

Adaptive Reuse of Traditional Himalayan Houses for Tourism: Expansions and Transformations of Dwellings into Sustainable Homestays in India

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Abstract

The recent floods and cloudbursts in Himachal Pradesh present a challenge to the locals to maintain their lifestyle. Here, it is essential to keep the village settlements and cultural identity in order to maintain the eco-friendly livelihood of the region. Therefore, the primary emphasis is on the identification of vernacular buildings, and how they can be conserved, restored and repurposed for today's needs, ensuring an ecological balance. Looking at the fast-changing scenario of homestay models in Himachal Pradesh, there is a great shift; loss of cultural identity and environmental responsiveness. This research explores the potential of the adaptive reuse of traditional Himalayan houses as sustainable homestays for the conservation of the heritage, environmental sustainability, and socio-economic resilience, while also minimizing the necessity of new construction in these villages.

The research will be conducted by documenting traditional houses, through field observations, case studies, stakeholder interaction and analyzing architectural features, building materials and spatial arrangement of traditional houses. It will also examine seismic, climatic and topographical responses of local materials and construction techniques and consider their suitability for re-use as sustainable homestays. The community view will be examined to understand how homestays can be used as a livelihood generator in terms of their socio-economic benefits.

The study underscores the importance of maintaining traditional houses in the Himalayas as one of the means to protect the architectural heritage and cultural identity and ensure sustainable livelihoods. It concludes that adaptive reuse is both a viable and sustainable alternative to indiscriminate new construction, which could preserve and repurpose existing built fabric, reduce environmental impacts and enhance community resilience.

Keywords: Himalayan houses, Vernacular settlements, Adaptive reuse, Sustainable homestays, Conservation, Socio-economy.

Introduction

Traditional Himalayan houses are now becoming a living cultural relic in the face of topography, indigenous knowledge and climate resilience. The region's structural identity is a product of generations of adaptation to harsh winters, seismic fragility and a community-focused lifestyle. But the uncontrolled tourism and the loss of agricultural livelihoods are making these homes unfit for habitation and resulting in high rate of migration.

Meanwhile, homestay tourism has emerged as a key livelihood in Himachal Pradesh, but the commercialization process may be fast enough to tend to lose the architectural and environmental identity by replacing traditional houses with concrete buildings, which are not context-sensitive. The population is reluctant to participate in operating the homestay program, and is skeptical, as revealed by research in Kullu.

A number of unfavorable situations emerge, including:

- Overshadowing of heritage clusters by new RCC homestays.
- Tourism does not pay local craftspeople and knowledge keepers.
- Cultural acts are made into commodities rather than lived.
- Rather than living system, the landscape is a setting.

This thesis argues that architecture should be the first thing to be developed when one starts building a house. The theory will explore the potential of adapting reuse of existing traditional dwellings into homestays to preserve cultural heritage, mitigate new development and enhance community resilience in the face of current economic and climatic challenges.



Fig. 1: The destruction occurring because of natural calamities.
Source: The Citizen, Rajeev Khanna, 2023

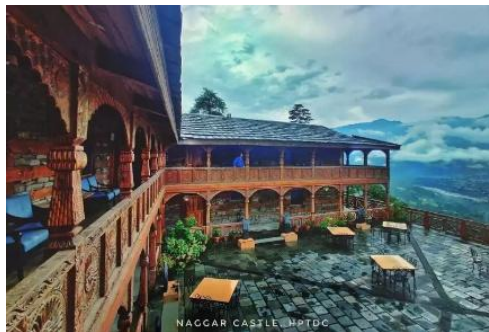


Fig. 2: The Naggar Castle which acts both as a homestay and a museum space, contributing well towards the conservation aspect.; Source: HPTDC



Fig. 3: The traditional houses and the settlements of each unit make it ideal for the context, hence there becomes a need of conserving these structures but at what cost.

Source: Mint, Avantika Bhuyan, 2023

Research Methodology

This research is done using qualitative approach of case study. The study follows up an in-depth literature survey and several case studies from Himachal Pradesh, specifically from the Kullu region, to develop a framework of assessment. Primary data is gathered by on-site documentation, architectural observation, photo documentation, mapping and structured questionnaires with homestay owners and local residents. Secondary data is derived from research articles, government reports, conservation guidelines and policy documents. The data gathered are then analyzed through a theoretical framework that has three main elements: heritage conservation, community involvement and sustainable homestay attributes, in order to evaluate the architectural, socio-cultural, economic and environmental aspects of adaptive reuse and its role in long-term heritage conservation.

Literature Review

Understanding Traditional Himalayan Houses

The traditional houses are built in a manner that the cattle are housed on the ground floor of the house, known as the Khudd. The mean width of the entrance is 1.5 meters, as the local cows are small and security, safety and bad weather are concerns. These are wooden doorways with carvings that represent a natural or mythological subject. Primary interior areas are living spaces and are primarily used for sleeping and cooking. Women weave and the elderly read on the verandahs and second floor balconies during the day, children play and other family tasks are done on the ground and second floor verandahs and balconies from dawn to late afternoon. Informal open areas such as those in front of houses are for informal activities such as celebrations, outdoor cooking, storage, and agricultural activities in the evening. (Bhatt, 2012).



