

# Listing and Grading of Heritage Buildings in Mysore City

Shankar B, Chidambara Swamy

**Abstract-** Cultural heritage is a legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations. Physical or "tangible cultural heritage" includes buildings and historic places, monuments, artefacts, etc., that are considered worthy of preservation for the future. Mysore is one of the important cultural heritage cities in India. It has many built heritage structures to include monuments, heritage buildings, and heritage areas. A very few buildings have been identified by the State Archaeology Department and Mysore Urban Development Authority. The majority of the unlisted buildings are undergoing a tremendous pressure for demolition, structural transformation and decay due to absence of clear cut guidelines from the planning authority. Therefore, there is a need for identifying for protection, conservation and regulating them. The paper presents the framework for listing and grading of heritage buildings in for effective protection, conservation and management the City of Mysore.

**Index of Terms:** Heritage Buildings, Listing, Grading, culture

## I. INTRODUCTION

Historic buildings are a precious and finite asset, and powerful reminders to us of the work and way of life of earlier generations. The richness of architectural heritage plays an influential part in our sense of national, regional and local identity. The buildings that possess the architectural, aesthetic, historic or cultural values, are declared as "heritage buildings" by the Planning Authorities or Archaeological Survey and State Archives or Heritage Commissioner's office under their statues. The main parameters for identifying the heritage buildings or precincts are of historical significance, architectural style, design, technology and material usage and other aesthetics. The important yard-scale of the measurements are a) an appreciation of the spatial relations between buildings, public space and private court yards, gardens, perspective views, surrounding landscapes etc., and b) the study of their inter-relationship. The study of heritage property begins with the clear understanding that it might have been built or inbuilt, old or recent, exceptional or ordinary, dense or dispersed, homogeneous or heterogeneous and urban or rural. The identification of heritage is carried out by the exploration, field survey and historical analysis of the areas.

Manuscript published on 30 March 2015.

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The statutes govern the identification of heritage structures in Mysore, to include, a) the Karnataka Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1961 and, b) the Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act. 1961. There are eight heritage structures that have been declared as the monuments under the Karnataka Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act 1961. As per the section 2 of this Act, any structure or monument, which has artistic, historic, aesthetic and cultural value and which has been in existence for not less than 100 years is declared as monument. As per a section 4 of the regulations, the listed buildings and precincts are to be graded as Grade I, Grade II and Grade III and the restrictions have to be imposed on the development and repairs on the heritage buildings as per section 5. The Karnataka Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Act 2004 has provisions to bring all the conservation sites including buildings, heritage precincts and natural features to incorporate the same in the Master Plan.

## II. BACKGROUND OF MYSORE

Mysore is the second third largest city in the State of Karnataka and it had a population of 8,87,446 as per provisional Census of India, 2011 and increased from 7,85,800 in 2001. The name of Mysore was derived from *mahisha* (a demon). Formerly, the city was the state capital and head quarters of the Princely State of Mysore. It is situated at a distance 140kms from Bangalore, on the southern part of Karnataka State at 12° 18' North latitude and 76° 12' East longitude, and at an altitude of 770 meters above mean sea level. The city lies in a saucer shaped basin flanked by Chamundi hills on the south-east and a raised platform near Hinakal village on the west. The city has a salubrious climate and the temperature varies from 12° C to 35° C. It has an average annual rainfall of about 798mm. The city spreads across an area of 128.42sq.kms. Mysore is one of the important cultural cities in the country, combines historical facts and anecdotes with a harmonious combination of both natural and built heritage. The world famous Amba Vilas Palace exists in this area and attracts five to six thousand people a day and other monuments as well. Most of the buildings were erected hundreds years ago. The State Archaeology Department has identified eight monuments through gazette notification for conserving the monuments and to impose restrictions around these monuments. The Mysore Urban Development Authority has identified ten monuments in the Master Plan - 2011 for imposing development control under zoning regulations.



