

**MINUTES OF 53<sup>RD</sup> MEETING OF THE HERITAGE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE**  
**HELD ON FEBRUARY 2, 2017**

**A. Proposals :**

**Item No. 1. Repair/renovation works at F-7, Inner Circle, Connaught Place.**

1. The proposal forwarded by the NDMC was scrutinised. It included the work in terms of the changes like plumbing, false ceiling, electrical, plastering, re-flooring, polishing white washing, re-roofing and wood work etc.
2. The proposal was found acceptable and approved with the following observations:-
  - i. From the site photographs received it was noted that the changes have been done on front facade. It is not acceptable. The front facade need to be restored to its original.
  - ii. The structural safety of the buildings should be ensured.
  - iii. Heritage Character comprising of architectural elements such as arches, cornices, quoins, gables, architraves, palladian style windows etc. should be retained in the modifications.

**Item No. 2. Repair/renovation works at premises no. A-15, A-1/15, A-1/16 and A-1/18, Connaught Place.**

1. The proposal forwarded by the NDMC was scrutinised. It included the work in terms of the internal changes, plastering, re-flooring, painting, patch repairing, white washing and re-roofing, etc.
2. The proposal was found acceptable and approved with the following observations:-
  - i) The structural safety of the buildings should be ensured.
  - ii) Heritage Character comprising of architectural elements such as arches, cornices, quoins, gables, architraves, palladian style windows etc. should be retained in the modifications.

**Item No. 3. Repair/renovation of painting, polishing and repair work at premises no. 101, 102, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, M-2, Yogeshwar Building, M-Block, Middle circle, Connaught Place.**

1. The proposal forwarded by the NDMC was scrutinised. It included the work in terms of the internal changes, painting polishing, re-flooring, replacing fallen bricks etc.

2. The proposal was found acceptable and approved with the following observations:-
  - i) The structural safety of the buildings should be ensured.
  - ii) Heritage Character comprising of architectural elements such as arches, cornices, quoins, gables, architraves, palladian style windows etc. should be retained in the modifications.

**Item No. 4. Permission for white washing, wooden work (furniture) and polishing at C-11, mezzanine floor, Connaught Place.**

1. The proposal forwarded by the NDMC was scrutinised. It included the work in terms of the internal changes, white washing and re-roofing, wood work etc.
2. The proposal was found acceptable and approved with the following observations:-
  - i) The structural safety of the buildings should be ensured.
  - ii) Heritage Character comprising of architectural elements such as arches, cornices, quoins, gables, architraves, palladian style windows etc. should be retained in the modifications.

**Item No. 5. Plans in respect of addition/alteration at Regal Theatre, Connaught Place.**

1. The proposal forwarded by the NDMC was considered by the Heritage Conservation Committee at its meeting held on December 16, 2016. It was observed that the architect should submit a Heritage Conservation Report. It was also decided that, to assess the heritage aspects of the building, a Sub-Committee comprising of the following will make a site visit and submit its report :
  - i) Smt. Vertika Sharma, Member HCC
  - ii) Shri Rommel Mehta, Member HCC
  - iii) Shri S.P. Pathak, Member HCC
  - iv) Member Secretary, HCC – Convenor
2. In compliance to the HCC's observations, the proponent has submitted a Heritage Conservation Report. The Sub-committee constituted by the HCC had visited the site on January 21, 2017 and has given its report with the following observations :-
  - i) The building has lot of heritage value in terms of various architectural elements such as arches, cornices, quoins, gables, architraves, palladian style windows etc. which should be retained in the modifications.
  - ii) Efforts should be made to restore the two big arches on either side of main entrance of the cinema, falling in main public portico.

- iii) The size of grand hall which has immense heritage value should not be reduced.
  - iv) Possibility of retaining the two number of stair flights from the grand hall to access way should be explored.
  - v) Proper restoration of the structure on sides and rear should be done.
  - vi) So as to appreciate the heritage of the building, all unauthorized structures/ encroachments should be removed.
  - vii) The aspect related to the plot/property line should be seen by the NDMC, being the concerned local body.
3. The proposal was scrutinised by the HCC in context of its earlier observations and the site visit report received. It was also discussed with the architect/proponent. While agreeing to comply with the observations of the HCC, with regard to point no. (iv) above, the architect made a submission that retaining of the two number of stair flights would create the problem of entry to commercial area from the grand hall, because of level difference. Rather by their removal more height will be available to appreciate the geometry of ceiling. It was agreed by the HCC and the proposal was approved.

