Historic Urban Landscape: A Study of the Cultural Landscape of the City of Guwahati

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Abstract: *The paper on Historic Urban Landscape: A Study of the cultural landscape of the city of Guwahati talks about the UNESCO Recommendation on Historic Urban Landscape in 2011. A Historic Urban Landscape according to this recommendation is the urban area which has emerged after continuous layering of civilisations having numerous cultural and natural features. With the growth of cities these historic characters which define the present area, changes and is vulnerable to be lost in the face of time due to climate change, globalisation, urbanisation and sometimes due to military activities. The Historic Urban Landscape approach therefore emphasises on conservation and management strategies for architectural and infrastructural safety in the face of development at the global and at the local level. Taking the example of Guwahati in Assam a state in India's Northeast, the paper studies the application of the Historic Urban Landscape approach on the Guwahati Baptist Church and frames methods for the conservation of the monument in the context of the urban heritage management plan.*

Keywords: Historical Urban Landscape, Urbanisation, Urban Heritage, City, Conservation, Architecture, Urban Regeneration

Introduction

The sounds, inscriptions, objects, images, books, magazines, television programmes, etc are all representative of cultural identity of a race or a nation. The UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) 2011, describes HUL as "the urban area which develops as the result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, extending beyond the notion of 'historic center' or ensemble to include the broader urban context and its geographical setting" (historicurbanlandscape.com). Today historic cities constitute the largest heritage 'category' on the World Heritage List. Several other previous recommendations paved the way for the development of the Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, 2011. They are (i) Recommendations on Landscapes and Sites (1962); (ii) the Venice Charter (1964); (iii) World Heritage Convention (1972); (iv) Recommendation on Historic Areas (1976); (v) Florence Charter (1982); (vi) Washington Charter (1987); (vii) Intangible World Heritage Convention (2003); (viii) Convention on Cultural Diversity (2005). The Preamble on HUL outlines that urbanisation is proceeding rapidly which is

further influencing socio economic change and growth. Thus, for the protection of the natural and cultural heritage, emphasis must be laid on the conservation of the historic urban area. Management and planning strategies for architecture and infrastructural development at local levels can also be worked out.

Conservation is the main feature of the HUL approach. The HUL can provide a framework for monitoring and managing changes in urban areas as the historic cities are similar to living organisms, in that it has the ability to adapt itself to modern life, passing through various stages of development and balancing between conservation and transformation, past and the future.

Urbanisation is characterised by the development of monotonous buildings, lack of space, disasters due to climate etc. The Historic Urban Landscape approach therefore addresses the new challenges and opportunities facing the historic landscape. Urban conservation is not limited to the preservation of a single building, but the entire architecture of the building is viewed as one element in the overall urban setting, and this becomes a key element of urban planning (Recommendation on the Historic Urban landscape, 10 Nov, 2011). The HUL is considered as an object of conservation policy and thus contemporary architecture is considered in the perspective of historic continuity in the urban historic field. The Burra Charter stresses that "conservation is an integral part of good management of places of cultural significance". The Burra Charter is the Australian ICOMOS Charter for Places of cultural Significance. It was first adopted in 1979 CE to develop on the understanding of the theory and practice of cultural heritage management.

Urban heritage constitutes a key resource in enhancing the liveability of urban areas. It fosters economic development and social cohesion in a changing global environment. The idea is to raise levels of awareness by involving people in preservation efforts through active participation of public, private and civic sectors (UNESCO Recommendation on HUL).

City

A city is not a static monument or a group of buildings but is influenced by dynamic forces in the economic, social, and cultural spheres (New Life for Historic Cities, 2013). No city in this world has been able to retain its 'original' character, changing along with the change in society. The UNESCO approach to manage historic urban landscapes is holistic and it integrates the goal of urban heritage conservation. The HUL concentrates upon the entire human environment embracing the tangible and intangible qualities. To preserve the urban historic landscape, a strategy needs to be conceived between various actors i.e., between the authorities who manage the cities, developers, and entrepreneurs along with the public (New Life for historic cities-The historic urban landscape approach explained-UNESCO). Historic cities come under pressure from (i) climate change, (ii) urbanisation, (iii) market exploitation, (iv) mass tourism etc. In a city, architecture is a primary element. The city becomes the ultimate scope of an architecture's striving for form (Llorens 1981:86 pp 42).

