

Preservation and Conservation of Architectural Heritage of Pabna City

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Abstract -Heritage building conservation , adaptive re-use of buildings is often the only way that the historic aesthetic values can be saved economically and heritage buildings can be brought up to contemporary standards. Under the colonial discourses, rapid changes have been occurred in every aspects of socio-cultural and economical perspective in whole Bengal As a part of its continuation a large number of colonial buildings of are exits in Pabna city most of them are in a vulnerable condition. This study aim to a straight –forward practical solution and alternative approach that may be adopted for compliance with building archaeology of pabna city .This paper describes the historical site of Pabna in respect of planning tools- "preservation and Conservation" .Methodology is build up in respect of identification of Heritage Sites in detailed Area Plan description and review primary and secondary documents.

Keywords: Archaeology, Heritage, Preservation, Conservation, Culture, Context

1. INTRODUCTION

Preservation involves keeping an object from destruction and seeing to it that the object is not irredeemably altered or changed. Preservation dictates that in order to retain the maximum amount of building fabric, repairs must be done with minimal or no changes to the original building fabric and in like materials, and if possible using the same methods as first created. In conservation, the absolute maximum amount of the original material, in as unaltered a condition as possible is preserved. Any repairs or additions must not remove, alter or permanently bond/cross-link to any original material. All repairs or additions must be reversible and removable without affecting the condition of the original material now and in the future.

Heritage is a part and parcel in every city's history all over the world. Pabna City has a long and varied cultural past. There are a large number of heritage building in Pabna city. But it is quite unfortunate that the Heritage structures and Sites have remained unrecognized and unrecorded. Very few of them are recorded for preservation under the department of Archaeology. The list should be made in consideration of historical, aesthetic, scientific, social, cultural, religious, and political and heritage value of the structures and sites.

2. Table 01: List of Heritage sites in Pabna City by Archaeology department

No	Name	Type	Location	Last recorded owner
1	Gopinath Jor Bangla temple	Spiritual	Pabna sadar(southern Raghampur)	-
2	Shashi Mosque		Chatmohor,Pabna	Mosque Committee
3	Jagonnath temple (Handial)		Pabna Town	Protiva Bromhochari, Harishchandra Bromhochari, Sobita Rani, Sree Sachandra Talapatra
4	Taras Vaban	Residential	Chatmohor, Pabna	Khinji Vushan ray bahadur,Radhika Vushan Ray,Bonomali Ray Bahadur
5	Robindro kachari bari		Shahjadpur	Archaeology Department

3. Preservation and Conservation of Historical Sites of Pabna City

Some Archaeological sites which should be preserved and conserved as well.

3.1 Jor-Bangla Gopinath temple

The “Bangla Style” is the most prominent style which developed later in medieval Bengal during the Muslim period, and even later under the patronage of the Hindu maharajas and zamindars, was possessed of a freshness and spontaneity of its own which, rarely found in the earlier examples. This archaeological temple is somewhere around 220-270 years of old according to the pundits. The main features of these temples is a pronounced curvilinear elevation. The pronounced curved cornices of the thatched hut, appropriate to the pliability of bamboo, when translated into masonry form are purely decorative. Study of earliest extant specimens in Bengal indicates that the evolution of these curious form in masonry is post muhammadan and most of surviving monuments are post in 15th century in origin, although it is incredible that some such equivalent did not exists before. All such buildings are roofed over with true Muslim arches and vaults. Multiples of the bangle style will be identified later with specific examples of temples in Bangladesh. It is the only extant example in north Bengal and seems to have been introduced here by the Vishnupur Raja’s in the early 17th century it therefore, must be later than its Vishnupur prototype. In spite of temple building activity there emerged a general tendency towards experimental design in temple Architecture in Bengal. It belongs from Chala variety.

The Gopinath Jor-Bangla or “Twin-Hut” temple was built on a single platform, the front of which constitutes a porch or Mondapa, and rear the sanctuary or Garbha-griha. It represents an extremely elegant pair of Bengali huts joined on a common platform. Internally the porch in front measures 19’-8” X 9’-2” (7.31X7.92m) and the sanctuary at the rear 20’-1” X 7’-6” (6.12X2.28m) . At present the height of the temple is 7.01m.