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Besides, INTACH and MAHTF have identified 139 and 201 buildings in 1989 and 2004 respectively. These buildings have not been notified in the official gazette which resulted in not establishing development control measures under zoning regulations. Therefore, many of the un-notified buildings have been facing threat of demolition, structural transformation and decay, incompatible developments around them, encroachments and environmental problems. In the absence of heritage cell or heritage authority, either in the city corporation or in the planning authority, it was neither able to notify the listed heritage sites including heritage buildings, heritage precincts nor able to fix the responsibility for managing the heritage assets including repairs and maintenance. As per the provisions of the Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act (KTCP), the heritage buildings are addressed under the ‘*areas of special control and development*’ in preparation of Master Plans, but only selected few buildings are covered with no comprehensive approach. In 2004, the KTCP Act was amended to include the heritage subject in the Master Plans by giving more responsibility to the Planning Authority for declaring heritage buildings and precincts within the jurisdiction of Local Planning Area, but these legislations are yet to be realized.

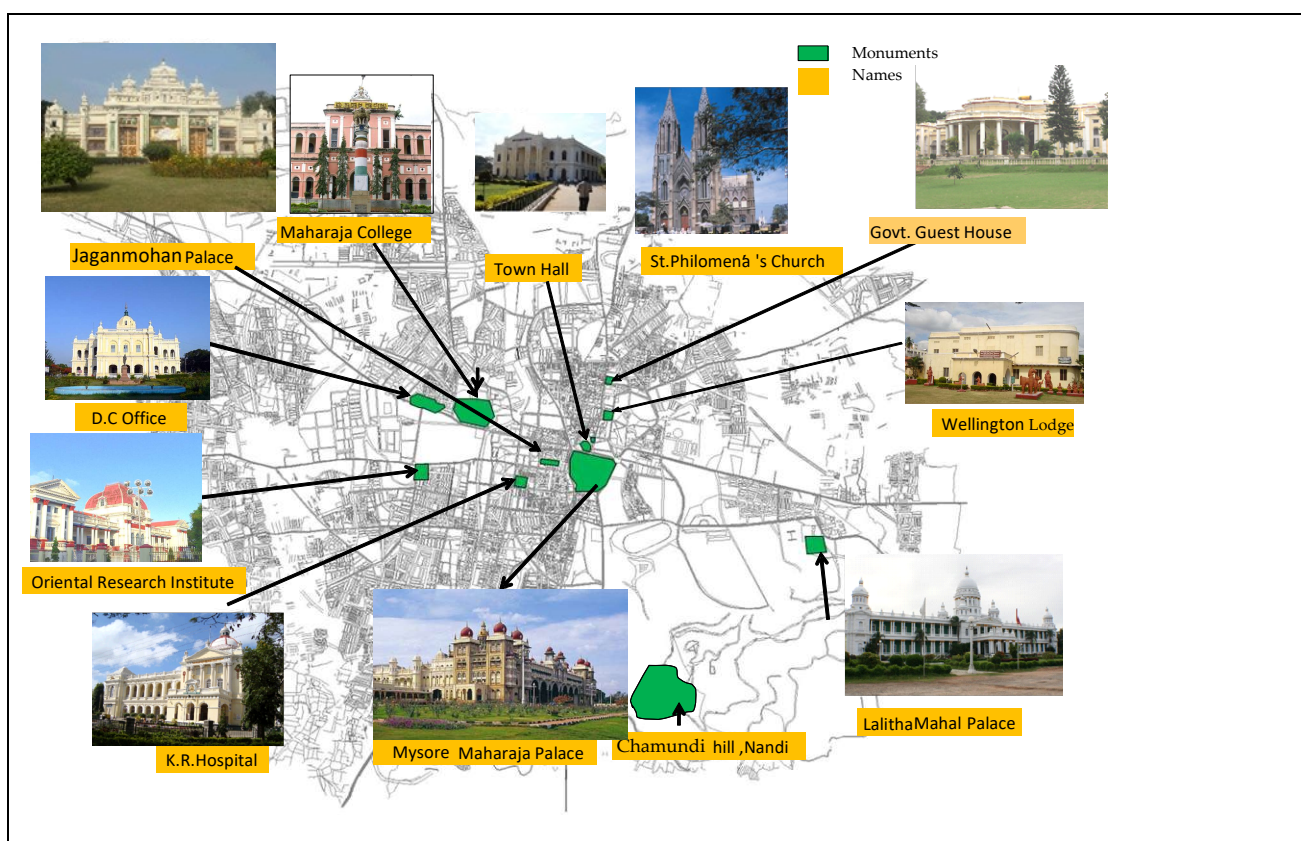
**III. LISTED OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS**