The 1962 UNESCO Recommendation talks about landscape as a safeguard for the beauty and characteristics of sites which preserve, and restore the urban, natural, rural, and man-made objects. Cultural Landscape according to the World Heritage Committee, 1992, represents the "combined works of nature and of man". Cultural Landscape is referred to an evolution over time, expressed in the historical stratigraphy which depicts the relation of man and nature in the past and is therefore archaeological in character (Martini, V, 2013). Cultural Landscape is subject to change in the future. Cultural landscape is defined as a fragment of geographical space, shaped throughout history, created as a result of combined environmental and cultural influences which create a specific structure characterised by regional distinctness perceived as peculiar surface features (Myga-Piątek U, 2008). Shaped throughout the centuries, evolutionary cultural landscapes are currently subject to rapid transformation resulting in factors like: -

i) Urban sprawl and dispersion of housing in open areas.
ii) Commercial tourism.
iii) Negligence in the field of the legal protection of areas with environmental value and making such areas available for commercial use (sports, tourism, construction, hunting, forestry).
iv) Building large commercial complexes.
v) Development of transnational transport routes.
vi) Creation of artificial landscapes (example theme parks) (Myga-Piątek U, 2011).

Historic Urban Landscape

The 1976 Recommendation was the first UNESCO instrument regarding the protection and management of historic urban areas. It was the principal reference for the development of the notion of Historic Urban Landscape. The concept of HUL had its origin in the problems of controlling development in the surroundings of historic buildings or historic urban areas. The Historic Urban Landscape addresses the problems arising from development near the historical monuments which are recognised for their outstanding universal value. The Historic Urban Landscape approach is an answer to the management of historic cities under the new forms of pressure from development.

Thus, the main aim of HUL is to preserve the significance and qualities of the city. According to the HUL approach, a city can be modernised without compromising its historical character and identity. It is to be recognised that landscape is a shared heritage by local communities (Martini, V, 2013). The 1987 International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Historic Towns Charter addressed the importance of preserving the qualities of the city including the historic character of the town or urban area as well as the streets and buildings including the 'shapes, size, style, and construction, materials. According to the UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape "The historic urban landscape approach aims at preserving the quality of the human environment, enhancing the productive and sustainable use of

urban spaces while recognising their dynamic character, and promoting social and functional diversity. It integrates the goals of urban heritage conservation and those of social and economic development (Art 11)".

The idea of the urban landscape concerns itself with the material and immaterial form of a site that in its historical and socio-cultural configuration is one of the first elements of human development. The urban landscape is considered as a historical stratification of cultural and natural values and is connected with the question of contemporary architecture. Rapid urbanisation threatens the character of the place and community identity (18th ICOMOS General Assembly and Scientific Symposium on Heritage and landscape as Human Values).

UNESCO World Heritage Convention of Paris addressed it's concern about the issues of cultural heritage by expressing on facts like: (i) a futuristic vision of the city is needed through a process of dialogue between politicians, urban planners, city developers, architects etc, (ii) changing traditions should be acknowledged, (iii) contemporary architecture should be blended with the historic urban landscape, (iv) in case of any disturbance to the historical resources, a cultural and visual impact study must be undertaken. In case of any emergency arising out of urbanisation and development to the heritage resources and historic areas within the city, the abovementioned tools can be effectively used through the application of legislatives like management plans and heritage impact assessment studies about the heritage resources. High rise buildings are now creating an impediment on the heritage structures, and these have been viewed with importance by the World Heritage Committee at its 29th Session in July 2005 in Durban.

The UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape adopted then 2011 considers a historic city 'as a unit which is influenced by growth, development and conservation, where conservation aims at carving a balance between urban growth and quality of life'. This is because industrialisation and tourism act hand in hand in the cities and they are also troubled by urbanisation in the form of real estate businesses, unplanned renovations, globalisation, and local developments. A proper management tool is the possible answer for the conservation of the historic urban landscape (Martini, V, 2013).

