

Heritage at Stake: Discourse Concerning the Causes of Damages Occurred to the Historic Hostel Structures Built in British Era in Karachi

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ABSTRACT

Karachi being the first born city of the colonial architecture in Sindh Pakistan has the honour of housing very important and diverse ornamental architectural master pieces. Along with the commercial nucleus; Karachi emerged as a regional educational hub after the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 with several hostel structures and studio apartments. These structures are among the better examples of the pre-colonial and post-colonial architectural influence in the region. Few of them (still surviving) are incorporated in the national list of protected heritage under Sindh Cultural Heritage Preservation Act 1994.

This research paper is focused on “the lost importance of the three different hostel (boys’ hostels only) premises in the historic core of the city of Karachi”. Despite possessing similar functions in the past and having the same status of the declared protected heritage at present, each of them has different use and conservation status at present. None of the buildings have endured the original function. This research focuses the reasons of the non-continuation of the original function and the impairments caused to the buildings due to this reason. Methodology followed for the research includes analysis of available archives, physical observation, photographic documentation and interviews with the local inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

The results and the findings of this research portray that eroding hostel culture has subjected those structures to slow and painful death of their original purpose. These buildings, once popular in the area, are now fading fast and perhaps will cease to exist in the near future unless the immediate precautionary measures are taken. The main conclusion drawn in this paper is that “it is important to preserve those historic premises as they are of significant historic character that remained associated with a number of key political and social personalities of the region. Moreover, they play a vital role in the general architectural value of the region”.

Key Words: Hostel Culture, Educational Hub, Ornamental Architectural Master Pieces.

1. INTRODUCTION

The research was initiated with the concern about the dilapidated state of a historic hostel structure situated in the historic city centre of Karachi. The historic city centre, once a centre for education with

various educational and amenity spaces, is now in highly decrepit situation. The area which used to provide a vibrant cultural life now is limited to the wholesale commercial and similar activities.

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Karachi was an important port city in days of British Raj and had important education facilities. At the time of partition of Indian Subcontinent, the influx of migrant students further cemented it as an important educational hub. Karachi boasted several hostels and small studio apartments to facilitate out-stationed students at that time and created a sub-culture around the collective life of students. This culture has eroded completely now. A few of the hostels having historical importance were: Sevakunj Hostel, located in Rambagh, which was basically meant for the accommodation of the students of Dawood College of Engineering and Technology, another was Jinnah Courts Hostel at Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad Road, which had been in the use of students of Sindh Muslim Law College and the third one was Mitharam Hostel near DJ Science College. Unfortunately, some of these hostels have been taken over by the law enforcement agencies depriving the city of facilities for students. Mitharam hostel and Jinnah Courts are now in the use of Pakistan Rangers while Sevakunj is abandoned.

A number of conservation projects have been proposed for the said buildings from time to time by the government but none have materialized and had a permanent positive impact on them thus the subject was found interesting to take as a research topic.

1.1 Core of the Research

The research is divided into two major aspects. The social aspect investigates about the possible reasons for the non-continuation of the original function of the hostels. It stresses upon the cultural transformation of the historic core of the city and its effects on the above-mentioned hostels.

The technical part of the paper deals with the physical impairments caused to the hostels by the social/cultural change in the area. Also, it deals with the consequences

of the damages that buildings acquired while they were vacant and when they were reoccupied. A basic understanding of the reasons for their physical problems is developed, which includes dilapidation of used materials, deformation of structural and other historical elements of the buildings and the causes of decay and alterations, made by people and local users of the heritage buildings, etc.

1.2 Methodology

The research initiated with archival analysis and physical observation of the structures and their context and recording oral history to prepare a baseline of the research context. The second stage was to document and record the buildings in detail. This was the difficult part of the research as entrance to Jinnah courts and Sevakunj hostels was not permitted. A photographic documentation of the neighbourhood was conducted which was followed by interviews with the local inhabitants. In some cases, permission for photography was restricted and therefore it posed difficulty in documentation of the structures. Resistance was also experienced in surveying the properties by the neighbours and people in the area as people are generally suspicious of such activities. However, they cooperated when informed it was for research purposes. After the collection of information, the data was thoroughly analysed and conclusions were drawn with some recommendations.

