

## State of Conservation of the British Colonial Architectural Heritage of Karachi: Case Study of Damage Mapping of Empress Market Building

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**Abstract :** In 1839, the British, after the annexation of the port city of Karachi, established a new urban centre consisting of various quarters and introduced new settlements there. These quarters were out of the boundaries of fortified native old area and now contain much of the oldest parts of the city and signify the colonial history of Karachi, in particular the Saddar Bazaar and the neighboring areas of Kharadar and Mithadar. These quarters bestow a mix of functional typology built in a hybrid form of construction - an adaptation of the western architectural attributes to regional requirements and characteristics. This approach is referred to as the Anglo Vernacular, Colonial or the Domestic Gothic architectural form. This research paper investigates the historical and architectural value of one such property: the Empress Market designed by then Municipal Architect, Ar. James Strachan in 1889 as a commemorative monument for the jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen Victoria; Empress of British India, at that time. This paper presents information on the present conservation status of the market building and highlights its role as a catalyst to the community interconnection. This building has survived to present day and functioned well, despite undergoing numerous transformations. A detailed analysis of the bio-degradation (Natural-Chemical dissolution of material) and the bio-deterioration (Manmade-Negative state change of the material) of the building, based on the examination of the prevailing causes of these bio-alterations is carried out, and is presented in form of a damage atlas containing both the categories of bio-alteration/ changes occurred to the building over the time. The research methodology followed in this paper starts with the available archival analysis, physical observation, photographic documentation, the statistics review and the interviews with the direct and indirect stakeholders. The results and findings of this research portray that these bio-alterations and changes are the essential part of the life cycle of Empress Market building which illustrate the historic development of the premise and therefore ought to be given due importance (depending upon their condition) while developing the conservation plan for the building.

**Keywords :** British colonial architecture, bio-alteration, bio-degradation, bio-deterioration, domestic gothic architectural form

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