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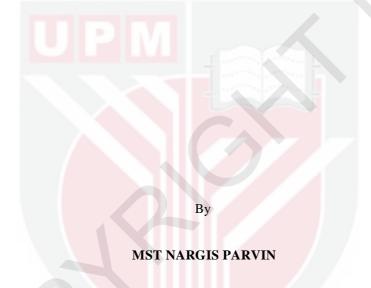
# REVIEW OF THE ADAPTIVE RE-USE OF THREE COLONIAL BUILDINGS IN DHAKA, BANGLADESH

# **MST NARGIS PARVIN**

FRSB 2017 8



# REVIEW OF THE ADAPTIVE RE-USE OF THREE COLONIAL BUILDINGS IN DHAKA, BANGLADESH



Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

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#### **DEDICATED**

Those who have special place in my heart;

My cheering parents - Md. Fazlur Rahman & Mst. Akherun Nessa;

My beloved husband Dr. S.M. Kamruzzaman

for his constant support;

And to my lovely daughters – Samara Zaman and Sehrish Zaman



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Science

# REVIEW OF THE ADAPTIVE RE-USE OF THREE COLONIAL BUILDINGS IN DHAKA, BANGLADESH

By

#### MST NARGIS PARVIN

#### December 2016

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Adaptive reuse is a process of redevelopment and regeneration of historic building that can be reuse for new purposes which provides social, environmental and economic benefits. Bangladesh have experienced long colonial past (1757 to 1947). During colonial period developed many significant buildings with colonial style and character. These buildings had strong impact on society, culture and history. However, many of these colonial buildings are not conserving and well documented for future generation. As a result, several colonial buildings are gradually decaying and abandonedor used by illegal people. Very few buildings are conserving and reusing by the government however, most of these buildings are in critical condition. In this study, we evaluated the current situations of conservation and adaptive reuse of three British colonial buildings (Ahsan Monzil, Curzon Hall and Ruplal House) in Dhaka, Bangladesh. To get the optimum result, three British colonial buildings selected as sample and qualitative methods applied for study. Interview, documents study and observation are the three main techniques for qualitative method, which applied for data collection. In order to identify the challenges or problems between the conservation practice and current condition of adaptive reuse, have analyzed in existing framework or guide lines that provided by the government of Bangladesh and international conservation principles, which delivered by the UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICCOROM and international Charters. Based on the data collections have revealed multiple causes, which severely effects to the longevity and adaptive reuse of British colonial buildings, such as: lack of proper planning and guidelines by the government, insufficient fund, lack of expert technical people, ignorance of implementation, weaken of monitoring system and lack of people's awareness. In such a deplorable condition, it is essential to reform the government framework, which followed by the international guidelines that provided by the international organizations and at the same time can full fill the all aspects and needs of Bangladesh's colonial buildings adaptive reuse. If the government and related authorities initiates these types of actions, the people will get multiple benefits from adaptive reuse of colonial buildings, such as economic, social, cultural, job opportunity, recreational, environmental and logical connection with the past and future generation.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Master Sains

