

“KARACHI: LOOSING ITS HISTORIC FACE”

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ABSTRACT

Karachi being a metropolitan city of population, more than 13 million, is usually seen and known to many of its inhabitants and visitors as a modern mega polis, which lacks an identity and a culturally rich historic background. Many who do not know the city too well would often exclaim “Does Karachi have a historic core?”; “Does Karachi have a history worth preserving?”. Surprising answers to these questions emerge when one tries to look into the historic background of the city and discover that there were times when Karachi scintillated with its richness of tradition and culture. Karachi certainly does not have a very long history to boast about, but its short colonial history does not lack anything that can be desired, thus making it comparable to many other colonized cities of the world that are today celebrated for their glory and richness.

Much has been written about Karachi and its rapidly vanishing historic fabric. Several reasons have been identified as the cause for the ruthless destruction of its historic core. Piecemeal efforts are made from time to time to give the city's historic fabric a protective cover. Yet the disturbing questions still lurk in the minds of those who really care for the city, “Why is our historic core constantly on the decline? Why are we loosing old buildings every day? Why are the existing masterpieces of architecture so badly maintained and mutilated? In spite of the existing legislation, how can people get away with the implacable destruction of heritage property?”. This paper aims at looking into some facts related with the listed heritage of Karachi, attempting at an analysis of the existing ground realities and their implication on the whole process of heritage conservation and issues related to it.

1. INTRODUCTION TO KARACHI'S HISTORIC QUARTERS¹

Before the British came to Karachi it was a small town controlled by the Talpur Rulers of Sindh. In 1839 Karachi (*Kurrache*) was annexed by the British Army and since then its rapid development and expansion started on formally planned lines. At the time when the British arrived in Karachi it had two distinct areas; the indigenous town and the camp areas (that later became the cantonment). The first of Karachi's division into quarters was done by Belasis (Collector of Karachi) in 1858. At this time the area of Karachi and its suburbs were divided into 14 quarters, excluding the Cantonment. In 1880's Baillie listed 26 quarters of the city in his book 'Kurrachee: Past, Present and Future'. Towards the end of nineteenth century more than one Cantonments were established in the city, each one of which acted independently having its own jurisdiction and authority. In 1905, five more quarters were added in Karachi's Municipality raising the number to 31 quarters. By 1941 the city grew into 44 quarters which were grouped into eight wards.

From among the 44 historic quarters of Karachi some are considered more significant and historically important. The oldest of quarters is the 'Old Town Quarter', which comprised of the 'Native Areas'. Almost all the historic quarters have been named after the most significant activity or building present within that quarter. Otherwise they were named after the important personalities (British Officers) who contributed significantly in the development of Karachi into an important harbor city.

Out of the 44 historic quarters of Karachi the following nineteen have been covered in the listings

¹ Summarized from the accounts of Karachi's historic quarters given in “*The Dual City Karachi During the Raj*” by Y. Lari.

prepared for protected heritage;

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| Saddar Bazaar Quarter | 76 |
| Serai Quarter | 78 |
| Artillery Maidan Quarter | 13 |
| Rambaugh Quarter | 76 |
| Market Quarter | 48 |
| Jail Quarter | 36 |
| Bunder Quarter | 16 |
| Macchi Miani Quarter | 18 |
| Railway Quarter | 11 |
| Karachi Cantt | 52 |
| Manora | 06 |
| Old Town Quarter | 24 |
| Ranchore Quarter | 29 |
| Preedy Quarter | 09 |
| Napier Quarter | 18 |
| Civil Lines Quarter | 39 |
| Frere Town Quarter | 20 |
| Clifton Quarter | 08 |
| Queens Quarter | 04 |

2. EFFORTS AT PRESERVING THE HISTORIC FACE OF KARACHI

The recognition of heritage values and awareness for their worth is minimal in the context of Karachi. On a national level Karachi does not enjoy the same reputation in terms of historic value, as many other cities in the country. In the past only a handful of people have advocated for the protection of Karachi's Heritage. Most of the efforts and campaigns initiated in this regard have been through the private sector, which created pressure groups to persuade government involvement and support. But, in spite of these efforts and activities, a properly developed policy to safeguard the heritage of the city is still lacking. Many of the attempts at implementation of the existing heritage preservation law have resulted in incoherent decisions and much confusion among those dealing with such listed properties. Due to the non-existence of a pre-defined guideline and well established-practicable set of rules it becomes difficult for each successive administration to deal with different situations and cases at different instances in a justified manner. Thus several instances of contradictory decisions are known, which reflect on the fact that the present state of

affairs is rather shaky and bendable, as per desire of those in office.

