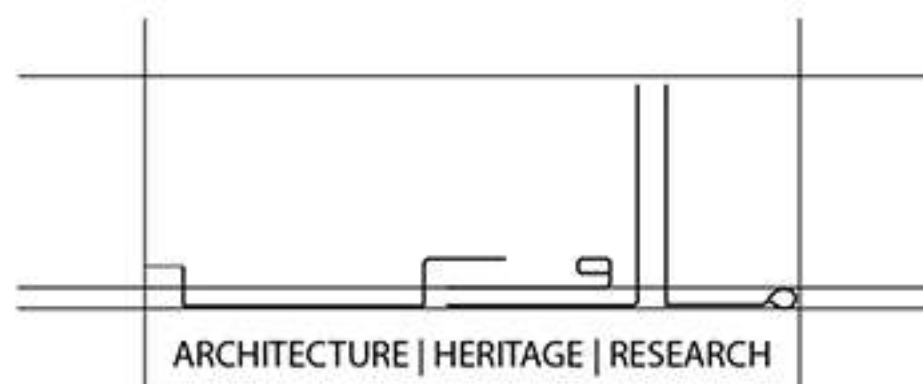


Heritage Evaluation in Everyday Urban Development

*Karachi's largest megalopolis
is fast losing its heritage built
environment through neglect,
illegal land distribution &
deterioration.*



PAKISTAN
CHOWK
COMMUNITY
CENTRE



HERITAGE
WALK
KARACHI

Content

<i>Setting the Lens</i>	5-14
<i>Instituinal Disconnect and Policy Gaps</i>	15-18
<i>Implementation Rupture</i>	18-27
<i>An (unpromising) Way Forward</i>	28-31

Preface

Marvi Mazhar & Associates (MMA) and Heritage Walk Karachi (HWK) a project of Pakistan Chowk Community Center (PCCC) have been advocating towards Karachi's built environment especially focusing on Heritage and Oldtown Karachi for last ten years. The research is an output of visual data collection and on ground citizen led advocacy where it's now important to discuss bylaws and government policies versus real estate phenomena. This disconnect in urbanity has caused a lot of loss in the context of urban history and everyday archives.

As part of the Sindh Cultural Heritage (Preservation) Act, 1994, the antiquities department instructs building owners to "maintain the facade of heritage buildings", making no mention of the importance of internal planning and its historical relevance. This leaves an irreversible void, as the features inside heritage buildings are neglected. These include wind shafts, light wells, diya-daans, chiraagh-gahs, ceramic decorative tiles and many other local architectural features worth preserving.

My advocacy and on going conversation with the city is based on everyday loss and top down decisions on urban planning. Cities are developed by understanding neighbourhoods, historical streets and keeping ecology and environment as part of design decisions. It's a practice where we accommodate humans and non humans equally and ethically.

On going research

Marvi Mazhar
June. 2022
Karachi

1



Image 1.0: The verticality can be clearly observed through this image where the high rise building sits atop the decaying heritage building making it seem isolated and neglected. It serves as a reflection of the increasing urban sprawl mentioned above. Photo by Marvi Mazhar (M.A. Jinnah Road).

Setting the Lens

and introduction to Karachi's Urban Heritage Conflict

"The Regulations must allow to identify and retain those essential features that contribute to the character of a building or area and to ensure that any new development is in sympathy with, and contributes to, the character of that area"

The historical districts keep many elements of important tangible and intangible heritage, including planning patterns, historic buildings, signages, social networks, lifestyles, traditional crafts, skills, materials, inherited customs and traditions, ceremonial rituals, and appearances, shared walls, neighborhood density, proportions, courtyards and terraces. All of that forms unique configurations that express the identity and collective memory of cities.

Karachi is a complex city with constant negotiations to maintain its uniqueness while urbanizing, which is why there is no denying that it is extremely integral for it to be infrastructurally developed accordingly. However, development does not necessarily mean destruction of the city's essence which lies in its inheritance and historically built environment from the lens of culture and architecture. There are many examples across South Asia which attest to this claim and have ensured their city's future is designed by using the historical roots as a tool to think forward. It is very important to acknowledge the conflict between those who, at the various levels of decision-making, are in favor of the preservation of old quarters, and those who feel that preservation is not a worthwhile operation, springs from a difference of approach to the question of the heritage. Should we restore it? And if so, how and what should we restore?

Jyoti Hosagrahar writes in the book 'Perceptions of Sustainability in Heritage Studies' that in the last two decades, South Asia has "experienced and observed unprecedented and incessant urbanization" (Hosagrahar, 2015, p. 113) where "rapid growth and globalized development have transformed cities and towns and posed a threat to the heritage assets, values, and the identity of historic places" (Hosagrahar, 2015, p. 113). In support of this, we can see that there is an urban sprawl which has become unparalleled across the city.

Pakistan is not the only one which faces such a problem, however, it is amongst the few which has failed to derive any 'care plan' to combat the problem. It is important to highlight that the problem of old towns and cities is even more acute in developing countries where the great wave of modernization came not in the 19th c but in the 1950s and 60s, usually around the time when political independence was achieved. This fast development to compete with developed regions created unnecessary competition of 'best skyline' phenomena.

Countries like Srilanka, Turkey, Bangladesh and India are all known to have celebrated culture in an exhaustive colonial history with intense significance to individual identity and community building. With systematic approaches and institutional collaboration, these countries have managed to preserve their heritage in the best conditions without compromising on their respective economic developmental goals.



Figure 1.1: Scaling Map to understand the proportion of downtown vs old town of cities where old town has been preserved for high end tourism, research and embracing heritage as part of the urban fabric. Mapping Illustrated in Maroi Mazhar Associates (Hani Arif, 2022)

It is important to note that despite these cities having a relatively larger old town, they have managed to better implement their comprehensive heritage laws and successfully conserve their heritage by “preserving the richness and diversity of people’s creative genius” (Hosagrahar, 2015, p. 117). Old town can be defined as the part of the city which holds the history and culture in its core. It is through these old towns that a city radiates historical and cultural significance which is why their preservation is significant for every country.

According to the Sindh Government website, Sindh has around 3000 sites and monuments altogether, out of which 1600 are in Karachi (Government of Sindh, 2021). With a colonial past and a widespread influence of “dominant modes of development focused on increasing GDP” (Hosagrahar, 2015, p. 116), Karachi’s heritage is wearing away. It is facing an enormous cultural crisis due to the inability of the institutions to recognise the need to preserve. What they struggle to acknowledge is how the process of urbanization can be redesigned in such a way that it does not take away from the essence of the city’s cultural landscape. Is there a policy which caters to this discourse and can it really be implemented in Karachi to achieve cultural sustainable development?

Karachi’s heritage is indeed in a dangerous condition because its conservation is not a provincial priority. Although the Sindh government and the heritage committee is seen working towards safeguarding the century’s old buildings, there has not been significant advancement towards any sustainable solution to keep the testaments of Karachi’s past alive and well.

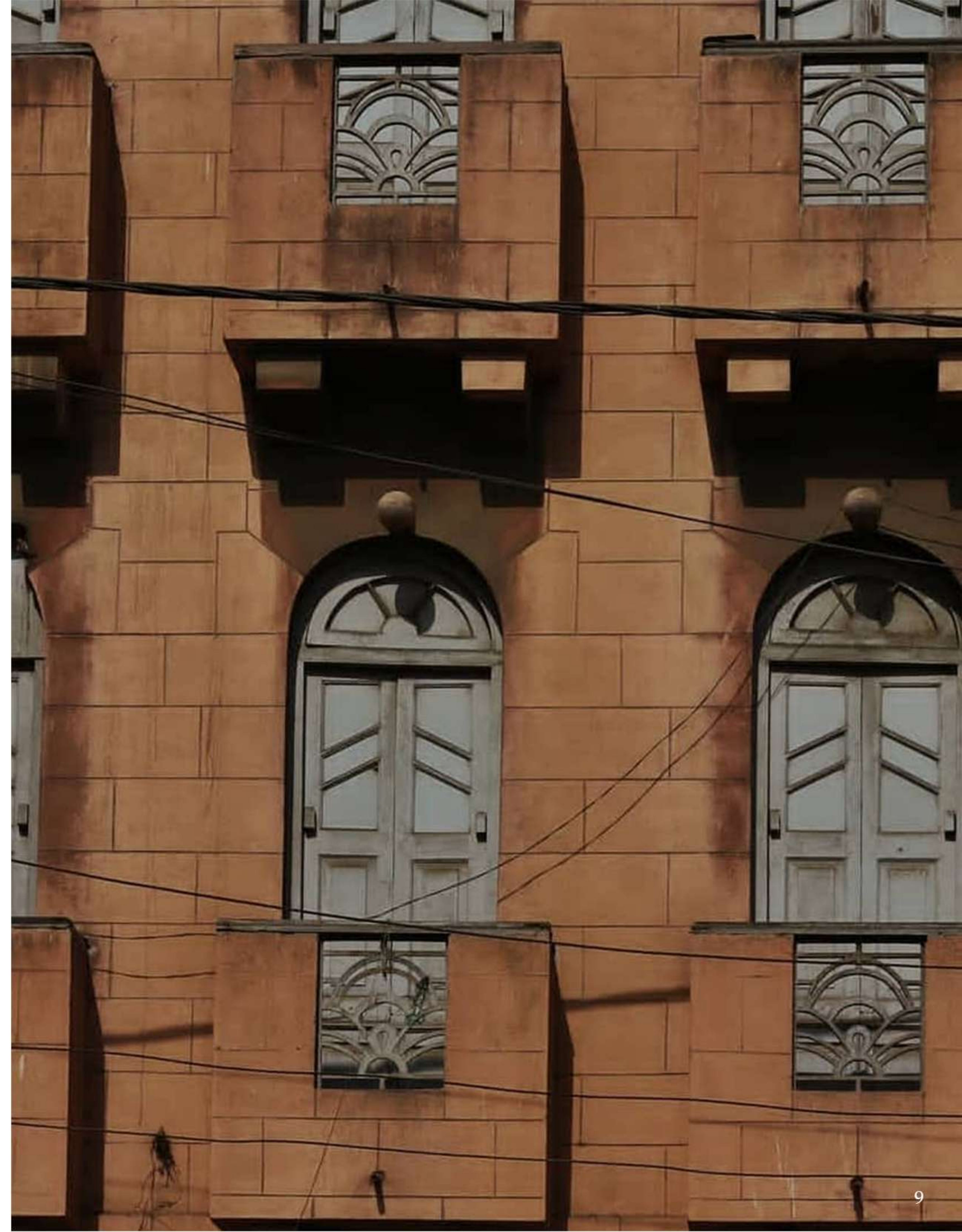




Figure 1.2: Map of Karachi with old town demarcated. It shows the proportion of the old town (49.71 km²) in comparison with the scale of Karachi (3780 km²). Mapping Illustrated in Marvi Mazhar Associates (Hani Arif,2022)

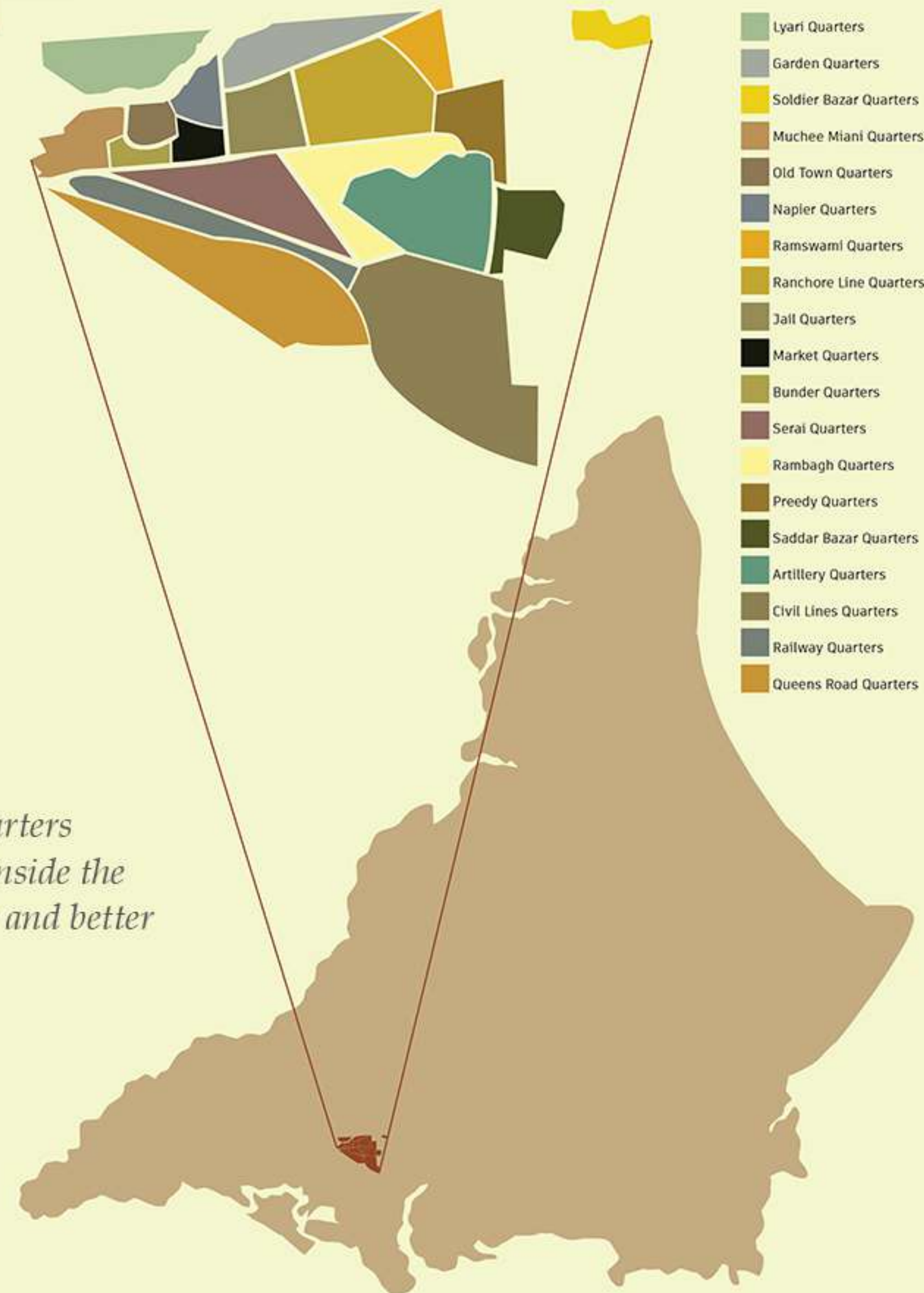


Figure 1.3: Zooming into the old town map with quarters demarcated. It shows the various different quarters inside the old town with their respective names for comparison and better visibility. Mapping Illustrated at Marvi Mazhar Associates. (Hani Arif,2022)

