HERITAGE URBANISM
Possibilities of Modification and Rejuvenation of Piary Das Road Area, Old Dhaka

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Abstract. Heritage must not only be a historic monument but also an active factor in contemporary life. The use of cultural heritage as a tool to respond to the rapidly changing socio-economic conditions becomes one of major focus points of historically rich cities. It has been proved from the claims of planners, conservationists, architect, historians, artists that the encouragement of and modernization of cultural heritage has a significant role in sustainability strategies that focus on responding to social and cultural needs to sort out conflicts and to actualize economic objectives through long-term vision and goal. Piary Das road, a historically significant street of Old Dhaka Bangladesh containing a number of historic buildings of Mughal and British Period. Vibrant, vigorous and vivid image of the daily activities surrounding this road, eventually tells a story of the past to the present. This paper aims at the possibilities of modifications, modifications, and rejuvenation of Piary Das road to uphold the scope of creating an arena that bears the flavour of its context and identity. It focuses on the acknowledgment of the value and potential of urban heritage. Also, emphasizes how heritage can be used as a trigger in socio-economic development in the neoliberal age.

Keywords. *Heritage Urbanism Old Dhaka Modification*

1. Introduction

The city Dhaka is a growing city and has a history of more than 400 years. Being located by the river Buriganga the part of old Dhaka became a place of trade exchange. Traders from different countries of the world paid visits to this area and this place started to grow as a centre for multicultural and

multidimensional space for living and trading. The architecture of this particular area is obviously started to have its significant character, going with people' lifestyle, regional culture and tradition. From the Mughal dome, Indo Sarasenic pilasters to colonial arches old Dhaka architecture has its own individuality and essence. But as time passes, user living condition-status changes and with the high demand of land and increasing land value, soon user focus on piece meal approach and the overall synchronization vanishes. This heritage is our asset and a bridge in between the past and future generations. This heritage can also play a vital role in earning revenue from tourists which will ultimately assist in our financial solvency. So for the sake the protection of this asset and for financial up gradation this heritage need to be cherished, conserved and portrayed in a positive and constructive way.

2. The concept of Heritage Urbanism:

Heritage Urbanism may be defined as the study of the characteristic ways of the interaction of inhabitants of historical towns and cities (urban areas) with the historic built environment. One of the significant approach of heritage urbanism focuses on the protection and care of tangible cultural heritage through socio-economic sustainability, adaptability, modernization and cultural enhancement.

3. Morphological Dimension of Piary Das Road:

Piary Das road was named upon a renowned landlord and famous lawyer Piary Das of British-Colonial Period. He was rewarded as one of the "Rai Bahadur", a title of honor bestowed during British rule in India, for his excellent service and bravery. In 1916 he became the Chairman of Dhaka Municipality [1,4].