Fig 4: Traditional entrance doors with small size of a Kathkuni house, village Nirmand.

Source: Bhatt, 2012

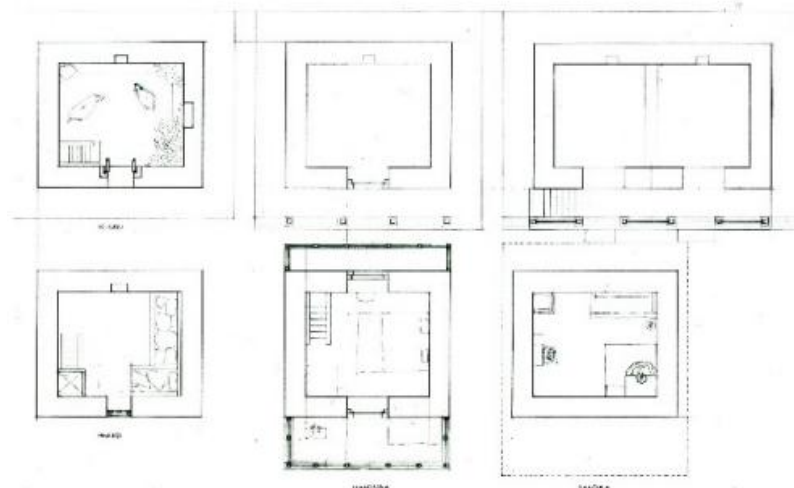


Fig 5: Spatial organization of dwellings of a Kathkuni house, village Nirmand.
Source: Bhatt, 2012

The language of the Kathkuni homes has been shaped by their environment and the culture that surrounds them. Although certain building methods such as the employment of stone and wood are found around the globe in other parts of the Himalayas as well as in Europe, the Mediterranean and East Asia, "the way these materials are assembled and techniques evolved indicates the uniqueness associated with each other cultural group and their indigenous attributes. Architecturally these houses have a very distinct and geographically unique expression. Even though the materials used or the construction technique is available elsewhere, these materials are adapted to the local context. (Bhatt, 2012).

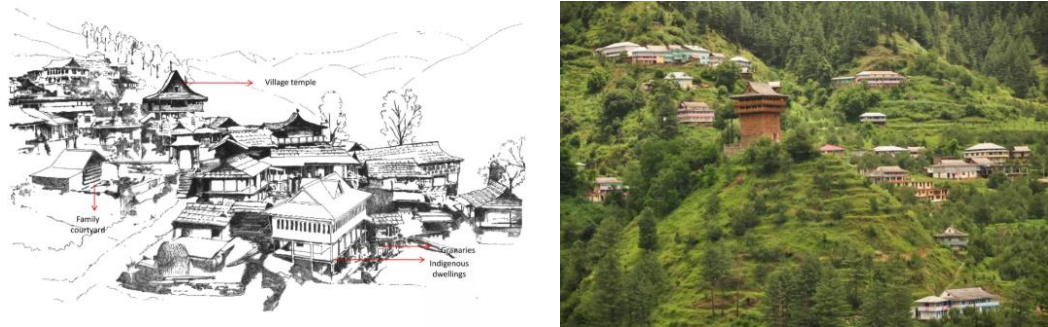


Fig 6: Settlement pattern of a typical village in Himachal Pradesh.
Source: echoes of edifice

Kath-Kuni structures are specifically engineered to withstand earthquakes, and are designed to be more flexible than they are stiff. The construction of Kath-Kuni is different to contemporary concrete buildings, which rely on columns from above, as the horizontal timber beams are alternated with dry stone masonry. As balancers, the hefty slate roof and stone plinth provide the structure a stable foundation and prevent it from toppling over. The walls are typically 45 to 100cm thick to give a good thermal mass. The air gap's role is to provide a thermal buffer, keeping interiors cool in summer and warm in winter. They are built from walls with a double skin with small stones inside. The interior surfaces can often be covered with mud plaster to increase the air circulation and insulation (Dutta, et al., 2022).

