



NALKANADU  
PALACE  
MADIKERI

A CONSERVATION PROJECT  
*by* Dhaani Singhal

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**FRONT COVER** - The Exteriors and gardens of Nalknad Palace in Kodagu District. Photo by "Phototraveller1" under Wiki Creative Commons

**BACK COVER** - Nalknad Palace ceiling decorating hand painting. Photo courtesy Vinayraj under Wiki Creative Commons



The Exteriors and gardens of Nalknad Palace in Kodagu District  
Photo by "Phototraveller1" under Wiki Creative Commons.



Dhaani Singhal being felicitated by Karnataka Chief Minister, Mr. Siddaramaiah at the Namma Smaraka event, at Vidhan Soudha (Legislative House), in Bangalore on September 25th, 2023.

## BACKGROUND

I initiated this project to restore and revive Nalknadu palace after coming across the Government of Karnataka's 'Adopt a Monument' scheme, under which organizations and individuals were being encouraged to adopt and restore a large number of historical monuments lying in a neglectful state. Starting in the early part of 2023, I started interacting with officials from the Ministry of Archaeology & Heritage to understand the scope involved and the feasibility of adopting one of the monuments. 7 months later I received the Letter of intent from the Chief Minister of Karnataka at the Namma Smaraka event held in the Vidhan Soudha at Bangalore. It was a very gratifying and humbling moment for me, to see an idea come to fruition. The work has just begun and there will be many steps to take and challenges to overcome before we can restore the Nalknadu palace to its pristine glory.



Hand-painted wall frescos at the Nalknad Palace. Photo courtesy by Vinayraj under Wiki Creative Commons.

## PROJECT PLAN

I have onboarded the experienced and well known conservation architect Abha Narain and her team (<https://www.anlassociates.com/>) to make the architectural plans for the restoration. A series of site visits have been planned by this team to study the existing structure and propose the possibilities for restoration. The project will be divided into two phases:

- **Phase I** : construction of basic facilities like the arrival hall, toilets, lights and access to water, sanitation and power to make the monument possible for tourists to visit in its current state.
- **Phase II** : plans to revive the monument with some structural modifications, embellishments and expansions to allow for better spaces for people to visit, gather and celebrate events.

## SUSTAINABILITY PHASE

Eventually the aim is to make the Nalknadu palace a self-sustained monument with income from tourism and events covering the costs of upkeep and maintenance. I plan to stay involved in this project to work on the financial and business aspects of this plan. The end to end implementation of this monument restoration could then be an example for many other historical monuments in Karnataka. That would make this endeavour truly satisfying.

BY *Dhaani Singhal*



The red columns in the interiors of Nalknad Palace.  
Photo by Vinayraj under Wiki Creative Commons.



ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಪ್ರಾಚೀನತತ್ವ ಭವನ



ಪುರಾತತ್ವ, ಸಂಗ್ರಹಾಲಯಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ಪರಂಪರೆ ಇಲಾಖೆ

Department of Archaeology, Museums and Heritage

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವಸ್ತುವರ್ಧನ ಪ್ರಾಧಿಕಾರದ ಆವರಣ, ಮೈಸೂರು - 570010 / Karnataka Exhibition Authority Premises, Mysuru - 570010  
ದೂರವಾಣಿ / Tel : 0821-2424673 / 74, ಫ್ಯಾಕ್ಸ್ / Fax : 0821-2424665, ಈ-ಮೇಲ್ / E-mail: commr\_amh@yahoo.in

Ref No. DAMH/Act.6/AMS/2023-24

Dated:25/10/2023

To  
Ms. Dhaani Singhal,  
Trustee and Project Head - Conservation Initiatives  
M/s. SINGHAL IYER FAMILY FOUNDATION,  
Bengaluru.

Sir,

Sub:- Adaptation of a Monument under the Namma Smaraka Scheme.

Ref:- Your email dated October 25, 2023.

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With reference to your email dated October 25, 2023, we are happy to inform you that the M/s. SINGHAL IYER FAMILY FOUNDATION proposal for conservation, providing basic and advanced amenities for the following monument, has been considered under the Namma Smaraka (Adopt a Monument) Scheme of the Government of Karnataka..

Sl. No.	Name of Monument	Location
1	Nalaknaadu Palace	Yavakapadi village, Madikeri Taluk, Kodagu District

You are requested to visit the approved above-mentioned monument to carry out the existing situation and need-gap analysis and develop your vision for the development of all necessary basic and advanced amenities for the selected site.

Accordingly, you are requested to submit your detailed project report for conservation, providing basic and advanced amenities in accordance with the Namma Smaraka Scheme (Adopt a Monument) guidelines, within three (3) weeks from the date of this letter for further evaluation as per the prescribed guidelines.

Please visit the website of the Department of Archaeology, Museums and Heritage, Government of Karnataka <https://archaeology.karnataka.gov.in> and [www.nammasmaraka.in](http://www.nammasmaraka.in) for further information.

Yours Sincerely,

Commissioner,

Department of Archaeology,  
Museums and Heritage.



Interior and exterior facade of the Nalknad Palace in the Kodagu District  
(Courtesy of Department of Archeology, Museums and Heritage, (GOK)

Interior and exterior facades of the Nalknad Palace in the Kodagu District  
Photo courtesy by "Phototraveller1" under Wiki Creative Commons.

**COORDINATES**

12.235203777499635  
75.64084168533779

The Nalknad Palace is located in Yavakapadi village, Madikeri taluk, Kodagu District. When the British invaded the Kodagu area, Nalknad Palace served as a shelter for the last monarch of the Halari line, Chikave-rarajendra. The palace is renowned for its antique murals and sculptures, as well as its grand doorway and *kalyana mandapam* for marriage rituals. It also features a *darbar* for meetings and entertainment

performances, along with the king's secret "dark rooms" in the basement. The palace, situated 45 km from Madikeri, presently belongs to the Archaeology Department.

The palace is a spacious structure with an open hall and several rooms. It has a tiled roof and large pillars supported by beams and rafters that uphold the high ceiling. The wood and stucco work are artistically executed. The palace is surrounded by a substantial compound wall and an entrance.



The first floor of the Nalknad Palace.  
Photograph by Deepa Chandran under Wiki Creative Commons.



Nalknad Palace waiting for conservation.  
(Courtesy of Department of Archeology, Museums and Heritage, (GOK)