Piary Das road area is a part of Sutrapur Thana and group C of the Capital city Dhaka. This part of the traditional city of about half a km length is more than 200 years old and at present has a predominantly colonial flavor. Most of the buildings of the area were erected on the either sides of a narrow, serpentine road, which are mostly two storied. Other historically significant areas like Shakhari Bazar, Tanti Bazar, Bahadur Shah Park, Ahsan Manzil, B K Das road are situated in the walking distance (Figure-01).
Among all buildings of the area, 51 building are more than 150 years old and 12 buildings are historically significant (Figure-02). One of the most significant buildings is Beauty Boarding. It was the first press of newspaper Sonar Bangla and later used as boarding cum café (Figure 02.e). Eventually it became the gathering place of artists, authors, columnist, journalists and many more creative people [2].
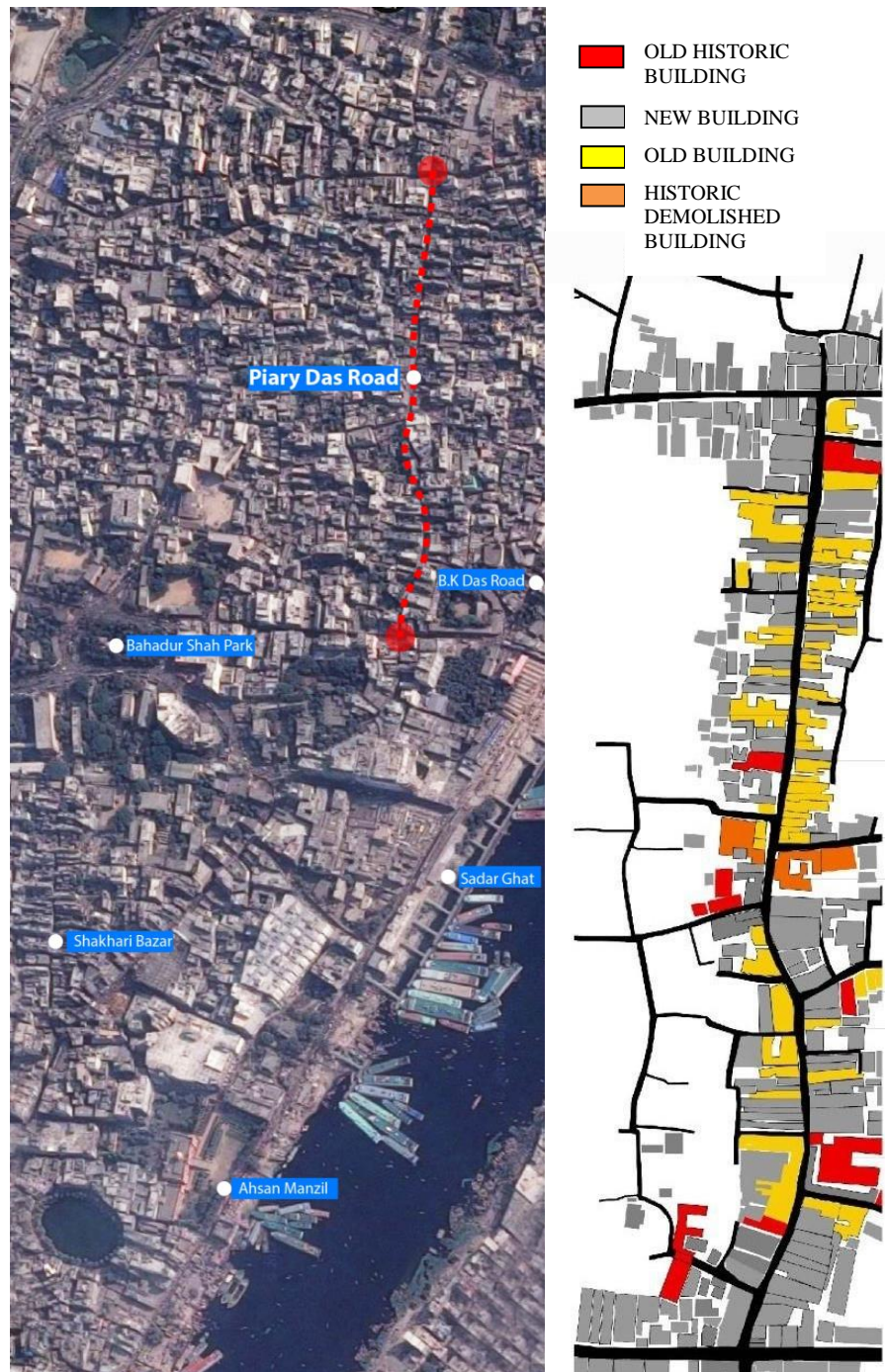
OLD HISTORIC BUILDING

NEW BUILDING

OLD BUILDING

HISTORIC DEMOLISHED BUILDING

Figure 1, Location map (*Source: Google*). Figure 2, Street map (*Source: Author*)

Kachery Bari, the most well preserved historical building among all the buildings around Piary Das Road. Kacheri means court and bari means house, so cumulatively Kachery Bari means 'House of court'.It was the court-house of Zaminder Dhankora, a famous lawyer. But the house was abandoned at the beginning of Pakistan period. At present it is used as the store-house of vegetables and different raw materials (Figure-04.b). Gouro Nitay Bigroho Mandir, a 100 years old Hindu temple [1] and presently the ground floor is being used as advocate chamber and Temple. The first floor is used as the dormitory of priests.

