

## URBAN STUDIES

[About](#)[For Students](#)[Courses](#)[News & Events](#)[Fieldwork](#)[Faculty](#)[Alumni](#) Search**Graduate Colloquium: "The changing landscape of Hauz Khas: Historical transformations in boundary and land use in 'rural' Delhi"****Tuesday, February 26, 2013 - 9:30am  
Meyerson G-12**[PennWebLogin](#)**Author:** Sudev Sheth, South Asian Studies**Discussant:** Shahana Chattaraj, Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Lauder Institute**Abstract:**

In 1912, the British capital of India shifted from Calcutta to Delhi. To accommodate 'New Delhi', the old fortified city Shahjahanabad was abandoned for a different site 10 kilometers away. New Delhi's expansion was met with resistance from villagers whose farm lands were being taken for urban development. As a conciliatory gesture to them, the Delhi Development Authority decided that village residential areas (Hindi: aabaadi) would not be acquired and would remain independent from municipal bylaws. As small pockets of unregulated territories, these 'urban villages' have become increasingly valuable to low-level developers because they provide an alternative space for unregulated growth. From the 1980s, overvalued real estate in the city combined with the desirable location of these old urban villages has led to unprecedented residential and commercial development in them. The consequences of this include structural changes in the built environment, shifts in the social and political hierarchies of the village, and new relationships with the municipal body. My project examines Hauz Khas, an important archaeological site and the most popular urban village in New Delhi. By focusing on historical transformations in boundary and land use along with the contemporary politics of urban planning at this heritage site, I seek to understand how seemingly discrepant alternatives and interests converge in remaking a place. How do everyday negotiations both within and without the legal framework translate into urban form? How have cultural tastes for the 'ethnic chic' and 'village old' pushed economic investment into this historically significant agrarian site? My work highlights how India's urban villages can help us think about the complex and contradictory nature of historic preservation, the political and economic nature of neighborhood change, and the gaps that exist between land acquisitions, ideologies of official planning, and the local realities that shape small pockets within big cities.

**Recent News**[How Closing Schools Hurts Neighborhoods](#)

March 6, 2013

[Learning to Read the Contemporary City](#)

March 1, 2013

[To Preserve or Not To Preserve?](#)

March 1, 2013

[Happy Valentine's Day - Jonathan Tannenwald's Ode to the Palestra](#)

February 14, 2013

[Artestar: Marketing + Business Development Internship New York City](#)

February 12, 2013

[More News »](#)

Urban Studies Program

University of Pennsylvania, 130 McNeil Building, 3718 Locust Walk, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6209  
215-898-6948; Fax: 215-573-2134 [urbs@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:urbs@sas.upenn.edu)