The original estimated cost of Rs 76 crore in May 2005 went up nearly nine-fold to Rs 671 crore by July 2007. This was mainly due to an increase in the scope of work on account of the following components:

Table 25.2 — Increase in Scope of Work / Costs

(Rs. in Crore)

Sr. No.	Item Description	Amount in original rough indication of cost by NDMC (May 2005)	Amount in revised indication of cost prepared by EIL (July 2007)
A. Engineering Services/Infrastructure			
1.	Overall Electrical System etc.	10.00	46.80
2.	Utility Duct/Service Tunnel in Middle Circle	—	69.21
3.	Escalators	—	80.00
4.	Other items	20.00	46.70
	Total	30.00	242.71
B. Façade restoration/ Areas to be taken up with stakeholders' participation			
1.	Façade Restoration	8.00	77.53
2.	Centralized HVAC	—	55.75
	Total	8.00	133.28
C. Pedestrian movement areas			
1.	Including improvement of existing subways and new subways, Outer Circle development)	—	65.05
D. Street furniture/ inner plaza development			
1.	Underground parking	—	111.99
2.	Civil & Electrical Works (Radial Roads, Middle Circle & Inner Circle)	—	66.08
3.	Others	30.00	51.88
	Total	30.00	229.95
	Grand total	76.00	670.99 (say 671.00)

Clearly, there was an enormous increase in the scope of work and costs. It is likely that this increase in scope and cost was driven, at least partly by the launch of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Rehabilitation Mission (JNNURM) by Gol in November 2005, and subsequent inclusion of this project under JNNURM.

Under JNNURM, 35 per cent of the cost would be funded by Gol, and 65 per cent would be funded directly or indirectly met by GNCTD. Till December 2010, out of total expenditure of Rs 163 crore on the project, Rs 22.21 crore was met from JNNURM funds, Rs 37.86 crore from GNCTD funds, and the remaining amount of Rs 102.93 crore out of NDMC funds (to be reimbursed subsequently by GNCTD).

25.4 Project planning

A pilot project for façade restoration of C-Block was awarded in August 2007, and completed in August 2008. The rest of the

project was divided into nine packages spanning the whole of CP, with all activities getting underway around the same time. The status of implementation of various works is summarized below:

Table 25.3 — Timeline of Implementation of Works

Works	July '07	May '09	June '09	July '09	Nov. '09	Jan. '10	Feb. '10	Mar. '10	April '10	June '10	July '10	Aug. '10	Feb '11
1 (C block)													
2 (façade)				Orange	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
3 (façade)				Orange	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
4 (service corridor-middle circle)					Orange	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
5 (electrical works-outer circle, subways)					Orange	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
6 (Area dev- inner and outer circle)						Orange	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
7 (façade lighting- C pilot block)							Orange	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
8 (toilets, kiosks everywhere)								Orange	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
9 (escalators in subways)									Orange	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
10 (façade – lighting-others)										Orange	Grey	Grey	Grey
11 (horticulture)											Orange	Grey	Grey
12 (signage, everywhere)											Orange	Grey	Grey
13 (road works in inner and outer circle)					Orange	Orange	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey

Note: Orange: award of work; Grey: Work in progress

As expected, all works were underway more or less at the same time, with the scheduled completion by November 2010 being completely impractical. A brief summary of two major works in progress is given below:

Table 25.4 — Summary of two major works in progress

Work	Brief Details
Civil, Electrical and Finishing Works for Service Corridor in Middle Circle	<p>A consortium of AFCONS-Sterling and Wilson Construction was awarded the contract in November 2009 at a cost of Rs 236.70 crore for completion by May 2011 with the structural works to be completed by August 2010 i.e., before the Games.</p> <p>We found that EIL accepted and NDMC approved a conditional rebate of Rs 5 crore offered by the tenderer for working round the clock for all days of the week. The above time schedule and the estimated price were based on 24 hours working in a day and 7 days in a week, on round the clock basis.</p>
Renovation of new subways and construction of new subways	<p>This work was awarded to Era Infra Engineering Pvt. Ltd. in November 2009 for Rs 56.04 crore on single tender basis on grounds of urgency and completion by CWG 2010.</p>

Details of the cost of different project components and expenditure till date are indicated in Annexe 25.1.

25.5 Traffic Management

As can be imagined, a 24 X 7 schedule of construction work in CP was completely impracticable, considering the importance of CP to traffic flow in Delhi. NDMC's response that the execution of the work was delayed due to non-receipt of clearance from the traffic authorities is illogical.

