Sarojini Nagar Redevelopment

Submitted By: GPM Architects & Planners



Organization Profile

Organization Name: GPM Architects and Planners J.V. Architect Hafeez Contractor (By NBCC India)

Organization Type: Private sector

Website: https://gpmindia.com/

Practice Details

Country(ies): India

City(ies): New Delhi

Start Year: 2017

Ongoing: Yes

End Year: N/A

Main Adequate Housing Components:



Housing Thematic Areas:

Housing, Land & Spatial Planning

Technology & Digital Solutions in Housing

Relevant SDGs:



UN-HABITAT

Problem & Context

Sarojini Nagar, one of Delhi's major government housing colonies, reached a stage of physical and social decline. The housing stock was characterised by low density, obsolescence, and an insufficient capacity to meet the needs of a growing population. Encroachments, traffic congestion, and overstressed civic services around the iconic market made the neighbourhood inaccessible. Social amenities were scattered and underutilised, while valuable central land remained underused, fueling urban sprawl.

Despite its potential, policy gaps persisted due to the absence of a structured redevelopment framework of ageing housing, with limited focus on environmental resilience, transit-oriented growth, and integrated social infrastructure. The Sarojini Nagar Redevelopment addresses these challenges by reimagining it as a high-density, mixed-use, zero-discharge neighbourhood that preserves its legacy, revitalises its market and green assets, and establishes a benchmark for resilient urban renewal.

Solution Developed

The project transforms an obsolete, low-density government housing colony into a high-density, mixed-use, sustainable neighbourhood. The primary beneficiaries are government employees allocated General Pool Residential Accommodation (GPRA), alongside a wider community that benefits from improved infrastructure, commercial spaces, and enhanced public spaces.

The objectives include creating over 10,000 units across housing types with adequate social infrastructure; retaining essential community facilities like schools, health centres, and community halls; revitalising the iconic Sarojini Nagar Market; integrating transit nodes for seamless mobility; maximising frontage with commercial development; and ensuring a zero-discharge, resilient neighbourhood.

Its landscape-integrated planning preserves mature tree cover; adopting monolithic RCC shear wall technology with aluminium formwork for rapid, efficient construction; zero-discharge systems through sewage treatment, dual plumbing, and rainwater harvesting; integrated solid waste management with on-site composting and recycling; and energy efficiency through passive design, renewable energy integration, and low-energy materials.

Implementation

The Sarojini Nagar Redevelopment was implemented as a large-scale housing and urban renewal initiative through coordinated planning and phased execution. Key actions included: preparation of a masterplan retaining existing road networks and green assets with adequate road widening; demolition of obsolete housing; construction of 10,190 new GPRA units across five housing types; preservation and augmentation of schools, health centres, and community facilities; development of commercial zones along Ring Road; creation of transit-linked plazas

and multi-level parking; and integration of zero-discharge systems for water, waste, and energy management.

The initiative was driven by the Government of India through its housing authorities, with NBCC (India) Ltd. as the primary executing agency. GPM Architects & Planners prepared the master plan and architectural design, while private contractors and technology providers contributed to the construction, renewable energy systems, waste management, and green infrastructure.

The process unfolded in clear phases: planning and design took place between 2017 and 2018, followed by sanctioning and tendering in 2019, and subsequently, phased construction and parallel development of social and commercial infrastructure from 2019 onwards. Financing was provided entirely by the Government of India, with NBCC managing implementation, ensuring coordination across stakeholders, and integrating sustainable systems at scale.

Enablers & Obstacles

Key enablers of the redevelopment included strong political and institutional support from the Government of India, NBCC's role as executing agency, and availability of centrally located land. A robust regulatory framework and timely approvals facilitated the initiation, while advanced technologies, such as monolithic RCC shear walls, aluminium formwork, and precast systems, significantly accelerated construction. Design strategies that retained road networks, preserved mature trees, and safeguarded social infrastructure fostered community acceptance.

Obstacles included congestion near the market, preservation of dense green cover, and ensuring essential services during redevelopment. These were addressed through landscape-sensitive planning, provision of dedicated shopping centres for existing vendors, and phased construction to minimise disruption. Zero-discharge systems for water/waste further reduced civic pressure, turning challenges into opportunities for a transformation.

Results & Impact

The redevelopment of Sarojini Nagar has delivered tangible early outcomes. The project comprises 10,190 GPRA housing units across five types, alongside 2,04,230 sqm of commercial space facing the Ring Road, 34,992.88 sqm near the metro plaza, and multi-level parking accommodating 682 cars. Social infrastructure includes multiple schools, dispensaries, community halls, Barat Ghar, and Griha Kalyan Kendra, ensuring continuity of essential services. Sustainability measures include GRIHA 3-star compliance, zero-discharge systems, rainwater harvesting, STP-treated water for flushing and gardening, energy-efficient lighting, and solar integration.

In the long term, the project will revitalise an underutilised central neighbourhood, curbing urban sprawl and commuting pressures, and creating a self-sustaining, walkable, and safe environment. Vibrant commercial and retail activity will stimulate the local economy, while the

preservation of mature trees, green spaces, and climate-sensitive planning will mitigate environmental impacts. Collectively, these outcomes will establish a replicable benchmark for sustainable urban redevelopment in Delhi and beyond.

Replication & Scale Up

While the Sarojini Nagar Redevelopment has not been directly replicated, similar large-scale government housing redevelopment initiatives are underway at the Netaji Nagar redevelopment. These projects adopt comparable strategies, including high-density mixed-use planning, preservation of green assets, integration of social infrastructure, and sustainable, zero-discharge systems. The Sarojini Nagar model provides a reference framework for phased, inclusive, and environmentally sensitive urban redevelopment in central Delhi.

The Sarojini Nagar approach can be scaled to other under-utilised government housing estates in Delhi and across Indian cities with ageing, low-density urban cores. Key strategies include high-density, mixed-use redevelopment; transit-oriented design; retention of green assets; integration of social infrastructure; and climate-responsive systems. Modern construction technologies and phased planning make replication feasible, enabling inclusive, resilient, and environmentally sensitive neighbourhoods while optimising land use and reducing peripheral sprawl.

Policy Uptake

This housing practice has been fully adopted into formal policy frameworks and legislation, and is being implemented at scale with institutional support.

The Sarojini Nagar Redevelopment has been adopted into policy frameworks with support from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Delhi Development Authority (DDA), New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), Delhi Urban Art Commission (DUAC), Department of Financial Services (DFS), municipal corporations, and state housing boards. It advances design-led densification of government housing through mixed-use planning, transit-oriented development, ecological resilience, and preservation of social and green assets, offering a scalable model for inclusive urban regeneration.

Lessons & Takeaways

With the GPRA Housing, the key learning remains that design must remain contextual — responsive to changing needs, technologies, and patterns of community life. While the redevelopment has met its objectives, there is always scope to refine maintenance approaches in terms of planning, integrating amenities, and ensuring long-term adaptability.