The State Archaeological Department has declared Chamundi Hill, Nandi Statue and Wellington Lodge as heritage areas and five temple buildings. The Mysore Urban Development Authority has identified ten important heritage buildings for development control for these buildings. The details are as follows:

**Table. 1: Listed Heritage Monuments**

Monuments Listed Mysore Urban Development Authority	Monuments Listed By State Archaeology Department
1. Mysore Maharaja Palace	1. Chamundi Hill
2. Jagan Mohan Palace	2. Nandi.
3. Town Hall	3. Wellington Lodge
4. Krishnarajendra Hospital	4. Temples inside Maharaja Palace
5. Lalith Mahal Palace.	a). Mahabaleshwara Temple
6. Oriental Research Library	b). Prasanna Krishna Temple
7. Maharaja College	c). Varahaswami Temple
8. St. Philomena’s Church.	d). Lakshmiramanaswami Temple
9. Govt. Guest house.	e). Kodisomeshwara Temple
10. Deputy Commissioners Office.	

Source: 1. Mysore Urban Development Authority, Mysore  
2. State Archaeological Department, Mysore



**Fig. 1 Identified Monuments in the City of Mysore**

The Indian National Trust for Architectural and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) has identified 139 buildings in 1989. The Government of Karnataka has constituted the Mysore Heritage Area Task Force (MHATF) in year 2004 to identify the heritage resources to include identification, classification, grading, Archaeological Department. The MHATF has identified 201 heritage buildings. Out of the above 201 heritage buildings, private or trusts owned

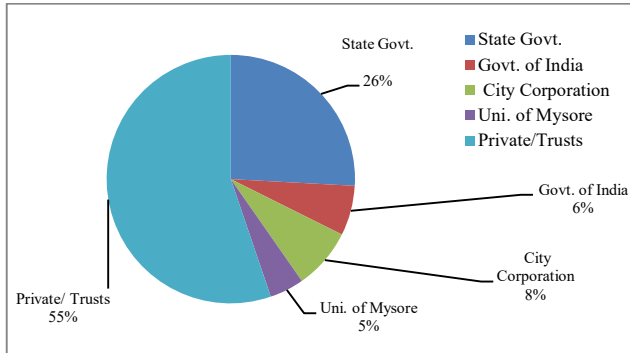
buildings are large in number and they constitute 55 percent, followed by State Government owned 25.87 percent, 8 percent owned by city corporation, 6.46 percent of buildings owned by Government of India and 4.47 percent owned by the University of Mysore.



**Table. 2: Ownership of Heritage Buildings**

Sl. No	Ownership Status	Number	Percent
1.	State government	52	25.87
2	Government of India	13	6.46
3	City Corporation	16	8
4	University of Mysore	09	4.47
5	Private/Trusts	111	55.20
	Total	201	100

Source: Museums and Heritage Department, Mysore.