The 1964 Venice Charter laid down the frameworks for city protection, while the 1972 World Heritage Convention laid down regulations for the general context of heritage protection. Since 2005 the term Historic Urban Landscape has been used particularly in the case of the urban centres all over the world. Urbanisation and the changing character of the city centres went parallelly along with the international race for the protection of these places of heritage. From 1972 onwards the widening scopes of cultural heritage led to a redefining and reshaping of the meaning of urban heritage. The old buildings were no longer considered as only historic monuments but as social habitats which should be preserved with their natural settings. Initially the term

'historic area' was used to describe a city centre. Later historic townscape and now urban landscape have come into use. A Landscape has no limits. The common requirement and which is urgently necessary for the landscapes, and which have been demanded by the documents are the need for conservation, a survey-based approach, programming and planning, involvement of the locals in the decision-making process and the enhancement of the educative value of the historic settings itself.

The HUL approach embraces the present-day historic city centres. Modernising and investing in historic cities, while at the same time preserving the historical character and identity of the urban areas is the aim of the HUL approach. It recommends certain planning tools for conservation of the urban areas. For this the (i) history of the city, (ii) mapping, (iii) urbanism, (iv) history of the art, architecture, economy and sociology have to be worked out for monitoring and managing the continuity and change in the historic urban areas and their surroundings. Point 5 and 6 of the UNESCO Recommendation for the Historic Urban Landscape addresses the need to better integrate and frame urban heritage conservation strategies within the larger goals of overall sustainable development, in order to support public and private actions aimed at preserving and enhancing the quality of the human environment. It also suggests a landscape approach for identifying, conserving, and managing historic areas within their broader urban contexts, by considering the interrelationships of their physical forms, their spatial organisation and connection, their natural features and settings, and their social, cultural, and economic values.

This approach addresses the policy, governance and management concerns involving a variety of stakeholders, including local, national, regional, international, public, and private actors in the urban development process (http://whc.unesco.org/en/cities/).

Urban Landscape of Guwahati

This paper attempts to study the relation of history with the urban development in Guwahati. History is not only a remembrance of the past but in the context of urban city planning, this nostalgic feeling can be assimilated, becoming a part of "rescue archaeology" for historic preservation to be successful amidst urban designing. For this the legislative, political, economic, technical, social, and cultural attributes of a city must be embraced.

Guwahati famously knows as the "Gateway to the North East" is the oldest city in the North Eastern part of India. Its most ancient name was *Pragjyotishpura*. The term *Pragjyotisha* means a country, while *Pragjyotispura* means the capital city of that country. The city is situated on the south bank of the river Brahmaputra. The name *Pragjyotishpura* occurs in the *Kalika Purana* which was composed between the 7-10th centuries CE. *Pragjyotishpura* continued to hold the position of a capital city till the 12th century CE and the term *Pragjyotishpura* was used till the Ahom period. Guwahati remained the head quarter of Lower Assam and there was a bitter conflict that arose between the Ahoms and Mughals for the possession of Guwahati. The city began to

develop on modern lines after the British occupation of Assam in 1826 CE. During their rule, Assam was brought under the new revenue system. The British Government was interested in improving the educational quality of the state and by 1835 CE school buildings started to be opened in Guwahati. In 1878 C.E Guwahati was constituted into a first-class municipality and in 1897 CE the Assam Bengal Railway line was constructed connecting Guwahati with Upper Assam and Sylhet. In 1901, Cotton College, the first college in the North East of India was established by Sir Henry Cotton in the city and by the time of the Second World War, Guwahati enjoyed a relative position of importance, since it was the army headquarters of the war front in the North East of India. With the dawn of independence , Guwahati developed into a full-fledged city. Thus, the history of the evolution of Guwahati can be traced to a period of remote antiquity and there is ample proof in the form of architectural edifices to speak about its history.