This research is intended to be extended further to highlight the problems and issues of the urban context of the buildings situated in the vicinity of the hostels such as the material decay, drainage and sanitation problems, environmental degradations issues etc. The scope of works in the second stage will also include the analysis of exaggerated repair and restoration works by the community and users of the heritage buildings.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Pakistan came into existence on August 14, 1947. Earlier it used to be part of the greater British Raj together with the present day countries of India and Bangladesh. The history of the city of Karachi dates to 1729 when it emerged as a fortified port settlement under the reign of the Talpur Dynasty. It was occupied by the British in 1839 and with this annexation a new era of development initiated which transformed the earlier finishing village into a thriving economic hub welcoming numerous economic migrants into the city. Besides being the economic hub, the city came forward as a centre for education having many educational institutions of various levels along with the supporting buildings. Many of those buildings that served this purpose are still surviving; functioning, abandoned or adopted with a change of function. This research also revolves around three hostel structures that were built to facilitate the educational institutes in the British colonial era which are now representation of the colonial past of Karachi.

2.1 Overall Context of the Hostels' Location

Fig. 1 location map shows the placement of hostels and educational institutes in the neighbourhood of Pakistan Chowk. The location of all three buildings is in the historic quarters and at a walk able distance from then location of all major educational institutes made them very accessible. It played a key role in their thriving inhabitation. The area is the core of current inner city and is at a short distance from major buildings and markets. All three buildings are situated at a close distance from the famous Pakistan Chowk. The area surrounding Pakistan Chowk was once considered the educational hub of the city and housed a great number of historic buildings.

In 1997 a large number of buildings were declared protected under the Sindh Cultural Heritage Preservation Act 1994 within the context of the Chowk. They included all type of built heritage including apartment buildings, clubs, hospitals, educational buildings, water troughs etc. Perhaps this was the largest enlistment in the history of Karachi till 2011 when another enlistment of the heritage buildings was declared [1].

2.2 Introduction to the Hostel Buildings

The three hostel structures selected for this research are built in the pre-partition era within the same time period. Therefore, apart from having similar function they also possess similar characteristics. Other than Sevakunj, both Jinnah Courts and Mitharam Hostels are designed by architect James Strachan who is credited with designing few of the most important structures the city has at the present day. The architect designed the buildings as free standing structures in a hybrid form of construction where he combined western architectural attributes such as the colonnades, the entrance portals and the pediments with regional features such as open compounds/courtyards meant for recreational activities. These styles imitate a certain type of architectural approach popular in then contemporary Europe, particularly in England, adopted with the regional context of the area. This amalgamation of style these buildings are representing is referred to as the neo-gothic and the neo-classical or the colonial style [2]. These buildings were financed by the citizens of Karachi for the benefit of students through their philanthropic donations.

These hostels accommodated in and out-stationed students coming from far areas for various educational institutions located in the vicinity. These hostels were mostly popular with the students of NED Engineering College and DJ Science Colleges and a number of accounts by then students show an overwhelming share of the

occupants studying in these institutions. The other institutions that benefited from the hostels are SM. Law College, BVS Boys Parsi High School, St. Trinity School, St. Patricks High School and the Karachi University. Sindh Madrastul Islam had its own hostel for students, namely the ‘Talpur House’, right from the beginning and therefore it had minimal impact on the life of the three hostel buildings.

All hostels offered housekeeping services and many of their residents were alumni students pursuing jobs, who went on to live there even after graduation. The hostels also housed reading rooms, where students could read daily newspapers and periodicals.

2.2.1 Mitharam Hostel

The hostel is situated on Dr. Ziauddin Ahmed (Kutchary) Road in Serai Quarter; and is easily accessible from a major artery of the city. The ideal location of this property on a main road allows convenience in terms of accessibility both with private as well as public transport as shown in Fig. 2. As part of the original design, the building was bounded within an iron grilled boundary wall which is now converted into a solid wall with no perforation. The visibility of the building from the main road must have created an enchanting impression over visitors while getting towards it. Mitharam and NED University (Old Campus and New Architecture & Planning Development) are located within a short distance that made the hostel the most appropriate place of accommodation. The building is currently in use of Pakistan Rangers since 1992.