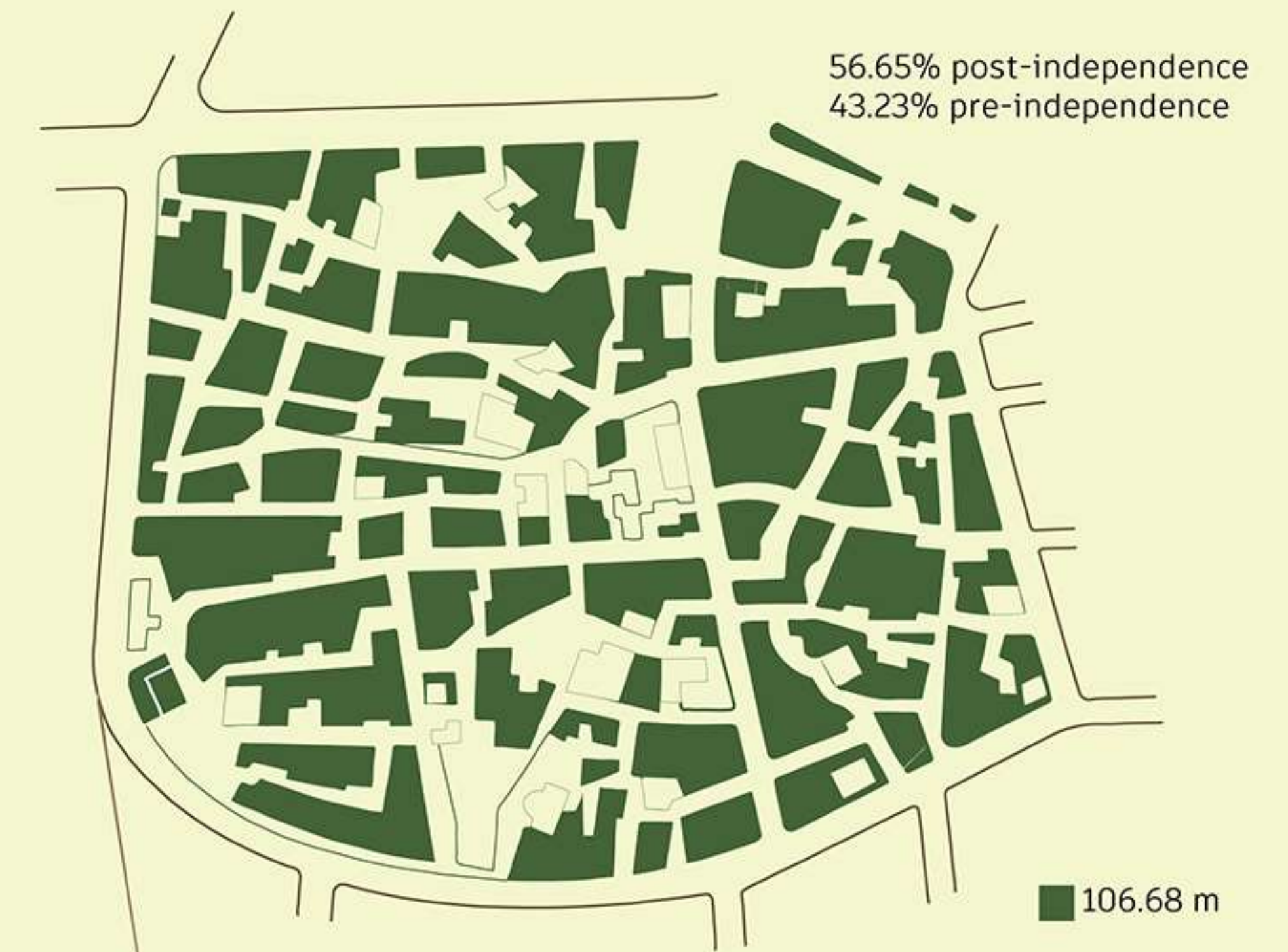


Figure 1.4: Zoomed into the Old town with a detailed map of **Machhi Miani quarter** which is the oldest quarter historically indicating the heart of Karachi. The Machhi Miani Quarter map indicates that 106.68 m of the land is the most vulnerable in terms of heritage destruction and urbanization. Mapping Illustrated in Marvi Mazhar Associates. (Hani Arif, 2022)

Karachi is a city of economic promises. It serves as a transiting hub for scores of people seeking employment opportunities, however, what is rarely taken into consideration is how this economic and population growth contributes to altering the city's urban-layout/design? What can be done to efficiently recognise Karachi's cultural significance through the 1600 heritage sites located in the city? While it is imperative for the international economic standards to be met as a port city, this does not negate the idea of Karachi also being home to years of history which needs to be protected. The city's elegance resides in its heritage and intricate architectural designs which is why to ensure that Karachi does not suffer from repercussions of the urban facade, it is important to restore and rejuvenate its heritage. Karachi's institutions can be seen neglecting its past to run the race of progress and while doing so are emphasizing on the discourse of transforming the city using high rise buildings and distant skylines. Although they may look phenomenal from afar, these skylines are a false projection of the future. A future with huge buildings, contaminated air and an even greater larger risk of climate change is not the kind of development one ought to be aiming for we should be aiming for. The destruction of heritage sites because of our infatuation with first world progress is not the correct path towards urbanization because in the context of Karachi, there is some exquisite and grand cultural heritage which needs to be appraised.

A past which begs to be accentuated and a present that asks for improved aspiration, Karachi truly needs to preserve its beautiful heritage because it is the walls of these sites that indicate the struggle of our forefathers and the majestic times they used to live in. As Elizabeth Longworth wrote "Cultural heritage plays an important role in supporting sustainable development, disaster risk reduction and building community resilience" (Longworth, 2014, p.120) and it is exactly because of these reasons why heritage conservation should not just be given priority on a national level but proper monitoring methods should be implemented to ensure the process of conservation is sustainable in the long term.

Karachi needs to be categorized as not just the successful metropolitan which is fulfilling its pre assumed dream of urbanization but also as a 'people city'. A place which emphasizes on the history of the country and delivers it in the hearts of people who are looking for inspiration and familiarity. What better way to offer both of these things other than through heritage restoration. People like talking about the old times but how will they do so if there is nothing to remind them of it?



Narrow passageway of Pre-partition building, Hasan Building



Photo Credits: mobeenansariphoto via instagram

Institutional Disconnect and Policy Gaps

One of the major reasons behind the poor preservation of sites of cultural and historical significance in urban and rural Sindh could be attributed to the lack of coordination between the relevant stakeholders, which leads to a gap in the policies formulated at the provincial level, and subsequently at the national level. Sindh is in dire need of extensive legislation which is aimed at preserving not just the cultural properties that carry the weight of the province's colonial past, but also the rich social connections it fostered via the spaces harbored in those buildings to stay connected with its roots, and pass them on to future generations. However, the current legislation on the protection of heritage only focuses on improving the exterior of the buildings and maintaining the facade rather than catering to the specific cultural, historical and/or anthropological needs of each site with respect to their social surroundings.

The impact of this has been the most visible in Karachi, which is an interesting mix of rural, urban and peri-urban regions, and is home to some of the most significant national monuments, indigenous neighborhoods and architecturally-rich historical and cultural sites. The idea of protecting and preserving the city’s heritage has been limited has been sadly been limited to processes of ‘gentrification’ and ‘beautification’, which are not only unsustainable in the long run but often serve as an attempt to conceal the corrupt real estate mafia rapidly plaguing Karachi and profiting off the concerned government departments. This is slowly turning Karachi into a capitalist’s paradise and jeopardizing the city’s heritage whose only hope now is solid structural change in its policies and stricter legislation.

The existing legislation and policies on the preservation of heritage sites are an extension of the laws introduced by the British Raj, whose foundations rest on the ‘Ancient Monuments Preservation Act of 1904’. With only minor changes made to the original document guised under different names such as Antiquities Act 1975, and the Sindh Cultural Heritage (Preservation) Act of 1994, etc, the only notable distinction is the devolution of power in 2011 where the responsibility of protection of heritage sites was transferred from the federal to provincial level as a result of the 18th amendment. Consequently, the Karachi Building Control Authority (KBCA) was transformed into Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) in 2011 by the Government of Sindh. With its jurisdiction now extending beyond Karachi to the entire province of Sindh, this institution is mainly responsible for approving building plans, overseeing structural designs and issuing no-objection certificates (NOCs) to developers and builders. The process of obtaining an NOC can be a tedious one and the hierarchy is shown in the figure below. The SBCA has 11 different departments which supervise legal affairs, demolition, town planning and regulation and deal with complaints.

The redistribution of power, however, has not proven to be of sufficient help for the preservation of heritage sites in urban centers like Karachi due to the lack of coordination among the different departments. The SBCA has been accused several times of issuing no-objection certificates (NOCs) to builders and development schemes which have evidently violated the Sindh High Density Development Board Act of 2010 as well as Sindh Environmental Protection Act of 2014, by allowing the construction of high rise buildings in vulnerable areas not categorized as ‘High Density Zones’. A report from the Daily Times in 2017 revealed that according to SBCA officials, “around 585 no objection certificates from 2010 till date have been

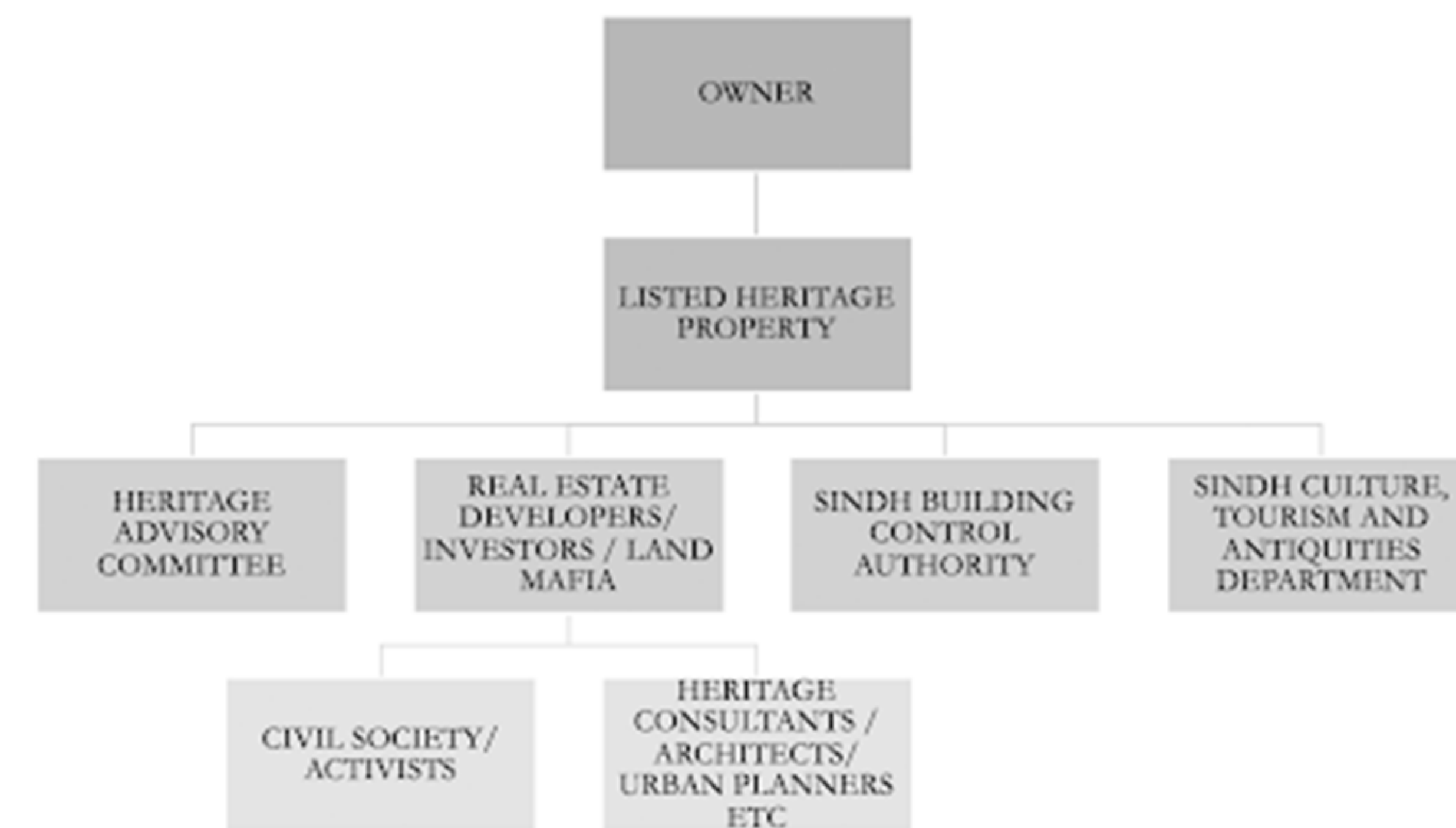


Figure 2.0: Outline describing a step-by-step hierarchy of obtaining a No-Objection Certificate (NOC) by a client for Real Estate Development for Rehabilitation.