While considering the visual properties like semi-circular arches, pilasters, wooden lattice, iron railing, battlement parapet, overhanging eaves, I joist Beam, decorative moldings and bracket, arched window, iron column etc ;we found those historic old buildings are very rich.
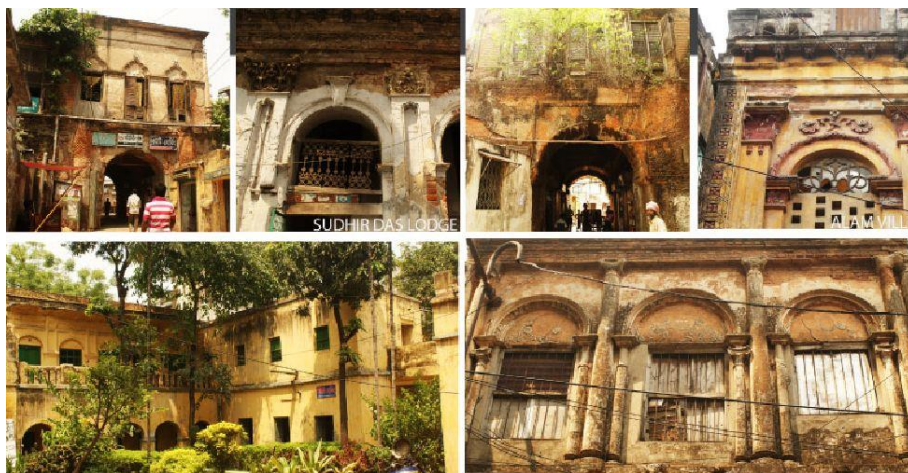

Figure 3, a. Shirish Das Lodge, b. Sudhir Das Lodge, c. Shirish Das Lodge, d. Alam Villa, e. Beauty Boarding, f. Bani Bhaban (*Source: Author*)

4. Social Environment and Socio-economic Condition of the residents:

Being a part of old Dhaka, Piary Das road definitely co-exist in the realm of diversified land-use and multi-faced character. According to ownership, here live two kinds of residents: the property owner and the working people (20% people are permanent residents; 55% are tenants' residents; and 25% are non-residents).Press and publication business is one of the pioneering trades of this area and its people. This business is continuing for more than three generations. Ground floors or the roadside/front side of the ground floor of

building are used as commercial zone and it is seen in more than 90% buildings of this area. The commercial zone is mainly has book shops, press, grocery shop, flower shop, hair salon, small café or tea stalls where residents as well as the visitors come to have their daily needs.

Figure 4, a. Bani Bhavan, b. Kacheri Bari, c. Aga Khan Mosque (*Source: Author*)

Due to the scarcity of open spaces, roofs of building are mostly used for the social gathering. The residents usually pass their leisure time for refreshment on roof in early morning, evening and even at the time of load shedding. Roofs are also the only plan for nurturing their hobbies such as gardening, pigeon flying, kiting, petting animals and playing indoor games. It is not only the feature of Piary Das road but also a significant characteristic of old Dhaka to use roofs as the breathing spaces.

5. Methodology

To understand the existing conditions and its prospect regarding up gradation we have conducted primary and secondary surveys. In the primary survey we have collected data of the buildings of Piary Das Road, their current conditions of facade, structure, use, activity and overall architectural pattern and a questionnaire survey was done among the people (one senior member and one junior member of every house/building) about their willingness and judgement regarding up gradation of their area to welcome tourists or visitors. In the second survey we compare the existing conditions of building and its scope of modifications thorough an intricate analysis and symbiosis among the available national building codes and foreign case study. This

study is expected to provide a concept of form based coding, policies and guidelines for current conditions and future development in this area as well as for areas which have similar aspects and characteristics.