2.1 Framing of Legislation

Legislation is an important tool that helps in supporting the cause of heritage preservation. But this particular tool becomes instrumental only in places where abiding the law is a must, and nobody can get away by not doing so. And, it works in places where the law stays constant for all. Pakistan unfortunately is a country reputed to offer options and possibilities. Thus the existing law, has not been able to make a significant impact on the critical condition of heritage preservation. Due to the lack of a national level policy that gives homogeneity to heritage issues throughout the country, it has become difficult to manage such properties with a nation-wide zeal and enthusiasm.

The earliest of legislation that gave a legal cover to heritage properties in Pakistan is the Antiquities Act of 1954. Within its definition of 'immovable antiquity' even this earliest of Act included "urban site, street, group of buildings or public squares²" as identifiable for preservation. However, this was never applied or understood by the departments involved, hence limiting it only to the archaeological sites and single buildings of historic value. In 1994 a separate law for the province of Sindh was passed by the Provincial Assembly of Sindh, named as the "Sindh Cultural Heritage Preservation Act, 1994". Although the passing of this Act was an attempt at updating and refining the existing legislation, but a close study of the two Acts does not show much difference. Even though these two were formulated forty years apart, ironically the vision and perception of heritage management remained much the same. The widely accepted concepts of "heritage neighborhoods" in a holistic sense, with all their tangibles and more importantly the intangibles completely ignored in this Act.

The Sindh Cultural Heritage Preservation Act is applicable to the entire province of Sindh. Indirectly, several laws and consequent administrative decisions have affected Karachi. For example, Karachi Development Authority was

² Section 2.g.iii.6 of the Antiquities Act 1954.

created in 1957 by the Presidential order No. 5 of the same year. Among the various functions that were entrusted to it, the zoning control and planning of the historic areas over a part of KDA's responsibilities. However, for Karachi and its historic quarters an additional security is provided through the Karachi Building Control Authority's "Karachi Building and Town Planning Regulations – 2002" in which a separate chapter deals with the "historic areas". The present regulations are a revised version of the earlier regulations of 1979, in which preservation aspects for buildings of historic and architectural interest were covered very briefly in chapter V. These included some definitions, authority for designation of buildings, emphasis on informing the owner, and methods for getting approval for alterations or demolitions. At this time a list of 44 buildings was included as an appendix to the document giving them protection. Under the KBTP Regulations the MP&ECD³ of KDA held substantial authority over these buildings, although some of them came under the ownership of the Department of Archaeology and Museums. However, the last clause still gave the owner the possibility to appeal to the government against their decision.

"If MP& ECD refuses to grant a person permission to demolish, alter or extend a structure of architectural or historical interest, and if the owner is unable to earn a reasonable return on the structure by reason of the refusal, the owner may appeal to the Government; and its decision shall be final".

Section 29.4; KBTP Regulations 1979

The 2002 revised version of Regulations, however are slightly more detailed, and cover the aspect of alterations and changes more elaborately. One clause that holds substantial weight-age in terms of real penalty is that;

In case of unauthorized or illegal demolition of declared protected Heritage Building no fresh approval of Building Plan on the said plot shall ever be permitted and a fine as permitted by the Ordinance as amended from time to time, shall be imposed by the Authority

in addition to any other fine that may be imposed by the Department under the provision of the Sindh Cultural Heritage Preservation Act-1994 or the Antiquities Act-1975.

Section 15-4-3; KBTP Regulations 2002

In spite of the existing law there are a substantial number of listed buildings which have been cheekily demolished by their owners, and there are several more that are clearly heading towards the same fate. A clear reason for this state of affairs is the fact that the penalties charged in the existing law are easily manageable. Therefore penalties does not mean much loss for the law breaking owner of the property.

2.2 Protected Heritage Listings

The first efforts of documenting historic buildings of Karachi was initiated by the Design Bureau - Karachi Development Authority (KDA) in 1984. The MP&EC list of 44 buildings was taken up as important 'historical' buildings and the listed heritage of Karachi. Most of the buildings included in this list were either public amenity or religious buildings, thus having a monumental scale and high degree of architectural and/ or historic value.

However, between 1995 and 1997 more extensive listings were prepared and more than 600 buildings within the historic quarters of Karachi were identified to be listed as protected heritage. These listings were prepared by an NGO supporting the cause of heritage protection in Karachi. The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Government of Sindh, officially adopted these listings through gazette notifications, giving all buildings included in these lists a legal cover under the Sindh Cultural Heritage Preservation Act of 1994.