**Fig. 2: Ownership of Heritage Buildings**

#### IV. NEED FOR LISTING OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS

A listing of building is a preparation list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Once the building is listed, it is not possible demolished, extended or altered without special permission either from the planning authority. Owners of listed buildings are to be compelled to repair and maintain those as per the laws within the framework of regulations. Preparing an inventory of heritage buildings, worthy of preservation is the most important task with which to begin the process of conservation. The primary aim of listing is to document the fast disappearing built heritage. Once a property or building is included in such a list, it becomes justifiable to undertake necessary conservation activities by formulating special regulations for its conservation or accordingly, due protection to ensured as per Karnataka Town Planning Act, 1961. Ideally, the footprints of all listed buildings have to be included in the Master Plan. Listing ensures that the architectural and historic interest of the building is carefully considered before any alterations, either outside or inside, are agreed upon. Buildings are judged on age, rarity, architectural merit and type of construction. Sometimes buildings linked to a famous person or historic event are listed. The criteria that the buildings are depicting the characteristics of historic, socio-cultural value, social, cultural and traditional values and architectural and artistic significance in respect of style, design, use of construction materials, qualify for selection of heritage buildings. The most of the public buildings were constructed by European Engineers in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These buildings were in classic order of Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian and Composite and they were built in the manner of Italian or French Renaissance with classic details (viz. Oriental Research Institute, Maharaja’s College, Law Court

Buildings and Jayalaxmi Vilas Mansion). The Buildings with traditional values and architectural significance have been considered for selection of buildings for conservation. The three attributes of listing namely *historic significance*, *historic integrity* and *historic context* are to be considered to determine, whether a property is worthy of listing and are:

- A. *Historic significance* refers to the importance of a property to the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering or culture of a community, region or nation.
- B. *Historic integrity* refers to the property’s historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics and significant elements that existed during the property’s historic period. The “original” identity includes changes and additions over historic time. Historic integrity enables a property to illustrate significant aspects of its past.
- C. *Historic context* refers to information about historic trends and properties grouped by an important theme in the history of a community, region or nation during a particular period of time. Knowledge of historic context enables the public to understand a historic property as a product of its time.

The listing off heritage buildings in the City of Mysore has been carried-out by employing the following methodology.

#### V. METHODOLOGY FOR LISTING

Before commencing actual fieldwork, the basic information from various sources including gazetteers, manuals, master plans, zoning regulations, traveler’s opinion and other heritage conservation books, guidelines, containing information about the architecture and history of the Mysore and criteria for assessment of researching is gathered and documented. The literatures are being collected from the University of Mysore and other libraries, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the Museums, Heritage Commissioner’s office, Mysore Urban Development Authority, Mysore City Corporation, Department of Archaeology, Museum and Heritage. Local experts, palace authorities, tourists, Non-Governmental Organizations are consulted for gathering information and for ensuring that all important structures of representative styles of buildings are covered. In some well-documented areas, distinctive physical characteristics of design, construction or form of building resource are being gathered. Historic development, significant events and important personnel associated with heritage areas acted as guiding factor for identification of historic areas and heritage buildings.

#### VI. FIELD WORK

The first and foremost task is to carry out a field survey to identify the buildings and the areas to be listed. A detailed physical inspection of the property and dialogues with appropriate local people such as the owners of the property, area residents, tourists, officials of authorities and heritage and local self governments viz. City Corporation were undertaken.





By physically inspecting the property, information regarding the physical fabric of the building, such as physical characteristics, period of construction, etc., was gathered and was cross-checked with the literature survey. By conducting a dialogue with area residents, the changes to the property over time, ownership details, historic function and activities, association with events and persons and the role of the property in local, regional or national history was ensured. The proforma was used to gather information on record of the property at the time of listing and consists of current name; historic or other name(s), location, approach and accessibility, current ownership, historic usage, and present use. Claims of historic significance and integrity were supported with descriptions of special features, state of preservation, relevant dates, etc. Information for each building or site was recorded. The photo documentation of at-least one photograph of the each of the property or building was recorded for identification purposes. All significant elements of the property were also photographed and additional information related to or affecting the built heritage of the city including planning regulations was documented.

For the purpose of inventory, 70 buildings (over 50% of the buildings) were selected from among the 139 listed buildings by INTACH; data was gathered as per the 'Inventory' methodology proposed in the previous paragraphs. Among 70 selected buildings 38 are from core areas and remaining 32 from the rest of the areas within the limits of city. Fifteen Buildings are depicted in Table 4 of Annexure I.

