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## **Integration of historical building for medium-sized expanding city: lessons from Khulna**

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### **Abstract**

History represents the legacy of past for the future generations. The traditional justifications for choosing historic structures for preservation are based on an aristocratic sense of history and a sentimental nostalgia for the past. This study presents evidence that the implication of historical buildings has a propensity to be exoticism-biased, object-focused, and temporally rigid for every growing city. Many times, the structures chosen for preservation are ones that were constructed using expensive materials and a lot of labor for the privileged. The relationship between heritage and elements of everyday life, where in many cases the latter continue to give significance to the former's current heritage status, has, however, received little research. The third fastest expanding city in Bangladesh, Khulna, is an ex-colonial city, this research employs a non-participatory lenses to examine 39 historical buildings. Yet, the city planners are not sufficiently concerned to preserve the heritage of the past, which represents the identity. According to the argument, ordinary heritage depends on historically enduring socioeconomic transactions of the common and ordinary in their regular and irregular pursuits of livelihood. These everyday human interactions which are temporally nonstatic and dynamic take place within and around the built environment's design, which makes it fluid, dynamic, and most importantly temporary. It forces architecture to change constantly while balancing the aspirations, requirements, aesthetics, and rationale of common people. Hence, everyday legacy appears as a socio-spatial-temporal assemblage that is inherent to an urban tissue that functions as a single organism. The study shows how historical structures can be important for tackling current issues including population growth, land shortages, encroachment, rising land values, changes in community standards of living, and the effects of climate change, among others.

*Keywords: Integration, Policies And Planning Strategies, Historical Building, Mid-Raised City,, Khulna*

### **1 Introduction**

A growing search for identification in today's generic cities has continued to include the conservation of historically noteworthy buildings. This has been particularly noticeable in cities of the developing world, which are undergoing a constant state of change to resemble those in the West. These modernizing cities adopt the architectural styles and spatial imagery of world-class cities without question, but frequently at the expense of the "indigenous" and the "genuine." While the need to preserve legacy is still crucial for building municipal identity in the face of cultural globalization, the definition of heritage is still a hot topic of discussion in both academia and the real world. Determining and categorizing history is also crucial for constructing the identity of the city (Podder, Hakim et al. 2018). The most important buildings in several livable cities have recently destroyed as a result of human activity, including fires, vandalism, theft, and pollution, as well as the effects of excessive population density, overcrowding, and marginal housing. These persistent anthropogenic contextual influences put pressure on historic structures. Contextual anthropogenic risks are all human spatial misbehaviors toward historic structures when they are present in vulnerable environments (Hegazi, Tahoon et al. 2022). To adapt to contemporary problems, including population growth, land shortages, encroachment, rising land values, changes in community standards of living, and the effects of climate change, all are highly responsible for losing the pride past which holds city's identity. Urban renewal methods are inextricably linked to redevelopment in cities. Urban regeneration aims to enhance the urban setting in conformity with peoples' shifting economic and social requirements. Urban redevelopment is valued for a variety of reasons. The housing stock and dilapidated structures can first be upgraded. Second, it is possible to preserve old buildings and structures. Third, by enhancing urban designs, open areas, road networks, and other infrastructures, a city can be changed. Urban renewal, however, can also result in potentially harmful social concerns, such as social exclusion, gentrification, and discontinuity of social lives, among others, even while it can assist in keeping urban centers functional and

vibrant (Anderson 2007, Han, Wu et al. 2018). These issues are not only common in a Northern and Western context, but they are also apparent in the Southern sphere and third-world countries, including South Africa (Visser and Kotze 2008) and the Middle East (Abu-Dayyeh 2006). For instance, the lack of community involvement in the renewal process revealed in Istanbul has undermined social justice and equity (Sasaki, Koivunen, et al. 2011). Thus, the major problem lies in how a city can carry out successful renewal to attain overall urban sustainability for the future.