Throughout the ages, Guwahati has remained the cultural centre of Assam. All the temples and architectural works of the pre-Ahom period have unfortunately been destroyed by major earthquakes, devastating floods etc. The pre-Ahom and Ahom period remains which exist in Guwahati are the Kamakhya Temple, Baneswar Devalaya, Sukrewar Temple, Janardan Temple, Ugratara Temple, Umananda, Vasishtha Temple etc. The colonial period in Assam saw growth and development in architectural features and parks for beautifying Guwahati and for administrative purposes. The city bears an exceptional testimony to a cultural landscape of a significant period of colonial history. The Guwahati Baptist Church, the Conference Centre Complex located in the Mission Compound at Panbazar, the Christ Church, the Satribari Christian Hospital and church , and the White Memorial Hostel located inside the premises of the Satribari Christian Hospital are all historically significant buildings in Guwahati, making them an important part of the city's cultural landscape.

These historic centres are the major components of the cultural identity of Guwahati. The old colonial constructions reveal the history of the city and the whole of its culture. Hence the importance of a Heritage Resource Management is necessary, which can address the issues affecting the cultural resources, emanating out of development and urbanisation and also to ensure preservation and conservation of the cultural resources at the local, national and international level. Heritage strengthens the identities at the level of our home, our neighbourhood, our town, our region, our nation and at the continental and universal levels (Howard. P, 2003).

Urbanisation is the most important landscape shaping force. During the 21st century, urbanisation has taken over most of the green and open areas (Bloemers. T, 2011) and cities are the root cause for this urbanisation. The first attribute of a city is that it is has an expansionary nature. The aspirations of the people, the advancements in science and technology, increasing population, industrialisation, increasing mode of travel, etc, have all contributed to the expansion of a city. Each urban area has access to facilities like education, government administration, recreation, health, culture, and

communication, besides participating in activities like trade and commerce. Administrations in large cities are often confronted with a multitude of key problems, like high urban densities, traffic congestions, energy inadequacies, unplanned developments, lack of basic services, illegal constructions, both within the city and in the periphery, informal real estate markets, creation of slums, poor natural hazard management in overpopulated areas, crime, water, soil and air pollution leading to environmental degradation, climate change and poor governance arrangements (Rapid Urbanisation and Mega Cities: The Need for Spatial Information Management (2010).

Urbanisation

Urbanisation is proceeding at an unprecedented rate in the history of humankind. This is leading to socio-economic change and growth. This change is likely to fragment and deteriorate urban heritage with deep impact on community values. High rise buildings are now creating an impediment on the heritage structures all over the world. Thus, natural, and cultural historic urban areas around the globe need to be conserved. Management and urban planning strategies can help in maintaining the urban identity (Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, including a glossary of definitions, 10 November 2011). Uncontrolled urbanisation results in the sprawling of modern cities, subsequent congestions near the heritage sites by new housing constructions, and destruction of the historical and urban landscape. By now it is recognised that most of the World Heritage Sites are dangerously overtaken by the urban environment due to the expansion of cities and subsequent civic land use.

Thus, urbanisation is indirectly contributing towards monumental degradation. Modern cityscapes today show little awareness of their historical past. New architectural structures, spaghetti highways and historic preservation projects are seldom integrated with the existing urban texture (Christine, M. 1997). Planned urbanisation for saving the built heritages, identifying the issues affecting the sites, policy guidelines in the name of Cultural Resource Management, community participation in preservation matters etc can perhaps give a facelift to these old buildings. As historic centres remain a major component of the cultural identity of Guwahati, or any other city, as the case maybe, management for preservation of urban heritage, tourism, and planning for an improvement in the quality of life in the city has to be considered properly. Attempts should be made to blend the fragments of past eras into the present-day urban fabric in order to educate the public about its archaeological heritage. Conservation of this heritage ensures that it becomes a resource for development in remote and economically peripheral regions of a country. Heritage conservation rejuvenates historic urban space through renovation, restoration, and reconstruction of historic buildings (Timothy and Nyaupane. 2009).

Urban Planning

Urban renewal is the answer for urban planning and an urban crisis. The term urban renewal is of American origin and it has got a universal applicability as far as improving the conditions of the towns and cities are concerned. It is a process of

replanning and development of land structures, physical and social structures, conservation and rehabilitation of areas, or the need of preservation of the historical or cultural linkages of the city etc. In view of its rapid growth and fast changing socio economic conditions in a city like Guwahati, the Master Plan of the city has included within its purview environmental planning and conservation, integrated transport (passenger and goods), infrastructure (physical and social), city image, urban design and landscape, social housing and slum rehabilitation, water supply, sewage, and drainage, access to health and education facilities, residential buildings equipped with proper infrastructure like lifts, fire alarms, well sized corridors etc. Besides Guwahati is one of the 63 cities of India, covered under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM).