Fig 1: Plan-Jor Bangla Temple



Fig 2: Perspective view Jor Bangle Temple

The Jor Bangla Gopinath Temple in Pabna is the only Jor Bangle temple which has been declared as a protected monument by the department of Archaeology, Government of peoples' republic of Bangladesh.

3.2 Chatmohar Shahi Masjid

Chatmohar Mosque is situated in the heart of Chatmohar Bazar in Pabna district, was once in utter ruins. Built entirely of brick, it is oblong in plan, measuring 18.14m by 8.23m on the outside. The walls are 1.98m thick. The four exterior angles of the building are strengthened by octagonal towers, which rise up to the roof level. Access is provided through two-centered pointed archways - three in the eastern facade and one each on the north and south sides. Of the three eastern archways the central one is bigger. The qibla wall is internally recessed with three semi-circular mihrabs, of which the central one is bigger and shows a rectangular projection towards the back.

Though produced in the Mughal period, the present example strongly bears the stamp of the regional art tradition of the sultanate period, such as the terracotta ornamentation, the bent cornices, the two-centered pointed arches, semi-circular mihrab apertures, domes without drums and finials, the corner towers rising up to roof level and the Bengali pendentives. In spite of all these distinguishing features of Sultanate architecture the building marks a clear departure at least in its internal arrangement and disposition. It set the pattern of a three-domed mosque style in Bengal, which henceforth, with elaboration and additions, long continued in the land.



Fig 3: Perspective-Chatmohar Shahi Masjid

This particular mosque style must have been a north Indian derivation; its earliest examples are to be found in the Lodi and Suri periods. The style evolved throughout the Mughal period. The north Indian Mughal three-domed prayer chamber without the addition of Sahn with surrounding riwaqs - a rectangular covered type - was at times regarded as a perfect mosque plan by itself, as exemplified in the Sunheri mosque at Delhi and the mosque beside the Taj Mahal (1634) at Agra. This particular kind of Indian mosque may be suggested to have been an elaboration of the Persian Iwan-i-Karkha type at Muhammediya or the musalla at Mashhad.

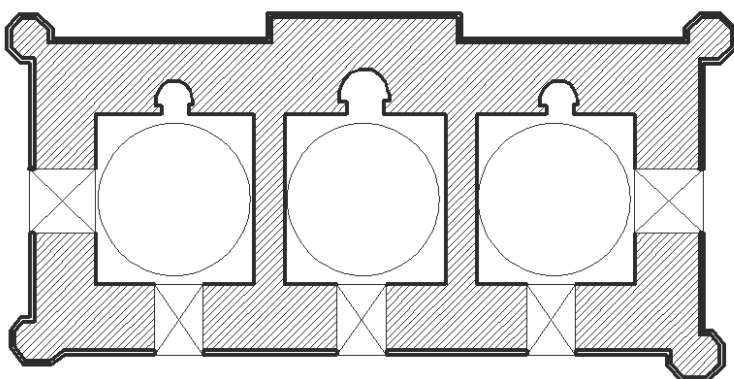


Fig 4: Plan-Chatmohar Shahi Masjid

The mosque was thoroughly restored and repaired in the 1980s by the Department of Archaeology, Bangladesh, and is now a protected monument. To preserve this monument authority should much more concern about it.

3.3 Jagannath Temple, Pabna

It is a single door small sized temple which was built using bricks. This temple getting narrower as it is progressing upwards. Only the front wall of the temple has some terracotta. The temple is placed over a high plinth. From the inscription, it's found that the temple was reconstructed by someone named Bhowani Proshad during 1590. But scholars are assuming that the temple was built even another 100 years before from that time.



Fig 5: Perspective-Jagannath Temple, Pabna

The whole temple premise is under a boundary. Another two newly temples are being constructed at the both side of the old temple. There is a small chariot available inside the premise. Also, a Mondop is available for annual Durga Puja.

