

Editorial

This issue of Protibesh, the journal of the Department of Architecture, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, contains five papers. As always the attempt of the issue remains dedicated to presenting the latest developments in architectural studies and research. This peer-reviewed academic publication presents papers on the topical issues of architectural history, conservation and environmental simulation.

The first paper, written by ... titled Darasbari Madrasah: analysis of Bengali Sultanate Madrasah in Gaur deals with the unique and intelligent architecture that prevails in the northland of the ancient city of Gaur. This is one of the two madrasas (religious schools) in Gaur and Pandua. The Darasbari Madrasah, identified by the discovery of its foundation plan after excavation of the site is an example of the Sultanate Architecture of Bengal. This Sultanate mosque, in its complex setting, is embedded with its own identity and stylistic integrity. The construction technique, building materials, local influence, formal expression is unique. The madrasah is a remarkable educational institute, near the Darasbari mosque, having a stimulating planning organization, axiality, spatial enactment and mediaeval structural solution. This paper, through a detailed field survey, has focused on analysing the form, spatial qualities and structural meaning of the Madrasah building to arrive at an understanding of missing parts of the structure, including the roofing outline. Detailed drawings have been prepared to execute the whole process of conjectural mapping and regeneration. The paper, in addition, addresses the philosophy behind the settings of the Darasbari Madrasah complex.

The second paper of this issue is titled Exploring Morphological Changes of the Oldest Core of Dhaka and is written by . . The paper, in the background of the built heritage of Dhaka city, discusses the problems that rapid urbanization is putting on its social, physical, cultural identity. There is transformation in the built forms due to shifting economic activities and changing land use patterns. The old historic structures of three major streets of the old city - Shirish Das road, Paridas road and Rupchand lane, forming a part of the oldest core of Bangla bazaar area are focused in this paper. The paper observes the present condition of these streets, attempting identification of find morphological changes, ultimately recommending some of the old structures of the area for conservation. The author bases his comments from physical survey, as well as from critical readings of publications, containing analysis of historic evidence on the identified buildings. As the area is undergoing major physical and environmental degradation, the paper advocates a rigorous programme for conservation of seven identified buildings, in order to preserve history for posterity.

The next paper shows that the same process of metamorphosis by globalization and urbanization is taking place across the border in Kolkata, India. This paper, written by Dr. Bose titled A Report on Durga Puja Festival in Kolkata: Traditional Cultural Heritage with Art and Architecture discusses the celebration of a traditional Hindu festival, the Durga Puja, in Kolkata which is a cultural expression of a particular Asian society that remains preserved and by dint of participation with vigour continues to thrive in India. As Asian cities are going through a phase in which old traditional and vernacular buildings are being replaced by modern standardized large buildings with universal look, thus erasing the 'Asian-ness' from the cityscapes, such festivals, it is argued can help to preserve the uniqueness of the context. The intricacies of the settings, the careful planning of the temporary Puja sites and the artistic craftsmanship and skills and architecture associated with it are described in this paper. The author goes on to list some of the problems that the practice of these celebrations inevitably brings to the forefront of civic life, often making safety difficult. The inherent conflict between global and local culture, can be neutralized with care so that this living cultural heritage may continue. This paper aims to present a report on this grand traditional religious and socio-cultural practice in Kolkata.

Back across the border to Bangladesh, the next paper addresses yet another religious rite and a pilgrimage spot on the Old Brahmaputra River. In this paper titled, To Conserve a Sacred Place: An Investigation on

Moha Tirtha Langalbandh, Mohataz Hussain proposes conservation of an ancient sacred place named Langalbandh. It is a well known pilgrimage area in Bangladesh which has a strong historical and religious significance. Thousands of Hindu pilgrims from around the world visit this region for ritualistic bathing. Historic bathing ghats (steps leading into the water), associated with several old temples and hermitages, were built in the past to facilitate the sacred activities of these devotees. Hossain brings to light the present condition of this holy place, which due to prolonged lack of maintenance is falling into disrepair. Recent Governmental decision to develop the place to facilitate the religious activities and to allow tourism, in recognition of its history, social and religious value has sparked new interest in conserving this two-kilometer long sacred site of Langalbandh. This paper investigates existing physical and social aspects of the site, focusing on a proposal for conservation-oriented development strategies, based on establishing cultural and historic significance of Langalbandh, while developing the sacred pilgrimage spot as a tourist spot, without hampering the religious context.

The fifth and final paper of this issue of Protibesh contains a different flavor from the other four. The paper titled Simulation determining passive cooling parameters for multi-storied residential buildings in Dhaka is written by ..This paper investigates the effect of passive cooling strategies of multi-storeyed residential buildings in achieving indoor thermal comfort in the context of Dhaka, Bangladesh. Two main passive cooling strategies for the warm-humid climate of Bangladesh is examined in the discussions. These strategies, thermal mass and clear floor to ceiling height are investigated by using the thermal simulation programme IES-VE to evaluate the isolated effect of each. The main findings of the simulations indicate that lowest internal temperatures are possible when thermal mass of 250mm brick wall is used for the walls and clear floor height is maintained at 3.35m. From the result of the simulations, the author suggests the adoption of these measures for residences.

It is hoped that through the five papers in this issue, Architects and practitioners of the building industry will get a notion of contemporary thoughts of researchers and academicians in their pursuit of architecture knowledge. As Editor, I would like to extend my thanks to the Authors of these papers for their painstaking efforts in writing these papers and disseminating their research for a wide audience. The process of review and modification after the post-review phase has also been sincerely done. Our Reviewers, through thorough reviews and intellectual input, have suggested modifications and corrections, following which the authors have modified their submissions, and thereby, added greater depth to the papers. Despite these various interventions at different phases, the final contents of the papers reflect the Authors' own thoughts and opinions, and the success, intellectual and academic value of their papers is their own achievement. The Editorial Board has merely served as instruments in their presentation.

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