6. Foreign Case Study

The main theme of conservation in Turkey, which was previously taken to be a museum-oriented phenomenon, has changed over the years; is now being conceived as a process of revitalization and integration of the entities having cultural, historical and architectural values with certain social, economic and functional potential. However, the perceived economic projection from the re-use of the cultural heritage invariably causes the transformation of the historic sites into large-scale development projects. The lacking in the realization of public policies, unrestrained urbanization, fast population growth, and choice bound resources and different appreciation of historic environment result in pressures for development, through a greater complexity of issues to be handled when compared to Europe. Within this context, **Beypazari** presents a unique heritage-led regeneration example to be a model for Turkey in balancing change and continuity with development policies [6].

The core of *Beypazari Yeniden Project* is the concept of heritage conservation as the basis of Beypazari development strategy. Beypazari Municipality has recognized that cultural heritage has a principal role in providing socio-economic development and environmental protection. By starting with the restoration of only 25 buildings, the project has had a major impact in sustaining historical and architectural pattern, embracing local cultures and identities, rising property values and increasing the awareness on conservation [6].

Figure 5, Tasmektep: a. in the 1930s, b. in the 1990s, c. in 2005 (*Source: Beypazari Municipality Archive*)

Besides physical conservation, Project has determined several regeneration programs including the protection and development of traditional handicrafts, local food and culture. As stated by the interviewees, the Project has not only respected to the suitable standards that are necessary for the protec-

tion of the historic environment but also it has generated quality of life by providing re-use of historical buildings and environmental improvements by utilizing public space and public art and changing the image of the settlement. The interventions also provide the local community to comprehend and cherish the value of their properties [6].

7. Objective

The objective of finding possibility of modification and rejuvenation is to establish a dialogue in between the new and the old, to reinstate urban fabric and rebuild communities to work the way they are used to, to provide permeability, to create urban contrast and to enhancing the overall socio-economic condition by promoting tourism and other economic activities.

8. Level of Modification and its Impact

Heritage conservation focuses mainly on architectural heritage of historic buildings and structures in western cities.
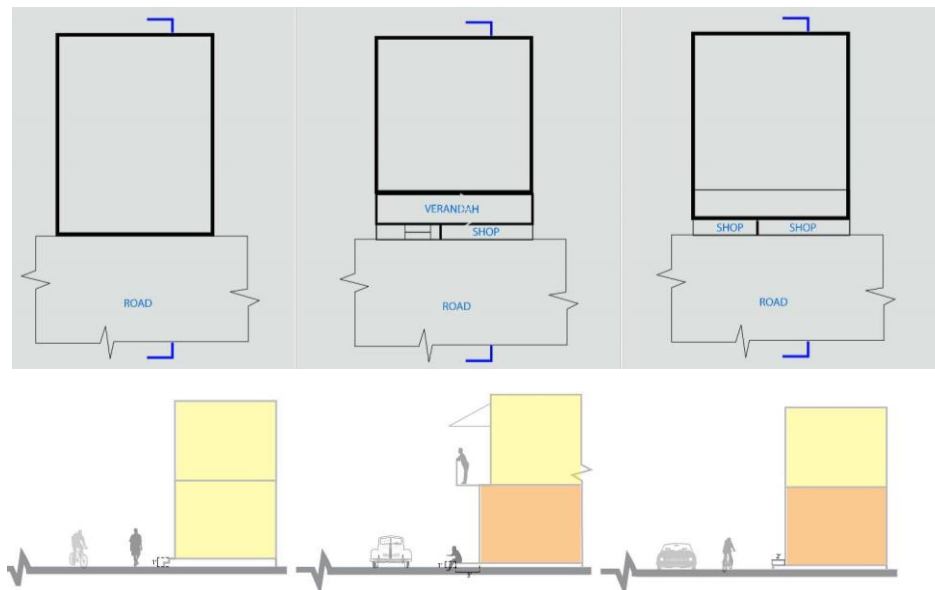

Figure 6, Spatial Connection between indoor, semi outdoor and outdoor

Sometimes, the surroundings of a heritage site turned into a 'luxurious' or too clean place for those who have used the place before heritage conservation and urban regeneration starts (Pendlebury et al., 2004). The heritage area becomes a kind of tourist-cantered place with the effect of external ar-

rangement. Consequently, urban minorities have to seek a new place for themselves or be subject to various restrictions which strive to control over their activities and behaviours. For securing the sustainable living conditions to original residents and users during the planning process of urban regeneration, an 'integrated approach' considering physical, socio-cultural and economic aspects is demanded. It would be a highly critical process if the plans reinforce the market demands without considering social mixing, which makes the community socially exclusive and spatially segregated from society [5].