Fig 6: Terracotta Details



The over 600-year-old Jagannath Temple at Chatmohor upazila in Pabna is about to fall into ruin as it has not been repaired in 400 years. Badrul Alam, a field officer of the department's Rajshahi division office, said the temple, locally known as "Handial Mandir", was declared a protected monument on April 12, 1934, according to an issue of Calcutta Gazette of West Bengal. According to archaeological documents, the temple was built on the Karotoa between 1300AD and 1400AD, the officer claimed

.Bhawani Prasad, whose identity could not be known, in the year 1590AD renovated the 87.45 square meter temple, with a height of 11.21 metres from the basement. This information was found engraved on a wall of the temple. Officials of the department presume that no repair work was made since. The department is going to do some repairs now even though it was declared a protected monument 74 years ago. However, Jagannath Temple, one of the most beautiful Hindu temples in the northern part of the country, has been attracting tourists and visitors with its eye-catching beauty and terracotta. High salinity of the ground the temple is built on is eroding much of the terracotta and ornamental bricks that are still in place.

Hundreds of them have been misplaced or stolen over the years, a senior official of the department said. The terracotta panels are placed between the decorated lines of bricks on the outside walls of the temple. Officials of the archaeology department said the temple may attract more visitors if it is renovated. Authority should take necessary steps to preserve the monument.

3.4 Taras Rajbari

The elegant two-storied building located in Pabna town is on the main Trunk Road facing east. It is reached through a tall semi-circular arched gateway, flanked by paired Doric columns. The oblong palace is about 100'-0" X 60'-0" with a prominent projecting two-storied portico in front which is supported on four tall Corinthian columns. At either end of the building there are two more projecting portions, each relieved with rectangular pilasters and topped by semi-Corinthian capitals at each storey. Semi-circular arches have been liberally used in the building. It is still in a fairly good state of preservation as it was only erected in the late 19th century. It now houses the office of the government Acquired Property.

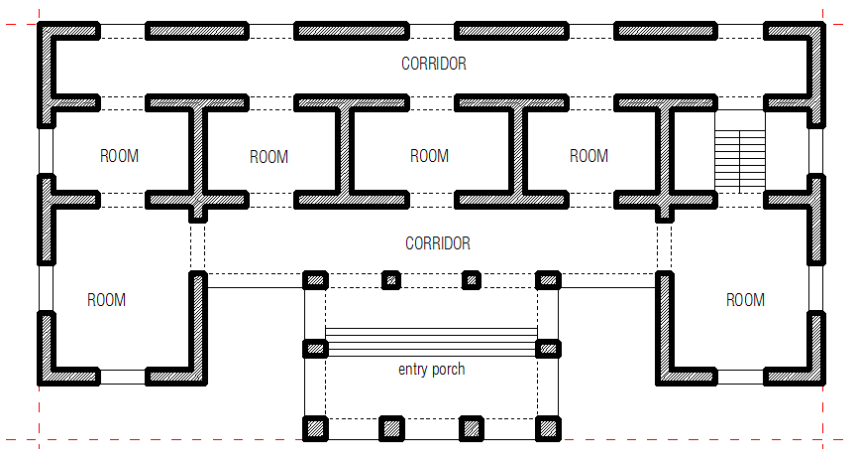


Fig 7: Perspective-Taras Rajbari



Fig 8: Column Capital and base

The late Rai Banamali Ray Bahadur probably built this present palace in Pabna during the late 19th century. One Basudeva Talukdar founded the Taras zamindari in the 17th century. His grandson, Balaralm Das was an emolpyee of the Natore Raj and adopted the title "Ray" as recorded in one of his inscriptions, dated 1711 A.D. In the early 19th century Ram Sundor Ray, the fifth in descent from Balaralm Ray, being childless, adopted Rai Banamali ray Bahadur, who died in 1914. He was conferred the title of "Rai Bahadur" by the government in 1894 in recognition of his munificence and public spirit. One of his many acts of munificence was his contribution of Rs. 50,000 to the Pabna Edward College for the erection of the new college building. Their headquarters at Taras is known as "Banwari-Nagar" derived from the name of a member of the family.