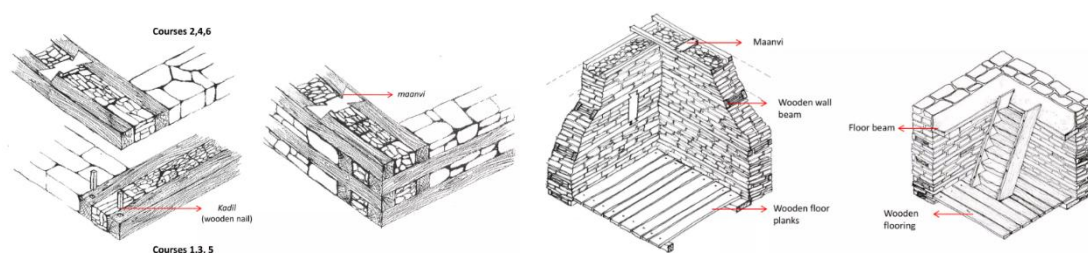


Fig 6: Structural understanding of a Kathkuni house.
Source: echoes of edifice

It is imperative to provide protection from the many dangers that stand to threaten the demise and degradation of this unique heritage. Due to rapid urbanisation, settlements have become dispersed and the centre has moved away from traditional centres, towards the periphery. This is leading to the creation of "contextless and faceless structures" made of reinforced cement concrete instead of the more traditional local materials such as stone and wood. People are abandoning and deteriorating their homes in order to move to these new, bustling neighborhoods (Bhatt, 2012). Roofs have collapsed on many older houses due to poor maintenance and excessive weight on the roof during winter (Macek, 2012). Traditional knowledge is being lost and traditional building methods are becoming obsolete. New

constructions do not adhere to indigenous values (Bhatt, 2012). It is very serious as 40% of the built historic stock in Himachal Pradesh is disappearing and it is the highest in India (Bansal & Chhabra, 2023).

In some areas, ecological problems and socio-economic changes that result in migration are making life tougher for the local residents. The impact of climate change including, but not limited to, the reduction in soil moisture, water shortage due to declining levels and traditional water structures drying up, and the negative effects on agricultural and food production, are significantly threatening people's livelihoods (Bhatt, 2012). In colonial hill towns such as Shimla, there is no integrated approach to conservation as each stakeholder has their own approach to funding, standards and delivery (Bansal & Chhabra, 2023). While planned water projects in the Johar Valley are abandoned when they do not work, more dependable NGO projects have been initiated to train locals in maintenance skills. State-promoted tourism projects, such as the Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam (KMVN) guesthouse, are generally without a community component, and do not necessarily respect local architectural traditions (Macek, 2012).



Fig 6: Severity and need for conservation.

Source: author

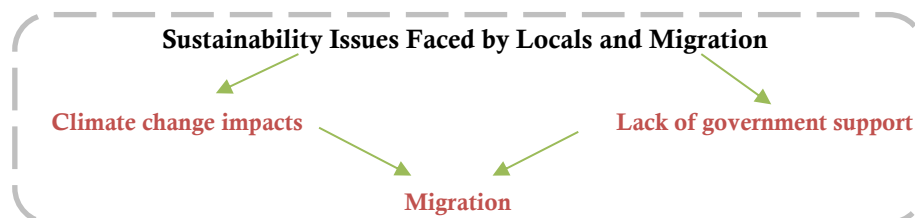


Fig 7: Issues faced by locals.

Source: author

Heritage Conservation

India has an incredibly rich, diverse, and dynamic cultural past that comprises a significant number of living monuments in addition to a vast body of manufactured heritage (Krishan, 2020). The term "heritage" implies a more expansive meaning that includes both tangible and intangible heritage as well as the settlement's natural ecosystem. Included are the built environment, historic landmarks and monuments, settlement morphology and pattern, heritage collections, historical and modern cultural practices, and the village's residents' way of life. It might act as a catalyst for the overall sustainable development and transformation of these rural communities (Zolfani & Zavadskas, 2013).

Because of the rapid modernization of the physical environment, it is imperative to focus on preserving the architectural and cultural heritage before it completely disappears. Historic or architecturally significant buildings and settlements are rapidly disappearing in all urban and rural areas as a result of neglect, decay, or reconstruction using newer materials. This

results in monotonous and repetitive new modern constructions that change the distinctive features of these village cores. It implies that enhancing a village's heritage character might contribute to the establishment of a sustainable instrument that will enable the residents to take part in rural development. Furthermore, the tool is likely to portray rural communities in a positive and vibrant light, which could result in the emergence of a trend that inspires young people who have returned to these rural areas (Nair, et al., 2021). The installation of a public drinking area with cladded ceramic tiles on top of the stone wall on the face of the village's oldest primary temple is one such example that shows how one could lose the holiness and originality of the architectural form if one is not made aware of it (Bhatt, 2012).

Resilient Development

Worldwide, rural homes are often non-engineered constructions. Generally, locally accessible building materials are utilized; the most popular ones are wood, stone, and mud. However, both the building materials and the final constructions are evolving. In rural areas, homes with reinforced concrete floors, roof slabs, columns, and beams are becoming commonplace (Chopra, et al., 2024).

Consider the pherols from Uttarkashi district's Gharwal. The pherols are multi-story buildings mainly constructed of stone and wood with mud mortar. Most of the buildings' construction is coursed-rubble masonry. Pherols were derived from a cooperative and communication-oriented culture. In recent years (last 30 or 40 years), a significant number of talented, physically well individuals have migrated out of the Garhwal High Serene Hills. The hills have lost their human and knowledge resources due to out-migration. As a result of such problems, villagers are no longer able to know how to build a structure of what is called a pherol type. This article then comes to the end point of being a status symbol, because, in the hills, a strong (pucca) cement-concrete house with columns and beams—such as those found in major cities and their facades with a polished, smooth finish—is a status symbol (Chopra, et al., 2024).

