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"Construction Boom in Pakistan:
Present & Future"



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Historically the first Era of construction boom can be identified as the period spanning from late 19th to the early decades of 20th century when the city started to emerge from its modest beginnings of a small fishing village to an entrepreneur's paradise. Many prestigious commercial and industrial establishments sprung up in the city. In addition there was a series of commissions for institutional, educational, health and other public facilities.



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The **second boom** of construction industry in Karachi is seen in the decades between late 1960's continuing to the 1980's. This was the period when the nation had recovered from the post independence syndrome and re-established its commerce and industry. As a result architectural icons emerged as symbolic expressions of wealth and organizational power or prosperity.



Sheraton Hotel, 1982
Pearl Continental Hotel, 1985
Habib Bank Plaza, 1987

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The **third phase** is the present high in the construction industry, outcomes of which are yet to establish their stance, and prompt us to further re-define the boundaries and scope of Karachi's **21st century heritage**



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LEGISLATION: an important tool that helps in supporting the cause of heritage preservation.

In 1994, a separate law for the province of Sindh was passed by the Provincial Assembly, the Antiquities Act of 1954. The "Sindh Cultural Heritage Preservation Act, 1994" is the earliest legislation to give legal cover to heritage. 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, essentially the vision and perception of heritage management remained such the same.

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LEGISLATION: an important tool that helps in supporting the cause of heritage preservation.

The 2002 revised version is slightly more detailed, and covers the aspect of Karachi and its historic quarters an additional security that provided through the Karachi Building Control Authority's "Karachi Building and Town Planning Regulations - 2002" in which a separate chapter deals with the "historic area". The revised version of the earlier regulations of 1975, which included some definitions, authority for designation of buildings, emphasis on informing the owner, and methods for getting approval for alterations or demolitions.

permitted and a time as permitted by the Ordinance as amended from time to time, shall be imposed by the Authority in addition to any other rule 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

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**THREATS AND ISSUES:
De-listing Appeals**

Ruby Mansion disappeared without even an attempt by the owner to get it listed.



Owners of more than 20% of the listed buildings have submitted appeals for de-listing their property. Quite a few have already demolished their building before any decision could be taken. Most ironically government departments such as Army and Archaeology Dept. have also applied for their buildings' de-listing.

Year of Listing	Total No. of Bldgs.	No. of Delisting Appeals	%age
1995	194	56	28%
1996	15	4	26%
1997	426	77	18%

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**THREATS AND ISSUES:
Illegal Demolitions**

Pallia House:
Saddar Bazaar Quarter



- Declared as Protected Heritage in the 1995 list.
- Declared as Dangerous Building by KBCA vide notification dated 22-6-95.
- Demolished in July 1997
- On 25-6-1997 the owner/ builder applied for approval of the new bldg. plan having B+G+4 floors.
- In spite of a strong protest campaign, presently the plot has a G+3 building with shops on the ground floor and flats on upper floors.

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**THREATS AND ISSUES:
Purposeful Negligence**

Leaving buildings abandoned, without any maintenance for prolonged period is one very effective way of getting them declared as a 'Dangerous Building'. A large number of listed buildings in Karachi today suffer from this neglect.



Ather Mansion, Din Mohammad Wafai Street

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**THREATS AND ISSUES:
'Designed' Accidental Incidents**

Taking advantage of the heavy rainfall in the city the owner employed labor for a day and got rid of the entire façade, trying to prove to authorities that it was has collapsed on its own.



Captain House in Saddar

As on 15th June 2006

As on 10th August 2006

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ORGANISATIONS AND DEPARTMENTS:

Within the present administrative system existing in Karachi there are two main departments responsible for the management of designated heritage property.

Ministry of Culture, Govt. of Sindh – through its ‘Advisory Committee’ and ‘Technical Sub Committee’

Technical Sub-committee visits the cases submitted for consideration; Advisory committee takes decisions on basis of their recommendations

Karachi Building Control Authority – through its Heritage Cell is responsible for management and monitoring.

Responsible for monitoring of declared heritage buildings and enforces its authority under SCHPA 1994 and KBTPR 2002

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Lack of Co-ordination and Support between Departments/ Agencies Involved

Although Karachi Building Control Authority works as a support department for Ministry of Culture, GoS, but its “Technical Committee on Dangerous Buildings” declares Listed Buildings as dangerous without any consultation, thus facilitating the owner for demolition.



Jiha Building

Pehlvi Building

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Lack of Co-ordination and Support between Departments/ Agencies Involved

Pakistan Army, claiming its superiority as a Federal Institution under Ministry of Defence does not feel bound to follow provincial law.



Bungalow on 216 E.I. Lines:
Karachi Cantonment

- A very fine example of residential bungalow from the colonial period, very few of which today survive in the city.
- Demolished in the year 2000 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.

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Lack of Co-ordination and Support between Departments/ Agencies Involved

The Department of Archaeology – again coming under Federal Govt., feels its superiority threatened if it is made to follow the Provincial Law, thus applied for delisting of all properties under its management



Baloch Graves
Chaukandi Tombs
Wazir Mansion
Flag Staff House

Ghulam Hussain Khaliqdinna Hall



Mazaar-i-Quaid
Frere Hall
Mohatta Palace

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Lack of Co-ordination and Support between Departments/ Agencies Involved

The Public Works Department – responsible for maintenance of almost all the government owned properties included in the heritage list ruthlessly carries out ‘restorations’ without any technical supervisions, ripping them off their original materials and character.



Custom House: A recent victim



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Present Spread of Karachi is almost 3600 km²

What comprises the historic fabric is less than 4% of this area. To achieve an effective preservation these areas need to be identified as ‘conservation zones’ and incorporated within the Master Plan with appropriate regulations based on conservation principles.



Boundaries of present 18 towns
Area covering historic quarters

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There is a need to understand that less than 13% of the listed properties are owned by the government or institutions, rest of them are all either trust or privately owned properties forming the actual fabric of the historic quarters.



■ Listed Buildings of monumental/institutional scale

■ Privately owned listed heritage buildings

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Suggestions and Conclusions

It is necessary that at planning level policies are chalked out that support conservation objectives. They should be designed to relieve the city centre from immense pressures of commercialization and the so called development.

To ensure preservation of the historic fabric it is essential to devise ways and means to encourage and facilitate owners for maintaining and protecting their buildings.

- ❖ Giving rebates on services and utilities
- ❖ Relaxation in property and other taxes
- ❖ Revision of rental system and its rates
- ❖ Provision of interest free loans for restorations
- ❖ Revision of legislation so that it does not only punish the wrong doers, but also rewards the well intenders
- ❖ Provide technical support and advice to carry out proper restorations

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