given to the builders for construction of high rise” (Correspondent, 2017). The SBCA officials further elaborated that in areas of the city where high-rise structures are prohibited, the majority of residential and commercial building projects have either been finished or are under construction. The areas facing the coastal line have been categorized as ‘High Density Zones’ but based on the 2017 records of the SBCA, only seven high-rise buildings were constructed in those designated regions in the past seven years, whereas over five hundred high rises with 9-stories or more were built in the non-designated areas.

This has only exacerbated the problems of urban dwellers who are now faced with the increasingly intense issue of water shortage. The Karachi Water and Sewerage Board had already warned the local authorities that it lacked the resources to supply water to the ever-increasing number of high rise buildings, but the SBCA granted the real estate developers their NOCs regardless, dismissing the concerns shown by KWSB. The growing influx of people and businesses in non-High Density Zones has also led to the issue of traffic congestion and attracted encroachers, all of which pose serious threats to the original landscapes of the regions, rich in culture and history. While laws exist on state and provincial levels for the protection of heritage sites, it is crucial to

understand that these laws are “uniformly applicable” to all types of architectural and cultural heritage sites and artifacts, archaeological sites, and monuments, regardless of their nature, status, or categorization (Khan et al., 2022). This implies that there is no solid plan of action which addresses the specific issues of each category, and the land and real estate mafia ultimately benefit as a result of this loophole and strategically use it to expand their capitalistic projects throughout the city.

Implementation Rupture

Karachi being the nexus of Sindh often bears the pressure of being further developed and farther urbanized which results in unplanned infrastructures and increased land prices because of a need to turn every area into a commercialized zone, however, Karachi has a profound history which needs to be considered and preserved before it gets lost in the development context. The development approach needs to be deconstructed and redefined in the context of Karachi, as one where we use words like ‘care’ and ‘repair’ to allow the city to breathe on its own.

The history of Karachi is slowly disappearing as we focus over how to develop it rather than how to repair and care for it. How the government and its institutions envision a future for Karachi dictates what gets implemented. Today there stems a partition between the urban and heritage landscape. Troubling situations are in-play against the context of preserving and protecting historical architecture from the

pre-partition era. The gravity of the condition is severe because of a lack of awareness and motivation on the part of real estate developers and owners of the heritage sites. ‘Many historic buildings have turned into private offices and commercial centers due to which their original form has been lost somewhere’ (Ferozi, 2020), and more are currently either completely closed to the public, commercialized as storage spaces, or homes for people who can’t afford to pay much rent, in other words they are left to be, on their own.

One of the most violent acts towards these sites is how developers buy out a heritage site, demolish its interior completely and let its front face stay as its part of the Sindh Heritage Act, the antiquities and archaeology department ‘keeps instructing building owners to maintain the facade of heritage buildings’ (Ferozi, 2020), and not the entire building. This leaves a void, which can never be irreversible as the heritage buildings internally have high value features like wind shafts, light wells, diya daan, chiraag gah, taq, glass painted panes, ceramic decorative tiles and many other local architectural features worth preserving as Living Heritage for future on site learnings.



Image 3.0: Ceramic Tiles from Nusserwanjee & Co are a unique special feature of Oldtown where almost more than 3000 patterns were documented by ADRL at Indus Valley School of Art & Architecture. These patterns reflected unique designs and local material reflected on economical maintenance.

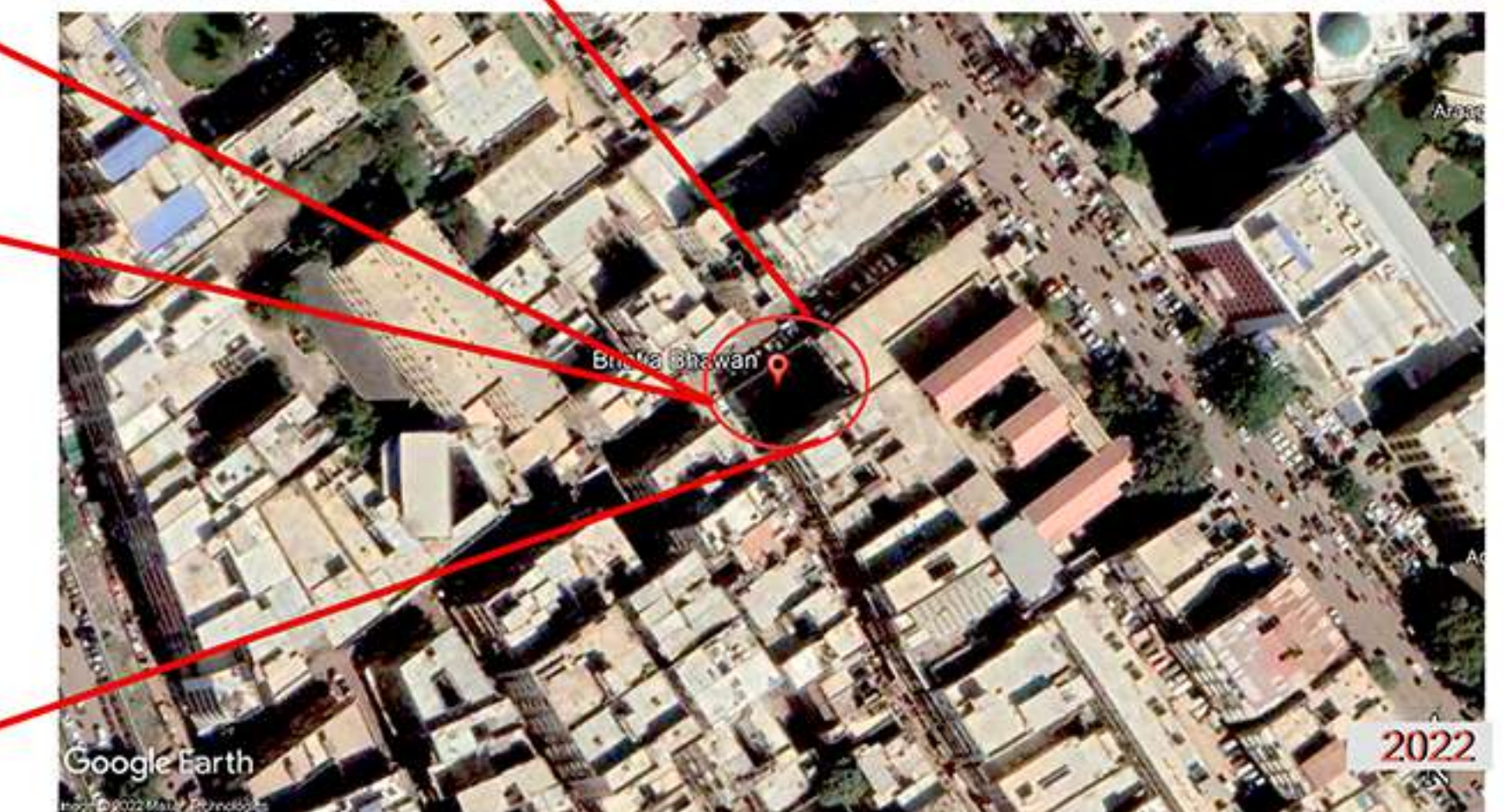
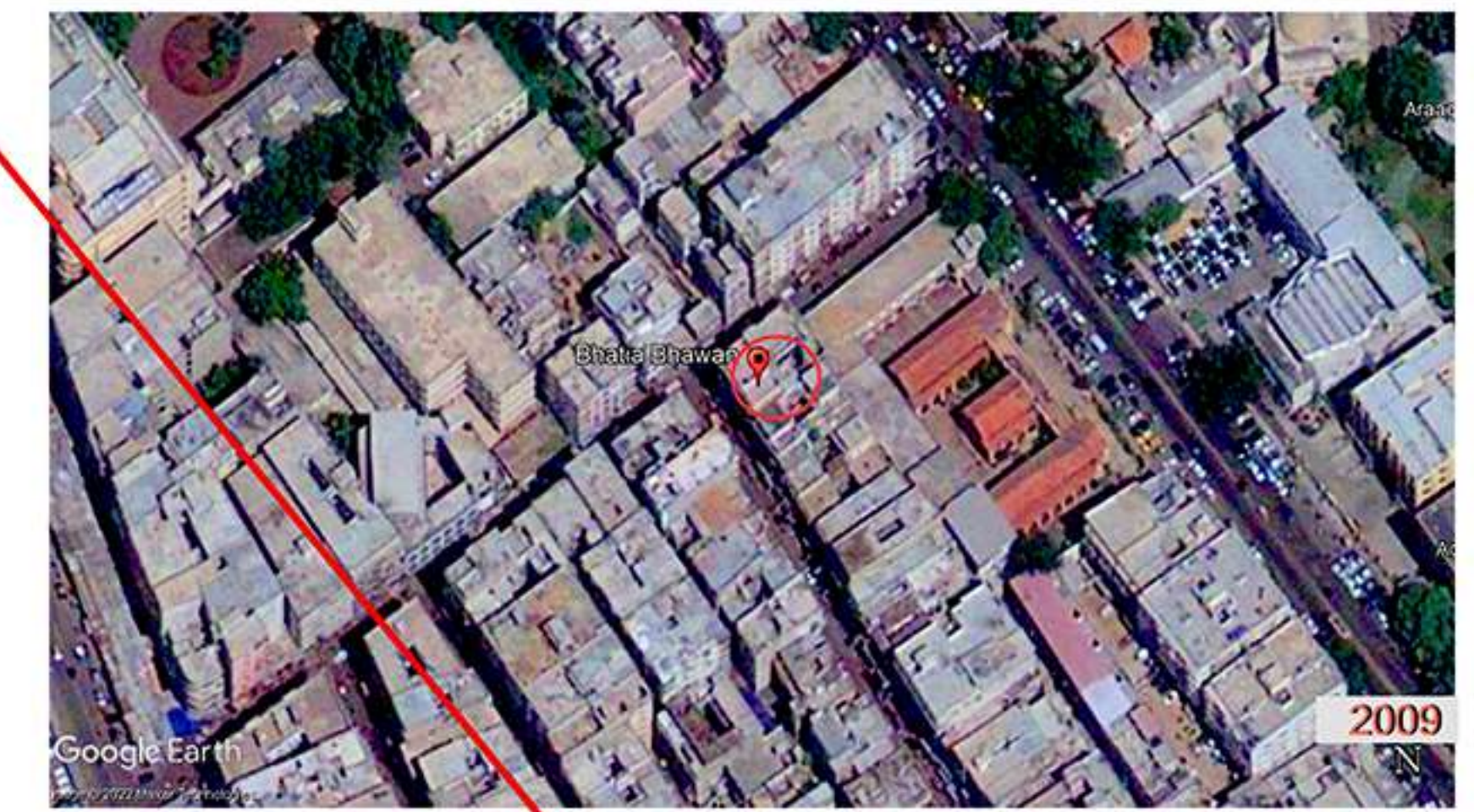


Image 3.1: Unique elements like jaalis, iron grills and corner stone cornices found on the public street after unethical demolishing. These lost unique architectural elements land up in heritage black markets sold for private collectors and repurposed and used in new development as part of 'memory' and 'collection.' Here it is critical to acknowledge that these urban ruins can easily be curated as part of Karachi's Ruin Museum, if ever proposed.

