ABSTRACT

‘Heritage’ is a broad concept which includes the cultural, natural and built environments and they are historic places, sites, landscapes as well as biodiversity, knowledge collections, past and continuing cultural practices including living experiences. The protection, conservation, interpretation and presentation of the heritage and cultural diversity of any city are important challenges for planners. The need to preserve the cultural property arises not merely to preserve the evidence of historic past, but in order to forge a concrete linkage between the past and the present in public memory.

Mysore city is an ancient, historical, cultural capital and heritage city in India. Wodeyars kings who ruled the city for many centuries have significantly contributed to the growth of different architectural style of buildings and make the city as a cultural centre including art, poetry and music. It has strong roots of urban design elements viz. landmarks, path, nodes, axis and urban imaginary which contributed significantly for good imageability of the city and well developed urban form in relation to the cultural and heritage identity. The major heritage buildings, precincts and areas are located in the core area of the city. The central area has emerged as a place of tourism, place of commercial, place of living and place of education over the years. The City of Mysore has been recognized as heritage city under the cultural tag both at state and national level. Palace has been a centre point, around which, the developments have come up with glorious monuments, buildings, precincts, areas including natural and aesthetics elements of the city. The core is slowly transforming into more commercial developments by altering the character and image of the city which is under threat and losing its character. There are 18 identified heritage monuments and buildings by the State Archeological Department and Mysore Urban Development Authority. Very recently, INTACH and MAHTF have identified and listed 139 and 201 buildings. But these listed buildings are not given legal status, and many of these heritage buildings are subjected to decay and are under greater threats of demolition, alteration etc. Heritage buildings need to be addressed with the proper care. This calls for identification of heritage buildings to include listing and grading, to be undertaken with proper procedure by the Planning Authority. Significance assessment and Inventory has been carried out for 50% of the INTACH listed buildings (70 buildings) both in core area and local planning area. To understand their significance and conservation value evaluation and assessment has been carried out and the buildings are ranked based on the scoring system. Study reveals that higher value and most significant buildings are located in the core area and its immediate environs and the area requires conservation, preservation and proper legislation. The existing laws are monument centric, generalized for the city, and not apply to heritage buildings. The heritage zones have to be identified and a detailed heritage regulation have to be framed for preparation for integrated conservation management plan by bringing an amendment to the Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act, 1961 for harmonized planning and conservation of heritage in the City of Mysore.