EIL sought permission from the Traffic Police in December 2008, who issued an NOC for 240 days (effective from 1 January 2010) only in December 2009. However, the NOC was withdrawn subsequently as described below:

- Due to starting of work at nine locations simultaneously, there were protests by the shopkeepers. Consequently, the NOC issued for traffic diversion during construction of the subways in the outer circle and service corridor in the middle circle was withdrawn in January 2010 by the DCP (Traffic), stating that the New Delhi Traders Association (NDTA) had strongly opposed the construction and redevelopment work¹.
- The Traffic Police stated that due to this construction work, a large number of buses had been diverted, creating congestion in the surrounding areas of the entire New Delhi District and Central

¹ NDMC informed the Traffic Police that the traders association had been taken into confidence. However, the Traffic Police were informed by the NDTA that they had strongly opposed the construction work in their interaction with NDMC.

District. Road link for the general public to New Delhi Railway Station had been similarly affected, leading to untold miseries faced by commuters. DCP (Traffic), therefore, asked NDMC to take a relook at the entire project of construction of subways and related redevelopment work in consultation with all the stakeholders i.e. Traffic Police, DTC, NDTA, etc. Pending a decision in the matter, construction work was asked to be immediately stopped, and the barricades covering the road space be removed.

- Subsequently, the Lieutenant Governor (LG) issued instructions for slowing down the pace of construction. In a meeting in January 2010 called by the LG to discuss traffic problems and access issues during renovation works in CP, the Commissioner of Police opined that the requirement of subways needed to be revisited. Some sub-ways had been planned on either side of the intersection, and some, for example the one at Panchkuian Road, at areas where not much of pedestrian movement existed. Some of the relatively less important subways could be taken up after the Commonwealth Games, and concreting of the Outer Circle road should be done lane-wise.
- The LG stated that the NDTA did not have any problem with restoration of façade renovation work in the inner circle, and the problems due to ducting work in the middle circle seemed manageable by appropriate segregation of works so as to keep two roads for entry and two for exit to and from the inner circle open at all times. The major problem seemed to be with the works in

the outer circle, which needed to be looked into in greater detail and the right solution found.

- Till December 2010, the contractor could complete only one sub-way i.e. at Super Bazar (old); the earthwork done for the four new sub-ways had to be refilled, due to non-receipt of clearance from Delhi Police. The work of installation and commissioning of escalators in the sub-ways (awarded to a different contractor) was correspondingly delayed.



Covered subway entrance after re-filling

NDMC's response that taking up construction of subways one by one would have led to completion in eight years with associated cost over-runs and inconvenience to the people appears to be untenable, as taking up so many works simultaneously led to even greater difficulties in execution.

25.6 Contract Management

We also noted the following deficiencies in contract management.

- Granite was used as flooring material in the pilot project for 'C' Block, contrary to the initial DUAC approval of November 2006. Consequently, after inspection, the DUAC ordered sandblasting of granite flooring in November 2008 to reduce the colour contrast, resulting in avoidable expenditure of Rs 0.19 crore



C-Block with Granite Flooring

- In area development works for inner and outer circle of CP, granite stone kerb instead of concrete kerb was used, with a difference in expenditure of Rs 5.97 crore. This included avoidable expenditure of Rs 0.61 crore, due to an unjustified change in colour of granite stone kerb from 'Sindoori Red' colour to 'Rajashri Red' colour.



Granite kerb fixed at work site

NDMC stated that granite was most suitable for such areas because of its durability, hardness, long life, and aesthetic value compared to other paving materials. Further, the samples of 'Rajshree Red' with complete laid flooring samples, including kerb stones, were approved by the Chief Minister during her visit to CP in March 2010.

We do not agree with NDMC's reasoning. The DSR provides for concrete kerb stones. We have, however, considered Kota stone as a comparable material in terms of its being durable, anti-skid and stain-resistant (besides being more economical). If a granite finish was deemed essential, this could have been achieved through 18 mm granite covering on a concrete kerb stone.

- We also noticed award of work of Polymer Concrete Drain costing Rs 2.44 crore along the circumference of Central Park. In our opinion, the expenditure is unnecessary, due to the existing road side drains. Further, our inspection revealed choking of polymer drain in some places with mud due to its narrow width.



Choked polymer drain

NDMC stated that the drain had been provided as the footfall was high, and providing a drain with grating was not suitable for this area; further, maintenance would be taken care of, after completion of the work. We do not agree, in view of the existing road side drains.

Currently, the project for renovation and restoration of CP is nowhere near completion, given the difficulties of traffic management and ill-conceived planning. We find it difficult to assess the timeline by which this project is likely to be completed to provide necessary benefits to the citizens of Delhi.