The grand places uniformly bear the unmistakable stamp of the late medieval Renaissance style of European where neo-classical features, especially of the semi-Corinthian order, find prominence in these buildings and may very well be compared with many renowned buildings in Europe belonging to the 17th & 18th centuries. In planning these feudal palaces the builders obviously had to commission the services of eminent architects from Europe, But unfortunately no records exist today. It would be extremely rewarding if someone or some agency

undertakes to survey and prepare documents in greater detail to present this fascinating group of monuments before they disappear completely. Fig 9: Plan-Taras Rajbari

3.5 Robindro kuthi-Bari



Fig 10: perspective view- Robindro kuthi-Bari

The Rabindra Kachharibari Rabindra Memorial Museum is a memorial of poet Rabindranath Tagore at Shahzadpur, Bangladesh. It is famous for the memory of Rabindranath Tagore.

Kumar Dwarakanath Tagore, grandfather of Rabindranath Tagore bought the estate of Shahzadpur at a price of Taka 13.10 when it was sold off at an auction in 1840. The Tagore family then acquired the Kachharibari, established on 8 bighas of land.

Rabindranath Tagore came to Shahzadpur several times between the years 1890 to 1895 to supervise the estate. During his stay at Shahzadpur he wrote many books of verse like Nowkadubi, Sonar Tori, Drama Bishorjon, Chitra, Choitali as well as short stories like Postmaster and Panchobhuto.

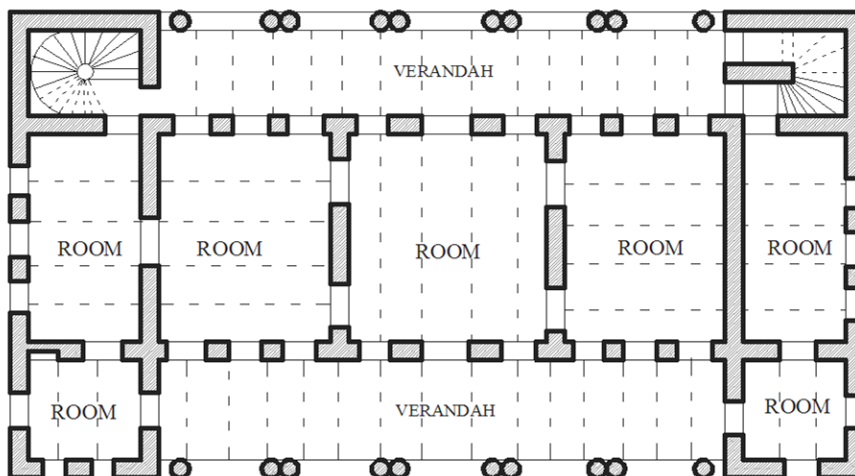


Fig 11: Plan - Robindro kuthi-Bari

The Kachharibari is a two-storey building, a quite an architectural delight itself. There are seven rooms inside the Kachharibari. There is a museum where many rare photos, furniture and metal vessels have been preserved. There is plenty of Tagore memorabilia inside the Kachharibari. There is a Palki which the poet used to visit various places at the entrance of Kuthibari.

The objects of interests include shoes, wooden sandals, a bedstead, couch, goggles, palanquin, sofa, piano, harmonium and different metal objects. Every year the Sirajganj district administration celebrates Tagore's birth anniversary on the 25th of Baishakh. Tagore's death anniversary is observed as well as his birthday. Furthermore, it was demanded that preservation and restoration efforts should be undertaken.

Rabindra Kacharibari at Shahzadpur in Sirajganj district is rapidly losing its appeal. Archaeological Department officials allege that some members of the local elite have grabbed a sizeable portion of land in the estate and have set up trade centers and clothing markets in the restricted area. Besides, say the officials, they face hurdles in preserving the memorabilia at the Rabindra Memorial Museum due to inadequate space and a shortage of manpower.

The memorabilia include dishes, bathtubs, hookahs, seals, shoes, wooden sandals, water filter, bedstead, piano, sofa, spectacles, palanquin, harmonium, metal vessels and rare photos belonging to the Tagore household -- all of which are in urgent need of maintenance.

Musical instruments such as the harmonium and piano are damaged, as they are not in use. Meanwhile, the sofa and palanquin have been infested with insects. The rusty dishes and blurry photographs too bear testimony to the appalling state of the museum. Likewise, the dusty books should be kept in bookshelves, say sources. Besides, a library is necessary together with a parking lot for visitors. However, due to lack of space and a parking lot, the authorities do not allow the visitors to hold picnics in the area. Many parts of the old Kacharibari building has developed serious cracks, which worries the locals.