Figure 06 describes the current situation and relationship among the adjacent spaces of buildings. As this road is a part of old Dhaka, generally its organic growth leads a very narrow setback in between road and a building. This threshold is basically used as the social interaction space for the community. So, these thresholds can be upgraded with landscape and proper treatment for functioning more lively and interactive.

8.1 FORM BASED CODING

A form-based code is a land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code. A form-based code is a regulation, not a mere guideline, adopted into city, town, or county law. A form-based code offers a powerful alternative to conventional zoning regulation (Form based code institution). Not to be confused with design guidelines or general statements of policy, form-based codes are regulatory, not advisory. They are drafted to implement a community plan. They try to achieve a community vision based on time-tested forms of urbanism. Ultimately, a form-based code is a tool; the quality of development outcomes depends on the quality and objectives of the community plan that a code implements [7] (CMAP-Form Based Codes).

To apply form based coding for future development in this particular heritage street three type of building type could be considered. Type 1 is Multi-family housing types such as apartments; Type 2 is Single family Housing and Type 3 is Main-street Mixed use. In type 1, the general use of buildings is residential. Ground floors of buildings could be used for parking by owner or given rent and no surface parking would be allowed. There may be low to moderate parking requirements to promote walk-ability and minimize the visual impact on the neighborhood. Buildings on the south side of the street should have been within (5 storey) 60' or a total height of 70' with 50% void of a floor for ventilation. Buildings on the north side of the street should

have been within (6 storey) 70'. Building form and height details are in Table 1.

In type 2, the general use of buildings is residential. Ground floors of buildings could be used for parking by owner or given rent and no surface parking would be allowed. There may be low to moderate parking requirements to promote walk-ability and minimize the visual impact on the neighborhood. Building form and height details are in the Table 2.

In type 3, the general use of buildings is mixed where ground floor could be use as commercial spaces like restaurants, shops etc and upper floor could have been used as commercial or residential or commercial. A part of ground floors of buildings could be used for parking by owner or given rent while using upper floors as residential purpose and no surface parking would be allowed. There may be low to moderate parking requirements to promote walk-ability and minimize the visual impact on the neighborhood. Building form and height details are in the Table 3.

BUILDING FORM	
Height	
Adjacent street facade	30' max
Ground floor ceiling	12' min clear
First floor ceiling	12' min clear
Upper floor ceiling	10' min clear
Plinth	2'

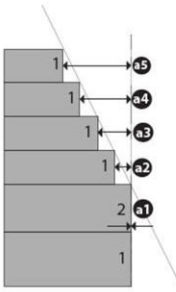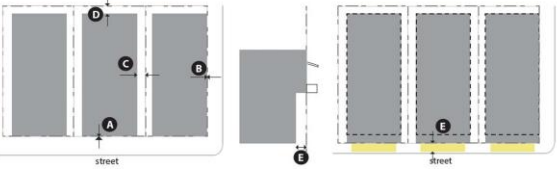| BUILDING PLACEMENT		
Setback (distance from property Line		
FRONT \ STREET SIDE		A
Floors 1 - 2	0'	a1
Floors 2+	5' min	a2
Floors 3+	10' min	a3
Floors 4+	15' min	a4
Floors 5+	20' min	a5
STREET SIDE	0'	B
SIDE	2' min 3' max	C
REAR	3' min 4' max	D
Miscellaneous		
If projected balcony is introduced the front setback is must		
FRONT	3' min 4' max	E
For plot fusion, no setback is required along the common property line		

Table 1: Building form and building placement_ Multi Family Housing as apartments