Resilience theory states that tourism sites are complex adaptive systems that can tolerate shocks without losing their vital functions (A. & M., 2018). This is especially relevant for the Himalayas where communities are often faced with climate-related risks, such as landslides, flooding and irregular rainfall. Through increased income from small, local businesses and various revenue streams, homestay tourism contributes to the socio-economic robustness of mountain communities (Bhattacharya, et al., 2026).

What can be done if these acts start happening in India's isolated villages where people need to live their own way of life and preserve their traditional knowledge? This ultimately raises the question as to how resiliently any area can survive with such issues and thrive.

Sustainable Homestay and Community Engagement

The assessment of the homestay tourism site is very important in developing sustainable tourism, economic sustainability and protecting the environment (Basak, et al., 2021). Home stay tourism is a kind of cultural tourism that can be achieved by staying with local families which provide a source of community-based tourism and local livelihoods (Regmia, et al., 2023). But if there's no proper assessment, its sustainable development may be hindered by issues such as over tourism, environmental damage, or inadequate infrastructure (Baloch, et al., 2023). Homestay tourism is a flexible option that can provide additional economic stability as there are a variety of income sources and create local jobs, especially for women and young people. Moreover, homestays encourage environmental responsibility and cultural heritage conservation as they typically involve a lower environmental impact than mass tourism (Bhattacharya, et al., 2026).

CBT model is based on sustainable tourism model which emphasizes sustainability through local community participation in management, decision making and benefit sharing. CBT has emerged as a counter development model to those which focus on top-down development and seeks to empower local communities through tourism rather than external profits (Bhattacharya, et al., 2026).

Himalayan Ecosystem

Himalayan area is a famous tourist hotspot in India. The assessment of tourism potential is essential to promote sustainable life and to safeguard the fragile ecology and culture of the Himalayan region especially for the development of homestay. The Himalayas is a huge source of potential homestay tourism with its rich biodiversity, vibrant cultural heritage and picturesque beauty. Assessing the touristic potential in the Himalayas is of great importance with an emphasis on homestay tourism to foster sustainable lifestyles and increase climate resilience (Bhattacharya, et al., 2026).

When choosing site locations, it is important to look for areas that will be compatible with the environment, and that will have the least impact on it (Mandić, 2019). In addition, it is vital to determine whether homestays are feasible in order to determine a venture's economic viability, particularly in remote Himalayan villages with limited availability of basic services. The excessive numbers of visitors to the Himalayan region can often exceed the assimilatory capacity of the environment, leading to some common problems such as deforestation, garbage accumulation and soil erosion (Bhattacharya, et al., 2026). The severity and speed of disasters have increased in the Himalayan region of India, with the blocking of roads and river crossings by landslides and resulting loss of life, property and livelihood. A total of 35 large landslides and 17 flash floods were reported in the state of Himachal Pradesh in the year (2021) which were 16 and 9 respectively in 2020. Moreover, the occurrences of cloudbursts have increased 121 per cent (approx. 30 cloudbursts in the year 2021). Much of the current massive destruction is due to anthropogenic activities, including tourism, and global climate change (Chanchani & Minhas, 2026).

The Tirthan and Sainj Valleys of the Himalayas, which are situated in the Kullu district of the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, are next to the Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP). This area has been popular with hikers of all times, and it has only recently started to be well known on tourist maps about 10 years ago. The UNESCO World Heritage designation in 2014 gave an additional boost to GHNP (Chanchani & Minhas, 2026).

The development outside the park boundaries is evidence of uncontrolled and unsustainable tourism development in Tirthan Valley with rise in number of hotels, resorts, campsites, hostels and homestays. Analysis of the Land Use and Land Cover (LULC) maps along with several field visits revealed that the creation of protected area, formation of the Ecozone, restriction of access to the park area, changes in the agricultural pattern and practice in the Ecozone, grazing, deforestation, forest fire, increased tourism, and the subsequent infrastructure and developmental activities had affected the Tirthan valley (Irfan, et al., 2023).

The decline in forest cover can be attributed to the expansion of agriculture at the cost of forests, the encroachment of settlement and built-up land due to increasing tourism and timber demand, the ever-increasing demands on pasture land, increasing fire incidence, etc. around villages, primarily in the floodplain. In the high altitude protected Himalayan region this is especially critical as balancing development with conservation has been somewhat difficult (Irfan, et al., 2023).

Cost Benefit Analysis Insights

The present study conducted an economic study of the homestay industry in Himachal Pradesh with the help of primary data gathered from the sample of 50 homestay operators by purposive cum multi-stage random sampling technique. The costs, income and profitability of the Shimla district was higher than that of the Lahaul-Spiti district with unemployment of 14% among the operators in the latter. To solve the problem of unemployment, the study highlights the need to get maximum utilization of man day by improving the management of the seasonal incomes and keeping a regular check on operational expenses. This is a strategy that has been developed to boost the profiting potential of the homestay sector and generate more jobs opportunities (Kumar, 2026).