**VII. GRADING OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS**

The listed buildings are graded to reflect their relative architectural and historic interest. Buildings of historic interest may justify a higher grading than would otherwise be appropriate. The grading of buildings/ heritage areas are being made. The listed heritage buildings are classified into three categories namely Grade I, Grade II and Grade III. The parameters for grading of buildings are employed and the heritage buildings are graded as per the criteria spelt out in the following table.

**Table 3: Parameters for Grading of Heritage Building**

Grade I	Grade II	Grade III
Heritage-I, comprises buildings and precincts of national or historic importance, embodying excellence in architectural style, design, technology and/ or aesthetics; they may be associated with a great historic event, personality, movement or institution. They have been and are the prime land marks of the region. All natural sites shall fall within Grade-I.	Heritage - II, comprises buildings and precincts of regional or local importance possessing special architectural or aesthetic merit, or cultural or historical significance though of a lower scale in Heritage Grade-I. They are local land marks, which contributes to the image and identity of the region.	Heritage II-I, comprises buildings and precincts of importance for townscape; that evoke architectural, aesthetic, or sociological interest though not as much as in the heritage Grade-II. These contribute to determine the special character of the façade and uniformity of height, width and scale.

Source: 1. Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act, 1961.

2. Heritage Guidelines of Government of India

The criteria has been employed for evaluation of selected 70 buildings, of which 20 heritage buildings are in the Grade I, which constitutes about 29 percent and there are 40 buildings in the Grade II category, which constitutes 57 percent and rest lies in the Grade III category.

**Table 3: Graded Building**

Sl. No	Grading category	No. of Buildings	%
1	Grade – I	20	28.58
2	Grade - II	40	57.14
3	Grade - III	10	14.28

**VIII. ISSUES AND POLICIES**

1. There are no proper data bases, research documents, articles, best practices etc., and management information system of heritage buildings/assets for updating the information and assessment. Therefore, there is need for researching the heritage assets on continuous basis for identifying, listing, grading, evaluating and preparing plans for conservation. Data base helps in assessing heritage value, plan, implementation and creating awareness. Therefore, Data Base Management System and Management Information System with a research cell need to be established in the Heritage Cell or in Planning Authority.
2. Though, INTACH and MAHTF have identified 139 and 201 buildings in 1989 and 2004, but they are not notified. Many of the un-notified buildings are facing threat of demolition, structural transformation and decay, incompatible developments around them, encroachments and environmental problems. In the absence of separate heritage section, it was neither able to notify the listed heritage buildings, nor able to develop regulations. The Heritage Cell needs to be constituted and it has to work in coordination with Heritage Commissioner's Office, Mysore Urban Development Authority and NGOs and Professionals by the Urban Development Department, Government of Karnataka on Hampi model.
3. Heritage Cell need to be assigned with preparation of comprehensive list of heritage buildings in consultation with authorities, stakeholders and heritage expert committee. The INTACH procedure may be followed for listing the heritage buildings including precincts. The listed heritage buildings to be documented. Only in exceptional cases, if the buildings are to be waived off for reasons to be recorded in writing on reconsideration by the Heritage Cell before being final notification. Once a building or group of buildings is listed, the entire property is going to form part of list. Listed buildings and precincts to be published in official gazette.
4. The listed buildings are to be graded into three categories, i.e. Grade-I, Grade-II and Grade-III for which guidelines to be established.



Listed/graded buildings are not being allowed to demolish or alter without the permission of heritage cell or authority.

## IX. CONCLUSIONS

The cultural buildings that possess the architectural, aesthetic, historic or cultural values are declared as “heritage buildings” for conservation. Though, the City of Mysore has many architectural and heritage buildings, only ten buildings are identified and un-identifying undergoing tremendous transformation, which is going to erode the culture of the city. Therefore, the heritage buildings are to be listed and graded by developing guidelines in the City of Mysore.