The Kanji Building on Outram Road and Bhattia Bhawan building are two examples of pieces of history whose souls have been destroyed, and just the skin remains intact. If such are the measures that are used for conservation then it's ironic and mocking the institution's attempts of respecting the essence of our history, as history does not stay when its context is erased. Centuries old stories will not be shared when there is nothing to relate it with. Heritage Bachao Tehreek raised their voice 'what happens behind the facade is the real crime' (Architectural Analysis Old Town-Karachi) to raise awareness against these daylight offenses. Kanji building and Bhattia Bhawan building await to hear what will be their future, if any.



Demolition of Bhattia Bhawan



Bhattia Bhawan (1931)
Wadhmal Odharam Adhumal Oodharam Quarter, Karachi,
<https://goo.gl/maps/Hi4D8XU4rwwsBZB29>

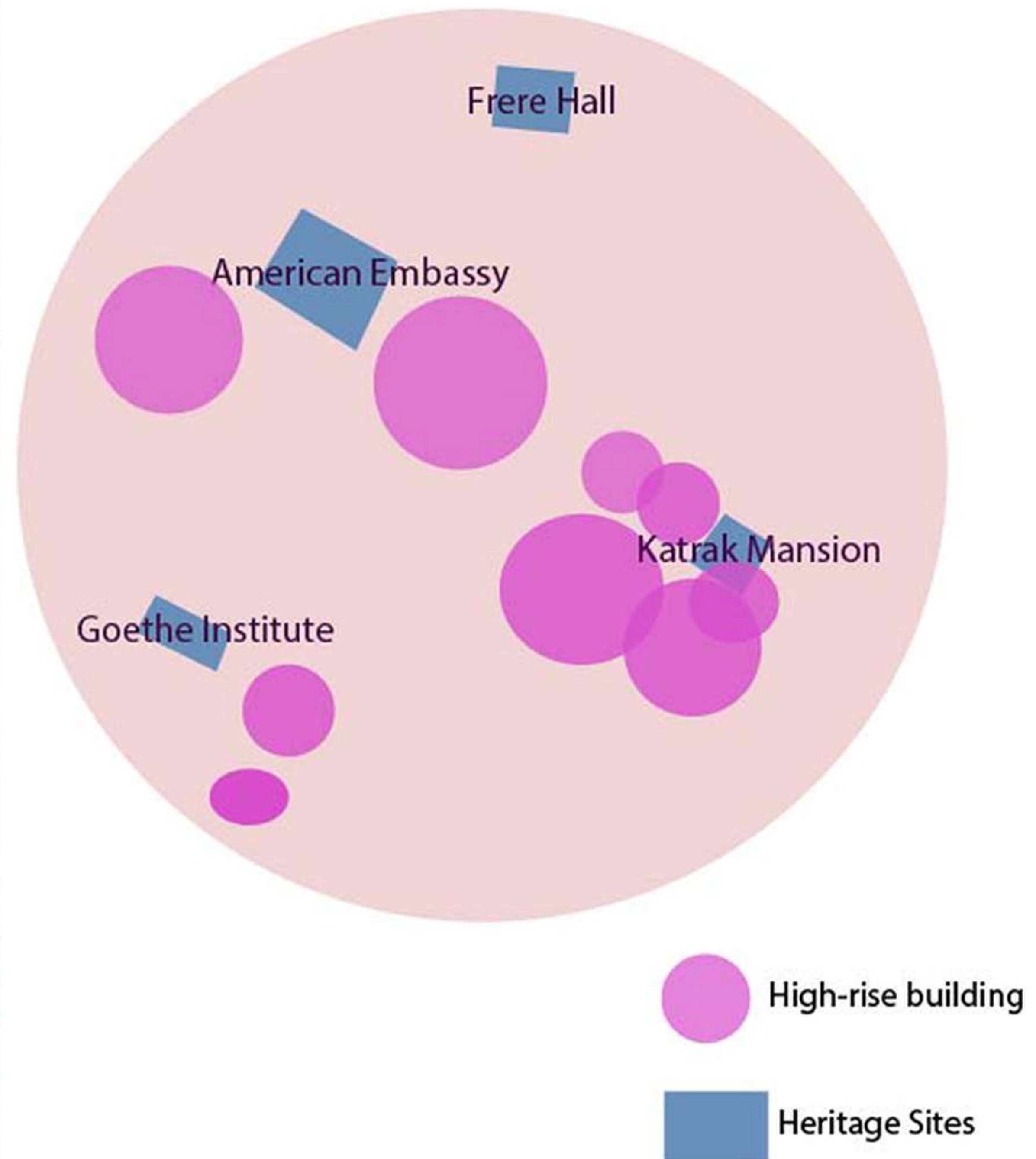
Image 3.2: Analysis shows Bhattia Bhawan in 2000, 2009, and 2022. By 2022 the building has been completely demolished from inside with just keeping the face intact.



Image 3.3: Analysis shows the Kanji Building and its deterioration overtime due to neglect. The satellite pictures are of 2010, 2019 and then the latest of 2022. This visual documentation of how the outer facade is at present and internal architecture is completely demolished. Through advocacy at MMA, stay order through legal action was applied but the future of these buildings stands at a vulnerable and uncertain position.



High-rise Buildings constructed surrounding Katrak Mansion



Homie Katrak Mansion (1890)
 Plot no. CL-9, 7 Abdullah Haroon Rd,
 Civil Lines, Karachi,
<https://goo.gl/maps/fzPVNgGQoqkeAhHV7>



Homie Katrak Mansion

The famous Homi Katrak on Abdullah Haroon Rd mansion was recently bought by TPL, an insurance company 'to be turned into a residential-commercial property, confirmed its chairperson Jameel Yusuf' (Ferozi, 2020). The location of Katrak mansion is 'popular as Karachi's designated cultural zone. It has colonial structures such as Frere Hall, and colonial privately owned bungalows along with the modern heritage of Richard Neutra's American Embassy building' (News Desk, 2021). Conserving even one of these is crucial in maintaining the high heritage important zone that is naturally present.

Unfortunately along the street where it is located, a high rise overviews it, in company with other new high rises. This means that the land around Katrak mansion is vulnerable in the hands of developers and just a few years away from being known as a cultural zone to a corporate commercialized zone. With Frere Hall as a landmark, the area gave way for low dense heritage sites to breathe, but multiple high rises are under construction and turning the whole landscape around.

Today what escalates the debate for conserving the heritage sites calls out to developers and policy makers before deciding to build high rises over and around that place.

'Karachi is the third most dense city in the world after Dhaka and Mumbai. Its density is 2,800 per person per hectare' (Express Tribune, 2014) . However real estate developers wish to continue to develop the already urbanized landscape of Karachi with high-rises. Recently a beautiful Bungalow located in Railway quarters faced the corruption and neglect of our institutions and was completely razed to ground zero and its land now awaits a modern, highrise to be constructed over it, and just like that a heritage site awaiting attention disappeared without notice. The point which needs to be highlighted here is that it's not just the historic architecture which is fading from the site, with it are the oral stories, centuries long mythological characters, and a social sense on which Karachi was built which is slowly evaporating away at the hands of capitalization.

Unfortunately these are not the only gruesome acts that are underway, vandalism plays a huge role in wiping away the essence of our heritage buildings as well. Doors, windows, railings, balustrades, and even the geometry of the landscape is eroding away in the hands of the heritage mafia black market. This is a serious concern and only the institution's policies and implementation plans can stop letting such ornaments be sold in black market. If one by one such ornamentations keep on disappearing, then there will be no motivation for preserving the buildings and will be sold to developers to build a commercial plaza or high rise in its place.

An (un)promising Way Forward

In light of the expansion of cities and urban transformations, heritage districts witness everyday deterioration due to negligence and lack of monitoring. Keeping in mind how integral cultural and historical architecture is to the process of reimagining the urbanized future of Karachi, there are many aspects to the conservation of heritage which need to be considered if we plan to move forward towards sustainable implementation. There is an urgent requisite for long term 'Cultural and Historical Programming' which will involve constructing a rehabilitation plan and resourceful addition to SBCA laws. Without an integration between both SBCA and the Sindh Anquity Department, effective implementation will remain an unachieved goal. As established above, there is a very clear policy gap between both of them which makes it easier for real estate owners to exploit heritage laws and overlook them.

This rehabilitation plan has to put emphasis on not just the interior of the heritage buildings but also on the landscape of those structures to preserve the real essence of them all. There may be extensive research potential around the heritage building and due to the real estate boom in Karachi, the landscape is compromised and it usually contains ornamentations and signages which are integral pieces of architecture. To avoid such practices in the future, both the main stakeholders need to be actively held accountable to ensure observable change in the near future.

Heritage Laws have been comprehensively discussed above and in accordance with them, it was clear that they are more focused towards 'Punishment' if the rules are violated which is presumptuous since not all heritage owners have a radical stand and are in violation of the laws. For example, Bhutan's heritage laws have a very detailed description of incentives which the owners receive because of the care and effort they put into the maintenance of the building. This guarantees public support and also motivates them to be forthcoming of the government's decision to preserve historical and cultural buildings.

This practice of incentivisation was further discussed by renowned architect Arif Belgaumi. He revealed in a conversation that up until a few years ago, the SBCA used to have a clause related to the 'Transferable Development Rights' which might just be the policy that could serve as an incentive for people to willingly let go of their property categorized as a 'heritage site' by the government. According to this clause "in the event that the existing total floor area of a building declared/notified under the Heritage Law as a Heritage Building, is less than the allowable covered area (Floor Area Ratio FAR) as per the regulations, the owner of such a building/property shall be entitled to sell unutilized floor area ratio" (Government of Sindh, 2002). However, this clause is no longer a part of the SBCA laws which makes the owners or caretakers of inherited heritage sites skeptical of their decision to partner up/cooperate with the government. This clause served as reassurance in the form of a law which would protect not just the heritage sites but also the interests of people who look after them.

15-3. Approval of Building Plans for Heritage Buildings.

15-3.1. Any building declared as a Heritage Building by the Government of Sindh, under the above mentioned preservation Act (1994) shall not be considered for approval by the Authority, except with the prior approval of the department designated as such by the Government of Sindh.

15-3.2. Transferable Development Rights. In the event that the existing total floor area of a Building, declared / notified under the Heritage Law as a Heritage Buildings, is less than the allowable covered area (Floor Area Ratio FAR) as per these Regulations, the owner of the such a building / property shall be entitled to sell unutilized floor area ratio. (Total allowable floor area minus the utilized floor area = unutilized floor area), to the owner /s of any another property / subject to following conditions:-

THE SINDH GOVT. GAZETTE APRIL 04, 2002 497

15-Preservation of Heritage Buildings

15-3.2.1. The unutilized floor area ratio can only be utilized on commercial plots or residential flats sites or residential cum commercial site where there is no restriction on constructions of number of floors, provided this also does not violate other conditions of owning regulations as given in Chapter 25 accept

<http://www.sbca.gos.pk>

KARACHI BUILDING & TOWN PLANNING REGULATIONS-2002 CHAPTER 15 – PRESERVATION OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS

the rules for floor area ratio, which shall be allowed to the extent the rights of floor area of a Heritage building is purchased by the applicant's owner of the building requesting to utilize the same FAR for his / Their building / project. No change in the land use shall be allowed where such a FAR of the Heritage Building to utilized.

15-3.2.2. The unutilized floor area ratio can be sold to more than one owner, However the maximum unutilized floor area which could be sold to one owner of a property / site shall not exceed 1 / 3rd of the floor area allowed for the said property.

15-3.2.3. The sale of unutilized floor area of the Heritage building must be recorded with Department of Heritage and with the Authority. The Authority shall maintain a separate register for the maintenance of record of the unutilized floor area of the Heritage building.

15-3.2.4. The purchaser of the unutilized floor area of Heritage Building shall provide a certificate copy of the document certificate by the concerned Heritage Department with regard to the exact covered area utilized in the Heritage Building. The Authority on receipt and verification of such information, by itself, shall, as per the provided in Chapter 25 of these Regulations determine the surplus, covered area which could be sold to other buyers and shall allow the applicant for the utilization of the same in the application project / building.

Image 4.0: Analysis of the aforementioned document by the Karachi Building and Town Planning Regulation in 2002 shows the conditions which apply to the Transferable Development Rights clause.