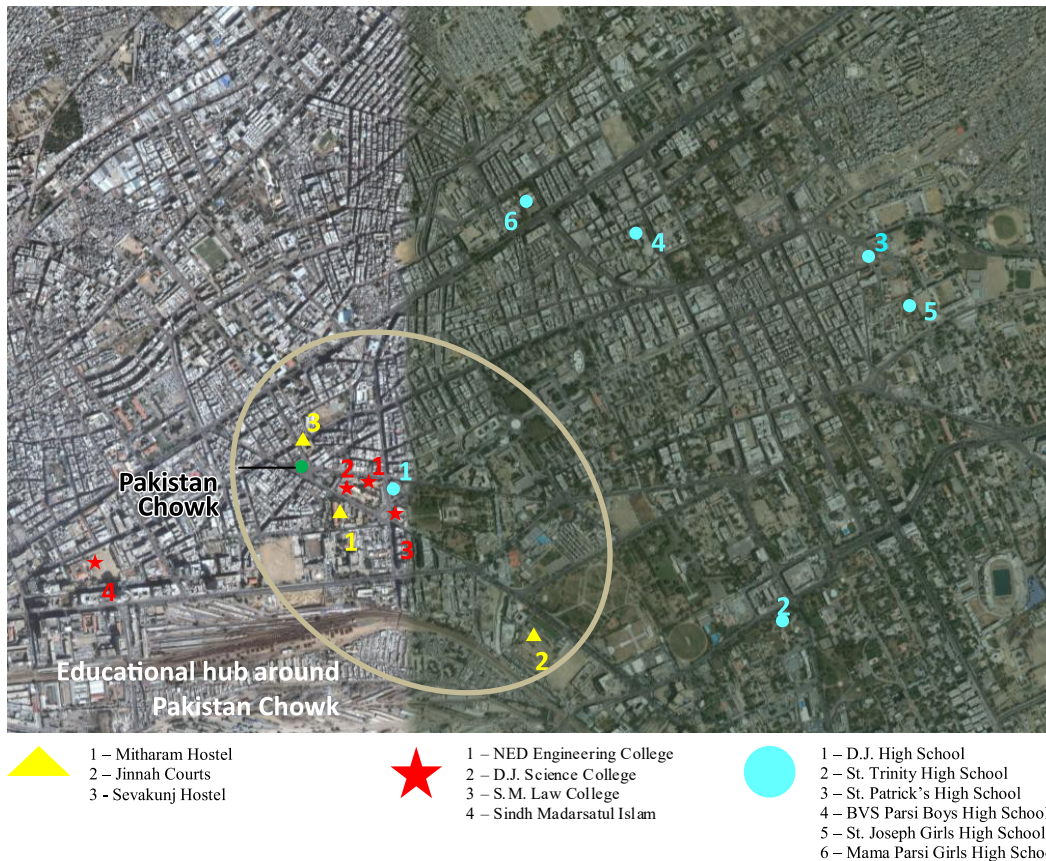


FIG. 1. LOCATION MAP OF ALL THE HOSTELS SHOWCASING THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD MARKED OVER GOOGLE IMAGE

Built between 1894 and 1901 [3], the building is unique in its planning as it has long and wide corridors that ensure its rooms are kept cooler in summers. The hostel was named after one of the main donors, Rao Bahadur Dewan Mitha Ram Gidumal under the financial support of Pinjrapur Education Welfare Trust, as a dedicated property for educational sector. Dayaram Gidumal, a prominent lawyer in the late 1880s, initiated a movement to build a college for the students of Karachi as many of them couldn't afford to travel to Bombay (which was the norm at the time in the smaller

coastal cities). Mitharam hostel; a neo-classical structure with the walls made of dressed Gizri stone, comprised separate blocks or outhouses for messes, a mosque, separate bathrooms on the outside, a canteen, several sports courts and a cricket ground. There were also independent quarters for the hostel staff and a laundry area for the students. Architecturally the courtyard of the building acts as the nucleus of the structure, which is bounded by arcaded verandas which provide access to the interior spaces of the building as shown in Fig. 3.



FIG. 2. LEFT – FRONT ELEVATION OF MITHARAM HOSTEL RIGHT- SITE PLAN OF MITHARAM HOSTEL FACING DJ SCIENCE COLLEGE ON DR. ZIAUDDIN AHMED ROAD

Description		Drawing	
Plan: The services are set at the corner of the spine. The entrance foyer and the central lobby connect to various internal spaces. The rooms are set on horizontal grids on all floors. The floors above have open corridors on either side of the wing.		<p>GROUND FLOOR PLAN</p>	
East (Front Façade): The front façade has open arcaded verandas on 1 st and 2 nd floor supported by columns. The openings are supported by the grill iron parapet walls 3' high. Central towers are topped by the star shaped crown with the centre flanked by the pointed pommel. The two towers are separated by simple façade details having rectangular windows.			
Legal Status	Protected heritage-Enlistment number 1995-185 and 1997-003	Date of Construction	1894 - 1901 owned by Government of Sindh and occupied by Pak - Rangers
Architect(s)	Municipal Architect in British era James Strachan	Main Donors	Rao Bahadur Dewan Mitha Ram Gidumal, other citizens
Total Area	4353 sq - yds (39177 sqft)	Location	Coordinates: 24 51'9" N, 67 0'48" E

FIG. 3. ARCHITECTURAL AND OTHER INFORMATION OF MITHARAM HOSTEL [4]

2.2.2 Jinnah Courts

Originally named as the Leslie Wilson Muslim Hostel, the Jinnah Courts had been constructed with donations from the people as well as local bodies of the province to provide residential facilities to the students who came from across Sindh to pursue their studies in Karachi. The construction of the hostel dates back to June 1932-33. The building was named after Mr Jinnah, soon after the independence in 1947. The building has spacious rooms opening up in the open corridor that is a typical form of hostel architecture. Made from the Ashlar masonry using dressed limestone blocks, it has fair finish

façades. Jinnah Courts is located on the same road as Mitha Ram, Dr. Ziauddin Ahmed Road around 1000m east to it in Artillery Maidan Quarter shown in Figs. 4-5.