Gazette notification for the first of these listings was done in **September 1995**, including **194** buildings in all. This list comprised of 76 buildings from Saddar Bazaar Quarter, 78 from Serai Quarter, 36 buildings from the earlier MP&EC – KDA list of historic buildings and 4 more buildings.

³ Master Plan and Environmental Control Department - Karachi Development Authority. After the enforcement of Sindh Local Government Ordinance, 2001 the KDA has ceased to exist. It is replaced by the City District Government of Karachi which is headed by an elected Mayor (Nazim).

However, 2 buildings were repeated twice in the same list,⁴ thus bringing the actual number of listed buildings in this first list to 192.

The second gazette notification of the same series was published **June 1996**, which had only **15** buildings in it. These were mostly from Manora and Keamari. Two of these buildings were already mentioned in the list of 1995⁵. With this an addition of only 13 buildings in the previous 192 was actually done, increasing the total number of Karachi's listed buildings to 205.

In **September 1997**, the third and longest list was announced through the gazette. This list comprised of **426** buildings in all. These included 13 buildings from Artillery Maidan Quarter, 76 from Rambaugh Quarter, 48 from Market Quarter, 36 from Jail Quarter, 16 from Bunder Quarter, 18 from Macchi Miani Quarter, 11 from Railway Quarter, 51 from Karachi Cantt, 6 from Manora, 24 from Old Town Quarter, 29 from Ranchore Quarter, 9 from Preedy Quarter, 18 from Napier Quarter, 39 from Civil Lines Quarter, 20 from Frere Town Quarter, 8 from Clifton Quarter and 4 from Queens Quarter. From out of these 426 buildings quite a few were however, repetitions from the first two lists. In all 19 buildings were repeated from the 1995 list⁶; 4 from the 1996 list⁷ and 2 that were repeated in both the lists⁸ previously. Thus the actual contribution of this list of 1997 was the addition of 401 buildings to the previous total of 205, bringing the final figure to a total of 606 buildings designated as Karachi's Protected Heritage.

Within a span of three years, 606 buildings were



Figure 1: Left out in the Protected Heritage List, because it lies on Bunder Road out of the Boundaries of the Historic Quarters Covered so Far; Although Unquestionably Deserving to be Designated.

declared as the Protected Heritage of Karachi and given legal protection under the Sindh Cultural Heritage Preservation Act of 1994. But the criteria on basis of which these particular buildings were chosen has not been defined clearly, leaving many questions unanswered. Why is it that many buildings within the vicinity of listed ones, having similar character and quality are not included? Why so many buildings belonging to the same period, having extraordinary architectural character, but located at places outside the boundaries of quarters covered in these listings are not given any importance? Do all the buildings included in these listings have equal importance thus treated in the same manner, or should there be a categorization on basis of their degrees of value? To be able to answer these questions a profound research based undertaking needs to be done that may give professional and logical solutions.

- 4 The two buildings repeated in the list are Parsi Dar-e-Mehr at #50 as well as #171 and Sindh Madrassah Building at #113 and #175.
- 5 KPT Head Office at #1 and St. Paul's Church, Manora at #4 of the 1996 list, previously mentioned in the 1995 list at #181 and #165 respectively.
- 6 Sindh Assembly Building at #1/97; #188/95; Sindh High Court at #3/97; #185/95; Hindu Gymkhana at #16/97; #184/95; Victoria Museum (presently Supreme Court) at #18/97; #177/95; Max Denso Hall at #94/97; #176/95; KMC Head Office at #143/97; #186/95; City Court at #153/97; #169/95; Flagstaff House at #180/97; #168/95; Methodist Church at #200/97; #172/95; St. Patrick's Church at #217/97; #158/95; Wazir Mansion at #262/97; #167/95; Jaffer Faddoo Dispensary at #279/97; #178/95; Khaliqina Hall at #323/97; #180/95; St. Andrew's Church at #337/97; #170/95; Katrak Mansion at #376/97; #191/95; Sindh Club at #379-380/97; #174/95; Bristol Hotel at #391/97; 192/95; Mohatta Palace at #415/97; #187/95; Clifton Promenade at #417-420/97; 182/95; KPT Head Office at #1 and St. Paul's Church, Manora at #4 of the 1996 list, previously mentioned in the 1995 list at #181 and #165 respectively.
- 7 Watch Tower Manora at #227/97; #5/96; Flag Mast Manora at #228/97; #6/96; D. C.'s House at #229/97; #3/96; Harbour Master's Bungalow at #230/97; #2/96.
- 8 St. Paul's Church, Manora at #226/97; #165/95; #4/96; KPT Building at #285/97; #181/95; #1/96.