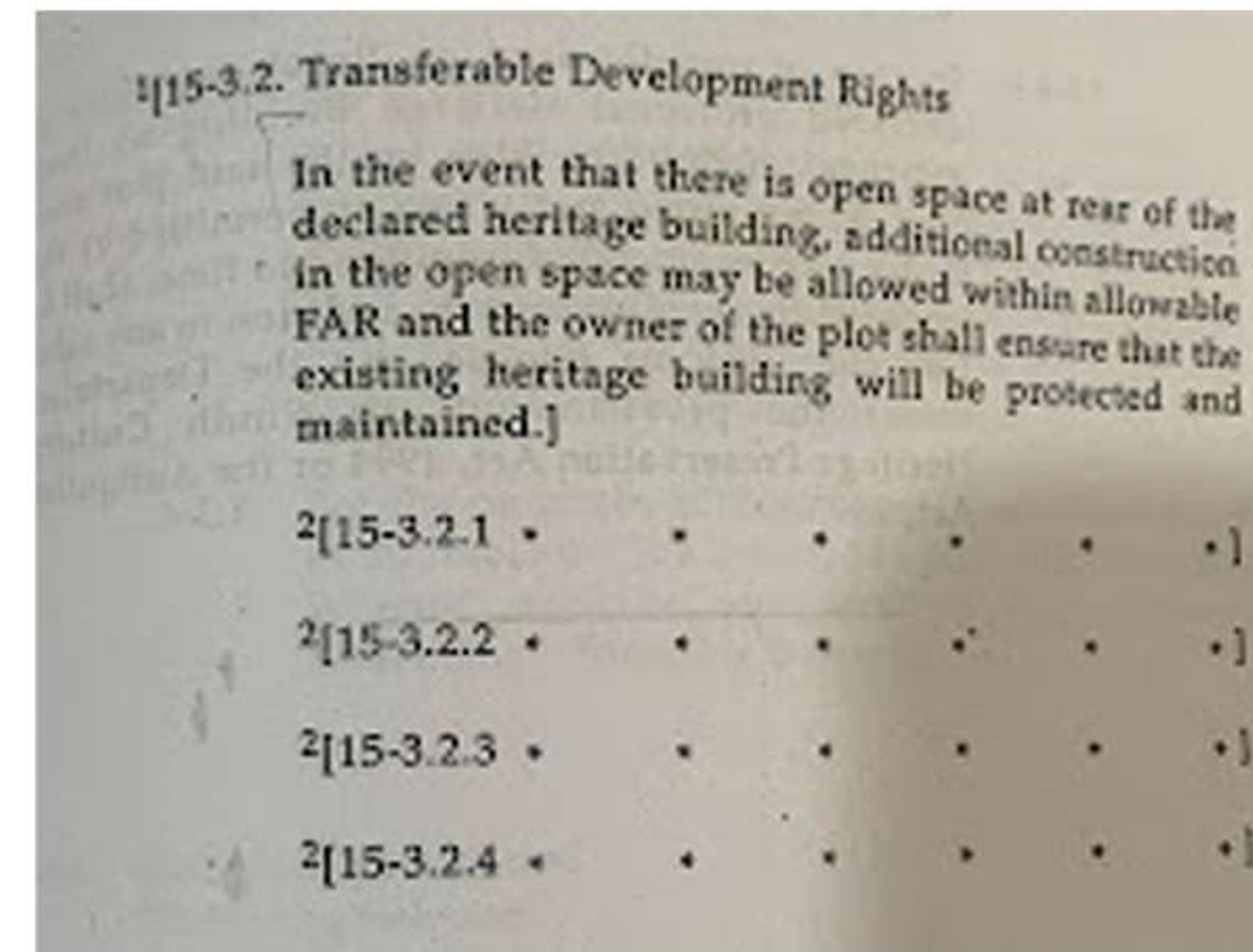


Image 4.1: Analysis of the aforementioned document by the Karachi Building and Town Planning Regulation in 2019 shows that the conditions related to the Transferable Development Rights are no longer listed and eliminated from the latest bylaws compilation.

Preserving the sites demands attention from the people and developers, and hence a rhetoric for their awareness can be initiated through various awareness programs. Karachi Heritage Walk (HWK) a project of Pakistan Chowk Community Center is such an initiative which enables and invites people to walk together and get a hands-on experience of knowing, seeing, and feeling the decayed context that surrounds historic buildings. Students, professionals, residents, academic researchers and the art community, it provides an engaging platform. Such creative awareness initiatives eliminate the existing gap between the heritage sites and public access to them, develop local tourist routes, generate economic opportunities to be history guides, cultural managers, and act like a local monitoring unit.

Additionally the Antiquities Department needs to institute a local Art & Cultural Fund so that the goal of culture empowerment may begin, rather than awaiting funds from international institutes, it will help promote a sense of responsibility within the people and its institutes as well to apply for local grant to sustain projects like Citizens Archive of Pakistan (CAP), IAMKHI, IPAF, Lyari Girls Cafe, T2F, Khanabadosh Writers Cafe, Irtiqa. If such empowerment programs are developed, then more arts and cultural spaces will open where intellectual gathering is encouraged outside formal institutions. It is now up to the government to begin analyzing and viewing Karachi from a social lens rather than the capital privatization lens.

2



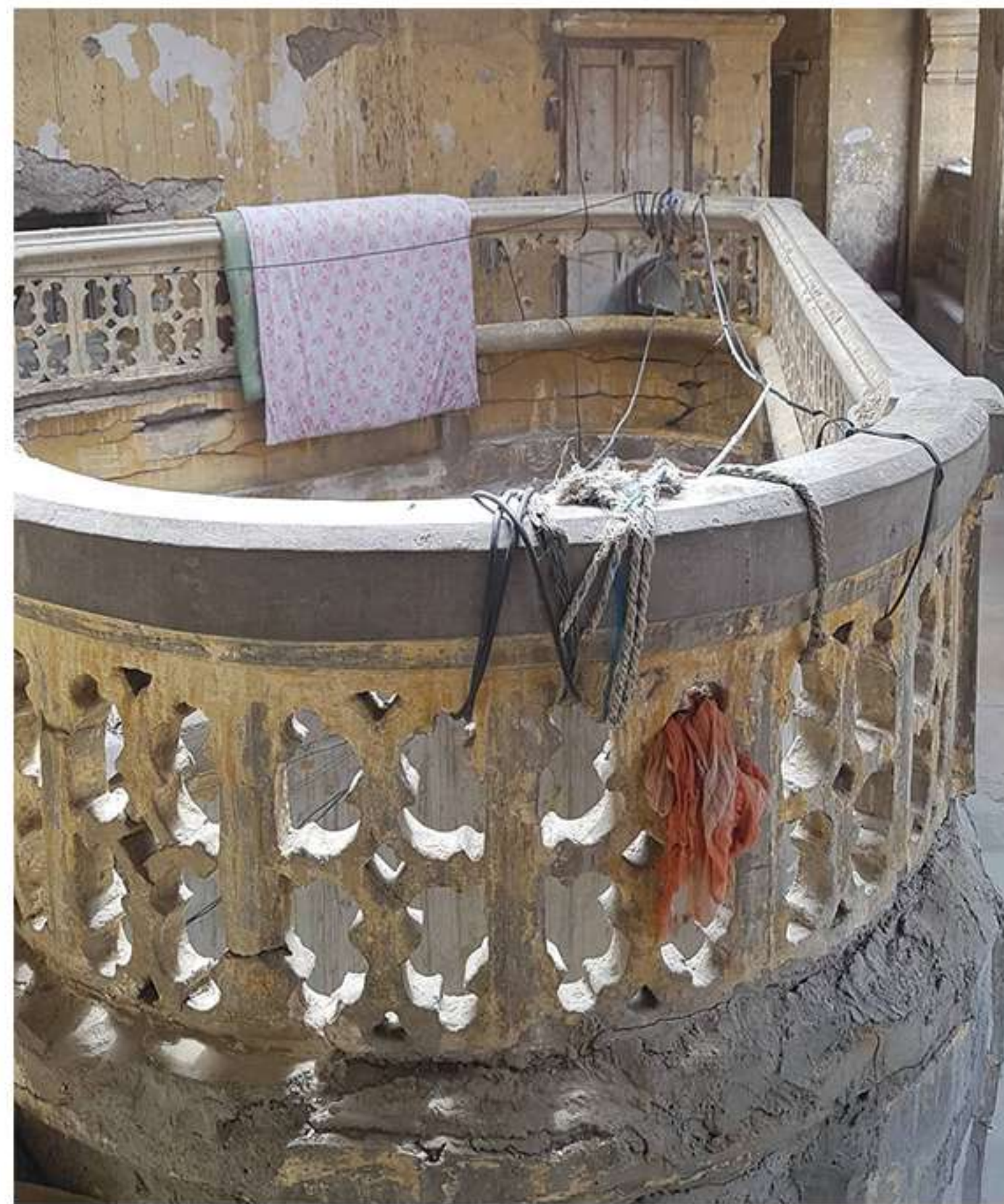
Museum of Ruins

Reimagining the Museum of Ruins for Karachi

Heritage, built environment and orally shared knowledge have many stories to tell and lessons to teach. Historical revisionism is critical for projects that refer to both the collective and personal memory of the city. Karachi is pertinent when we converse about heritage conservation because there are many sites which need urgent care, decaying due to owners' negligence and government's lack of monitoring and non-incentive programs. Therefore, most of these sites are destroyed and completely ruptured.

With time and economic procurement privileges from vulnerable households, the middle man dalaal plays a role by purchasing precious remains and then those sold in the black market for high prices to be placed in luxury homes as decorative pieces or personal collectives.

This is not just a loss of lived archives, but also loss of the craftspeople's skills, who put their hard work into building exceptional commissioned heritage buildings and important historical narrative. Heritage across Karachi is a testament of craftspeople and regional philanthropists' investment to this city and through consistent demolition in these modern times, citizens are being deprived of the opportunity to fully appreciate the historical built environment.



Exterior and a broken iconic triangle opening of Meghraj Dwarkadas Nagpal Building, a century old building crumbling piece by piece.

Amidst the physical loss, the stories are gradually vanishing through real estate rupture and local building codes where developers and land mafia play a huge role. In response to developing a protection plan, we as heritage allies pitch a conceptual plan to preserve the city's lost belongings. A 'Museum of Ruins' needs to be built in the city. The preservation of such pieces is imperative to appreciate the past and move towards a future with an improved understanding of the significant role history and culture play in the development discourse.

A place limited to heritage ruins is something we owe to the craftspeople, residents, who managed to create such culturally diverse architectural structures we now call heritage. Historians, researchers, and the new generation can develop this museum as part of the collective, and bring the Citizens Archive as a lived experience.



Broken Greek key design from the Free Masons Lodge



Tiles From Bhatia Bhawan

The idea of Museum of Ruins is not as new as one might perceive it to be since Bangladesh has done the same with their Varendra Research Museum in 1913 and China has recently established a museum of their own. These countries place a strong emphasis on their heritage and their efforts towards its preservation is symbolic of the same. Here, rather than a state narrative, we would focus on Karachi, a citizen led museum, where a museum can be a walking experience through ruins, placed in the old town at various nodes, walls, elevations or open spaces.

An interactive place which exposes intelligent minds to stroll through the city and have intellectual conversations about the unprecedented archeology and architecture of the colonial subcontinent. These conversations would have the potential to reform the heritage discourse in the city and transform urban archeology into something more influential. An opportunity to learn more about history and culture, this Museum of Ruins could act as a Research Centre, provoking insightful dialogue and intriguing questions. This citizen led museum would be a significant step towards a more culturally aware community where conversations would revolve around heritage preservation and how important that is for a city like Karachi which lacks an empathetic connection to the past.



Fazal Building on the brink of ruins

A stone masonry building of mix use, having shops on the ground floor & flats on two floors above. Only the shops are functional while the rest of the building is abandoned as it is in a need of repairs & maintenance otherwise Karachi will loose another beautiful Heritage Building



Morriswala Building

This broken Corbel was found on a footpath of M.A Jinnah Road
It is originally from the **Morriswala Building** .(image on the left).
This was built in 1933 by Architect Ahmed Hussain Agha.