The building is currently in use of Pakistan Rangers. The Rangers shifted their headquarters to the Jinnah Courts on a temporary basis in April 1999 and never left since then. Earlier the Rangers headquarters was housed in Sheikh Zayed Islamic Centre on University Road, but they had to vacate it when the United Arab Emirates government (which had funded its construction) raised the objections to its use by the law enforcement agency as the Centre was meant for educational purpose [5].



FIG. 4. LEFT – IMAGE OF JINNAH COURTS - BEFORE BARRIERS [4]. RIGHT- LOCATION OF THE HOSTEL

Architectural and other Details of Jinnah Courts Hostel:			
Description		Drawing	
Plan: Hostel has a symmetrical plan having a central colonnaded entrance portal flanked by a pedimented. Services such as rest rooms are situated at each corner.		<p>GROUND FLOOR PLAN</p>	
North East (Front Façade): Façade has simple arrangement of colonnaded verandas which allow good ventilation within entire building yet it looks robust due to the height of the building.			
Legal Status	1995-152	Date of Construction	1932-33 owned by Government of Sindh and occupied by Pak- Rangers
Architect(s)	James Strachan	Main Donors	Citizens' donations, Govt contribution
Total Area	-	Location	Coordinates:

FIG. 5. ARCHITECTURAL AND OTHER DETAILS OF THE JINNAH COURTS HOSTEL [4]

2.2.3 Sevakunj Hostel

Sevakunj, another important hostel in the region was built in the same era by the Shahani family who is acclaimed to extend the educational spirit in the region by opening up various libraries and schools. The literal meaning of the word Sevakunj is derived from Sanskrit word Seva-Kunj meaning “Services – Centre/House”. It served many years in the service of the students. Sevakunj has a strong presence and character in the region. It not only housed students from various regions of the country but a great number of foreign student population.

The building is decorated with a minimal designed yet elegant façades punctured with series of longitudinal windows. The plan typology of the building is unique in

a way it is designed not within an open compound rather it encloses a small courtyard in the centre as shown in Fig. 6. The open to sky courtyard was used as a communal space within the building. Often university events were held there. The important information about the design and construction of Sevakunj is not available. No one can say for sure the exact year of construction and the name of the architect for example. Unlike the former two, Sevakunj is credited to be in use till late 80s and early 90s by the students of Dawood Engineering College. It was in use by students of NED even after the college/ university had moved to its present location in mid 70s. Currently the building is abandoned. The Sevakunj is located in Rambagh Quarter north of the Pakistan Chowk as shown in Fig. 7.



FIG. 6. LEFT – VIEW OF SEVAKUNJ HOSTEL FROM THE CORNER RIGHT – LOCATION MAP OF SEVAKUNJ HOSTEL NEAR PAKISTAN CHOWK

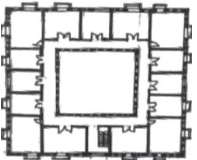
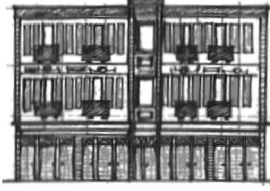
Architectural and other Details of Sevakunj Hostel:			
Description		Drawing	
Plan: A perfect square plan is set around a square courtyard that was meant for the hostel recreational purposes. There exists a performance stage in the courtyard that was later added at sometime. The building is a G+2 structure having rooms all around the courtyard.			
South West (Front Façade): the building has symmetrical façade embellishments on all four sides. Each side is equally divided into two halves having central window openings. Each rooms has a balcony having wrought iron grilled boundary walls supported by stone brackets.			
Legal Status	1997-031	Date of Construction	1910ss (approx), owned by the Dewan trust, vacant
Architect(s)	Unknown	Main Donors	Shahani family
Total Area	-	Location	Coordinates: -