History represents the legacy of the past for future generations. The traditional justifications for choosing historic structures for preservation are based on an aristocratic sense of history and sentimental nostalgia. This study presents evidence that the implication of historic buildings has a propensity to be exoticism-biased, object-focused, and temporally rigid for every growing city. Many times, the structures chosen for preservation are ones that were constructed using expensive materials and a lot of labor for the privileged. The relationship between heritage and elements of everyday life, where in many cases the latter continue to give significance to the former's current heritage status, has, however, received little research. The third fastest expanding city in Bangladesh, Khulna, is an ex-colonial city; this research employs non-participatory lenses to examine 18 historic buildings. Historically Khulna is recognized as an organic city for its diversity and uniqueness of living and non-living organisms. Yet, the city planners are not sufficiently concerned with preserving the heritage of the past, which represents the identity. The study shows how historical structures can be important for tackling current issues, including population growth, land shortages, encroachment, rising land values, changes in community standards of living, and the effects of climate change, among others.

## 2 Literature review

According to the 1920s, historical conservation strategies were largely restricted to local scales and lacked a thorough "global" framework. The creation of the International Museum Office in 1926 marked the beginning of the notion of "heritage" receiving extensive international recognition. Le Corbusier's 1933 Athens Charter was the first of many charters, conventions, resolutions, declarations, and recommendations that were made regarding conservation, with a focus on heritage preservation (Ahmad 2006). Determining a common definition of legacy and its areas of application was one of these guidelines' key goals. The definition of legacy was significantly developed after the Venice Charter of 1964, shifting the focus from physical structures to intangible assets. International organizations like UNESCO, ICOM, and ICOMOS have been working hard to redefine the boundaries and ideas of heritage since 1965 (Zancheti and JOKILEHTO 2005). In order to distinguish between the different types of heritage, from museum artifacts to the immovable built environment, ICOMOS defined heritage as "monument" and "site" in 1965. In 1968, UNESCO expanded the definition of heritage to encompass both movable and immovable items, referring to the former as "museum collections" and the latter as "architectural heritage." As a result, different international organizations had unequal interpretations of what heritage encompassed. ICOMOS viewed legacy as "monuments and sites," whereas UNESCO classified it as "cultural property." However, this terminological discrepancy was resolved at the World Heritage Convention in 1972 by defining heritage as something that should have both cultural and natural components. Recognizing "important" cultural and natural heritage with "outstanding universal significance" was the main goal. Then, between 1970 and 1980, a greater emphasis was placed on developing national and regional principles on a global scale (Ahmad, 2006). The 1975 Amsterdam Declaration and the 1979 Burra Charter both reflected this strategic shift. The Amsterdam declaration's primary goal was to promote heritage for cultural tourism and create income, despite the fact that it acknowledged the significance of heritage settings and context (ICOMOS 1976). The Burra Charter, on the other hand, placed more emphasis on the cultural relevance of heritage assets, citing its aesthetic, historic, scientific, or social worth and fabric; later modifications added the intangible values and characteristics of legacy. Eventually, these were included in the UNESCO agreement on Intangible Cultural Heritage from 2003. Following that, nations including Vietnam, China, and New Zealand enacted their own charters based on the principles established by UNESCO and ICOMOS. Such regulations are still not present for South Asian nations.

This is how the idea of heritage has always ignored the "culturally significant" everyday people, their actions, and the non-exotic/elitist spatiophysical components. We argue later that structures and areas used for daily human activity, which are integral to the creation of every place, should also be seen as legacy. Since most initiatives to discover and conserve "elitist" heritage have a mostly tourist-centric aggressiveness that seeks to commercialize it. So, the development of tourist destinations as a "product" seems to be linked with maintaining the "exotic" and "visible" elements of history. However, such ostensibly "untidy" can also be an integral part of a society's "process," which frequently vanishes in favor of the preservation of the "exotic." Through a critical examination of Khulna's morphogenetic history, a thorough explanation of this is provided. We anticipate that this will help raise some important issues for redefining the significance and range of heritage in a more comprehensive way. Whether we experience them directly or through a linked technology, historical places, living heritage, and natural sites enrich our daily lives in various ways. Innovation is naturally fueled by creativity and cultural diversity. The world is changed and our view on the environment in many ways by artists,

