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Preserving Heritage Through Adaptive Reuse: Strategies, Case Studies, and Sustainability

SamiurRehman. S

Associate Professor School of Architecture, KL deemed to be University, Andhra Pradesh, India. samiurrehman@kluniversity.in

Abstract.

This study explores the pivotal practice of adaptive reuse for preserving historical buildings, emphasizing its impact on cultural, economic, and social sustainability. Amid the dominance of modern architecture, the fading connection between past and present prompts a call for brownfield development over Greenfield alternatives. Strategies for adaptive reuse are presented, supported by case studies demonstrating contributions to sustainability[1]. The definition of adaptive reuse is explored as a revitalization strategy, emphasizing its crucial role in maintaining cultural identity, fostering social connections, and mitigating environmental impact. The study concludes by advocating for ongoing transformation through adaptive reuse, aligning with sustainability goals

Keywords: Maximum 4 keywords.

1. Introduction

In the dynamic landscape of urban development, the adaptive reuse of historical buildings emerges as a pivotal strategy, offering a balance between heritage conservation and contemporary needs. This paper explores the profound significance of repurposing historical structures, emphasizing its economic, cultural, and social sustainability that enriches urban communities. Amid the dominance of modern architecture, there is a growing disconnect between past and present, underscoring the urgency of revitalizing historical ties. Acknowledging research favoring brownfield development over Greenfield alternatives for reduced environmental impact, this study presents strategies and case studies to illuminate how adaptive reuse contributes to sustainability.

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Historically significant places provide tangible links between bygone eras and the present, and the adaptive reuse of such buildings revitalizes not only the structures but also the communities surrounding them. Beyond fulfilling the immediate functional needs of a structure, adaptive reuse actively preserves and rejuvenates community identity, stimulates tourism, and transforms spaces into dynamic, character-defining places[2]. In the face of escalating demand for new constructions and the associated environmental costs, the time has come to reimagine historical buildings as bastions of conservation, preservation, and adaptive reuse, aligning with contemporary trends and fostering sustainability.

The subsequent sections delve into the definition of adaptive reuse, the pivotal role it plays in sustaining social, environmental, and economic dimensions, and the strategic approaches involved. Drawing insights from case studies, such as the Bayt al-Kritliya in Cairo, Egypt, and Tipu Sultan's Summer Palace in Bangalore, this paper explores how adaptive reuse can seamlessly integrate modern functionalities while preserving historical integrity. The research underscores that adaptive reuse is not merely a transformation of physical spaces but a conscious effort to uphold historical identity and contribute to sustainable urban development.

Case Study 1: Bayt al-Kritliya, Cairo, Egypt

Bayt al-Kritliya stands as a testament to adaptive reuse, representing an Ottoman residential structure built in 1540 AD, situated in Darb al Asfar, Cairo, Egypt, adjacent to a mosque. Reflecting the social patterns of the Ottoman period, this architectural gem separates public and private areas within its structure[3]. Originally consisting of two interconnected buildings referred to collectively as Bayt al-Kritliya, its historical narrative took a significant turn when it became the residence of British art collector R.G. Gayer Anderson.

Figure 1 BAYT AL-KRITLIA BUILDING

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Adaptive Reuse:

In the later years, R.G. Gayer Anderson initiated the adaptive reuse of Bayt al-Kritliya in 1999, transforming it into 'The Gayer Anderson Museum.' This adaptive reuse not only preserved the building but also added new elements and functions. The museum now features an open-air theater, carefully designed landscaping, and additional display spaces, creating a harmonious blend of historical preservation and contemporary utility.

This adaptive reuse showcases a unique sustainability approach, demonstrating a commitment to conservation while providing a novel experience for both staff and visitors[4]. Bayt al-Kritliya serves as a living example of how historical buildings can be repurposed to contribute to the cultural richness of a community and attract tourism, all while preserving the authenticity of its heritage

Case Study 2: Tipu Sultan's Summer Palace, Bangalore

Tipu Sultan's Summer Palace, located in Bangalore, India, stands as a historical marvel constructed by Hyder Ali during the reign of Tipu Sultan in 1791.[5] This architectural gem, constructed primarily with teak wood, stone mortar, and plaster, served as the residence from which Tipu Sultan conducted his court affairs, utilizing the eastern and western balconies on the upper floor.

Figure 2 TIPU SULTAN'S SUMMER PALACE

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Adaptive Reuse:

The adaptive reuse of Tipu Sultan's Summer Palace exemplifies the transformation of a historic structure to meet contemporary needs. The ground floor of the palace has been converted into a museum, showcasing Tipu Sultan's achievements, administration, clothing, crown, and portraits of people and places from that era. Additionally, silver vessels gifted to Hyder Ali are on display. The garden in front of the building has been developed into a lawn by the Horticulture Department, enhancing the overall visitor experience[6].