FIG. 7. ARCHITECTURAL AND OTHER DETAILS OF THE SEVAKUNJ HOSTEL

3. MATERIALS AND METHOD

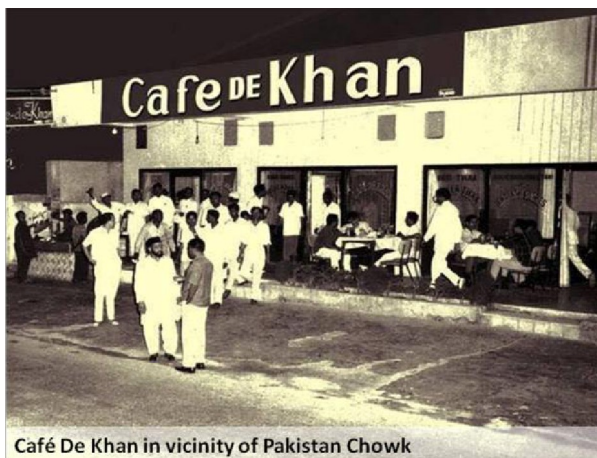
The discourse of understanding and analysing the reasons behind the current state of the selected hostels is linked with the process of data acquiring regarding the historic context in which these hostels were situated. The analysis further links to the changing context investigation which involves various affecting factors such as changing demographic patterns, city core change in function and the erosion or the dilapidation of culture/ social life in the city etc. The entire data is compiled and presented under the following sections by the authors. The data acquired from other sources is used with due credits and copyrights.

3.1 Context of the Area

The downtown of Karachi which represents the historic part of the city is demarcated within the (virtual) boundaries of various quarters. Historically Alexander F. Bailie (the municipal engineer then) divided the whole city into 18 different quarters in the British era; more were added as the city grew with time [7]. These quarters emerged as the thriving cultural hub of the city specially the areas which housed the institutional buildings. The multi-class participation and nature of activities developed the cultural identity of the city on a larger scale.

The area surrounding Pakistan Chowk in particular became a dynamic zone and evolved into an educational hub. It housed a large number of supporting infrastructure and activities including hostels, libraries, cafes and restaurants, and cinemas. The area was a multicultural and multi ethnic activity zone. The culture of cafes was a catalyst in the lives of students. They were not only visited by students but a number of intellectual thinkers visited there who were a great help for the intellectual grooming of students. Few of the famous public places were Café Saadi, Cafe de Khan shown in Fig. 8, and Kaiser Restaurant [3] where students from nearby institutions could interact during their breaks, and became an important hub for educational interaction.

One of the corner buildings, named Saranagati; a listed heritage building in the region, shown in Fig. 8, housed British Council library and its second floor is said to house an atelier for young and emerging artists. Many book shops offered free reading rooms for students. Ground floors of many of the buildings in the surrounding housed activities related to students. One of those buildings used to have a printing press which published newspapers and the magazines such as Ismat and Saraswati [9], which were made available to students living within the area, mainly at the hostels.



Café De Khan in vicinity of Pakistan Chowk



FIG. 8. LEFT: CAFE DE KHAN, [6] RIGHT: SARANAGATI BUILDING (FORMER BRITISH LIBRARY)

3.2 Changing Context within City Core

3.2.1 Changing Demographic Patterns

Karachi is subjected to a constant impact of varying demographic patterns each year. This includes annual rural urban migrations since the city serves as major economic hub of the region. Previously city had greeted a great number of refuge populations at multiple times in history major of them are:

- Refugees from Indian subcontinent partition in 1947
- Refugees from Pakistan Bangladesh Partition in 1971
- Refugees from Afghan Russian war in 1980

The refugee population occupied most of the buildings abandoned by Hindu community including public and religious buildings in the Native city and the open spaces in the Cantonment and Lines area near Saddar.

They included all kinds of professionals: government officers, entrepreneurs, poets, artists, journalists and the intellectuals. Karachi became a multiclass metropolis with intermingling of education, sports, and culture. In addition, the population increased every year as the average household size increased as shown in Fig. 9. According to the recent research the city grows at the rate of 50 times more its size every year largely due to strong economic hub which brings significant physical and cultural change to the city on a constant basis.

3.2.2 Urban Blight to the Original Function of the Buildings in City Core

The decline of the hostel buildings (chosen for this research) is directly proportional to the decline of the

overall built environment within the historic core of the city. There are multiple grounds which driven this decline.

Soon after independence city received new cooperative housing societies and satellite towns with the notion of ‘privileged living’ on the extended limits of the city. Influential people started to move there this included the wealthier and prominent families leaving behind the historic buildings occupied by them previously which later were converted to some sort of commercial purpose. Moreover, the major wholesale markets located within the city centre extended their limits by occupying the historic structures and converted them into godowns and storage yards etc., which were earlier used as cafes, restaurants or the libraries. The whole functional typology of the area changed to the commercial. It was further supported by amendments in the building bylaws and the up gradation of the land use regulations in 1972 [11] which caused a great deal of damage to the heritage buildings as well as open spaces. Increased building heights with the minimum penalty on the cases of deliberate damage to the heritage properties put a great threat to the historic structures in all.