For urban regeneration plans to be successful, the Master Plan implementation requires the (i) development of new areas, (2) redevelopment of existing developed areas and (3) conservation of eco sensitive areas. Guwahati Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) shall be the nodal agency for this Master Plan's implementation. Last but not least, the GMDA has taken the responsibility of conservation of buildings and structures of architectural, aesthetic, historical or heritage importance (Master Plan for Guwahati Metropolitan Area-2025: (Land Use Zoning and Development Control Regulation) 2009, GMDA).

Under the scheme regeneration plans are being undertaken in Guwahati at the moment and the city is getting an urban upliftment and quality enhancement through the construction of flyovers and improved road connectivity without impairing heritage structures. The Old Deputy Commissioner's Building located at Panbazar in the heart of the city of Guwahati has been renovated and been taken care of by the Government of Assam under the various schemes of development of Guwahati. Regeneration is the key tool for the cities even today which are craving for redevelopment.

It is seen that cities all over the world are developing at a rapid rate particularly in the 21st century. Guwahati is no exception. It is a city dotted with colonial monuments and which are now mute spectators of the urbanisation. The colonial monuments are important from the point of view of archaeology, architecture, science, and technology. The need of the hour is therefore to evaluate how these tangible heritage objects can be preserved as part of the urban heritage, and planning process of Guwahati.

Heritage Management Framework

For urban heritage management, certain individual tools have been developed that can help in the maintenance of the heritage in the city of Guwahati. The methods are (i) describing the architectural design of the monument (ii) drawing of the monument through auto cad (iii) and a descriptive account of the history of the monument. Taking the example of the Guwahati Baptist Church (Figures 1 and 2) located at Kamarpatty in Panbazar, an auto cad drawing is done for this study.