creators, and entertainers. These are priceless resources that can be used to address the present world concerns, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis. In the past 75 years, the concept of culture has undergone significant change. Since the end of World War II, when people realized how important it was to protect cultural assets from being destroyed, to the launch of global campaigns to protect World Heritage sites and the idea of living and intangible heritage, to the focus on the creative economy and the need to maintain cultural jobs and livelihoods, UNESCO's actions over the years are evidence of the many ways that people have tried to understand how culture can strengthen our sense of who we are. Over the past century, our connection with culture has undergone significant change. If we take a look into the past, we might be more equipped to handle upcoming changes. Like other developing country like India, Sri-Lanka, Nepal and others has respected their history to represent their identity, in accordance with Bangladesh has also tried to preserve their history. Panam-nagor, Narayongonge and Baro-Bazar archeological sites are some recent examples developed by the archeology department of Bangladesh.

### 3 Methodology

Insofar as it was utilized to describe the characteristics of the vulnerable spatial context of heritage buildings and their impact on urban regeneration, the investigation of the underlying socio-spatial process and interactions between physical spaces and humans can be considered a novel addition. To understand the influences of historic structure from a global to national perspective, which represents the identity of every specific context, the research relied on an innovative multi-method analysis ranging from urban spaces simulation around a set of heritage buildings in historic Khulna to literature review-based predictive analysis. Khulna, an ex-colonial metropolis and the third-fastest growing city in Bangladesh, is the focus of this research, which examines 28 historical buildings using non-participatory lenses. The Bangladeshi Archeological Department approved this study as ethical. The committee affirmed that all of the research's experiments were carried out by accepted ethical standards. Also, the study conforms to all rules.

For the collection of primary and secondary data, the mixed approach of the study used a variety of methodologies. Data was gathered in two stages: first, information about colonial buildings was gathered, and then, socio-spatial vulnerability was mapped. Following a thorough analysis of pertinent published material, a study structure has emerged. Following that, building information was gathered based on each parameter.

The second phase involved the collection of socio-spatial information about a particular colonial building using various techniques. By conducting a field survey and taking field notes, morphological mapping, spatial information, and building-to-building connectivity data were collected. Table01 shows the data sources to stabilize the significance of historical structure for mid raised growing city.

Table01: The data sources to stabilize the significance of historical structure for mid-raised growing city

Data type	Sources
Background literature (Narrative)	Published articles, aged person, researcher, key authority person
Anthropogenic risk indicators, context specific (qualitative & quantitative)	Questionnaire, Informal discussion, Mapping, Physical observation
Building details	Photographs, Sketches

#### 3.1 Case introduction

Khulna, an ex-colonial city, is notable historically for being situated on the Bhariv River, which makes the area a commercial hub of Bangladesh's South-Western region. Khulna, however, has a far more recent past than Dhaka and Kolkata from an urban perspective, although infrastructure improvements in the early 20th century elevated Khulna to a prominent location that served as an administrative hub throughout the colonial era. Additionally, the river played a significant role in the socioeconomic growth of this coastal metropolis and later served administrative and civil needs. After that, along K.D. Gosh Road, a civil line with some administrative buildings emerged. The development of Khulna city is influenced by its access to waterways, as well as by the construction of the railway and the connectivity of its roads.