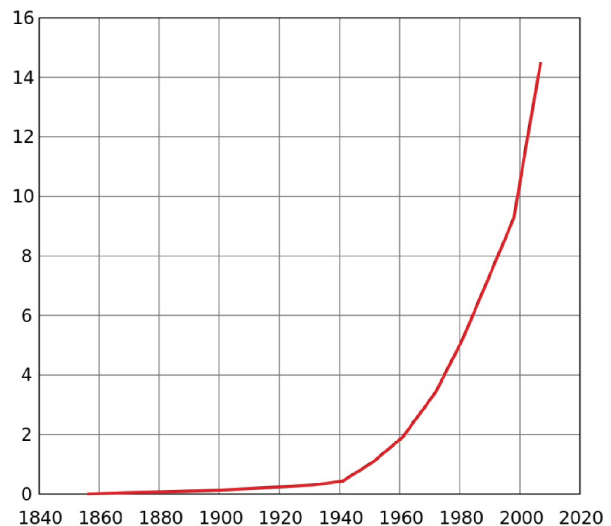


FIG. 9. TRENDS OF POPULATION GROWTH IN KARACHI FROM 1840-2020 [8]

The ever-increasing need for transportation, both because of the between of and increased commercial activity and for people to reach their workplaces, converted the historic city centre into a transit camp, congested with crowds and badly managed traffic [12]. This newer chaotic feel of the city centre was totally different from the earlier atmosphere and thus heralded the age of constant decline.

3.2.3 Erosion of Culture

The city centre when deprived of all cultural activities, turned completely into a commercial centre. The process of shifting of universities gradually took with it the student related activities. Not only were the hostels affected by this development, but most of the entertainment and recreational activities also suffered. The process was strengthened by means of shifting of most elite retail outlets from the city centre to the area where the elite moved. Many old business houses and retail outlets shifted to the newly established residential and commercial areas for the elites [11].

The gradual conversion to just commercial activity caused streets and the open spaces to house drug addicts and homeless after dark. All intellectual and cultural activities started to move away from the area to the cultural centres at specific locations or at the foreign missions and five star hotels, mainly at touristic destinations. In order to revive the old city centre, it is essential that such activities be brought back to historic areas and must be housed in the old buildings which are not used today. It was most likely in that context that the chief minister of Sindh in early 1990s is said to have expressed desire to house museums in the historic buildings of Mitharam and Jinnah Courts. However, the turn of events show that this desire never materialized and nothing could be done to revive the culture in the city centre.

3.3.4 Conservation Status of Heritage Properties within the Area

The said hostels along with the immediate historic neighbourhood went through an enormous urban affliction. This affliction of the heritage properties consolidated with the non-prevailing situation of heritage laws and the conflicts of the users such as the overpowering commercialization forces, lack of awareness and the ever increasing number of users. Over past decades a shift has been observed in the functional typology of the historic properties from residential to commercial which puts the whole area under a great threat of further commercialization [13]. Not only has this but the ever increasing household with deficiency of the financially viable incentives put supplementary stress on the buildings in terms of amendments to fulfil the desires of the users. Restricted availability of suitable conservation know-how and the high-priced techniques marks the pitiable state of conservation of historic structures.

The changing building regulations are also threatening the survival of the heritage properties of Karachi paving the way for new development projects. The economic changes, transformation of technology, modernism and the changing human behaviour have played a great part in making old (historic) structures unwanted for present day world [14].

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The Final Blow – Shifting of the Universities

Among the two biggest institutions supporting the educational environment in the area were the Karachi University and the NED University of Engineering &

Technology. Karachi University, established in 1951, grew gradually. Most of its departments were housed in many buildings nearby. Similarly, NED University had a campus on then Strachan Road (currently known as Maulana Din Mohammad Wafai Road). Both institutions acted as pivot to life and culture associated with academia in the area. Towards the end of 1950s, for a variety of reasons, new locations, away from city centre, were earmarked and provided to the universities. The campuses of both universities shifted within a gap of one or two years to their present location causing a mortal blow to the high culture of hostels in the city centre as shown in Fig. 10. Because of this change in location, students residing in the hostels in the city centre found moving to areas closer to new locations (of the universities) or better connected with the transport more appropriate and thus started the gradual erosion of student-led culture from the area.

The broader changes in the environment created further pressures. Karachi was still expanding rapidly and struggling with the challenges of accommodating immigrant population appropriately. New areas like Nazimabad and North Nazimabad were developed in the early and the late 1950s.