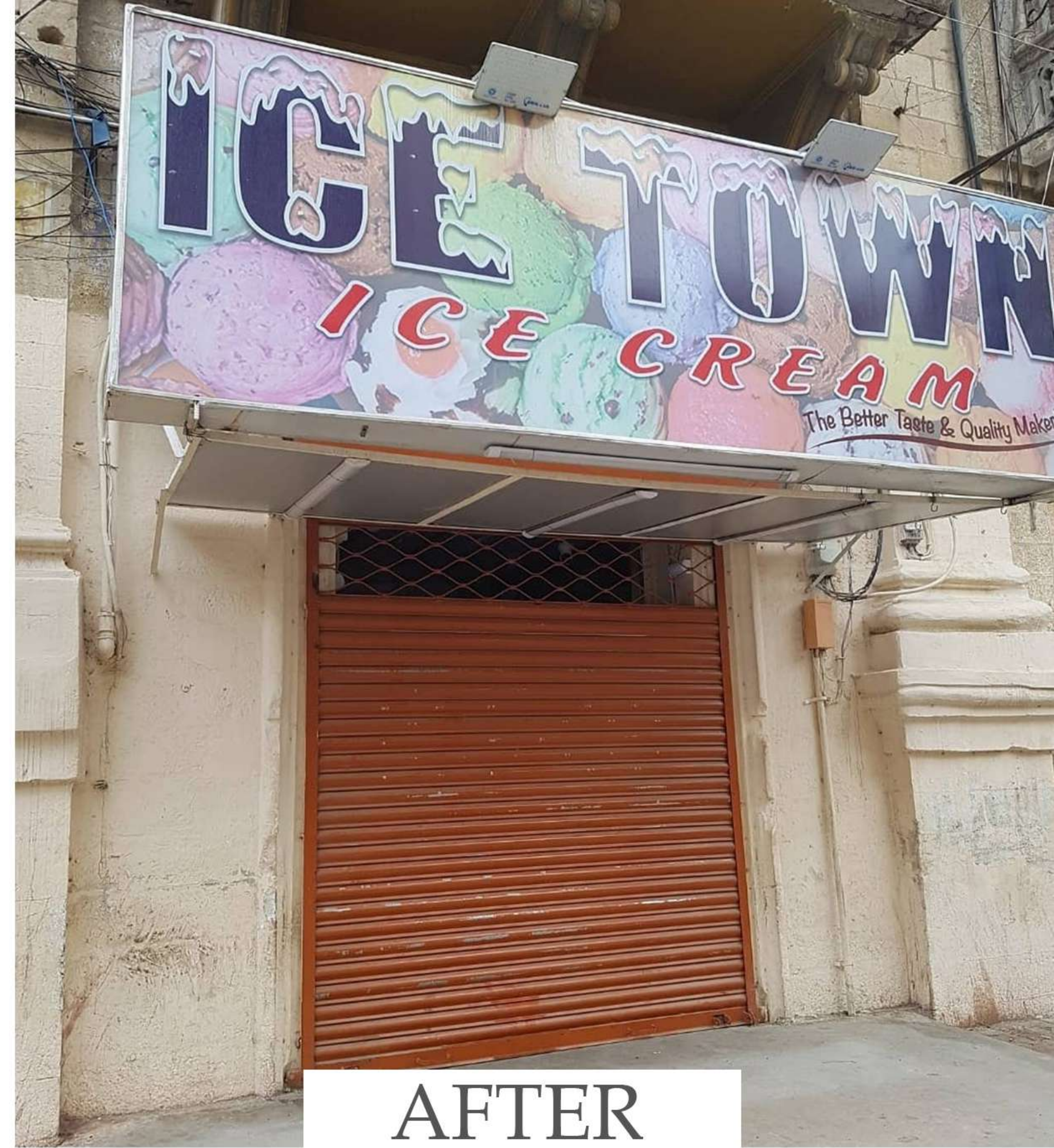
Menghraj Dwarkadas Nagpal Building

Now properly known as the **Railway Building**, it was a Hindu student hostel built in 1918 that still has broken remnants of a Hindu Temple.



BEFORE

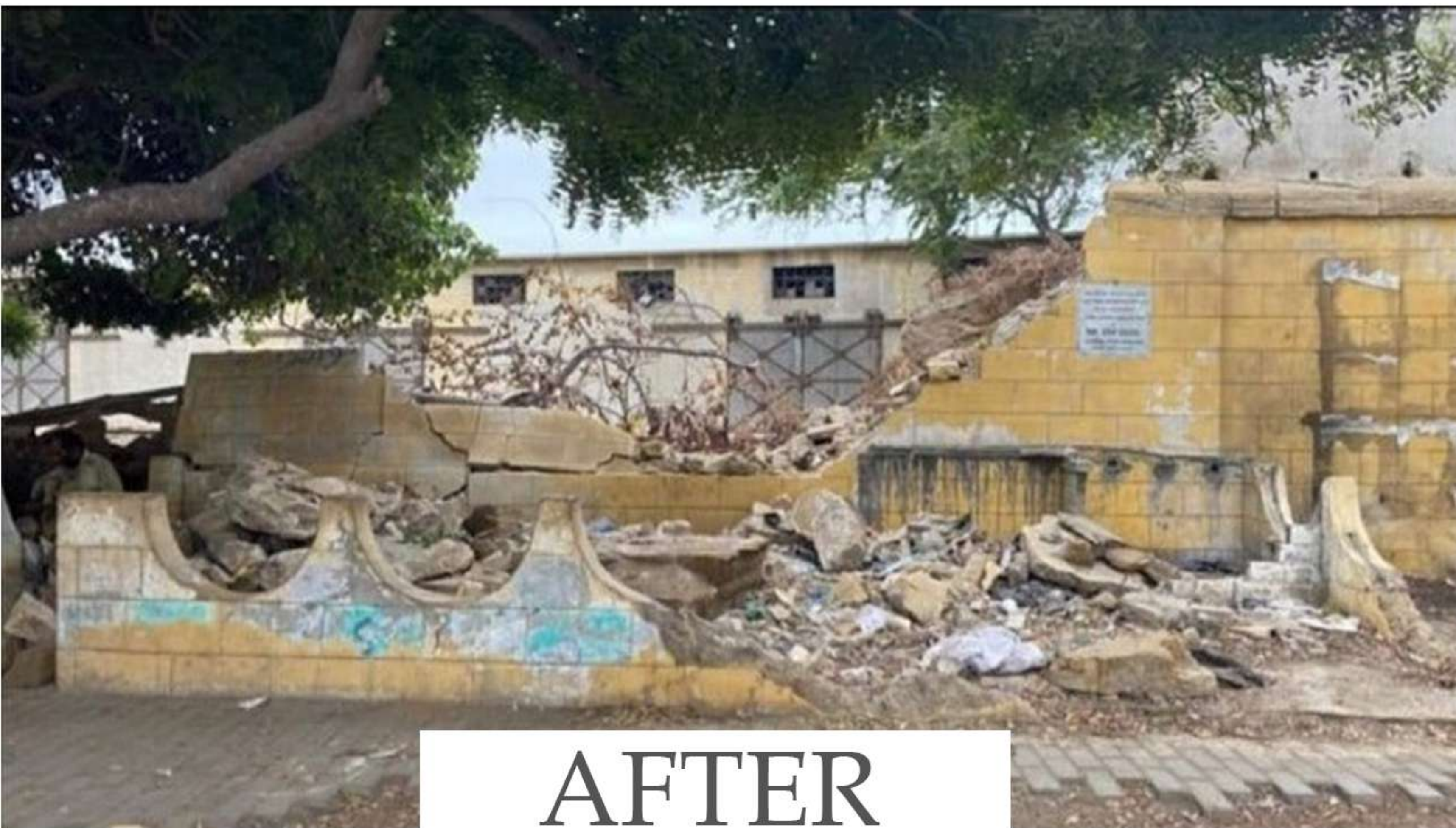
In Old Town Karachi, the strong and still in good condition wooden doors of the **Meghraj Dwarkadas Nagpal Building** are being replaced by metal shutters. This old school printing press was taken down to make room for ice cream shop



AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER

Water trough demolished





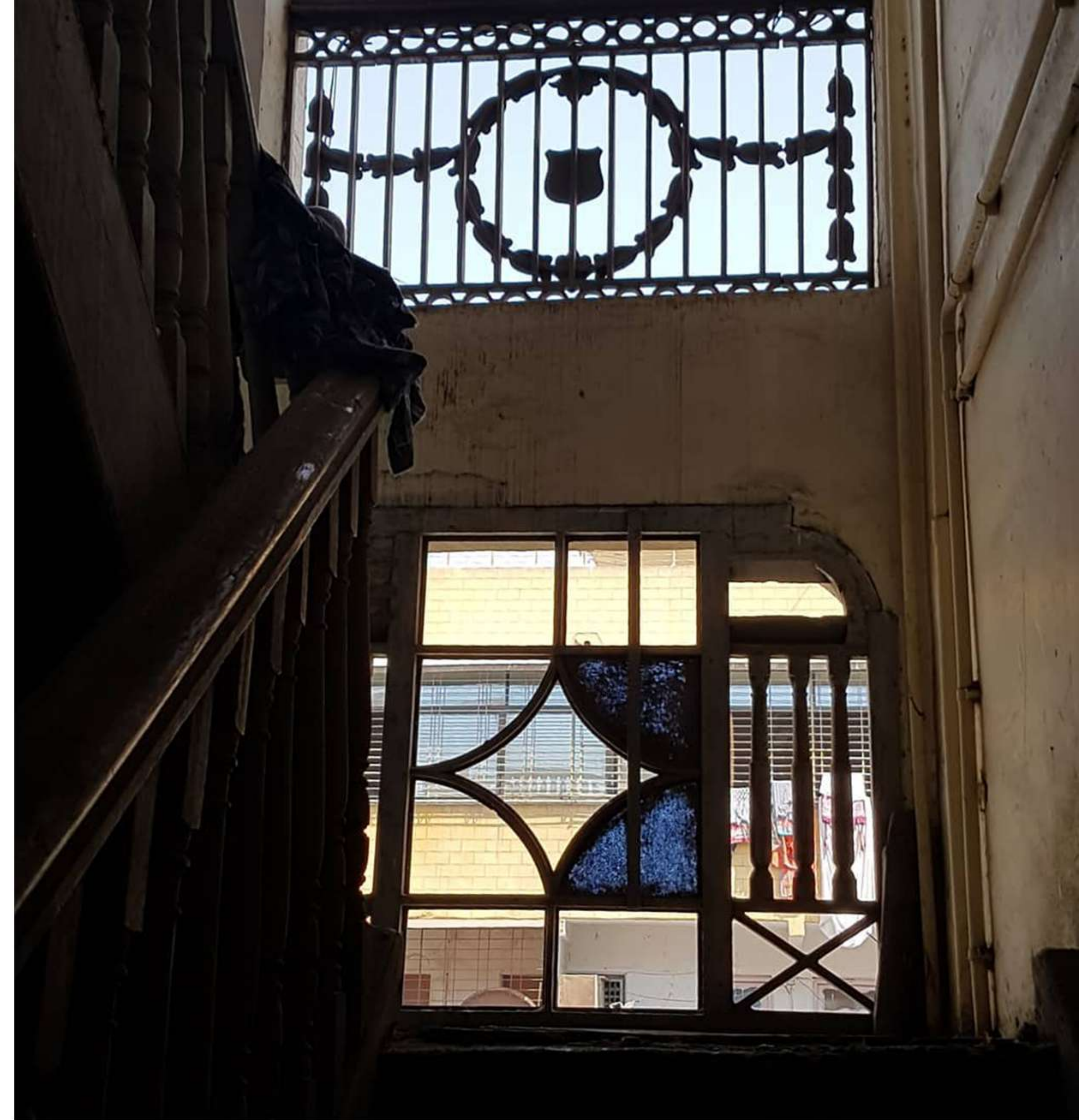
BEFORE



AFTER

Kutchery Road

The wooden screen of this Building with stained glass window & shutter style ventilation windows have been removed & replaced by iron grille after painting the interior grey with yellow border.



Lotia Manzils staircase

Now known as Sadik Manzil, remnants of stained glass are visible.