On the other hand, visitors cannot spend much time in the area because of the absence of a guesthouse and hygienic restaurant. She further said that due to the illegal establishment of trade centers and clothing markets, the estate of Kacharibari is fast losing its original splendor. The visitors who spoke to this correspondent urged the authorities to set up public toilets, a parking lot and a restaurant. On the other, hand the structural system is in a vulnerable condition as a result at present the upper floor cannot be used as a part of the museum. Steps should be taken as early as possible to save this valuable monument.

4. Table 02: List of Heritage sites in Pabna City which are unrecorded

A large number of unrecorded monuments exist in pabna city which should be preserved and conserved. Consideration of Archaeology Department and the Authority is necessary to protect these monuments.

No	Type	Name	Location
1	Residential	Shitlai Palace	Pabna Town (beside Ononto Bazar)
2		Suchitra sen's ancestral home	Pabna Town
3		The British Kachari ghor	Pabna City
4		Sree Chandra Nath Bigroho	Pabna Sadar
5		Judge Court	Pabna Sadar(Zero-point)

6	Public	Medicine Store House	Pabna Sadar (East side of Jublitank)
7	Institutional	Edward college	Pabna Town
8		Law college	Pabna City (Beside Rupkotha Road)
9		Little Jewel Kindergarten	Shalgaria, Pabna
10	Spiritual	Shree Vabani temple	Pabna City

4.1 Shitlai Palace, Pabna Town

Picturesquely situated on the abandoned northern banks of the river Padma towards the Eastern outskirts of the town, this double-storied grand palace, is still fairly well preserved, and presents an imposing 100'-0" frontage on the with it prominently projecting semi-circular portico in the middle. A broad staircase, flagged with white marble, directly leads from the portico to a spacious corridor on the upper storey. The arched portico, facing east, is supported on semi-Corinthian column. Columns above which there is a spacious hall, measuring 30'-0" X 20'-0". The parapet of the portico terminates to a triangular pediment. The inner "Mahal" behind the front block is also a double-storied building and is arranged around 50'-0" X 30'-0" inner open courtyard linked by an 8'-0" verandah running in front of more than twenty apartments of varying dimensions. The verandahs are carried on slender cast iron pillars with Corinthian capitals. The palace was built around 1900 by Jogendra Nath Mitra, one of the zamindars of Sitalai estate as the family residence in Pabna town. The well-known Sitalai zamindars with "Mitra" as their family title rose to eminence in 18th century.



Fig 12: Front view-Sitalai palace

Today the palace is occupied by the EDRUC, an eminent drug manufacturing laboratory in Bangladesh. The palace should be preserved as archaeological site as well as the drug manufacturing laboratory.

4.2 Little Jewel Kindergarten



Fig 13: Internal court



Fig 14: Front view

Little Jewel Kindergarten is one of the important buildings of Pabna. Most provably it was built in the year of 1955. The owner of the building is Hasina Koraisi. It is located at Ataikula Road, Shalgaria, Pabna. The building was mainly built for residential purpose, but now-a-days it is served as a Kindergarten School to the local community. It has cultural value because of not only archaeological appeal, but also served as cultural academy to the local people.

4.3 Medicine Store House

It is two storied building that stand at the EAST of the Jublitanak at Pabna City. It's age is about 80 years. Recently it is used as Medicine Company but basically it was build for Residential purpose. As the building has great Architectural & Aesthetical value, so it can be preserved as an Archaeological Site. it also enhance the environment of jubilee tank as the jubilee tank already has been served as a breathing space for City dwellers.



Fig 15: Front View- Medicine Store House

4.4 British Kachari ghor

This Building is about 150 years old. The British used this building as a Kachari Ghar, so it is called as "Kachari Ghar". Now it is used as residential purpose. The Architectural style of this building has enough potential as a heritage site.