**Item No. 6. Plans in respect of Interior work on ground Floor and mezzanine floor of H-16, Govind Mansion, Outer Circle, Connaught Place.**

- 1. The proposal forwarded by the NDMC was scrutinised. It included the work in terms of the internal changes, plumbing, false ceiling, electrical, re-flooring, painting and polishing etc.
- 2. The proposal was found acceptable and approved with the following observations:-
  - i) The structural safety of the buildings should be ensured.
  - ii) Heritage Character comprising of architectural elements such as arches, cornices, quoins, gables, architraves, palladian style windows etc. should be retained in the modifications.

**Item No. 7. Plans in respect of interior renovation work on ground and mezzanine floor at 11, Scindhia House, Connaught Place.**

- 1. The proposal forwarded by the NDMC was scrutinised. It included the work in terms of the internal changes, repairing of old electric wiring & fitting, plumbing, polishing & repair of false ceiling etc.

2. The proposal was found acceptable and approved with the following observations:-
  - i) The structural safety of the buildings should be ensured.
  - ii) Heritage Character comprising of architectural elements such as arches, cornices, quoins, gables, architraves, palladian style windows etc. should be retained in the modifications.

**Item No. 8. Proposed 8 no. Bus Stops at Shanti Path.**

1. The proposal of the bus stops at Shanti Path was submitted by the NDMC for approval of the HCC. As per notified list of Heritage Buildings/precincts of NDMC area 'Shanti Path Vista' is in Grade I.
2. The proposal was scrutinized and discussed with the Chief Architect, NDMC. The HCC observed that the grandeur of the Vista should be maintained. While the proposal was agreed in principle, the HCC observed that the use of glass as the roofing material as proposed need re-consideration in view of extreme weather conditions. The Chief Architect, NDMC was advised to submit the revised proposal with alternative roofing material for consideration of the HCC.

**Item No. 9. Restoration of Hindu Rao House and its surroundings in Hindu Rao Hospital in C-280, Civil Lines Zone.**

1. The proposal was forwarded by the North DMC for consideration of the HCC.
2. The proposal forwarded earlier by the North DMC was considered by the Heritage Conservation Committee at its meeting held on November 23, 2012. It was not approved. Certain observations were made.
3. The revised proposal was found acceptable and approved.

**B. Other matters :**

**Item No. 1. Recommendations of the Sub-Committees constituted on:**

**(a) Inclusion of Modern Post Independence (1947) iconic Buildings in the Heritage List – Criteria thereof.**

In the 49<sup>th</sup> meeting of HCC held on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2016, it was decided to constitute a sub-committee with the mandate to prepare criteria for the inclusion of modern iconic post-independence buildings in the heritage list. The sub-committee has submitted its report on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2016. This report was discussed in HCC's 53<sup>rd</sup> meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2017.

2. It was observed that the sub-committee has gone beyond its mandate of preparing criteria for inclusion of modern buildings in the heritage list. The sub-committee has entertained and analyzed the list of 62 buildings received from INTACH and has made recommendations regarding whether they should be considered heritage buildings along with their grading. Para 1.5 of Annexure-II, referred to in bye-law 7.26 of the Unified Building Bye Laws for Delhi, 2016 (UBBL) clearly stipulates that the responsibility of preparation of list of heritage sites is that of the local bodies based on the advice of HCC. Further, this para mentions that the list may be supplemented from time to time by the Government. Thus, UBBL clearly identifies the roles of various bodies in preparation of heritage list and HCC has an advisory role only. Therefore, the grading and listing which has been recommended by the subcommittee is beyond their jurisdiction or that of HCC. It is quite clear that HCC can consider any list only for advisory purposes after the same has been referred to them by the local body or the Government.
3. Further, it is not procedurally correct for the sub-committee to consider these 62 buildings whereas they themselves go on to recommend a procedure for preparing such lists. The sub-committee has failed to specify the details of the features/ characteristics of individual buildings based on which they have been graded. It is also not stated in the report that the members of the sub-committee have visited and appraised each of these buildings properly. Moreover, the criteria prepared by them was neither approved by HCC, nor by the government/local bodies who are ultimately responsible to approve any new criteria. In view of this only, the sub-committee was tasked to prepare the criteria, which was to be shared with the Government and the local bodies for further action, as may be considered appropriate. Thus the entire recommendations made in Part III of the report of the sub-committee are without any basis, arbitrary and completely ad hoc. Hence, these recommendations are not acceptable.
4. It was also observed that the criteria recommended by the sub-committee in Part I of the report appears to be a cut-and-paste job from heritage laws of various local bodies in India and abroad without much application of mind. The criteria are open-ended, vague (e.g. architectural significance criterion 7), overlapping (e.g. historical significance criteria 1 and 2 overlap with the criterion 4), repetitive (e.g. architectural

significance criteria 5, 6 and 12) and even meaningless (e.g. architectural significance criterion 10). It is clear that the sub-committee has not deliberated on what could be significant to Delhi in view of various practices being followed across India or abroad, specially in the context of contemporary buildings. It was noted that nothing specific to Delhi has been recommended. Given the vagueness and the open-ended character of these recommendations, almost any and every building could end up as a heritage building. Hence, such criteria are not acceptable.