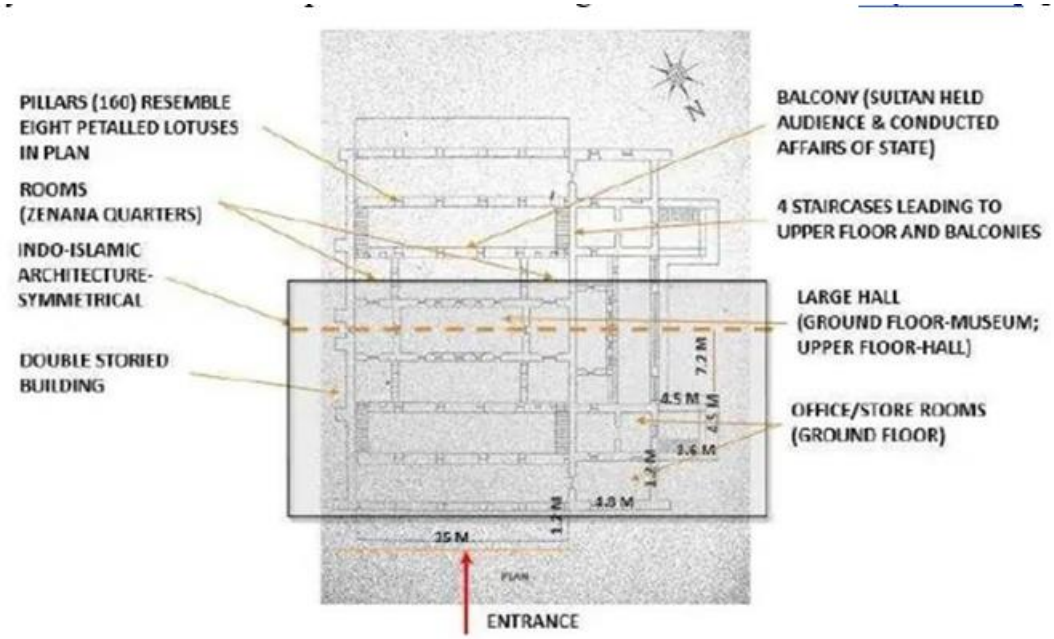

Figure 3 GROUND FLOOR PLAN

The adaptive reuse of Tipu Sultan's Summer Palace demonstrates the possibility of repurposing historic buildings without compromising their significance and original fabric. The careful design of new contemporary elements and facades, without mimicking the heritage details, allows the building to breathe new life into its surroundings[7]. This case study emphasizes the importance of preserving the streetscape's historical significance, character, and scale while adapting buildings to serve modern functions. It reinforces the notion that adaptive reuse can successfully integrate the old with the new, contributing to the cultural and historical richness of a region.

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Figure 4 FIRST FLOOR PLAN

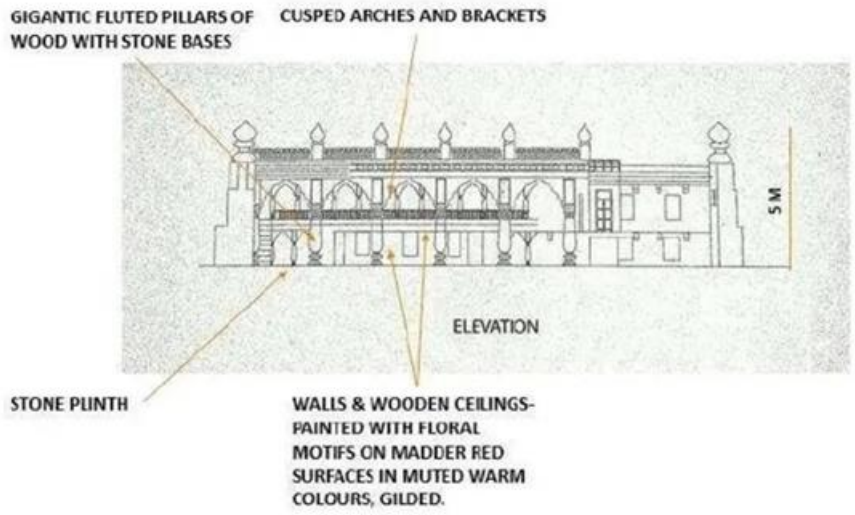

Figure 5 FRONT ELEVATION OF TIPU SULTAN'S PALACE

2. Analysis and Strategic Takeaways:

Adaptive reuse emerges as a viable strategy for preserving historic buildings while incorporating contemporary functionality. By skillfully designing new facades and making thoughtful insertions without mimicking heritage details, the original fabric and significance of the structure can be retained[8].

Preservation of these buildings contributes to the streetscape, maintaining its historical value, character, and scale. This ensures a harmonious blend of old and new, allowing buildings to breathe new life into their surroundings.

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The flexibility in altering interiors and exteriors during a change in building use underscores the adaptability of adaptive reuse[9]. This approach avoids rigid percentages and promotes a creative transformation of spaces.

General Strategies for Adaptive Reuse:

1. **Local Material Selection:**
    - Prioritize materials that are locally available, ensuring a sustainable approach to construction.
2. **Material Harmony:**
    - Select materials that seamlessly integrate with existing ones, fostering a cohesive aesthetic.
3. **Innovative Combinations:**
    - Introduce a blend of old and new techniques and materials in construction for a dynamic and functional result.
4. **Contextual Suitability:**
    - Ensure changes made align with the surroundings and cater to societal needs, emphasizing the preservation of heritage elements.

3. **Conclusions:**

This research provides effective strategies for the adaptive reuse of historical buildings, minimizing disruptions to their existing forms and elements. Preservation of the original fabric, characteristics, and historical identity is paramount. The transformation of these buildings for different typologies demonstrates a forward-looking approach that respects the past while meeting the evolving needs of the present.

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