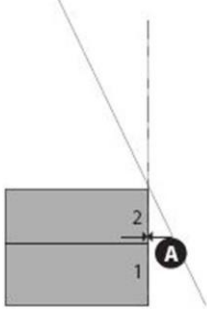| BUILDING FORM		
Height		
Total	30' max	
Ground floor ceiling	12' min clear	
Upper floor ceiling	12' min clear	
Plinth	2'	
BUILDING PLACEMENT		
Setback (distance from property Line		
FRONT \ STREET SIDE	0'	**A**
STREET SIDE	0'	**B**
SIDE	2'min 3'max	**C**
REAR	3'min 4'max	**D**
Miscellaneous		
If projected balcony is introduced the front setback is must		
FRONT	3'min 4'max	**E**
For plot fusion, no setback is required along the common property line		

Table 2: Building form and building placement Single Family Residence

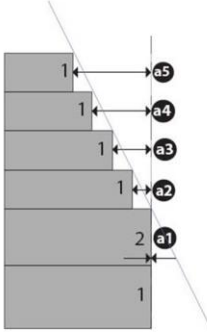| BUILDING FORM		
Height		
Adjacent street facade	30' max	
Ground floor ceiling	14' min (including plinth)	
First floor ceiling	12' min clear	
Upper floor ceiling	10' min clear	
Plinth	0' min 2' max	
BUILDING PLACEMENT		
Setback (distance from property Line		
FRONT \ STREET SIDE		**A**
Floors 1 - 2	0'	**a1**
Floors 2+	5' min	**a2**
Floors 3+	10' min	**a3**
Floors 4+	15' min	**a4**
Floors 5+	20' min	**a5**
STREET SIDE	0'	**B**
SIDE	2'min 3'max	**C**
REAR	3'min 4'max	**D**

Table 3: Building form and building placement_ Main Street Mixed Use

8.2: CATEGORIZATION OF USE AND REUSE:

Typology	Probable Use
Large building complexes	Museums / Libraries
(e.g.: Kacheri Bari, Bani Bhaban	Hotels / Restaurants
Beauty Boarding, Gouro Nitay Mandir)	Schools

Buildings with internal courtyards   Exhibition spaces / Galleries
(e.g.: Kacheri Bari,Alam Villa,   Motels / Rest Houses
Shirish Das lodge)
Small row houses   Shop houses
(e.g. : Radhakor Bhaban,   Residential Accommodation
Other old buildings)

Figure 7, Refurbishment of old heritage buildings (*Source: Author*)

The revenue that can be collected from the reused spaces like café, rest houses, restaurants can help the owners financially. These places can be used by both the community living in this area and visitors. Galleries/exhibition spaces can be given for rent and then revenues can be collected from its use. When the areas would be upgraded with proper designed open spaces adjacent to building the overall environment will help the users as well as whole community to live a better community, social and economically solvent life.

9. Conclusion

Since heritage is not only about the past but also about contemporary living, urban modification and rejuvenation that involve heritage are always sensitive. Involving

the heritage sites, urban activities should be based on integrated urban contexts and also the needs of local residents must be considered. Otherwise, the sites lose their vitality and only exist as a stage setting cut off from the time flowing. Before the planning of large-scale developments, there is a need to grasp the meaning of heritage and its surroundings, characteristics of neighbourhoods and the socio-urban context. Place-based strategies of heritage conservation and urban regeneration often tend to lead to spatial division which misses the complexity and social interaction of the existing community. It is difficult to figure out particularity and historicity of neighbourhoods involving heritage in a large-scale plan. Therefore, heritage conservation plans should play an active role in bridging between the past and present, users and visitors and preserving historic values and recreating new values.

There is a need to re-think regeneration of social values relating to heritage conservation. It may cause more conflicts and leads to loss of heritage significances if heritage conservation is driven by capital and forced by authority. Heritage should involve more socio-political discourse to be socially inclusive and to bring more opportunities to the local community. There is a need for research on how heritage conservation can tackle negative modification effects and contribute to the process of social inclusion demanded in local context.

9.1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

9.2. REFERENCES

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