Theoretical Framework Heritage Conservation

The main parameters used for heritage conservation analysis are: Economic viability, Infrastructure, Built fabric, Social and cultural character, Environment, Settlement pattern, according to Challenges and New Paradigms in Conservation of Heritage-based Villages in Rural India – A Case of Pragpur and Garli Villages in Himachal Pradesh (Nair, et al., 2021).

The case studies are further analyzed from a conservation perspective by breaking down these into spatial and architectural parameters. Vernacular construction methods, half-timber systems, slate roofs, mud plaster and wood carvings are included in the assessment of architectural features. The materiality assessment takes into account the use of local materials, authenticity of materials in repairs and replacement of traditional materials by RCC and brick that can affect the heritage value. Morphological attributes are related to the timelines of construction, restoration/reconstruction years, abandoned versus active structures and mapping of the residential, commercial and tourism zones.

Community Engagement

The level of community engagement is considered in terms of community and perception-based attributes as mentioned in the Sustainable Homestay Tourism in the Himalayas: A Multicriteria Evaluation Approach (Bhattacharya, et al., 2026). Community awareness includes understanding the heritage village status and awareness of the tourism potential. Community participation focuses on the role of residents in maintenance, participation in homestays, and the use of local techniques in construction. Socio-economic differentiation examines the impact of economic class on heritage upkeep migration pattern, ownership versus rental occupation and their influence on conservation.

Sustainable Homestay

Cultural sustainability involves the conservation of cultural heritage, safeguarding of moral values and traditional lifestyle, and the promotion of local specialties. Social sustainability is about cultural exchange, cultural bonding, skill development, community empowerment, safety and social acceptability. Local income generation and tourism driven rural rejuvenation are taken into account in economic sustainability. Environmental sustainability covers the concept of infrastructure, waste management and making it environmentally friendly, preserving biodiversity, environmental responsibility programs like Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and preparing for disaster. Infrastructure and service quality includes viable homestay infrastructure, hygienic food and health services, connectivity and accessibility.

Contextual Overview of the Site

The Kullu district is the most important site area followed by Tirthan Valley and Sainj Valley. Architectural built form is more likely to be found in these areas. Due to the size of the valley, a number of unique traditional components of the built mass which are facing extinction have been investigated and few of the traditional elements are functioning better. What is not well known here, is that a number of problems have begun to occur in these places, which, if left unchecked, can lead to some dire situations. The place selected is particularly important because of the escalating geo-ecological process and cultural sustainability challenges caused by the eco-tourism, rural development and homestay economics.

Tirthan valley is located in Kullu district of HP and named after the fast-flowing Tirthan river. The river starts from a holy water spring called Tirth around 4800m high Hanskund peak. It then flows through the valley till joining the Beas River at Larji. The valley falls within the environmental buffer zone of the Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP) and the average altitude is 1600m above sea level. In terms of community, there are about 50 settlements throughout the area.

The landowners who farm the land maintain the surrounding farmlands, with most of the land falling into the forest area. So, houses started to grow in the farmlands. Particular homestays are selected for the study as they have a common objective of running a homestay and systematic environmental contribution.

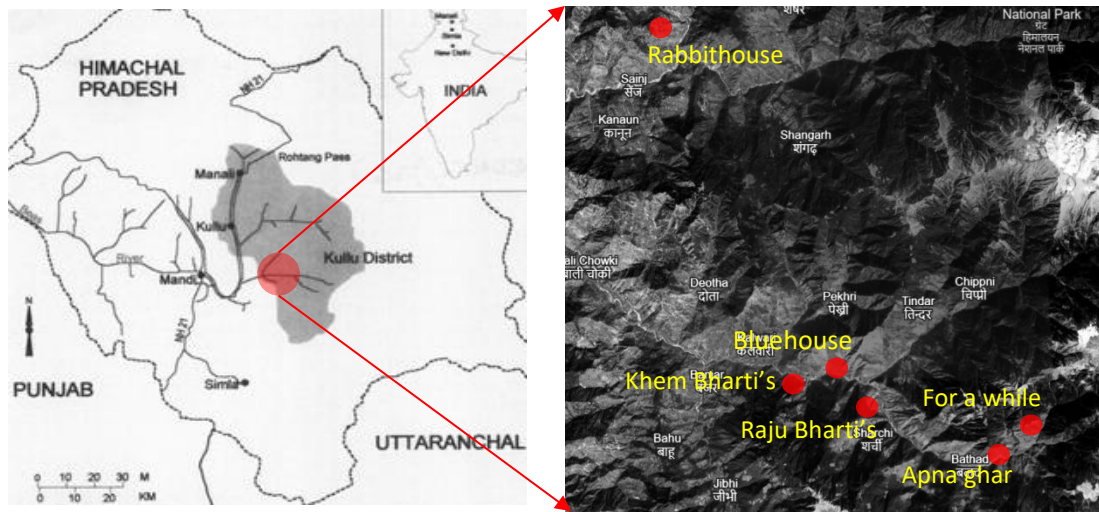


Fig 8: Location of the study region.

