

Brief Report on the Panjab University Heritage Conservation Committee meeting of 17th Feb 2017, held at the VCCR.

The first meeting of the Panjab University Heritage Conservation Committee was held at the VCCR under the Chairmanship of the Vice Chancellor and support of the Registrar. Present were Shri Hardayal Singh Johal, former Superintending Engineer (Horticulture), Professor Kiran Joshi, formerly of the Chandigarh College of Architecture and currently with the School of Architecture of Chitkara University, Professor Sangeeta Bagga of the Chandigarh College of Architecture and currently actively involved in the efforts of the Getty Foundation to restore the Gandhi Bhawan to its proper heritage status and Shri Tarun Mathur, architect. From within the university community, present were Professor D V S Jain, who has authored a history of PU, Professor Shelly Walia, who has been actively involved in preserving the heritage of PU, Professor Jagtej Grewal, Chairperson of the Department of Visual and Fine Arts, Professor M Rajivlochan, who has authored a book on the social history of Chandigarh and is the Director, IQAC.

A number of ideas emerged out of the meeting. Some of them are listed below:

After a brief introduction by the VC and the Registrar on the matter of heritage of PU a general discussion followed in which the following ideas emerged:

1. Heritage is a comprehensive matter that involves the upkeep of the entire campus including its
 - a. buildings,
 - b. roads,
 - c. gardens,
 - d. open spaces,
 - e. artifacts such as
 - i. books,
 - ii. furniture,
 - iii. architectural drawings and blue prints
2. In order to preserve the heritage value of Panjab University the university should actively involve the people of Chandigarh and Punjab as also the alumni of the university. As it is the citizens of Chandigarh visit the campus often for its gardens, Student Centre and in general as a spot that

has to be shown to visiting guests as part of the history of Chandigarh. Mechanisms would have to be evolved to involve the people of the city and the alumni more actively.

3. PU is a living campus, the buildings and spaces are still in use. The use of buildings and spaces changes according to shifting requirements. Yet, it should be possible, for heritage purposes, to bring about changes in such a manner that the original look and feel of the building and spaces is maintained.
4. Correspondingly, there would be need to draw up a comprehensive plan to study the heritage of PU and find ways to preserve it.
5. PU should strive to get official recognition for being a heritage campus. This would involve approaching the concerned authorities that for PU to be registered, or at least part of the campus, to be officially recognized as part of the modern heritage of India and if possible even of the world.
6. Steps towards getting official recognition would involve:
 - a. Maintenance of the building in a manner as to protect their heritage tag
 - b. PU to undertake restoration of buildings as and when that is required. The Gandhi Bhawan is already under restoration. Restoration and urgent upkeep was also suggested for other buildings that dated back from the earliest times of the university and with which the university was identified. In this regard the names of the buildings that came up included the Fine Arts Museum, the Library building, the Administrative Block, the various water bodies of the university, Hostels 1, 2 and 3, Arts Block 1 and 2, one of the earlier Science blocks.
 - c. Making available the original architectural drawings and other significant records etc. associated with the buildings
7. Taking due care of the horticultural aspects of the university involving the scientific management of gardens, roadside plantations, shrubs, orchards, educational gardens etc. This would involve setting up of trees and bushes not just for their aesthetic value but also for their ability to help protect the environment
8. Making the university campus suitably environment friendly using the most appropriate technologies as and when they evolve. The university already is officially declared a non-smoking, dumping of garbage is prohibited, composts horticultural waste.

9. Setting up a framework of guidelines, rules and regulations much like Corbusier had done for Chandigarh through his edict, to ensure that there is a firm basis for the effort to protect and project the heritage status of the PU campus, its buildings and artifacts.
10. Set up brief inscriptions, in most of the heritage areas of the campus to introduce people to the heritage value of various buildings and areas of PU.
11. Set up a display of the history of the university along with sundry artifacts that may be of interest to the general public and also provide them a glimpse of the history of the PU and its contribution to society and the nation. This could include a suitable display of furniture, books, paintings, architectural drawings, letters, notings, scientific instruments et cetera, in an appropriate space such as the gallery of the upcoming University auditorium in Sector 25 or a room in the Fine Arts Museum in Sector 14. If done on a large enough scale this could become a museum of the history of the university.
12. Think about completing some of the original projects that had been designed for the university in the 1950s-60s but were simply never completed. This could include the display based on the model of the Uranium atom for the pond before the Administrative Block.

17th February 2017

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