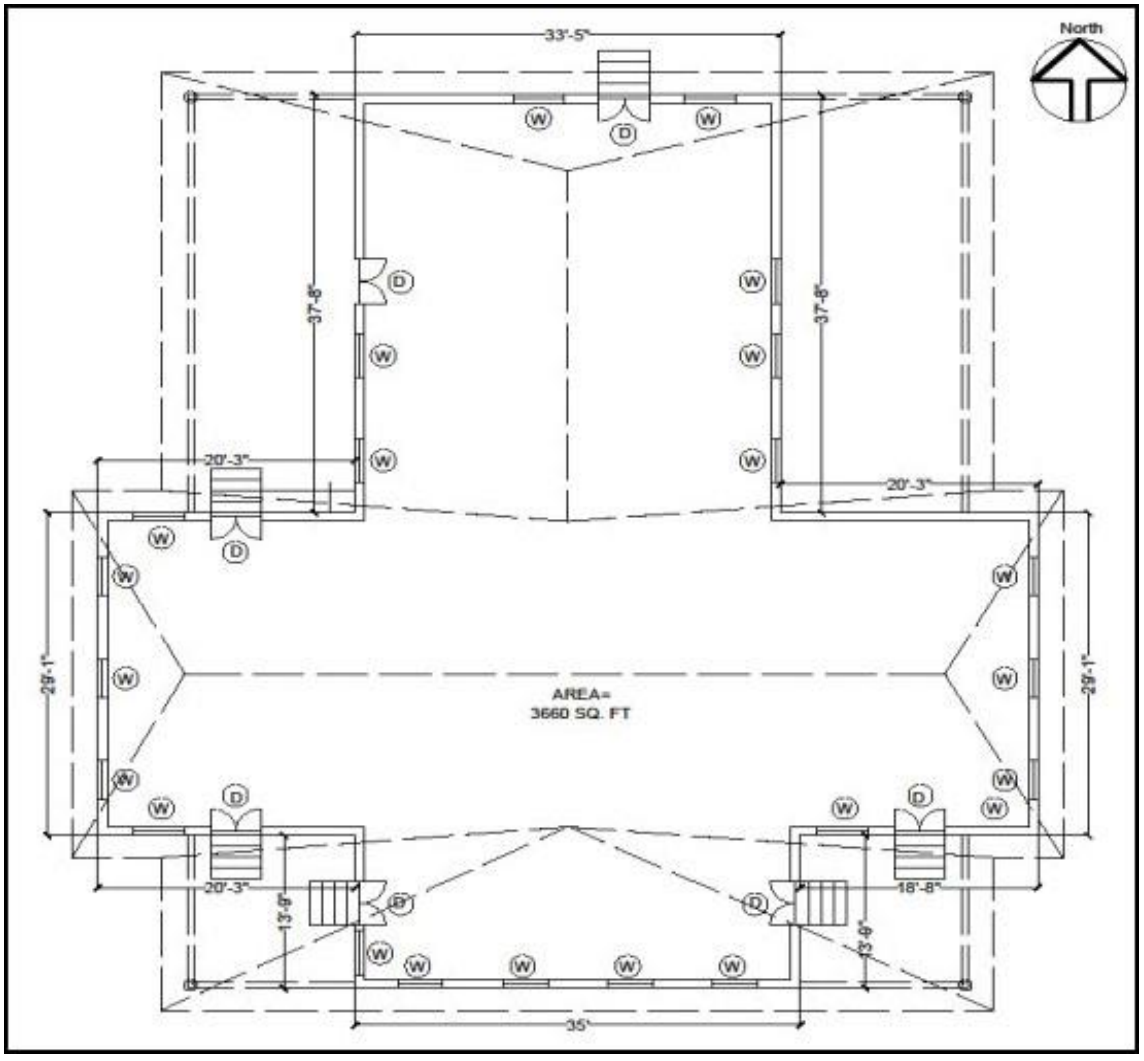


Figure 1: Plan of the Guwahati Baptist Church

Architectural Design

The present building which houses the Guwahati Baptist Church was constructed in 1914 CE. The Church is a structure with a spacious interior. It is dodecagonal having a concrete structure with supporting pillars which are plain in nature. The structure is a rectangular shaped house which underwent alterations and is now designed like a cross. Built on a high plinth it is a single storeyed building which was constructed on a highland inside the Mission Compound at Panbazar. But recently a new floor has been added from inside the main Church Hall to accommodate a greater number of Church members. The walls are 6.5 inches (0.1651 meters) thick and are designed with tall arched shaped windows and doors (Gothic Revival) at regular intervals. A Transom Light has been fixed above the main entrance door located on the east. As the building is an elaborate structure the roof area is large, steep, and sloping as well. Galvanised tins are placed on the roof tops. The ceiling is high and is 23 feet 14 inches tall (7.366 meters). A Gothic design is the characteristic feature of this building. There is a tall steeple resembling a tower on top of the roof on the eastern corner of the Church.

