

NED CITY CAMPUS RESTORATION SETTING BENCHMARKS FOR CONSERVATION PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

NED University of Engineering and Technology originated in 1922 from what is now known as its 'City Campus' or 'Old Campus' located in the hub of Karachi's historic areas. Shifting of university campus to its present location on University Road in 1975 led to the abandonment of this historic site for more than twenty years; adversely affecting the structures due to neglect and disuse. In 1997 NED City Campus was declared as a listed heritage of Karachi given protection under the Sindh Cultural Heritage Preservation Act 1994. In 2000, realizing its importance as an invaluable asset the NED university's Department of Architecture and Planning conceptualized the vision for restoring this campus and putting it to use; not only on grounds of its historic significance but also for reasons of sustainability, environmental enhancement and regeneration of historic fabric.

Restoration of NED City Campus is envisioned with an approach of minimal interventions and respect to the original setting, layout and materials of construction; closely following the international principles of heritage conservation. The approach is to achieve optimum utilization of campus premises primarily as an educational hub; but additionally introducing a variety of ancillary activities to facilitate extended usage of the property. Being an extensive undertaking the project is planned and being executed in phases; the first major phase being the restoration of 'Bai Puribai Becharbhai and Bercharbhai Raichand Block'. This paper gives an overview of this first phase, with a focus on interventions carried out to consolidate the existing structural members of the historic building.