# TINJAUAN PENNGUNAAN SEMULA TIGA BANGUNAN KOLONIAL DI DHAKA, BANGLADESH

Oleh

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Penggunaan semula adalah proses pembangunan semula dan penjanaan semula bangunan bersejarah yang boleh digunakan untuk tujuan baru yang memberi manfaat kepada; sosial, alam sekitar dan ekonomi. Bangladesh telah mengalami era kolonial yang lama iaitu dari 1757 hingga 1947. Semasa zaman penjajahan, banyak bangunan yang penting menunjulkan gaya dan watak kolonial. Bangunan ini mempunyai kesan yang kuat terhadap masyarakat, budaya dan sejarah. Walau bagaimanapun, banyak bangunan kolonial ini tidak dipelihara dan didokumenkan dengan baik untuk generasi akan datang. Akibatnya, beberapa bangunan penjajah secara beransur-ansur rosak dan didiami oleh orang yang menyalahi undang-undang. Sangat sedikit bangunan yang dipelihara dan digunakan semula oleh kerajaan namun kebanyakan bangunan ini berada dalam keadaan kritikal. Kajian ini, menilai keadaan semasa pemuliharaan dan penggunaan semula penyesuaian kepada tiga bangunan kolonial British iaitu Ahsan Monzil, Curzon Hall dan Ruplal House di Dhaka, Bangladesh. Untuk mendapatkan hasil yang optimum, tiga bangunan penjajah British dipilih sebagai sampel dan kaedah kualitatif digunakan untuk kajian. Temubual, kajian dan pemerhatian dokumen adalah tiga teknik utama untuk kaedah kualitatif untuk pengumpulan data. Untuk mengenal pasti cabaran atau masalah di antara amalan pemuliharaan dan keadaan semasa penggunaan semula penyesuaian, telah dianalisis dalam rangka kerja atau garis panduan yang sedia ada yang disediakan oleh kerajaan Bangladesh dan prinsip pemuliharaan antarabangsa, yang digariskan oleh UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICCOROM dan piagam antarabangsa. Berdasarkan koleksi data, terdapat banyak sebab yang memberi kesan ketara kepada jangka hayat dan pengunaan semula bangunan kolonial British, seperti: kurangnya perancangan dan garis panduan yang sesuai oleh kerajaan, dana yang tidak mencukupi, kurang ahli teknikal, dalam pelaksanaan, Ini semua melemahkan sistem pemantauan dan kurangnya kesedaran orang awam. Dalam keadaan yang sangat menyedihkan, adalah penting untuk memperbaharui rangka kerja kerajaan, yang diikuti oleh garis panduan antarabangsa yang disediakan oleh organisasi antarabangsa dan pada masa yang sama dapat mengisi sepenuhnya semua aspek dan keperluan bangunan penyesuaian bangunan kolonial Bangladesh. Sekiranya kerajaan dan pihak berkuasa yang berkaitan memulakan jenis tindakan ini, rakyat akan

mendapat banyak manfaat daripada penggunaan semula bangunan penjajah yang bersesuaian, seperti peluang ekonomi, sosial, kebudayaan, peluang pekerjaan, rekreasi, alam sekitar dan logik dengan generasi masa lalu dan masa depan.



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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 21 December 2016 to conduct the final examination of Mst Nargis Parvin on her thesis entitled "Review of the Adaptive Re-Use of Three Colonial Buildings in Dhaka, Bangladesh" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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#### **CHAPTER 1**

#### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of Study

This research focuses on the extent and scope of the adaptive reuse by existing framework for supporting and maintenance of colonial buildings in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Here three prominent colonial buildings have selected as sample for case study. Due to the geographical strategic location, topography and climate, Bengal was the favorable ground for development of its own native architectural character. Notable that Bangladesh has experienced different architectural phases from the beginning of the ancient period and it evoked by some marked architectures of this region. Previously Dhaka was a center for the trade and commerce and many invaders came to this city for business in the colonial era, later they seized the power and settled here. At that time, architectural development have totally influenced by the colonial power along with their essence. Currently Dhaka, the capital city, is congested and hazardous for the unplanned development. Because of unawareness and lack of interest, the historical buildings and their sustainability become deteriorating. Therefore, in this research we evaluate the current situations and prospects of the magnificent colonial buildings and demonstrate the potential adaptive reuse options.

As the case with many other former subjects of the British period, the British legacy in Bangladesh remains a controversial topic. However, almost all can agree that the landmarks built by the British power are valuable assets of our society and can only add to the richness of Bangladeshi heritage. During the colonial period, the colonizer built many infrastructures, road networks and other amenities in their colonized region of the world. Many of these built items are till now existing in these areas as the legacy of the British period. Buildings are the prominent items and some of these buildings are until now standing as a monument and reusing. Any historic building represents the history and culture of a country. Historic buildings are the witness of our past lives and give us the sense of magnificence of our glorious history. It has architectural, stylish, noteworthy, narrative, archeological, financial, social, political and profound or typical qualities; it is an image of our social character and coherence, furthermore a portion of heritage. Sometimes the conservation of historic buildings has neglected for the money and risk. However, adaptive reuse is a process to give a new life of an old building (Jamal et al., 2012). Adaptive reuse involves rethinking existing structures for new uses that means the adjustment of historic buildings starting with one, utilize then onto the next while protecting their heritage value. Sometimes, this might be simply an adjustment of activities and uses, however as a rule structure require changes to suit their new utilization. For this result, reuse permits historic structures to maintain properly and their foundation, origin to be discovered and considered, even where their purpose and capacity have changed.