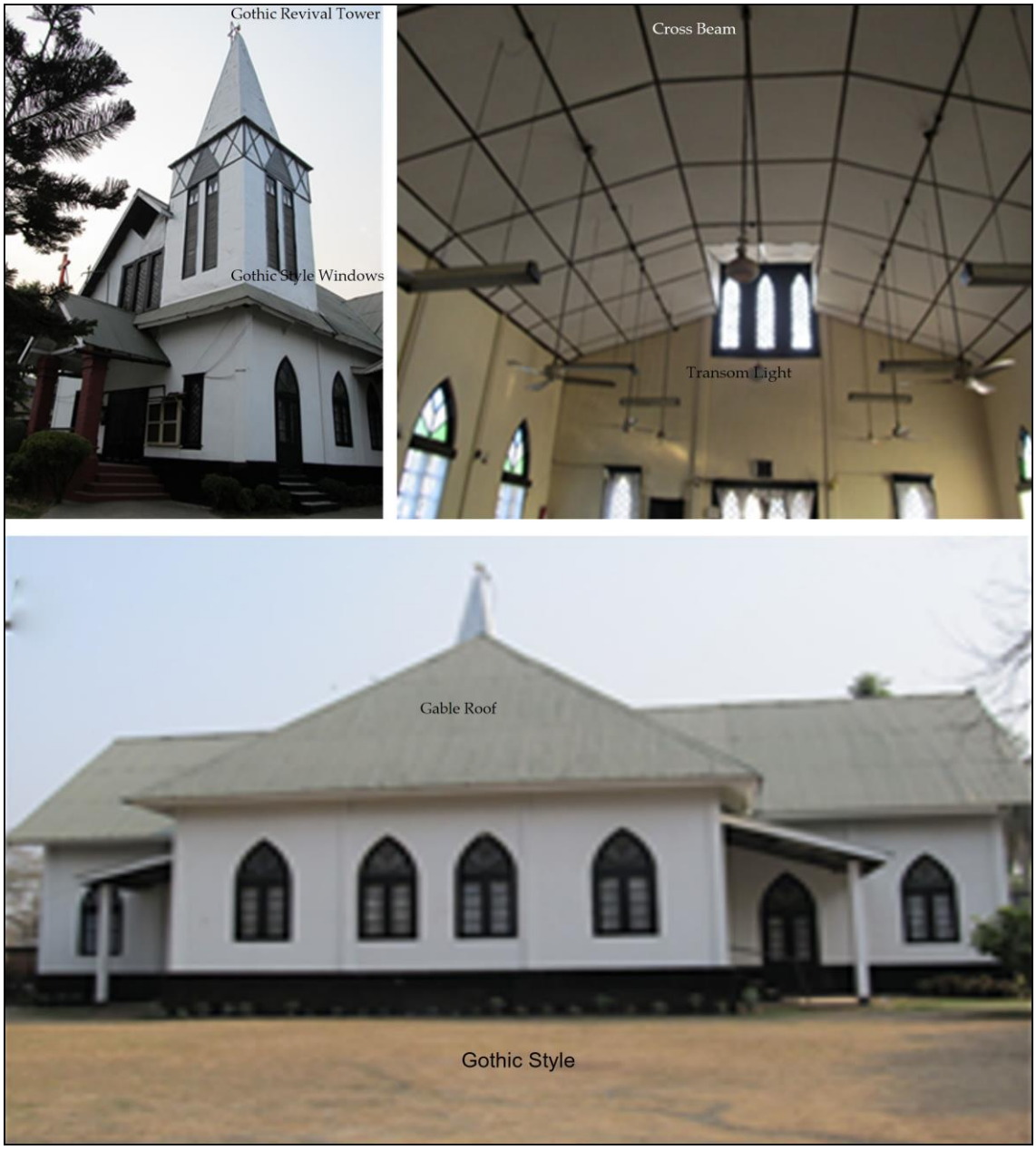


Figure 2: The Guwahati Baptist Church established in 1845 CE, Present Structure built in 1914 CE

Site Background

The American Baptist Missionaries, who at the invitation of the British Government came to Guwahati to spread Christianity. A mission centre was established in the city and the mission itself was the forerunner for the establishment of the first Baptist Church in the Northeastern region as in the year 1845 CE, the representatives of Christians in Nowgow, Sivasagar (located in Upper Assam) and Guwahati established a Church in the area which came to be known as the Guwahati Baptist Church. Unfortunately, in 1897 CE the Great Assam Earthquake destroyed the Church building

and current building was constructed in the year 1914 by Rev G.R. Kampfer and is presently 107 years old. The remnants inside the Guwahati Baptist Church which was originally constructed by the American Baptists are an outstanding representation of American art and architecture embracing the local factors and the geographical conditions of Assam.

This building is also known as the Ward Memorial Church. Mrs Bucknell suggested that a Church building should be constructed, and she paid the money for the same (Missionary Report, 1916, Report from Gauhati Field). An interview with the Council of Baptist Churches Northeast India (CBCNEI) was carried out for this study. The Pastor of the Church and the stakeholders suggested a Public-Private Partnership mode for the financial support of the Church. Legislative measures present in the Constitution of India, and Acts for heritage protection passed by the Assam State Government are applicable for the preservation of this monument. The Council of Baptist Churches Northeast India is actively involved in the management of the Guwahati Baptist Church. But for the overall conservation of the monument in question the HUL approach is considered to be necessary, particularly in the context of the management of the monument in the backdrop of a developing metropolis.

