

Heritage awards for cathedral, agiary

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Mumbai: It's time once more to celebrate the city's built heritage. The Rustom Faramna Agiary (1938) in Dadar Parsi Colony, the St Thomas Cathedral (1718) in the Fort area, Forbes Building (1900) on Charanjit Rai Marg, Fort, and the Keramos Showroom in Sergeant House on Colaba's J A Allana Marg have won the Indian Heritage Society's urban heritage awards for 2003. The Citizen's Award has gone to the Guzdar Scheme Residents' Trust in Santa Cruz.

The awards were distributed on Friday at a simple ceremony at the Bombay University's neo-Gothic Convocation Hall. The adjudicators, a panel of three judges including historian Mariam Dossal, architect Ved Sagan and former bureaucrat S S Tinaikar, said that they had chosen the buildings because their owners/occupants had been most sensitive in maintaining and/or restoring them.

The Cathedral had skillfully restored the original pitched roof over the apse, included unobtrusive external protection to the stained glass windows and reorganised its lovely little garden into a haven of peace. The agiary had done an excellent job of restoring both its interior and garden. The Keramos tile and stone showroom was a lovely example of adaptive re-use of a vintage building, they noted, while the Forbes Building had sensitively integrated the facades of its additional floors with the stone effect of the original structure.

The Citizen's Award had gone to the Guzdar Scheme Residents' Trust because it had, in the face of physical threats, financial limitations and initial disinterest by the community, gone ahead with its aim of building civic awareness in the neighbourhood. Today, with a membership of 15,000, the Trust regularly interacts with the BMC, the police, NGOs and local schools and has made a qualitative dif-



St Thomas Cathedral at Fort [above], whose roof has been restored, and the renovated interior of Rustom Faramna Agiary at Dadar Parsi Colony



ference to the area, showing that citizens govern best when they get together to better their bit of earth.

The IHS, now spearheaded by Anita Garware, Nirma Phatarpekar and Harshad Bhatia, instituted these awards in 1988 to create greater public and institutional awareness for the need to preserve and protect public and private buildings, open spaces and gardens in the metropolis as a proud expression of the city's unique heritage. It included a Citizen's Award in order to focus attention on an individual or organisation that has, in the face of high odds and challenges, fought battles to preserve and protect the city's heritage and open spaces.