Figure 2 & 3: First Income Tax Building of Karachi situated on M. A. Jinnah Road. Left abandoned for many years, Recently became Prey to the destructive hammers. Nothing can be done to save this beautiful structure, holding substantial historic importance, as it never made it to the list of protected heritage.

2.3 The Heritage Committees and Cells

Managing and maintaining heritage sites is a specialized process that requires technical knowledge on all aspects of the heritage property. Within the present administrative system existing in Karachi there are two main departments responsible for the management of designated heritage property. All designated property primarily comes under the Government of Sindh, Ministry of Culture, Tourism, Sports, Youth Affairs and Social Welfare, through its Advisory Committee. But the responsibility of management and monitoring is shared by the Heritage Cell of Karachi Building Control Authority (KBCA). Karachi Building Control Authority is a municipal institution created under the Sindh Building Control Ordinance, 1979. It has the jurisdiction of monitoring and approving all kinds of buildings in the metropolitan areas of Karachi, extending military lands and cantonment. It now functions under the supervision of city Nazim (my or). Heritage sites also fall under its control. All applications or appeals regarding alterations, demolitions, repairs, extensions, etc. are filed by the owner, at the Heritage Cell – KBCA, which then forwards these cases to the Secretary Culture. The Secretary Culture then calls up the Advisory Committee to meet and take decisions on these cases.

Advisory Committee for Sindh Cultural Heritage: Under section 3 of the Sindh Cultural

Heritage Preservation Act 1994, the Government formulates an Advisory Committee that is composed of a Chairman and six other members, out of whom three are professionals from heritage related fields. The Advisory Committee also nominates a Technical Sub-committee, comprising of professionals from the field, who are requested to visit each property whose case has been submitted for consideration. On grounds of the observations during these visits the Technical Sub-committee gives recommendations to the Advisory Committee on basis of which final decisions are taken, but its strict enforcement has not yet been achieved.

Both the Advisory Committee and its Technical Sub-committee work on an Honorary basis. There is no fixed schedule of meetings, and these are done at the convenience of the members in the committee, when required. Sometimes the meeting of members gets delayed for very long stretches causing delays in decisions and frustration for the owners, specially those who have plans to restore their buildings and reuse them for economically viable usage. Although within the legislation a time limit of 30 days is given for the concerned government department to take a decision on the application.

“Prior to permitting the alteration, extension to Heritage Building, the Authority shall inform the concerned Department of the Government of Sindh. The Department shall have a period

of thirty (30) days in which to express any objection to such an alteration or extension."

Section 15-4-2; KBTP Regulations 2002

It may be noted that in addition to the members of provincial and local government, few notable citizens of the city with interest in heritage and professionals are also included in the said committees. These individuals are apparently thus most potent force that also asserts upon the bureaucracy to take up heritage matters seriously. However, since the onus of taking action lies with the concerned departments, these well meaning efforts hardly make a difference.

Heritage Cell - Karachi Building Control Authority: The KBCA - Heritage Cell was originally initiated as "*Urban Renewal Cell*" in 1987. It was in the late 90's that this was renamed as the Heritage Cell. This unit of the KBCA is responsible for monitoring of declared heritage buildings and enforces its authority under the SCHA 1994 and KBTP Regulations 2002. The cell comes under the Chief Controller Buildings who is also a member in the Advisory Committee for Sindh Cultural Heritage.

Another committee of KBCA that plays an important role in the matters of listed historic buildings is the **Technical Committee on Dangerous Buildings**. This committee works independently from the Heritage Cell or the Advisory Committee, thus many cases have occurred where the owner was able to get listed property declared as dangerous thus justifying demolition. Since the two committees function independently, many times contradictory decisions are taken, one declaring a property dangerous and the other declaring it as protected heritage. The criteria for declaring buildings dangerous by KBCA is also not clearly formulated, as an analysis of previously made decisions shows that even if only doors and windows of a building are missing, or if any one member of the structural elements has collapsed, the entire structure, may be declared as dangerous.