Conclusion

Conservation is very largely the art of controlling or managing change. Without change historic buildings may not have a secure and visible future but that change must be both considerable appropriate for the building. Monuments, wherever they are located around the world, must be looked at with the same perspective and interest. Henceforth a monument located whether in Guwahati or elsewhere demands the same preservation strategy. For example, in situ conservation preserves the authenticity and integrity of an archaeological site through proper documentation. The cultural landscape and archaeological remains of Guwahati continue to testify to the different cultural phases of its history. Seen as a cultural landscape, the city with its artistic and architectural remains, the land use and constructions continue to express its value in terms of materials, form, and location setting, but which may be vulnerable in the face of development, requiring careful conservation and management. According to the Heritage Resource Management Policy, archaeological resources are non-renewable resources which cannot be replaced. They are cultural resources having historic value and are part of our national heritage. Most of the monuments which are not in the nation's heritage management system are not cared for however important they may be. This is more so in the Third World countries where the monuments are lying scattered in the newly urbanised areas. Hence it is necessary to have registers, schedules, and lists denoting these structures. Archaeological landscape can play an important role in securing sustainable development for a locality or a region by attracting tourists and therefore contributing to infrastructural improvements, creation of jobs and in the welfare of the inhabitants engaged in tourist services (Lozny, L. 2008, pp 219). The public-private partnership for maintaining the cultural resources has the possibility of enhancing the entirety of life itself.

Under the Historic Urban Landscape Approach, the Public-Private Partnership is an essential concept where, not only the money from stakeholders is sought but also a monetary contribution from the general public is received. This mode is essential not only for financial support from the stakeholders but also for developing a sense of responsibility amongst the local population towards maintenance of the structure and to make the people understand the importance of the monument as a heritage property.

The Ancient Monuments Preservation Act of 1904, passed by Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, was a landmark development in the conservation of cultural heritage in India. Since then, the nation saw several legislations which has been passed for the sake of conservation of monuments. Article 49 of the Directive Principles of State Policy as mentioned in the Constitution of India talks about the *Protection of Monuments and Places and objects of National importance.* The nation also has legislative frameworks such as (i) The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 ;(ii) The Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 for heritage conservation and (iii) The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amendment and Validation) Act of 2010. Besides, state level regulations in Assam like the Assam Ancient Monuments and Records Act, 1959, and the Assam Ancient Monuments and Records Rules, 1964, aims at protecting the heritage resources from urbanisation and developmental pressures, the two new problems which have cropped up as a result of economic globalisation, apart from other threats to the cultural heritage resources.

In a developing city like Guwahati, apart from high rise buildings having large ground plans, traffic projects like bridges and other transportation systems are some of the factors which disturb the peaceful existence of old heritage buildings within the city. Demolitions and large-scale constructions have become the order of the day in almost all parts of the city. Nevertheless, around the hustle and bustle of this growing metropolis there still exist archaeologically rich monuments of the Ahom era, along with a large number of colonial buildings which stand out meaningfully amidst the concrete jungle, graciously defying all the elements that have come forward to remove it from the face of the urban city . The Guwahati Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) has in its agenda various plans for carving out a balance between the urban features of Guwahati and her colonial counterparts.

This competent authority is responsible for the conservation of heritage buildings and precincts and is also the plan sanctioning authority for the city. The Master Plan for the Guwahati Metropolitan Area 2025, which shall be implemented by the GMDA acting as the nodal agency, has laid out a schedule to (i) develop new areas, (ii) redevelop the existing developed areas, and (iii) conserve eco sensitive areas . The Guwahati Baptist Church which formed a part of the present study should certainly aim at maintaining the standards of townscapes by protecting the trees, spaces and vegetation which contribute towards enhancing the quality of the building and the surrounding areas. Positive management is essential to raise the quality of the built environment.

Managing the cultural landscape of Guwahati with its layers of heritage amd historical values requires legislative frameworks, strategic policies, funding programmes to support communities to maintain their particular connection and build their capacity as they manage and protect 'our' heritage. The monuments of the Ahom era, The Guwahati Baptist Church, and other colonial buildings today give us a tangible view of the early colonial period of settlements. Inclusion of the local people in an integrated heritage management is necessary to save all of heritage for posterity.

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