

Sophia Malik, MPhil - 'Heritage not Inherited'

The historic buildings of Karachi are in disrepair. Though they are listed, they are not protected effectively. Destined for one of two fates; they either suffer demolition or fall into disrepair. The current listing process keeps the building stagnant and decaying and thus, the heritage conservation practices employed for the safeguarding of Karachi's heritage have failed.

It was found that there are more incentives to demolish and build new than repair and reuse, and owners do not have the necessary tools to repair their properties. Therefore, the embedded value of the buildings is unable to be unlocked. Following efforts in building designation, there were no practical frameworks in place to promote use after being listed, thus they remain stagnant.

Today, the land that these buildings lie on are of high economic value, yet the structures themselves are dormant and are perceived as obstructions to that value.

The current situation presents an opportunity to catalyse a shift in building culture by promoting a sustainable use of heritage. To unlock the embedded value, protection is reimagined through a user-centred lens. By examining indigenous low-carbon techniques as a means of promoting the use of these structures, the divide between sustainable reuse principles, and the protection of existing structures in the face of climate change can be bridged.