3. THE 'PROTECTED HERITAGE' SCARE

Till the time when there was nothing being done for the historic areas and old buildings of Karachi,

the fate of these buildings remained at the owner's desire. The pace of change was not very fast as people did not pay much attention to these properties, unless they really wanted to develop something in its place. However the rise of attention towards heritage, promulgation of laws and preparation / announcement of lists of protected properties created grave concerns among the property owners. Those whose property got announced as listed heritage felt that they had been 'doomed' and those whose properties were yet not listed felt scared that they might be put into that list in the future. Thus varied reactions started to come up.

Some felt that acting immediately would be wise, and there are cases where immediately after knowing of their building being listed the owner attempted to get rid of it by quick demolition. As a result quite a few buildings disappeared almost overnight.

The concept of historic buildings in private ownership, being designated as protected heritage is very new for Pakistan. Till recent years the trend has mostly been to protect monumental buildings that mostly come under the archaeology department. Conscious efforts at preserving historic quarters of cities and designating all/ most of the old buildings, even though of modest scale and architectural quality, but contributing towards creating a certain characteristic and ambiance for the area, has never been attempted in Pakistan. The importance, implications and benefits of this are not yet understood by people. Since the entire process of declaring buildings as 'protected heritage' was just enforced on people without any orientation and awareness building or public debate, it received a lot of resistance. Even now when ten years have already passed from the time when the law was first enforced and the first list of protected buildings was announced, there has hardly been any effort on part of the agencies involved to develop a program through which the owners of these buildings can be motivated to maintain and keep these listed buildings in a well kept state.

The present legislation and its interpretation has also played an important role in building up the existing 'Listed Heritage Scare'. On one hand the law maintains (atleast in writing) firm rights of

the administrative body dealing with heritage property, giving them power to charge penalties on owners if they do not follow their instructions or damage the designated property in any way. But, on the other hand there is nothing, in the form of incentives or benefits, for those who undertake this responsibility properly and attempt to maintain their properties in a sensible manner. Technical assistance and guidance is also not available very easily to people, thus discouraging them from undertaking any maintenance attempts for their property. The general impression that prevails among people at present is that restoration is troublesome, highly expensive and time consuming, thus should not be attempted.

3.1 Appeals for Delisting

Having ownership of a listed heritage building is considered to be something very prestigious in

many countries. But the reaction to heritage notification received by the citizens of Karachi reflects a completely opposite psyche. Owners of such properties sought ways and means to get their properties de-listed at the earliest. Section 6(2) of the Sindh Cultural Heritage Preservation Act 1994, gives the chance to owners or custodians of the listed buildings to file any objection against the notified decision, within a month from the date of announcement. Quite a large number of applications were submitted with an appeal for delisting and excluding the property from the Heritage List. Strangely enough even the various Government sector departments applied for delisting of their properties.

Looking at the statistics of the three lists of 1995, 1996 and 1997 the following percentages of delisting appeals come out;

| Year of Listing | Total No. of Bldgs. | No. of Delisting Appeals | Percentage | Comments |
|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------------|------------|--|
| 1995 | 194 | 56 | 28% | Within the 56 cases submitted for delisting a total of 63 buildings were involved. 5 buildings were already demolished ⁹ before any decision could be taken on them. Out of all these appeals only 1 appeal was accepted for delisting, 27 appeals were clearly rejected in the order dated 20-5-1998 and the rest of the cases were either deferred for further investigation or decision of maintaining their facades was taken for them. |
| 1996 | 15 | 4 | 26% | All 4 applications for delisting appeal were rejected. |
| 1997 | 426 | 77 | 18% | Within the 77 cases submitted for delisting appeal a total of 137 buildings were involved. But quite a few of these cases were repeated within the same list or in the 1995 list of delisting appeals. 9 cases were accepted for delisting, two of which were cases where building was already demolished before the survey for recommendations was carried out. 49 cases were clearly rejected in the order dated 20-5-1998 and the rest of the cases were either deferred for further investigation or decision of maintaining their facades was taken for them. |

The premise on which the appeal for delisting is often built by the owner is the claim that their property is architecturally not significant, or it is already heavily altered, thus should not be included in the heritage list.

Many properties owned by Federal Government departments such as the Pakistan Army and the Archaeology and Museums department, were also included in the protected heritage list. Surprisingly

enough, instead of supporting the effort they have reacted by applying for delisting of their buildings claiming that they are not bound to abide by the Provincial Law. This clearly reflects on the non-cooperative attitude of the administrative departments towards each other, and the rift for power and authority. Government departments are normally reluctant to relinquish any trace of authority from the available controls on their properties. thus the listing of buildings as heritage

⁹ Victoria Mansion, Abdullah Haroon Road: Haji Abu Trust Building, Raja Ghazanfar Ali Road: Palia House, Raja Ghazanfar Ali Road: Gibbon and Mamooji Building, Frere Road: Jhumra Autos Building, Dr. Ziauddin Ahmed Road.

site was viewed as a potential threat leading towards the diminishing of power and control on properties.