Various Karachi development plans had been put forward with a varying degree of success in managing the city. The desire to manage chaotic expansion of the early years of the partition to more manageable and controlled placement helped create a general mood where change was accepted. Thus, the change in core functions of the city centre and erosion of high culture was not an important consideration at that time.

The subsequent decades of 1960s and 1970s saw dramatic changes in the country’s politics affecting everyday life. Student politics remained at the forefront of political activity; however, restrictions put on student politics in 1980s under martial law ended any hopes of the revival of student-led cultural life in the area. The political turmoil of 1990s created the room for a permanent presence of various military and law enforcement agencies in the city. The buildings fell prey to expediency of meeting the immediate needs and one by one, saw the fundamental change in their functionality. In 1992, Mithram Hostel was converted into residence for Pakistan Rangers – a border security force entrusted with the city’s law and order situation, and in 1999, Pakistan Rangers converted Jinnah Courts into their headquarter. Only the Jinnah Courts was empty at the time when this change of function occurred whereas the Mitharam was still functioning as the student

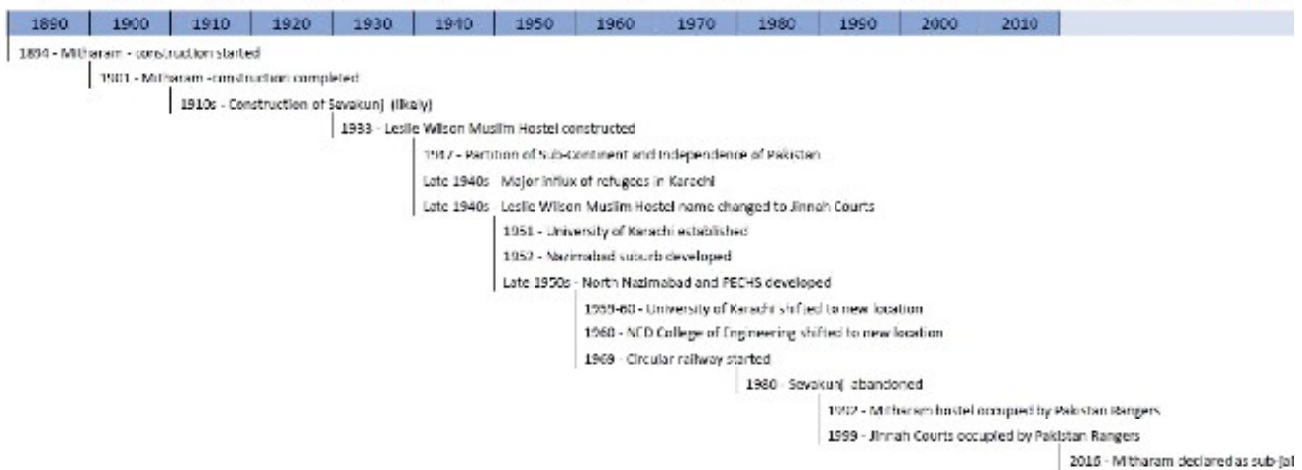


FIG. 10. HISTORIC TIMELINE OF 3 HOSTEL STRUCTURES

accommodation for the Dawood College of Engineering & Technology, Karachi, Pakistan, students.

4.2 Current State of the Structures

The present state of conservation of all three buildings differs from each other. Especially the two hostels occupied by rangers are generally disliked by the neighbours. Rangers presence within the main city centre creates problem for the inhabitants as they feel threatened. The roads where they are located are often closed for the special movements related to the rangers. Moreover, the same roads are barricaded with barbed wires with the ranger guards standing beside them putting forward a sense of exclusion to the passer bys. It reduces the existing road capacity creating traffic congestion at times. This overall creates a feeling of unrest in the area which is not appreciated by the dwellers of the area.

The analysis of the current state of the three hostel structures is carried out in different ways as only Mitharam hostel is permitted to be visited from the inside, where the permission to visit and document the rest of two hostels is not granted therefore detailed damage analysis of the building interiors was not possible.

4.2.1 Mitharam Hostel Building 1901-2017

The original building scheme layout of Mitharam included only hostel for accommodation of students. Later change of usage has resulted in addition of new blocks/ extensions on the site. The negligence and changes done to facilitate the current usage have caused decay to the building structure and the material. The property has been neglected and lack of appropriate repairs has left it in poor condition. The users have left an irreversible damage to the buildings to accommodate their growing needs.

The Southern front of the hostel has a longitudinal 81' long veranda/ corridor on ground floors as shown in Fig. 11. This space originally served as a transition between indoor rooms and the outdoor entrance portal.