5. It was further noted that the sub-committee's recommendation that buildings should be at least 15 years old for them to be considered as heritage buildings, is completely arbitrary. This recommendation is against the very sense of the word 'heritage', which means "valued objects and qualities such as historic buildings and cultural traditions that have been passed down from previous generations" (refer online Oxford dictionary). Even if we consider a time interval of merely two generations as one of the essential conditions for a building to be considered heritage, the minimum time period would be  $30 \times 2$ , i.e. 60 years. It was pointed out by Member Secretary that when the notifications of the heritage buildings were done in 2009 and 2010 by GNCTD, the list consisted of buildings constructed prior to 1947. Thus, all the buildings notified as heritage buildings were at least 62 years old at the time of notification. In view of the above, it was decided that the buildings to be included in the heritage list should be at least 60 years old.
6. With every passing year, buildings are being constructed in increasing numbers. In view of technological advances, these buildings are likely to last longer as compared to the buildings constructed in the past. Therefore, in order to ensure that only those buildings which truly deserve to be preserved or conserved are identified as heritage buildings, the criteria should be highly selective besides being very objective and transparent.
7. In view of the above, it was decided to reject the report of the sub-committee. It was further decided to form a new sub-committee to prepare objective, transparent and meaningful criteria for inclusion of modern buildings in the heritage list, based on best national and international practices. However, these buildings will have to be at least 60 years old. The criteria so prepared would then be shared with the local bodies and the Government of NCT of Delhi, who are responsible for inviting

objections and suggestions from the public and supplementing the list of heritage sites.

8. Following will be the composition of the sub-committee:

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. Prof. Dr. Rommel Mehta, Member HCC                         | .....Chairman of Sub-Committee |
| 2. Ms. Vertika Sharma, Member HCC                             | .....Member of Sub-Committee   |
| 3. Sh. Sanjeev Kapur, ADG (Architecture),<br>CPWD, Member HCC | ..... Member of Sub-Committee  |
| 4. Sh. Rajeev Sood, Chief Architect NDMC, Member HCC          | .....Member of Sub-Committee   |
| 5. Member-Secretary, HCC                                      | .....Convenor of Sub-Committee |

**(b) Incentives offered for Heritage sites/buildings in Delhi.**

Because of paucity of time the consideration of the proposal was postponed.

**Item No. 2. Policy for conserving and repairs in Connaught Place and its precincts – Letter received from President, New Delhi Traders Association(NDTA).**

1. A letter no. NDTA/GL-4/PG-258/2/17 dated January 2, 2017 received from the New Delhi Traders Association was placed before the HCC. In the letter its has been requested that :

*“.....HCC and the NDMC to promulgate a just and equitable policy whereby repair activities listed under 6.4.1 and which do not require any structural modifications and further which do not involve the front façade of Connaught Place (the element of heritage importance), should be allowed without prior approval.....”*

2. It was recalled that at its meeting held on December 16, 2016, HCC had considered a letter no. CA/BP/D-1560 dated November 22, 2016 in which NDMC had requested for exemption from the purview of HCC the cases of repairs etc. in Connaught Place.

The HCC had observed that as per its mandate it cannot take out any heritage building premises out of its purview nor can it delegate its power to the local body.

3. The matter was considered and the HCC observed that the provisions contained in clause 7.26 (Annexure-II) of UBBL-2016 are applicable to all notified heritage buildings/precincts. As such the provisions of clause 2.14 of UBBL-2016 (Clause 6.4.1 as per old document of UBBL) which provide “Building permit not required” are applicable only to other buildings and not to notified heritage buildings. The HCC reiterated its observations of December 16, 2016 given in response to NDMC’s letter

of November 22, 2016, that it cannot take out any heritage building premises out of its purview nor can it delegate its powers to the local body.

**Additional item :**

**Item No.1 : Proposal for internal renovation works in respect of N-44, Inner Circle, Connaught Place.**

1. The proposal forwarded by the NDMC was scrutinised. It included the work in terms of the internal changes, false ceiling, plastering, re-flooring, white washing, wood work and furniture etc.
2. The proposal was found acceptable and approved with the following observations:-
  - i. The structural safety of the buildings should be ensured.
  - ii. Heritage Character comprising of architectural elements such as arches, cornices, quoins, gables, architraves, palladian style windows etc. should be retained in the modifications.

**Sd/-  
(Vinod Kumar)  
Member-Secretary  
Heritage Conservation Committee**