4. GROUND REALITIES; SOME FACTS AND FIGURES

Declaring several hundreds of buildings within the old quarters of Karachi is almost like a beginning of an attempt towards protecting the historic districts of the city. Although there has not been any demarcation or identification of boundaries for these areas, designating them as protected areas for heritage preservation, but the sheer number and the magnitude of area within which these buildings are located leads towards the fact that such designation is required for ensuring an effective conservation plan of these quarters.

Ground realities however, indicate that the will to actually implement a thorough conservation plan, which is effectively implemented and made part of the Master Plan for Karachi is unfortunately lacking. A clear indication of this lack of interest and will is reflected from the following excerpts that are taken from a report submitted by Chairman KBCA-Heritage Cell, requesting for approval by the Governor of Sindh in October 2002.

".....Heritage Buildings are either those of Archaeological, Monumental value or related to the genesis of Pakistan Movement or connected with Quaid-i-Azam"

The same document further states that;

"Private buildings which are not either of Archaeological or Monumental value be released to the owners".

These statements are a clear proof of the fact that those who have been placed at an authoritative position for making decisions on heritage buildings and facilitate the entire process of heritage preservation, at heart consider it as something unjustified. For them the only history worth preserving is either something that belongs to the archaeological past or has some link with the independence movement of Pakistan. Anything

other than that is not considered as part of history, thus not worthy of preservation.

The concepts of living cultures and continuity with the past are not understood; neither by the general public nor by the administrative authorities. The current trends internationally accepted and followed all over the world clearly define the scope of cultural heritage beyond just buildings. "Urban areas are considered as an expression of diversity of societies throughout history and embody values of traditional cultures. Thus the scope of urban area conservation should incorporate the character of such areas with all their material and spiritual elements. Conservation plans should also cover legal, administrative and financial aspects of any property. And due regard should always be given to the spatial layout including scale and lot size."¹⁰




4.1 Illegal Demolitions





Property once notified as the Protected Heritage is not supposed to be destroyed, defaced, damaged or altered, without getting proper approval and permission from the KBCA-Heritage Cell and the Heritage Advisory Committee, Government of Sindh. Such acts are punishable under the law. Even if the owner wants to do some changes in the property, permission and approval of the proposed plan has to be acquired. But in spite of this there are many examples where buildings have been demolished or are under demolition. In quite a few examples the case was also timely reported in the press but to no use.

Despite the fact that the law gives protection to listed heritage structures, their constant destruction and demolition is something that comes across as a failure of the existing system. Looking into the existing law it becomes apparent that the penalties indicated in the national level law are not substantial to stop the owner from demolition and gaining huge profits on it.

"A contravention of any provision of this Act or the rules shall, where no punishment has been specifically provided, be punishable with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months, or with fine which may

¹⁰ Excerpts from the "Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas" also known as the Washington Charter – 1987, adopted by the ICOMOS General Assembly.

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| <p>Victoria Mansion: Saddar Bazaar Quarter</p>  | <p>Declared as Protected Heritage in the 1995 list. Demolished in July 1991.</p> | <p>“One More City Landmark Bowing Down”, The News, April 5, 1991.</p> | <p>Demolition took place even before the property was declared as protected Heritage, thus its delisting was inevitable.</p> |
| <p>Pallia House: Saddar Bazaar Quarter</p>  | <p>Declared as Dangerous Building by KBCA vide dated 22-6-95. Declared as Protected Heritage in the 1995 list. In March 1997 Ministry of Culture received a letter by DG-KDA informing that the owner ha approached them for permission of demolition. Inspection team from Sindh Culture Department on visiting the building reported that it was in good condition and in no danger of collapse. Demolished in July 1997. On 25-6-1997 the owner/ builder applied for approval of the new bldg. plan having B+G+4 floors. By Feb. 1999, slabs of G+3 floors were already constructed.</p> | <p>Several news items appeared in the press during and after demolition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Protected Building Falls Prey to Builder Mafia”, The New, July 7, 1997. • “Heritage Structure Does a Vanishing Act”, Dawn, July 29, 1997. • “Rubble Without a Cause”, The Herald, September 1997. • “Pallia House in Saddar: Illegal Building Replacing Demolished Heritage Structure”, The Star, Feb. 9, 1999. | <p>In spite of the enormous hue and cry raised over the demolition of this building from the start of its destruction, it could not be saved.</p> <p>The builders’ mafia with its cunning ways worked at a pace that the city administration could not match.</p> <p>Presently the plot has a G+3 building with shops on the ground floor and apartments on upper floors.</p> |
| <p>Karim Manzil: Macchi Miani Quarter</p>  | <p>Declared as Dangerous Building by KBCA Demolished some time after 1998</p> | <p>An article was published in Dawn Magazine on Nov. 8, 1998; titled “Will it be Gone Too?” reporting the starting of demolition of this listed building.</p> | <p>Application for delisting was never submitted to KBCA/ Heritage Advisory Committee.</p> <p>The building was apparently demolished on the premise that it was declared dangerous.</p> <p>Presently a multi-storeyed apartment building stands in its place.</p> |