Adaptive reuse is an essential and suitable component in holding historic structures and places for future eras. In addition, there are significant returns for ecological sustainability. Some, architectural community generally express adaptive reuse (AR), or Reuse, as the method that adjusts structures for new uses while holding their historic character and features.

Nowadays, the basic to prolong the life cycle of a building related with different sustainability goals. In order to get social, economic and environmental benefits adaptive reuse is a best option than the other methods of conservation. Adaptive reuse of historic buildings is an outline of sustainable urban regeneration, which expands the building's existence and avoids destruction waste, supports reuses of the embodied energy and provides considerable social and economic profit. Adaptive reuse bypasses the wasteful process of demolition and reconstruction. Therefore, adaptive reuse is more suitable and beneficial than the other method of conservation and it turns into a way to renew urban life and declining neighborhoods.

#### 1.2 Problem Statement

Throughout the British Colonial period, Bangladesh was British Colonies, experienced many political, economic and social deviation and fluctuations. The British Colonials transported their architectural styles into Bangladesh, some of which are still in presence and displaying the sophistication of their unique architectural characteristics. Although, the colonial period has painful past and unique characteristics in their architectures but these buildings are valuable heritage to us and still now have the potential to contribute to the society in Bangladesh.

There are no strong evidences or documents regarding British Colonial buildings in Bangladesh. Very limited information is available about the British Colonial buildings. A small number of colonial buildings have been conserving but most of them have not documented as a part of heritage conservation. Many of these colonial buildings are abandoned; some are enemy property used by the illegal people. For this disregard and ignorance causes demolition and deformation of these valuable heritage buildings. Rapid urbanization of Dhaka city has ignored to interlink with the core place of this city that is the most historic area in the city named as old Dhaka.

Dhaka is a densely populated city and approximately 16 million people are living in this city. Therefore, the city is always overcrowded and has tremendous traffic congestion in all areas. Unplanned city development makes a chaotic situation and the comparative urban development of basic requirements (residential, commercial and recreational) have shortage and this development has not established any dialog between the old historic area and the new developed area of this city's context. The feasible architectural expression also overlooked. However, this 400 years old city has many historic buildings that remain the potential to contribute for the sustainable development thus the government and local people may get social, economic and environmental advantage.

Nowadays, the ideal picture of conservation process and techniques are ignoring. For adaptive reuse of colonial buildings the guidelines, techniques and principles have ignored which provided by the international organization for heritage conservation and international Charters. Therefore, reuse of colonial buildings turn out to be inactive, unfeasible and unprofitable. Some of colonial buildings are non-conserved and decaying for abused by the illegal inhabitants. This condition shows the lacks and gaps of proper conservation process, which highlights the importance and need for the specific guidelines or framework of the government rules. Proper understanding and implementation of these rules for conservation and adaptive reuse may guide to sustain long time and contribute for social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits.

This study will identify the framework of adaptive reuse in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Many historic buildings has situated in this area, which developed in different period and in different types. To concise and concentrate on this study, only focusing on the British colonial buildings because the people have very bitter experience about the British ruling during British colonization in Bangladesh. Therefore, three colonial historic buildings will be discussed here as a sample of case study, such as Ahsan Monzil, Curzon Hall and Ruplal House. These buildings are famous in this area, which have different types of architectural significance and great influence to the society. Here, Ahsan Monzil and Curzon Hall is currently reusing but Ahsan Monzil still facing many problems to sustain independently. For this reason, it is necessary to pay more attention and essential to monitor the process of adaptive reuse and the transformation overtime for the sustainable development. Therefore, reuse or regeneration of these colonial buildings can make positive impact on society and can generate revenue, job opportunity, recreation and environmental feasibility. Thus, it is a critical issue to raise awareness on the British colonial buildings before demolished. To protect these assets need a long-term planning and proper implementation of the guidelines.