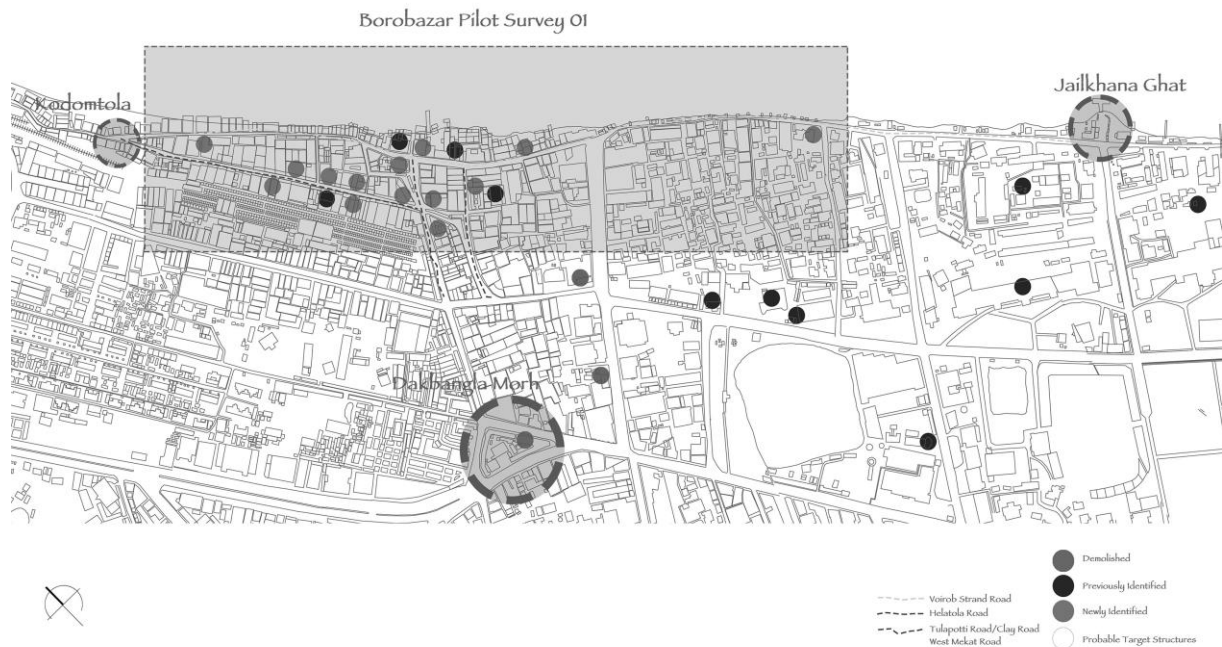


Figure 01: partial location map of Khulna city showing roads having major colonial buildings

Early in 1950, as a result of the industrial explosion, the population began to move into the city center in search of better employment prospects. However, the decline of the industry-focused economy had an influence on city expansion and slowed the flow of population. After 2000, the situation altered as a result of people moving into the urban center and capitalism's evolution of the consumer society. As a result, new construction has replaced these landmark structures, putting pressure on the city's historical fabric. The vulnerability is further increased by urban issues including land shortages, property valuations, changes in load usage and land cover, reckless land encroachments by politically well-connected people, and official ignorance regarding these historic resources. A group of historical structures dispersed throughout historic Khulna have been chosen as case studies for this research which has been marked in figure 01.

#### 4 Findings and analysis

A rapidly expanding body of literature on the behavioral aspects of the environment has been produced in recent years as a result of increasing interaction between architecture, planning, and the social sciences. Due to the wealth of information that has been available, such as that on environmental perception and the social use of space (Craik, 1973), empirical or theoretical investigations of the role of social and, in particular, cultural factors in the relationship between behavior and Environment are still difficult to come by. The colonial artifacts in this area are essentially a product of two very distinct cultures: the first is Indian, which was originally a fusion of Muslim and Hindu culture, and the second is a colonial form of European culture, specifically British culture if each of these two disparate and juxtaposed elements' physical-spatial forms is understood. The issue that needs to be researched right now is how two cultures that are geographically close to one another but have different forms of social, economic, technological, and political organization and development responded to that environment during the colonial era and met human needs in accordance with their respective social and cultural systems (King, 1976). Khulna was discovered to be a tertiary type city during the colonial period based on its determinants, events, and expansion. The influence of aesthetic development in socio-artistic domains was never immediately apparent, and the developments were primarily driven by personal aspirations that outweighed Bengali regional and historical styles. Only the buildings and their designs (individual and collective as well as those made by Europeans) demonstrated how the paradigm chosen for all micro-level administrative strongholds, such as districts and subdivision towns, was used. The design was prototypical, more geared toward engineering than art, heavier than light, and more ambitious than sympathetic. The civil line's surroundings and architecture are characteristic of district-level towns in Bengal, India, and throughout the country as a whole the colonial heritage along the K.D.Gosh Road in Khulna is still clearly visible, despite the passage of time, in contrast to Dhaka and Kolkata, where callous infiltration, alteration, and demolition altered the colonial aesthetics. When one moves around the Ramna neighborhood of Dhaka, one never gets the impression that the place is colonial; instead, one could enjoy the beauty of particular buildings amid the rush of ostensibly "democratic" aesthetics.