Source: author

The data gathering showed that there were no outsiders in the valley until 2007. The built growth in the valley, however, started when the government interfered with the development of homestay. Non-local investors started to develop their own hotels from around 2007. They had no interest in the prospect of future development in the valley and the gradual changes in the landform. For the sole purpose of selling, the towns around the river grew. The main houses of the community, which ran homestays, were about four or five in the early 2007. As of 2025, there are already 130 non-traditionally-built hotels and homestays in the area.



Fig 9: Settlement across Nagini to Gushaini village.

Source: google research open buildings



Fig 10: Canals and roads damaged during the 2025 flood in Tirthan Valley. Affecting the daily route of the locals to their houses.

Source: author

By 2017, there will be further development close to the river, raising serious concerns about potential future damages during disasters. Talking about the cloud burst in August 2025 in Tirthan valley, Himachal Pradesh; had the most serious issue of landslides leading to blocked roads and destruction of ancient and traditional houses which were in poor condition. The nearby homes by the river were impacted by flooding; little bridges that connected the opposing side crumbled, and everyday transportation was disrupted.

Transformation of the Homestay

The house is owned by a local family and sits at a height of 1,575 m. Traditional business of Kathkuni construction, later converted to homestay in 1991 and recognized under homestay policy, is a family business. The property is split into two built in units, one for family homes and visitors and the other for the communal spaces, such as the kitchen and dining room. Most of the large land plot (6,000 square meters) is used for terrace farming. Open for business in the busy travel months, the homestay is able to host approximately 25–27 people in double and family rooms. A local five-person family runs the homestay, where local culture, tourism and agriculture are integrated.

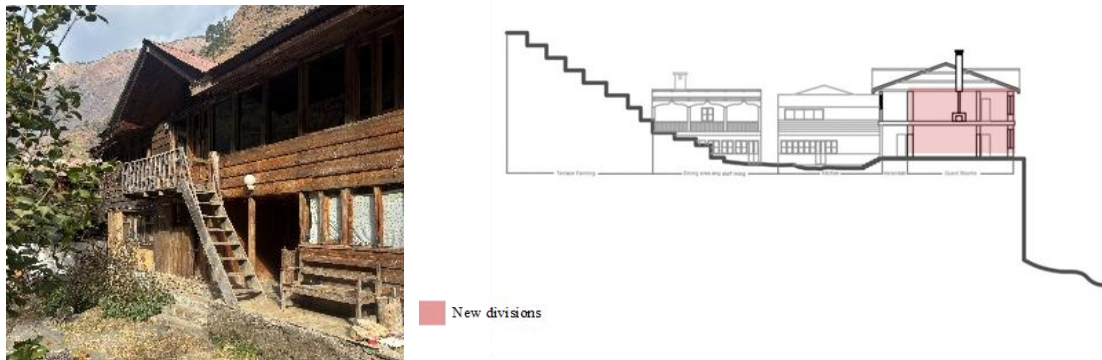


Fig 11: Living quarters of the homestay. Section through terrace farming to the river edge. The highlighted part showing the additional toilets and room division, because of tourism pressure. Also, the roofing is not of slate because of renovation and had no access to it.

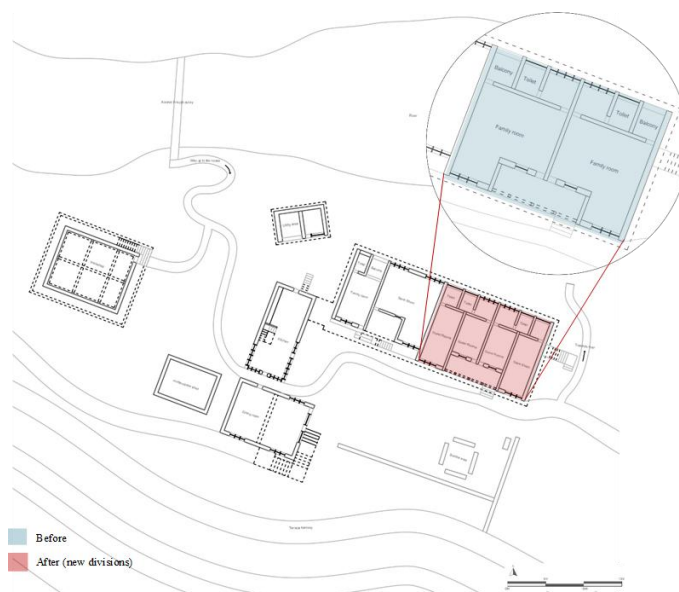


Fig 12: Plan with major access and context. The highlighted part showing the conversion from family rooms to more divisions for guest rooms and additional toilets. Area converted is 133 sqm, from original 145 sqm space.
Source: author

Some of the architectural features like, the structural system used is Kathkuni, where the plinth is high and made of stone and the walls are made of cross framing of timber with infill of small stones, which resists the seismic forces. Materials for construction were used from the site itself like local stone, and wood (rakhal, cal and deodar) from nearby villages. Rare use of bricks, depending on the elevational treatment required. For new construction, wood is received through Timber Distribution (TD) and no local trees are allowed to cut. For the later construction, wood is purchased from the markets or is imported from different countries as per requirement.