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Table 4: Listed Buildings

Annexure I

Sl. No	Name Historic/ Current	Location	Age (Years)	Ownership/ User	Grade	Usage	Height	Condition	Architectural features	Miniature
1.	Amba Vilas Palace	Ashoka road/ Albert Victor road Junction	97	State Govt.	Grade-I	Royal residence/ Tourist Spot	G+2	Good	Domes of roman. Arches and columns of Dravidian and Indo-Sarcenic Style	
2.	Jagan Mohan Palace	Deshika road	137	Private.	Grade-I	Royal residence/ art gallery. Tourist Spot	G+2	Good	Façade is composed of three large openings with graduated end bays punctuated with decorative pilasters, Religious motifs, niches, stained glass works, and cusped arch balconies.	
3.	Lalith Mahal Hotel	East of Palace	88	Govt. of India	Grade-I	Overseas Guest house / Star Hotel	G+1	Good	Ionic columns, projecting porch, decorative motifs on walls and ceilings, carved wooden shutters and wall panels, myriad details, stained glass, floor tiles, luxury fittings.	
4.	Cheluvamba Vilas	CFTRI	101	Central Govt.	Grade-I	Mansion / CFTRI	G+1	Good	Main façade is composed of twin towers, semicircular block of grand columns and verandah, arched niches and main pediment with Hindu religious motif, arched verandahs	
5.	Lokaranjan Mahal	Itigegeedu	139	Private.	Grade-I	Summer Palace/ Not in use.	G+1	Fair.	Handsome bungalow mansion set in a large garden, sumptuously carved gate of cusped arches crowned with a string of finials, Tuscan columns.	
6.	JayaLakshmi Vilas Mansion	Manasa Gaangotri	104	University of Mysore.	Grade-I	Mansion / Folklore Museum	G+1	Good	Series of Twin Corinthian and Ionic Columns. Regal pediments on the first floor above porches, oval ventilators, richly molded.	
7.	Rangaachariu Memorial Hall/ Town Hall	Curzon Park	125	Mysore City Corporation.	Grade-I	Community hall	G+1	Good	Corinthian grand columns, pediment with motif. Roman arched windows, louvered window shutters.	
8.	Vasantha Mahal	Nazarabadi	167	State Govt.	Grade-I	Special schools/ College.	G+1	Good	Wrought iron porch of three graceful arches, leading to a curving verandah and a large oval inner hall, Tuscan columns, oval aperture parapets, wrought iron railings.	
9.	St.Philomena's Church	Irwin Road	200	Private.	Grade-I	Church		Good	Gothic style. Flying buttress, four centered arches. Stained glass window are the main features, pointed arches dominates the structure.	
10.	Crawford Hall.	Gordon Park	62	University of Mysore.	Grade-II	University of Mysore	G+1	Good	Corinthian grand columns, heavy multiple molded entablature, wide spandrel plaster relief of Goddess Saraswathi.	
11.	Chamundi Guest House (East Building)	Dewans Road	89	State Govt.	Grade-II	Guest house	G+1	Good	Tuscan columned five bay verandahs, multiple molded entablature, apertured parapets and a central projected pediment, wings are composed of semi-hexagonal projections, arched windows.	
12.	Chamundi Guest House (West Building)	JLB Road	89	State Govt.	Grade-II	Guest house	G+1	Good	Continuous verandah with square columns, arched central section of the first floor, wooden posts springing into carved arches, imposing pediments.	
13.	Cheluvamba Hospital	K.R. Hospital Complex	71	State Govt.	Grade-II	Hospital	G+1	Good	Plain-cut semi-circular arches topped by shallow square niches, and RCC Chajja.	
14.	Sir Muthiah Chettiar Ophthalmic Block	Sayyaji Rao Road	75	State Govt.	Grade-II	Hospital	G+1	Good	European -Classical style, pilasters and rims of arched openings flanked by twin pilasters and topped with a balustrade parapet.	
15.	Krishna Rajendra Hospital	Sayyaji Rao Road	91	State Govt.	Grade-I	Hospital	G+1	Good	Greco-Roman Style. A Vatican dome resting on an octagonal drum, dominates the elevation. Tuscan, Ionic, Corinthian columns were used. Arched and plastered colonnades.	