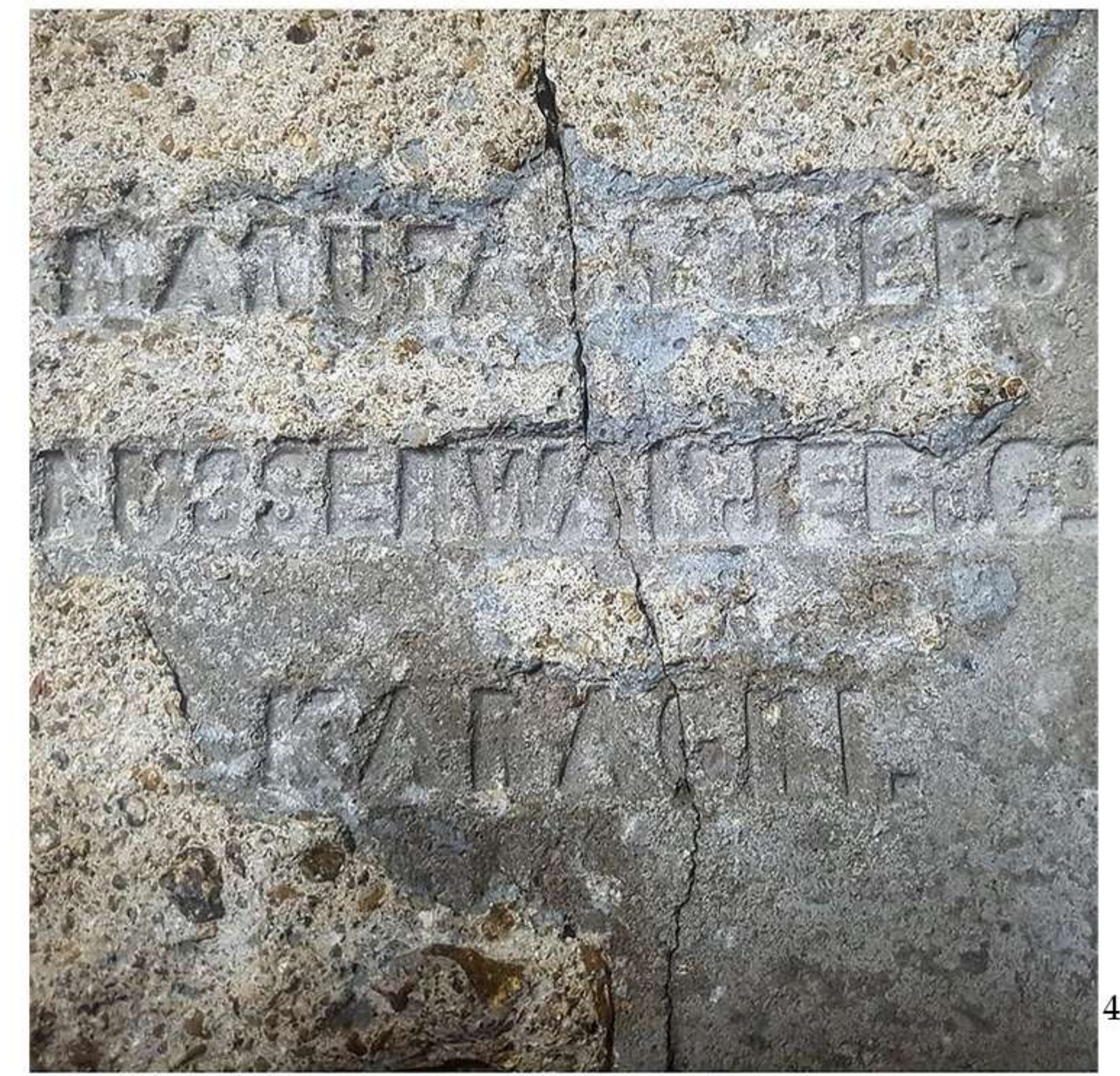


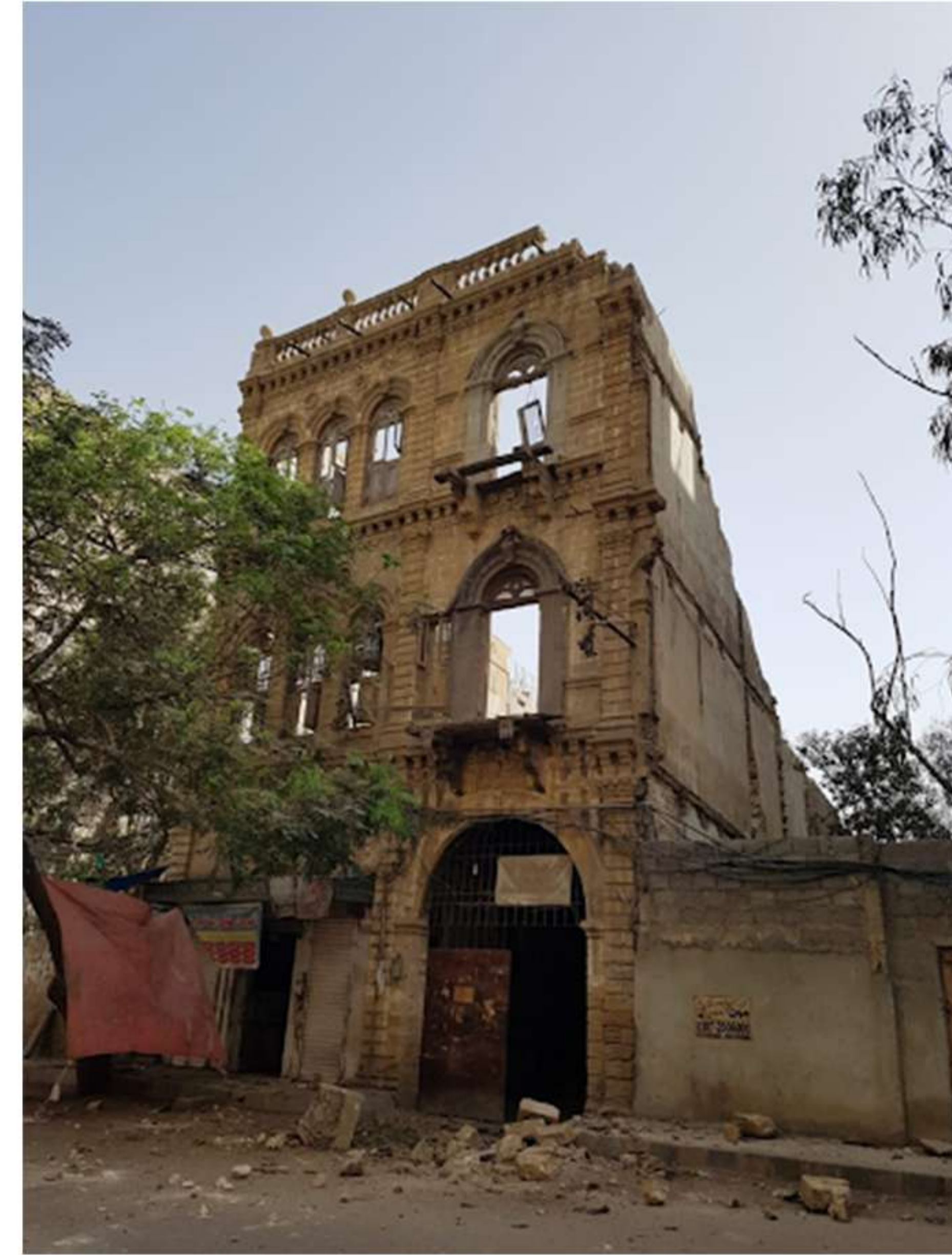
Adamjee Jivajee Building

130 year old staircase from the now known as Tahirbhoy Muhammadali Building
needing maintenance



These are the original
Nusserwanjee & Co floor
tiles with the name written
on the back of the tile from
the 130 year old building.

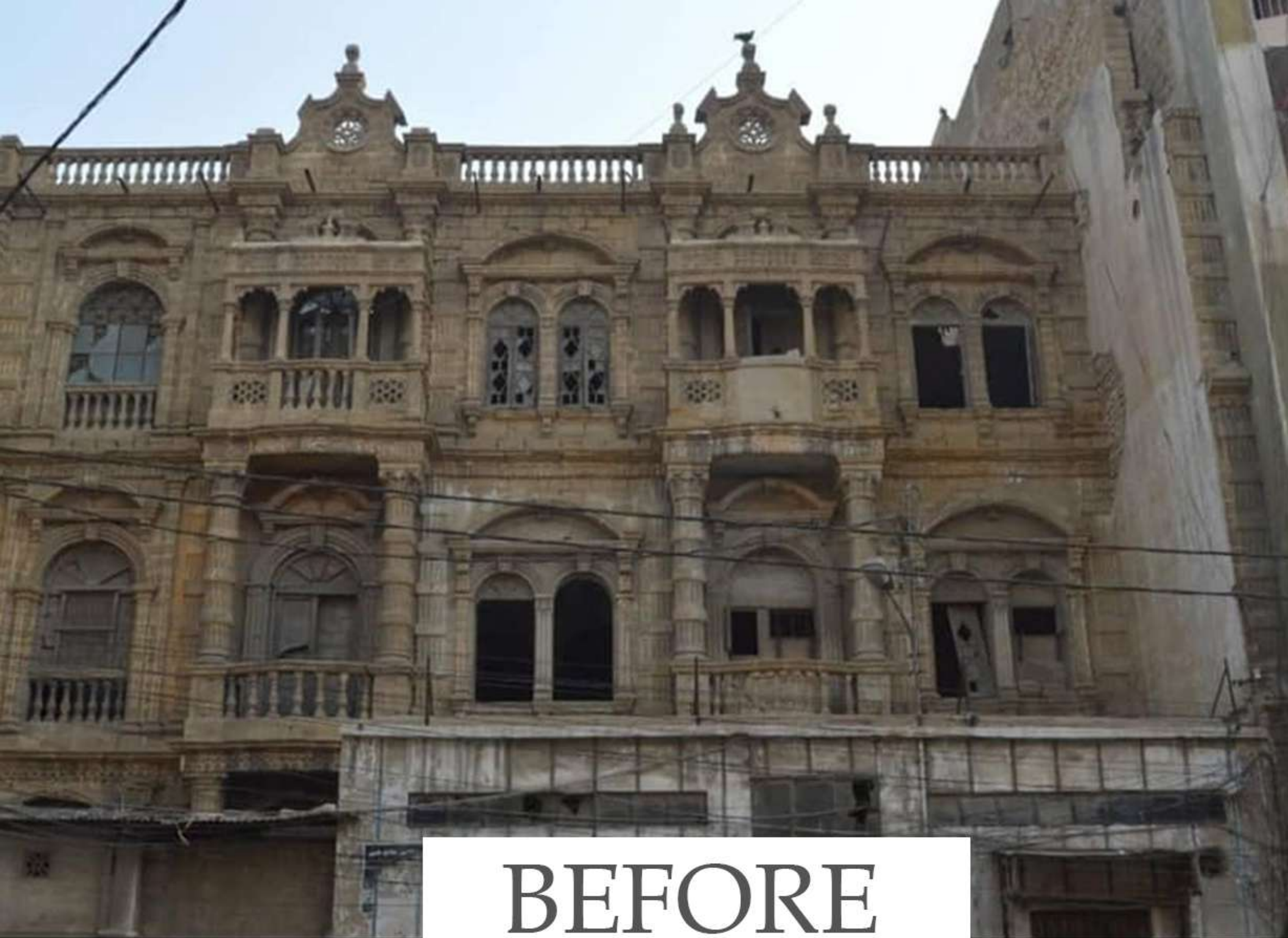




Tahirbhoy Muhammadali Building:

This heritage building was illegally vandalized and demolished. Grills, doors and everything in between were taken off to be sold at the black market.

Heritage Buildings of Karachi needs regular monitoring & supervision. These are the photographic documentation of the Building, during the different stages of demolition done by HWK, a project of PCCC.



BEFORE

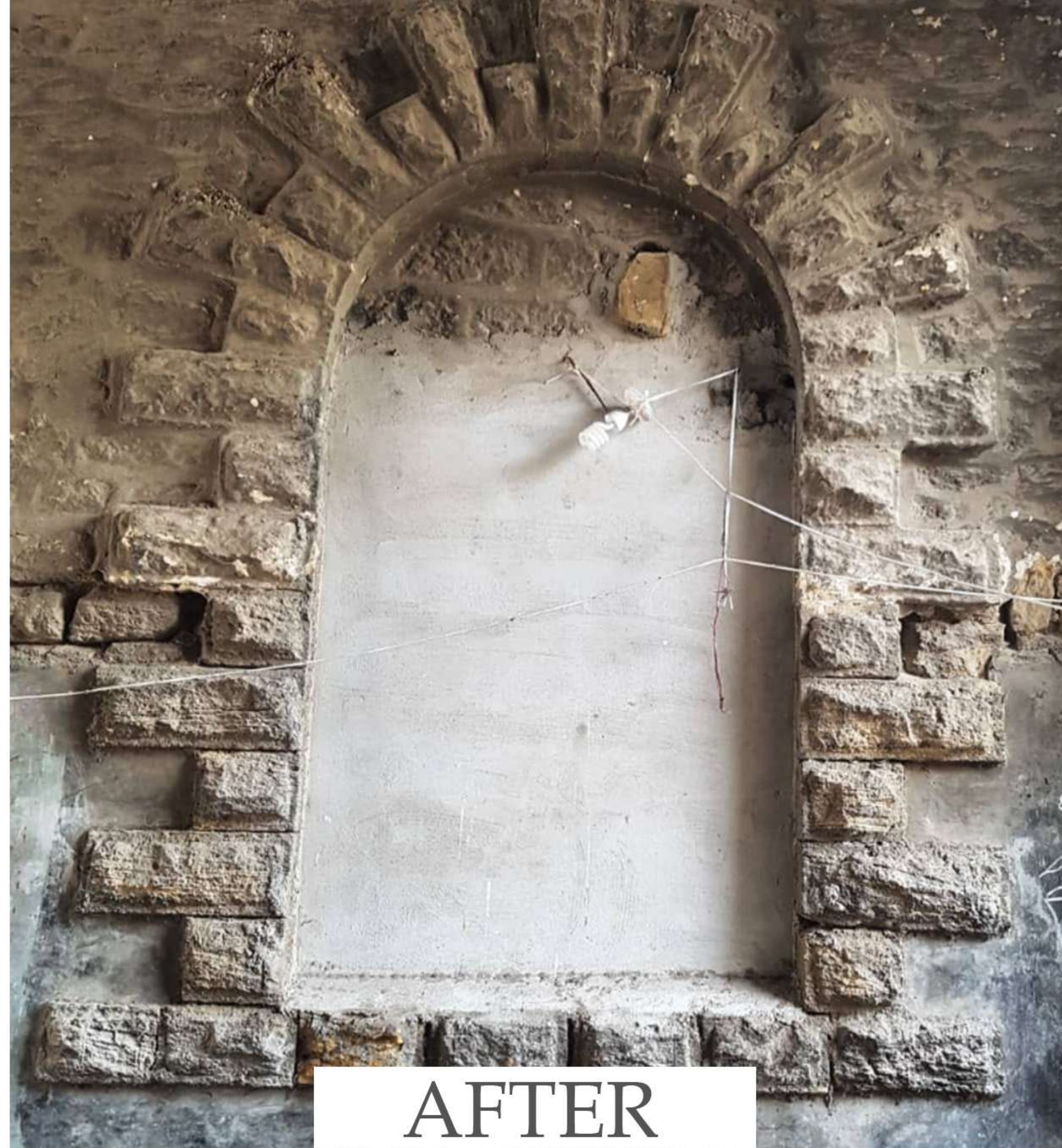


AFTER

Mendoza Building

This is Mendoza Building, Heritage listed Building in Ram Bagh Quarter. It is slowly & silently being demolished internally on daily basis without any prior documentation. Mendoza Building was one of the 25 sites listed on 2018 World Monument Watch List.