#### 1.3 Research Questions

Key research questions are arising based on research problem. This research will discuss on the point of the following questions:

"What is the framework for the adaptive reuse of the historic buildings in Bangladesh? "What are the key factor that causes the inactiveness and demolition of the colonial buildings in Bangladesh? What would be the framework for the proper utilization of these historic buildings to contribute properly for social sustainable development?"

Thus, the research efforts to find the existing factors that are enabling the colonial buildings to perform as valuable resources. This study also attempts to clarify the significance and remaining values and optimum potentials to use of the three selected colonial buildings in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

#### 1.4 Aims and Objectives

The goal of this research is to find out the complication of adaptive reuse of the British colonial buildings in Bangladesh and analysis to increase the possibilities of adaptive reuse. This study will also explore some ideas of adaptive reuse to investigate the probable outcomes on how it might perform its part for the development, unification and conservation for social, cultural, economic and environmental benefit in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The specific objectives are as follows:

- 1. To identify the framework of adaptive reuse in general and in Bangladesh.
- 2. To document and analysis of the adaptive reuse of colonial buildings in, Dhaka, Bangladesh, as sample case study: Ahsan Monzil, Ruplal House and Curzon hall.
- 3. To identify the main factor that causes the deteriorations of the colonial buildings in Bangladesh.
- 4. To propose a framework for the colonial buildings adaptive reuse in Bangladesh.

#### 1.5 Scope and Limitation of the research

This research will discuss about the 190 years (1757-1947) colonial history of Bangladesh and the architectural development of this region that will focus on the contemporary problems, significance and the values of three prominent British colonial buildings in Dhaka. In order to get some ideas, this study will analyze the existing framework in Bangladesh and international guidelines for conservation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings. Furthermore, with the qualitative method, this research will investigate the contemporary problems and potential adaptive reuse of the selected cases. These three data collection method proposed by Yin and Flick, which includes the expert's opinion or interview, document study and observation (Yin., 2011; Flick., 2015). These methods will guide to identify the factors that are enabling to perform as successful adaptive reuse of these colonial buildings in Dhaka, Bangladesh. It will help to draw a template and evaluate the current scenario of these buildings and context. Finally, a brief outline will be drawn and recommend some new potential adaptive reuse options for the selected cases.

According to Burra Charter, any conservation work will be carried on a place it should be preceded by preliminary studied to understand the place; this however should include drawings, documentaries and physical analysis (ICOMOS, 1999). In these selected study cases, architectural enquiry have done properly and included the architectural drawings (plans and elevations), pictures to relate with the places. Unfortunately, architectural plans and detail drawings of Curzon Hall have not presented because it has not archived or documented. So, it made difficult to collect the necessary drawings. We presented here some drawings of Ahsan Monzil and Ruplal House from the different sources because only few practitioner architects and historians have collected these drawings with their personal interest.

#### 1.6 Outline of the thesis

This thesis is consisting of six (6) sections and a brief layout of the proposal have discussed here. Chapter one (1) have described the summary of the research comprising the research background, problem statement & issues, research question, aims and objectives, scope and limitations, outline of the research. In chapter two (2) contains the review of literatures, relating to the research topics which comprises the theoretical background of historical buildings conservation and adaptive reuse, international organizations and international charters who works for the conservation, history of colonial architecture, three case studies as example in three different colonized countries, colonization in Bangladesh and development of colonial architecture. An overview of conservation guidelines and current scenario of adaptive reuse in Bangladesh have included. In chapter three (3), Research Methodology excessively represents the research technique and incorporates the research plan, data collection strategies and data analysis. In section four (4), view of the selected methodology, an elaborate representation of the research findings have displayed. The research findings have prepared in a realistic way to assume an appropriate method for analyzing the data. In Section five (5) have analyzed the collected data in view of the predefined parameter that was developed from the review of literature. In the section six (6), collected data and data analysis have been answering for recommendation and conclusion. This section have suggested to make an effort of answering the research questions stated before and section six is the last part to the research.

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