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| <p>Olympia Building:</p>  | <p>No records for delisting or being declared dangerous were found in the available documents.</p> | <p><i>"Rubble Without a Cause", The Herald, Sep. 1997.</i></p> | <p>While the media was still trying to attract the attention of concerned authorities on the illegal demolition of Palia House, these buildings also disappeared from the same street.</p> <p>The owners not even bothered to file an appeal for delisting before committing the crime.</p> |
| <p>Medina Building: Saddar Bazaar Quarter</p>  | | | |
| <p>Bungalow on 216 E. I. Lines: Building: Karachi Cantonment</p>  | <p>Owned by the Pakistan Army. Demolished in the year 2000.</p> <p>Army claims that since it is a Federal Institution under Ministry of Defence thus not bound to follow provincial law.</p> <p>The bungalow was owned by Mr. E.U. Dinshaw, who died without leaving a legal heir. Later Mr. Fernandes started living in its servant quarters.</p> <p>Army got the residence vacated after several years of litigation.</p> | <p><i>"Another Historic Building Razed", Dawn, Sep. 1, 2000.</i></p> | <p>A very fine example of residential bungalows from the colonial period, very few of which today survive in the city.</p> <p>Applied for delisting in 1997 list, but no decision on its delisting is found in available records. Demolished on the grounds that being Military Property it did not come under Provincial Law. The demolition was done in haste with no plans at that time for any new development. Presently the plot lies vacant.</p> |
| <p>Bungalow (Ruby Mansion): Preedy Quarter</p>  | <p>Till 1995 the building existed on the site. But in this year the intention of demolition became clear from the banner displayed for advertising the new development that was to replace it.</p> | <p>-----</p> | <p>Application for delisting was never submitted to KBCA / Heritage Advisory Committee.</p> |

extend to five thousand rupees, or with both.”

Section 32: Antiquities Act 1954

“Where any person including the owner destroys, removes, injures, alters, defaces a protected heritage, shall be punishable with fine which may extend to on lakh rupees, or with imprisonment which may extend to three years, or with both.”

Section 18: SCHPA 1994

In a time when the property values are soaring to the skies and where profit rates in real estate are unbelievably high the amount of fine seems ridiculously low. However, a much stricter and more punishing rule is given in the Karachi Building & Town Planning Regulations 2002.

“In case of unauthorized or illegal demolition of declared protected Heritage Building no fresh approval of Building Plan on the said plot shall ever be permitted and a fine as permitted by the Ordinance as amended from time to time, shall be imposed by the Authority in addition to any other fine that may be imposed by the Department under the provision of the Sindh Cultural Heritage Preservation Act-1994 or the Antiquities Act-1975.”

Section 15.4.3: KBTP Regulations 2002

In spite of a strict law many listed properties from the city have disappeared. Following are a few examples randomly picked to highlight upon the varying scenarios within which different

demolitions were undertaken.

These are just a few randomly picked examples of illegal demolitions that have taken place from among the listed heritage buildings of Karachi. There are several other examples, some identified and recorded, but quite a few for which no record exists.

4.2 Purposeful Negligence Leading to Destruction

Regular maintenance and safety measures are an essential requirement for maintaining buildings. Lack of maintenance leads to decay and damage of building materials, giving a dilapidated appearance to the property. In many cases the owners tend to intentionally leave their property unused for a long stretch of time. Falling in disuse eventually leads to deterioration and a very large number of old buildings in the city have been a victim of this purposeful negligence. The pattern is clearly visible in such cases; where first the building is abandoned and left unused for some years, then slowly doors and windows start to disappear, and finally some parts start to fall apart. At this stage the property is ‘declared dangerous’ giving an excuse for demolition. Quite a few buildings within the city even now show the same patterns heading towards a similar destruction.