Jehangir Kothari

The exterior grills of Jehangir Kothari Building had its beautiful grills taken off to be replaced by cement



Hakeemji Building

A partially maintained heritage building facing a second degree threat.



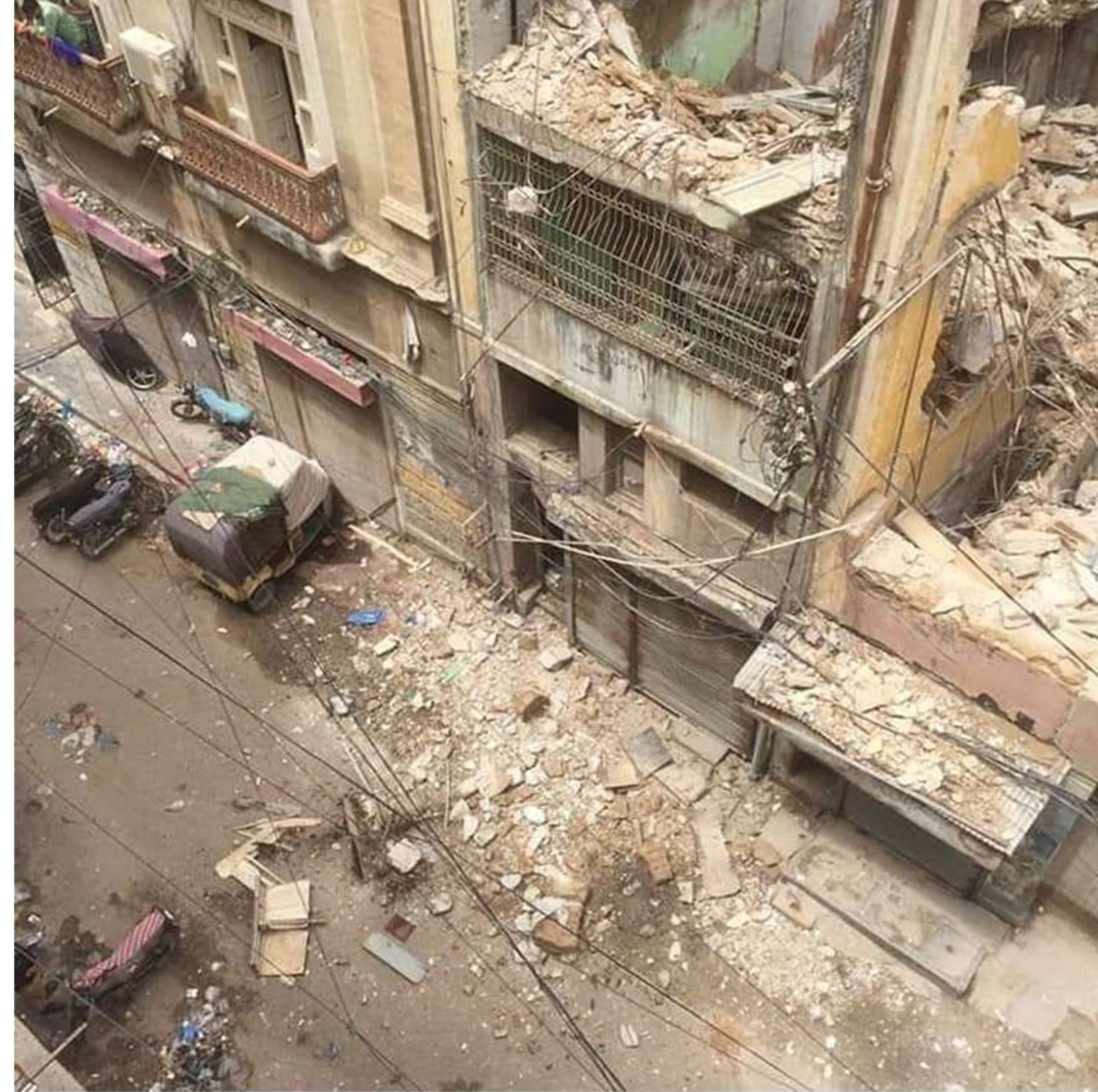
Karachi Eastern Tile Company



Shafqat House

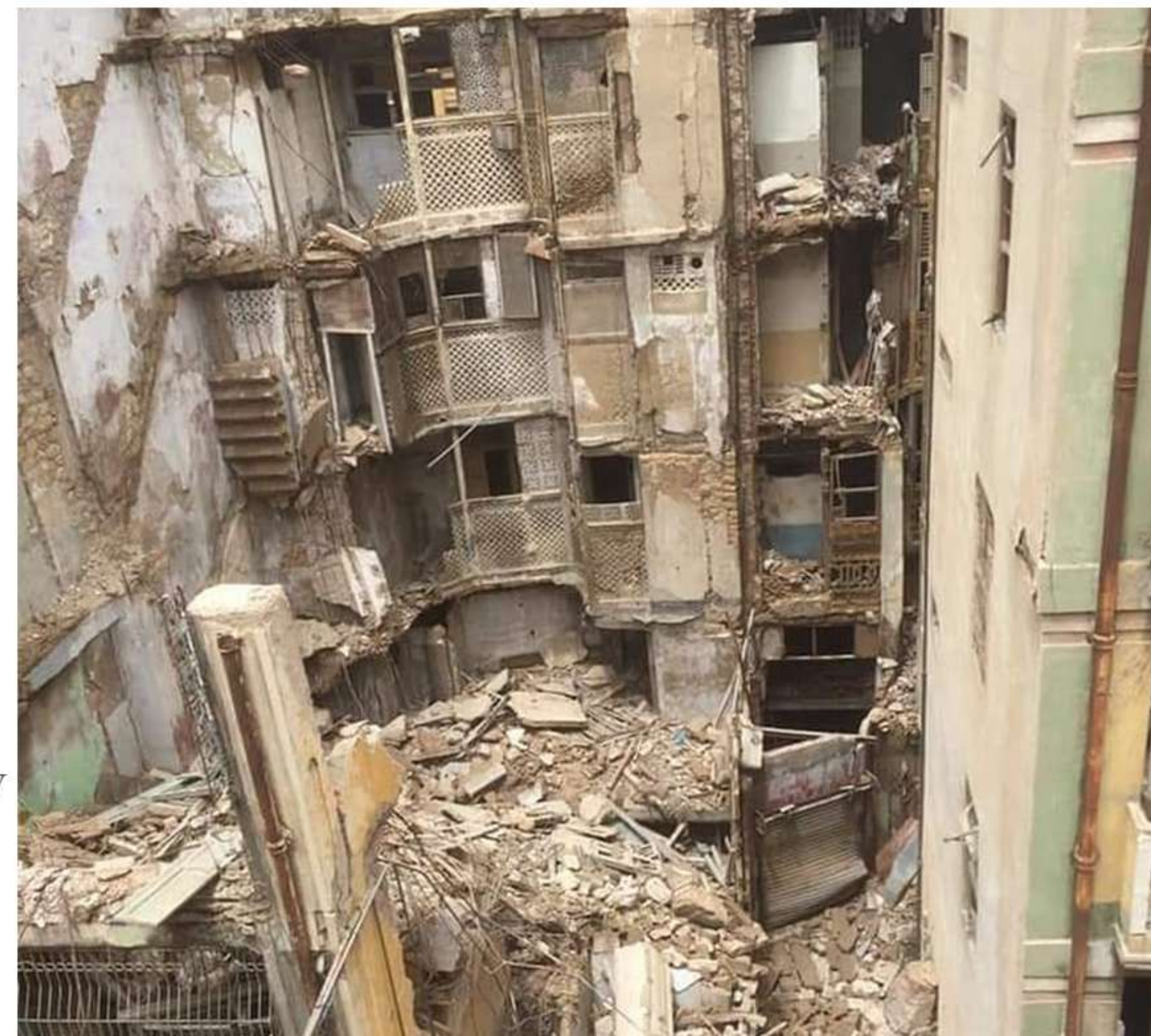


Shafqat House has three-storey structure houses approximately 40 apartments and around half a dozen shops. Although it is largely empty, a few residents occupy the place; a family on the first floor, and a tailor shop on the second floor. The third floor, as the building's occupants put it, is a no-go zone.



Kaseer Manzil

Near Al Abbas Bakery in Serai Quarter, Karachi, Kaseer Manzil was lost over absence of monitoring this historic building. Building Mafia are at a lookout for these old dilapidated buildings, which no one takes the responsibility to protect or to preserve these structures.



NAPA

The Hindu Gymkhana, nowadays known as the building that houses the The National Academy of Performing Arts is a post partition structure. What makes the Hindu Gymkhana rather unique is that its base form was inspired by the Tomb of Itimad- ud- Daulah which is a piece of mughal architecture, whereas buildings like KMO have a base form inspired by european buildings. The building now needs attention as its cracks, largely apparent with the messy coverage of cement is faltering and as the visual below, large chunks of the building are now breaking away.



Outram Road

According to the residents of the area this was the last road built by the British. It was a cobblestone road and lost during the tenure of Mayor of Karachi Mustafa Kamal, when new sewerage and drainage lines were laid.

The road was built in many layers including:

- Tile
- Bajri Channi hui / Coarse aggregate
- Rori/Crushed Stone
- Bajri/Coarse aggregate
- Chikni mitti/ Mud

The road used to be very slippery during the rains when paddled by cycle to play in Railway Ground on I.I. Chundrigar Road.



References

- 1) Khan, N. A., Nuti, C., Monti, G., & Micheli, M. (2022, March 19). Critical review of Pakistani current legislation on Sustainable Protection of Cultural Heritage. MDPI. Retrieved May 24, 2022, from <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/14/6/3633>
- 2) Correspondent . (2017, June 3). Construction of High Rise Buildings Allowed. Daily Times. Retrieved May 24, 2022, from <https://dailytimes.com.pk/8554/construction-of-high-rise-buildings-allowed/>
- 3) Akbar, Syed & Iqbal, Naveed & Van Cleempoel, Koenraad. (2020). Re-reading the heritage legislations of Pakistan.
- 4) Siddiqui, T. (2017, June 2). Construction of high-rise at Heritage Site challenged in SHC. DAWN.COM. Retrieved May 24, 2022, from <https://www.dawn.com/news/1336802>
- 5) Cowasjee, A. (2010, June 6). The Higher They Rise... DAWN.COM. Retrieved May 24, 2022, from <https://www.dawn.com/news/965572/the-higher-they-rise>
- 6) Government of Sindh. (2019). Introduction. Culture, Tourism, Antiquities & Archives Department . Retrieved May 24, 2022, from <https://sindhculture.gov.pk/>
- 7) 130-year-old Katrak mansion being demolished?. Global Village Space. (2022). Retrieved 24 May 2022, from <https://www.globalvillagespace.com/130-year-old-katrak-mansion-being-demolished/>.
- 8) Karachi's astounding heritage awaiting to be rescued. Daily Times. (2022). Retrieved 24 May 2022, from <https://dailytimes.com.pk/654974/karachis-astounding-heritage-awaiting-to-be-rescued/>.
- 9) Chapter Title: The Culture of Prevention: Heritage and Resilience Chapter Author (s): Elizabeth Longworth Book Subtitle: Impacts on Cultural Heritage and Cultural Diversity The Culture of Prevention: Heritage and Resilience. May 2022.
- 10) Debate: Does Karachi need more high-rise buildings? | The Express Tribune. The Express Tribune. (2022). Retrieved 24 May 2022, from <https://tribune.com.pk/story/762307/debate-does-karachi-need-more-high-rise-buildings>.
- 11) Albert, M. (2015). Perceptions of Sustainability in Heritage Studies. Berlin, München, Boston: De Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110415278>
- 12) Architectural Analysis Old Town-Karachi. (2018).
- 13) Government of Sindh. (2002). Housing and Town Planning Department. Karachi Building and Town Planning Regulations 2002. Retrieved May 25, 2022, from https://www.neduet.edu.pk/arch_planning/ICOMOS/

Contributors

Concept Development
Marvi Mazhar & Associates

Research, Text & Editing
Marvi Mazhar
Daniya Yousuf Varoo
Laiba Farid
Qurat Ul Ain

Field Knowledge
Shaheen Nauman

First Phase Research Compilation
Tia Aftab
Manaal Maqsood

Photographs
Heritage Walk Karachi (HWK)

Illustrations & Layout
Hani Arif
Sana Mohsin

This project was supported by