Fig 16: Perspective view-British kachari ghor



4.5 Shree Vhobani Mondir

The temple structure is about 125 years old. Now the temple is outcast and abandoned. The Architectural style of this temple is quite different from architectural style of Bengal temple. So if it can be revitalized it makes a contribution to the Archaeology of pabna.



Fig 18: Front view-Shree Vabani Mondir



Fig 19: Entry of Vabani mondir

4.6 Shaheed Aminuddin Law College



Shaheed Aminuddin Law College is beside the Rupkotha Road at Pabna City. It was the oldest college in pabna town which is situated beside the Ichamati River. It's naming by Shaheed Aminuddin, the martyr of our war of independent. In 1999 to 2002 it's all academic education had been stopped. Now it is a heritage site of pabna city. It was established as an estate building.

Fig 20:Front view: Aminuddin Law College

4.7 The Pabna Judge Court

'The Pabna Judge Court' is one of the most important buildings in Pabna city which was built in the British period. The Judge court of Pabna came into being on 1884. The Pabna Judge Court was served as the working place of Deputy Commissioner before a few days. It was used as "Nilkhuthi" at the time of indigo revolt and the indigo planter passed their leisure in this space as a club. It is located at kacharipara, the centre of Pabna City .There are eight to ten chambers And the plinth level is 4'-0" and the height is almost 4.88 m. The central jail is at north side of the judge court. Now-a-days it's lost the actual architectural appeal which can be achieved with the consciousness of Archaeology department. This should be preserved for its Historical value as well as its local value.



Fig 21: Judge Court, Pabna



Fig 22: Entry judge court

Fig 23: Double panel Door: One panel is made of wooden louver and other is glass panel with wooden frame

4.8 Suchitra Sen's ancestral home

Imam Gazzali Trust, a Jamaat-e-Islami backed organization, has been occupying Suchitra Sen's first ancestral home at Gopalpur in the town since 1987 and running 'Imam Gazzali Institute'. The house of late legendary film actress Suchitra Sen in Pabna is recently, freed from Jamaat's occupation. Imam Gazzali Institute, which was allocated the house on yearly basis lease, has shifted from the historic house by the order of the Supreme Court. The 0.21-acre house located at Gopalpur Hem Sagor Lane later went under government custody as vested property. So this should be preserved properly to revive the cultural and historical value of it.



Fig 24: Front View- Suchitra Sen's ancestral home

4.9 Shilpokola Academy, Pabna



Fig 25: Perspective View- Shilpokola academy, pabna

It was built basically as a residential building and later it served as "Shilpokola Academy". But now-a-days it is almost abandoned, authority should take steps to preserve this monument which can be help to revive it as a cultural academy as well as a piece of art.

5. Attempt to Historical Site preservation & Conservation

To protect historical building and important places authority can enact the following regulations.

Authority will preserve a list of buildings to be conserved

To prepare this list, authority may consult with Archaeological department, IAB or experts on historic, scenic, social, spiritual buildings.

After preparation the list of building, Authority has to notify the concern owners of the buildings.

After preparation of the list of buildings, Authority has to demonstrate the list of general public.

For any change, extension, addition, destruction of these building, one has to obtain written permission from City Development Committee.

Authority can permit (fully or partially) applications to change, extent, adjoin or destruct the listed buildings and can impose reasonable condition also.

The permission from the authority will be valid up to three years.

If any person do change, extent, adjoin or destruct of the listed buildings, authority will order the occupier or owner to impede the tasks.

If it seems that there is lack of superintending of the listed buildings, authority can acquire the listed buildings.

Authority can list special scenic, historic, scientific, social, spiritual or naturally remarkable area as conservation site.

Authority will take steps to upgrade and conserve the areas from time to time.

6. RECOMMENDATION

Building and areas need to be identified as a part of our cultural heritage and proper documentation needs to be done and should be conserved or preserved the monuments, structures of historical and archaeological significance sites for future. If we conserve and preserve the heritage of this city this can have a vital impact on our national heritage. If proper conservation is possible by maintaining the chronology it will also contribute in the world heritage as well as National Heritage. Sometimes illegal prohibition taken place so strict position against illegal prohibited from the historical sites. Besides merely posting a sign saying that the building is protected under the law, its history and importance should also included to inculcate awareness and pride in the people of the area.

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