In the present era of advancements in all technical



Phelvi Restaurant & Jiha Building, Preedy Quarter.



Duarte Mansion, Saddar Bazaar Quarter.

Figure 4 & 5: Three Examples in which only Façade of the Buildings are seen Standing for Many Years. None of the Owners have Applied for Delisting of their Property. However, Phelvi Restaurant Building and Jiha Building have been Declared Dangerous by KBCA. Whereas, Duarte Mansion’s Owner has been Served Notices for Carrying Out Works Attempted at Damaging the Structure.

fields, it becomes unacceptable that structural solutions cannot be sought for facades that have been standing on their own for so many years, proving their worth in terms of stability and strength. Even though attempts have been made by their owners to facilitate their accidental collapse, but they have simply refused to bow in.

Although deterioration due to disuse is one of the prime factors leading to the destruction of historic buildings, but cases of other destructive acts such as fire, bomb blast, etc. causing the buildings' collapse have also been reported in the past.

One such case of building gutted in 'accidental fire' was reported in the press¹¹ in the year 2000, where building caught fire in the middle of night and within three hours the entire structure just became a heap of rubble. What little was left was quickly pulled down the very next morning. The building was apparently being used as a chemicals godown, leading to questions as to why a historic building was being used as a storage of combustible materials. Many more examples of such hazardous usages exist unchecked in the city's historic quarters.

5. CONCLUSIONS:

Karachi being a city of immigrant people from different parts of the country suffers because a majority of the population does not relate with its history, thus does not want to own it up as worthy of any emotional ties. Only a small fragment of its inhabitants have nostalgic memories that they can relate with the physical fabric of the older parts of the city. Thus it remains at the will of these handful people to create awareness and an understanding of the historic values of the city and propagate them as worthy of preservation. But this cannot be done successfully, isolating from the realities, as interests of a varied group of people are involved. Unless all stake holders are made part of the decision making, or at least part of discussions leading to these decisions, successful results will never materialize.

There is a need for clearly chalking out a clear



A pre-1947 building was completely gutted when it caught fire early this morning. At least 11 fire tenders were used to put out the fire in which 9 firemen were injured.—STAR photos
Figure 6: A Historic Building that got Completely Destroyed by Fire within Three Hours.

definition of what heritage is and creating awareness as to why it should be safeguarded. The objective of any such effort needs to be outlined prior to attempting an implementation, so that questions and confusions can be logically satisfied. To be able to reach towards a practically applicable solution public debate and participation of owners should be involved. Following are some recommendations which can help in formulating a future line of action for developing a concrete conservation and heritage protection program for Karachi.

- The existing listings and documents can be taken as a starting point of reference, but building upon them is very essential to ensure that all that is worth protecting is included without any discrepancies. A clearly defined criteria needs to be developed for making the whole process foolproof. Verifying and updating the existing listings is also necessary, to know the actual situation presently existing in reality.
- Parallel to updating initial listings, detailed inventories need to be developed for each specific case, so that each case is understood in its own context and decisions for it are taken accordingly.

¹¹ News clippings "100 Year Old Building Destroyed by Fire", Dawn, Nov.1, 2000 and "Chemical Godown Gutted near City Courts: 9 Firemen Hurt", The Star, Oct. 31,2000.

- Detailed documentation and inventories should then be used to analyze the existing building stock and develop a scientific methodology for establishing a hierarchy of monuments based on their 'degree of importance'.
- Legislation and regulations should be developed not only to control or penalize the owner, but also to address their interests, helping them and motivating them through incentives such as tax rebates, interest free loans, subsidized services and utilities, etc. so that they willingly undertake the responsibility of being guardians of city's heritage.
- A Technical Support Unit needs to be formed that gives advice to the property owners developing viable solutions for an effective restoration of their property. Awareness building and developing a sense of pride among the

owners of such heritage property should also be part of this program.

- Involvement of the academic institutions to build a pool of conscious and properly trained pool of professionals is essential in undertaking an exercise of such large magnitude. Research based studies need to be made as a continuous ongoing part of the whole exercise.

Heritage conservation can no longer be treated in isolation. It is a multidisciplinary and scientific profession where specialized inputs are essential. Thus developing a professional approach is the only key towards resolving issues related with it. Karachi badly needs a conservation policy that looks into the entire situation holistically and this can only be achieved when whole thing is tackled in a very scientific and professional manner based on thorough research and factual details■

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