Kolkata's situation is comparable. K.D.Gosh Road has such a significant impact in Khulna that when an extension to the Municipality Building was desired, the design had to take into account the aesthetic elements already present. The perception is that the new structure is an extension of the current one. Secular structures, however, have not had a significant influence on local thought. This might be the case since the structures represent more of a personal statement than a particular aesthetic vocabulary. Additionally, the distance between each structure caused by their positions causes a break in the growth's continuity. In some instances, pseudo-artistic responses (such as Sans Souci) to incorporate colonial imagery in the building were obvious, while in other situations, demolition and incursion followed to achieve the purpose of the home owner.

At the center of the conventional urban fabric, it preserves human settlement patterns that date back to the colonial era through a multiplicity of streets and historic homes. For the increasing complexities, Khulna is a living organism with significant density in the city core. High population density have resulted in a variety of issues, including unplanned urbanization and environmental pollution. According to the assessment on environmental dangers facing historical regions, which listed a number of anthropogenic elements such fires, all forms of man-made pollution, accidents, and crimes, the old city is therefore vulnerable to many anthropogenic hazards. The city's exceptional universal value is also diminished by all human activities, including unwanted views of garbage dumps, street vendors, dusty roads, contemporary structures, and numerous other things. The assessment concluded that it was becoming extremely relevant to put plans in place to slow the ancient city's rapid decline and the community's impact on it. On the other hand, from a morphological perspective, it is a multi-layered metropolis. Extraordinary building block, and street geometry can be found in urban tissues. Only when the organic city was deformed over centuries of human encroachment and urban sprawl on ancient assets within the city, can the hierarchy of streets and asymmetrical geometries help to create susceptible situations. Hence, it should investigate into how various spatial configurations and human behavior interact across the study region. Twenty-eight heritage buildings comprising distinct typologies and urban tissues were chosen for this study within the research area, as shown in Figure 1. The researchers look into how the socio-spatial arrangements around the structures that have been recognized as historic affect the local anthropogenic dangers.



Figure 02: Top Left-Agrani Transport Limited, Bottom Left-Shohoj Path Shisu Kanon, Top Right-Ispahani Building, and Bottom Right-Old Post Office

## 5 Conclusion

In order to develop a different understanding of heritage, this essay set out to investigate how heritage is produced via the struggles, compromises, and changing lives of the common people. We have maintained that, contrary to what is frequently believed by academics and international regulatory bodies, heritage of the ordinary may not always exist in "spectacular" urban forms or in terms of any historically "significant" monuments with remarkable universal values. Heritage buildings and structures suffer serious degradation as a result of anthropogenic dangers. Focusing solely on physical characteristics when analyzing vulnerable area, particularly with regard to natural hazards, is one of the major issues presented by the field of risk assessment and management of cultural assets. These methods did not fall within the category of anthropogenic risks, wherein the presence of humans in the immediate environment poses a risk. In order to assess vulnerable spaces and forecast contextual anthropogenic hazards, this research made the assumption that the social aspect has a significant impact that needs to be investigated. This will help researchers develop appropriate and sustainable strategies for the adequate performance of heritage buildings in livable cities. In an effort to incorporate cultural protection into urban renewal schemes, this article looks into the social elements that must be properly taken into account and addressed. The study argues that as social effect and intangible community values are of utmost importance, heritage conservation in urban redevelopment districts should also focus on them in addition to the physical fabric of the historic buildings and the surrounding environment.

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