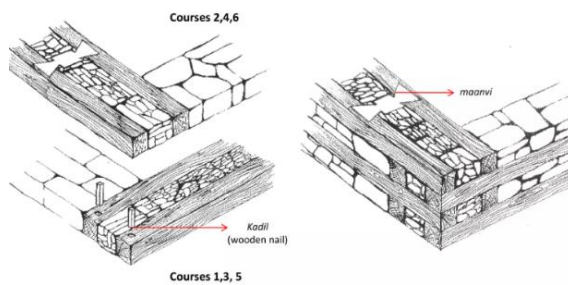


Fig 13: Corner junction of the built mass. Source: (Pandey, 2024)/
exposed kathkuni walls during construction at the homestay.
Source: author



Fig 14: pine wood panels, imported from Russia for new construction. Source: author

The examples of facade are repetitive windows, smaller apertures and raised wooden batterns. Balconies are located on the upper level and large verandas on the ground. The area is shared by the owner and visitors. They are each organized as a disjointed mass of buildings and connected by common open areas. There are a total of four guest rooms that can accommodate three to four persons in each room, open areas and shared verandah sitting. Every accommodation has a view of the river. Two rooms for four employees and two rooms for the proprietors (who live there with four family members) have attached restrooms with long, small windows for natural light, heat and sufficient ventilation.

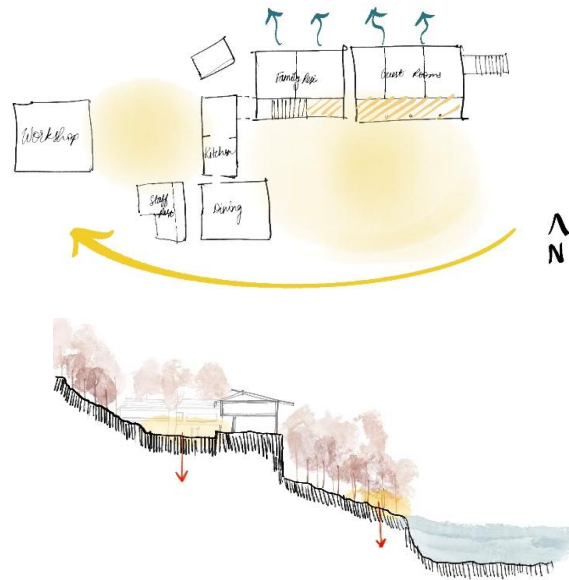


Fig 15: Open spaces oriented to gain maximum morning sunlight. The spaces are not deep and mass is oriented north south direction.

Source: author

The eating area serves as a gathering place in addition to being a separate area from the kitchen. The eating area features a tandoor to keep it warm and is utilized as a meeting place in addition to the kitchen. A well-balanced example of an adaptive reuse of house, with the original construction of the kathkuni but with thoughtful improvements. A verandah-oriented design and fragmentation of the massing enhance social contact and microclimatic adaptability. The establishment is effective in their community from an environmental perspective and they are aware of their responsibility for the upkeep of the area around the establishment. The proprietor runs this homestay business in a sustainable way, by implementing the necessary measures.

Urbanization and Built Form Changes

A survey was conducted to understand the transformation of the house, because of the practice of the homestay. A change in architectural transformation is observed in case of replacement of a portion of their earlier house with RCC with about 50% of respondents. The changes are not for structural safety or low maintenance issues, but for tourism expansion. This means that a sense of lifestyle, economic opportunity, is more powerful than a sense of technical need. The impact of infrastructure development on changes has been moderate with 50% reporting no changes, 33% reporting direct influence and 16% reporting partial influence. This is why 50% of them value tradition over economy, and understand the need for growth. This is also why the renowned family may be satisfied and won't need any other earnings from the home. In addition, most of the respondents agree that traditional houses are rapidly being replaced (scales 4 to 5), indicating the noticeable changes in the morphology of villages. Additionally, the percentage of traditional homes will not be as high as the percentage of new homes in another 10-15 years. Results reveal a great transformation of traditional houses by the forces of modernization. As urbanisation and tourism have grown, the built fabric is increasingly being modified.

Climate Change and Environmental Impact

In the last decade or so, all the responders had observed changes in rainfall and snowfall patterns. The main issues cited in homes are roof leaks and wood rot, highlighting greater moisture damage concerns. There were no reports of damage to walls or foundations, but there was some discussion about the potential of landslides. Landslides were mainly responsible for

damaging the water canals and the link roads to the dwellings, but the dwellings themselves sustained no damage.