But due to the change of function and lack of proper space for accommodating almost a double number of people then it was designed for, the alterations of converting the corridor into closed space with partition walls was required. The corridor has been divided into a big hall, which further is sub divided into rooms according to the needs.

The grill iron parapets of the corridor have been replaced with masonry blocks, creating a huge solid wall. A window is being fixed into each room. The original flooring on the ground floor corridor is done with beautiful mosaic of Belgian tiles of 6" by 6" size. Besides being highly dilapidated the tiled flooring on the ground floor is in fairly better preserved state only requires little cleaning and polishing. It is damaged at the areas where corridor is being subdivided with masonry walls; the rest of flooring is in good shape and is just covered with dirt and soil. Flooring on the above floor is wooden, which is in a highly dilapidated state having huge holes. Many other such modifications have turned the building into a poor state of maintenance and it is in need of extensive restoration measures [9].

4.2.2 Jinnah Court's Building 1932-2017

Due to Jinnah Court's location on major artery of the city, environmental pollution has affected the building exterior however in general the condition of building's is much better than Mitharam. The reason is probably the placement of headquarter of the rangers within the building. Yet the façade of the building shows signs of soiling, apparent by a slight change in colour of the stone, due to dirt and soot accumulation.

As the Mitharam, the layout of Jinnah Courts also included only hostel for accommodation of students along with the support facilities of mess/ canteen and the warden residence. But due to the change of the function and the increased number of people to cater, extensions on the site occurred in form of the addition of new blocks. However, unlike Mitharam these later added masses are

kept in well maintained state, which distinguishes it in terms of the better maintained structure.

The barriers in front of the building as shown in **Fig. 12** create traffic congestion during peak hours. The pedestrian paths are encroached by those barriers which cause a hurdle for pedestrians. Internal access to the building was not granted therefore analysis based on the internal planning of the building is missing at this stage. The building is under surveillance 24 hours therefore even the photography of the building from outside (from road) is prohibited.

4.2.3 Sevakunj Hostel Building 2017

Sevakunj Hostel has remained vacant since decades and this has had a negative impact on the structure. Its present dilapidated condition is evidence of the lack of

maintenance by the owners of the building. The building underwent several changes over a period of time. Except for the ground, all the doors and windows have been removed from the above floors leaving behind the openings.

The layout of the building is very exclusive and different from the rest of two hostels. Its location directly on the main road crossing and not within an open compound makes it prone to the various forms of degradation. Since it is a corner plot therefore two sides of the façades of the building receive dust and pollution all daylong and present awful soiled-surfaces as shown in Fig. 13. Signs of graffiti are also seen on the façades. Haphazard electricity wires dangle here and there on the façade of the building.



FIG. 11. IMAGES OF MITHARAM HOSTEL SHOWING DILAPIDATED STATE

Images of Jinnah Court showing its condition from outside



Barricaded road in front of the hostel making it inaccessible

FIG. 12. IMAGES OF JINNAH COURTS HOSTEL SHOWING DILAPIDATED STATE [11]

Images of Sevakunj Hostel showing dilapidated state



Ground floor showing signs of wearing



Damaged details of surface decoration



Ground Floor converted into shops



Dirt accumulated and soiled façade



View of internal courtyard



Courtyard view with windowless openings

FIG. 13. IMAGES OF SEVAKUNJ HOSTEL SHOWING DILAPIDATED STATE

5. CONCLUSION

This research highlights the rationale concerning the damages caused to the 3 historic hostel structures in Karachi and concludes about the contextual irrelevance of the hostels' new acquired functions for which they were not designed. The presence of law enforcement agencies in centre of the downtown is deemed inappropriate by various stakeholders most importantly by neighbours. This change of function damaged the heritage buildings irreversibly, but the buildings still show potential for the revival of the original function or any other more appropriate function. The continued functioning of DJ Science College and revival of old NED campus to house university's Architecture and Town Planning Department permanently and the revival of the cultural life around the historic Pakistan Chowk has restored some of the original context of the area. This could provide grounds for restoring the original function of these three historic hostels. But any attempt to restore the functionality or adaptive reuse of historic hostel buildings; however, needs to be done in extensive consultation with all stakeholders. What is beyond any question is the need for restoring these historic structures to their original state for their historic character and association to the city's historic fabric.

Despite emergence of the subject of conservation being relatively recent phenomenon in local region there are few inspiring cases of monument adoptive reuse followed by proper and strategic conservation approach in Karachi. The projects like TDF (The Dawood Foundation) Ghar, PACC (Pakistan American Cultural Centre), restoration project of Mahotta Palace and Free Masson's Lodge (Sindh Wild Life Building) or the Extension of the

NED University City Campus are worthy to mention. These projects portray the interest in heritage revitalization in the city and the worth of the heritage at large.

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