The most prevalent adaptive action in response to climate stress has been the retention wall, while concrete reinforcement and minor repairs have been the second most commonly used adaptive action. Climate change has a direct impact on the performance of traditional building components (roofing, wood, etc.). Adaptation solutions are often incremental and oriented towards structures, and may specifically imply interventions which, in turn, may shape the development of traditional construction systems.

Socio – Economic Shifts

The village has diverse economy, ranging from tourism to agriculture. Some respondents take up agriculture along with tourism, while most respondents take up the business of tourism and hospitality as the primary source of income. The main motive for the conversion of houses into homestays is extra income, and then promoting regional culture. As home stays grow in popularity in the area, more and more are getting the idea that the motivation is financial. Majority of the respondents believe that the maintenance of traditional houses is lesser when compared to RCC construction. As importantly, younger family members have conflicting interests, with doubts regarding the sustainability of customs. Migration statistics show there is some partial abandonment of homes, but few complete abandonment homes.

Cost Benefit Analysis

Basically, it is whether or not the homestay idea can be incorporated into their livelihood strategy. Is it environmentally and socially sustainable and true? Finally, there is a way to survive that can be counted which gives a quantitative explanation of what to do during migration periods. What are its benefits to them to practice the homestay model? If so, how can it be adequately monitored without causing any losses? In addition, it also compares a newly built homestay to an old home converted into a homestay, to assess which one is more advantageous for the environment and the community. The following analysis is done through research paper, Economic Analysis of Homestay Enterprises in Himachal Pradesh, (Kumar, 2026).

The analysis showed that homestays developed through the adaptive reuse are socially and economically beneficial. Besides providing jobs and reducing migration, the homestays provide reliable livelihoods to the local families that have a positive income/cost ratio and a predictable profit as well. Adaptive reuse is more sustainable than new build as it has reduced operating and depreciation costs. Overall, the conversion of old houses into homestays is an effective way to achieve economic sustainability, cultural preservation and sustainable rural development.

Findings

Traditional architecture of the valley of Tirthan is examined and it is found that the current shift in vernacular architecture will not be able to replace the traditional architecture in a short time. Rather, it is a gradual modification shaped by the local economy, climate and urban development related to tourism. Use of RCC components in almost 50% of the existing homestays has been replaced with traditional construction materials. This illustrates the growth of roofs, slabs, and more guest rooms gradually as opposed to completely demolishing them. The structural failure and the growing dependence on tourism for livelihood are the major driving forces behind these changes.

The economic change towards tourism is the main reason for the transformation in architecture. Home remodeling is accelerating and is changing the nature of settlement due to generational goals, maintenance needs and financial viability. Better access to the roads, infrastructure development and tourist numbers have altered the village layout from a cluster of villages into a more linear area layout.

Embracing old family homes or old traditional construction methods is a matter of conflicting views among young family members. This means that some houses are currently used seasonally or for business and not for residential purpose, which suggests a lack of clarity in cultural continuity in time.

Discussion

Tourism has grown immensely in the valley and new hotels and infrastructure have been built, all of which are contributing to the valley's transformation. These changes have undoubtedly made for a rise in economic activity, but are also creating more pressure on public space, traditional dwelling units and urban fabric. In this ever-changing landscape, the question of who the village is for and who belongs in it has taken on greater significance. Mass tourism and climate change are endangering ecosystems.

The idea to control streets and other public spaces of a region is understood through language of order. Without order, the debate goes on and the liberty is impossible. Also, the order should be specifically geographic, as it centres on the control of streets and questions, ones right to the city. Excerpt from Don Mitchell's *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space*, 2003. Therefore, if we don't preserve the living heritage now, then in the future, the space will end up as an object to which nobody cares. The thing which attracts people are the traditional houses which blend with the context and creates its own city landscape. The rising development will turn into non-contextual built mass over the years. Thus, it signifies the depth of the harm we create for just our sake of happiness and not thinking about future; that's when we think about sustainability with a thoughtful way. Justifying that, adaptive reuse should be more practiced than newly constructed buildings.

Conclusion

The results indicate that in such environments rigid preservation models are not effective in supporting conservation efforts. They have to recognize the development of vernacular settlements that are a synthesis of modernity, economy and environmental concerns. The creation of context sensitive standards is critical to the long-term sustainability of traditional houses in the Himalayas. These should incorporate more effective tourism functionality, structural safety and climatic responsiveness. These are considered without losing cultural identity, community layout and material authenticity. Last, in a continuously evolving Himalayan context, the adaptive reuse must be considered as a balancing approach to keep living heritage alive and not as an economic approach.

The study concludes that it is more important to maintain traditional homes rather than to build new homestays. The locals are receiving good jobs and assistance from maintaining their homes as a result of the socioeconomic changes. The newly-built homestays have inflicted greater damage on the environment and society when compared with traditional houses. Thus, it is not the foreigners who are benefitted from the homestay development, but the locals are greatly benefitted from the homestay. To summarize, it can be said that adaptive reuse of traditional dwellings as homestays is an alternative to new building.

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