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Research Paper　　　　　　　　　　**Architecture**

Image ability Analysis of Built Environment:
A case study of Aligarh Muslim University Campus

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ABSTRACT　*The spatial evolution of the Campus is marked by many inadequacies and with the passage of time these shortcomings have become rather apparent and as a result the campus identity and character is deteriorated. Now there is a need to rectify these shortcomings so that the overall image of the campus to be improved and new development in the campus to be in accordance with the proper guidance.*
This paper deals with the key issues that detract the imageability of the campus and recommendations to improve it on the basis of urban design principles.

KEYWORDS: Image ability, Legibility, Public realm

1.0 Introduction

The Aligarh Muslim University is one of premier institute of India. It was established with 75 acres of land in 1875 and right now it is sprawling over about 540 hectares.

Like many other educational institutions, quite often, most university or colleges do not have their campuses planned. As such, over the years, they expanded rather haphazardly without much attention paid to spatial relationships inherent in the myriad variety of buildings and their land use activity pattern, and more often than not, available land was "put to use" in an unplanned manner. As a result, land resources, which appeared large at one point of time, were, in a sense 'squandered'. The campus of Aligarh Muslim University has suffered the same fate in spite of starting out with a fairly well conceived in effect a planned layout with remarkable architectural style that evoked a sense of distinction and pride, for it had identity and aesthetic sense. There was a sense of unity and coherence that can still be observed in the original buildings that came up during the initial stages of university's development, but there was a drastic variation in a architectural character of buildings which came after independence.

By taking case study of Aligarh Muslim University campus the author tried to know the lacunae responsible for deteriorating identity and image of the campus.

2.1 Key issues:

- Diverse building types, scales, characters and land uses of variable quality that lack a sense of coherency;

- Streets lack a sense of enclosure and definition. Low quality, weak frontages to the Street detract from the significance of buildings.

Poor legibility of gateway, entrances and boundary wall of the campus.

· Potential landmark buildings lack prominence and are devalued

by poor public realm;

· The area around the SS Hall has a strong heritage value but the feeling of seclusion prevails as it became at one corner of the campus.

· Medical Road provides the key approach to the campus from Allama Iqbal Hall side, but heavy traffic, poor public realm and ill defined gateway decreases the sense of arrival.

Architecture of the highest heritage and amenity value is detracted from by poor quality of public realm, lack of proper parking and maintenance.

· Blending of new construction with heritage buildings detracts the Architecture of the highest significance.

· Ad hoc constructions, gaps in building frontages and insensitive infill development compound the negative image.

· There is no colour and material regulation on the exterior facade of the campus buildings.

S.No.	Quality Attribute	Rating
1	Character	3
	Anchors to the past	4
	Style, Scale and Context	3
	Visual character	4
	Transformation of character	2
2	Continuity and enclosure	3

	Continuous frontage and boundaries	2
	Permeability	3
	Fronts and back	3
	Defining the street	3
	Street planting	3
3	A quality of public realm	3
	Street life	3
	Space to breathe	2
	Activity, natural surveillance and safety	2
	Visual richness	3
	Landscaping	3
4	Ease of movement	3
	Restricted movement	1
	Walking and cycling	4
	Parking facilities	2
	Accessibility	3
5	Legibility	2
	Routes/nodes	3
	Land marks	1
	Visual quality/aesthetics	3
	Views	2
	Signage	2

Table4.1: Quantification of imageability, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh

3.0 Evaluation:

A check list of preferred qualities and characteristics could be framed with ratings. The campus could be evaluated against this checklist. A simple rating scale can be used. A scale of 1 to 5 is sufficient to accurately cover the range of performance: 5 = excellent; 4 = good; 3 = average; 2 = poor; 1 = very poor;

4.0 Recommendations:

To ensure the Urban Design Principles are implemented appropriately, a simple three tier graded approach has been developed to guide the successful regeneration of campus.

These degrees of intervention determine the extent of development or conservation required.

1. Reinvention and Reconfiguration zone
(Areas of big change)

2. Repair and Recovery zone
(Areas to improve)

3. Conservation zone
(Areas to conserve)

4.1 Reinvention and Reconfiguration zone

· These are areas of the campus that have the most potential for change with many of the existing buildings and land uses being of a lower quality or old age. Larger scale development is most appropriate in these areas.
· They can accommodate a high degree of change in terms of land use and urban form.
· Create a new identity within overall urban design principles.
· Create focal points /land marks/vistas to enhance the legibility of the campus.
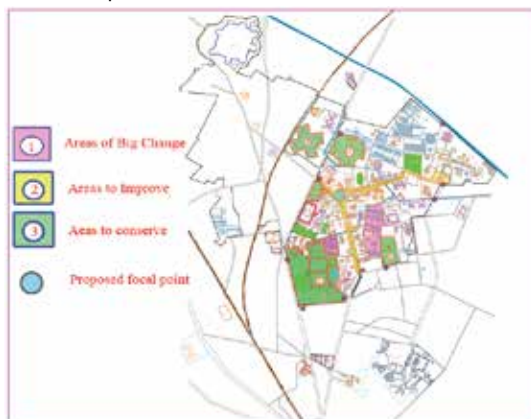

Fig 4.1 Division of zones

4.2 Repair and Recovery zone

· These zones are currently working well, but there may be areas where they could realize their full potential. A moderate level of change may be appropriate including development on key sites and improvement of the public realm.
· These are the areas with elements of distinct character and quality, but require 'repair' to enhance aesthetics and integrity of the campus
· The innovative and creative interventions possible to reinforce the area's character.

4.3 Conservation zone

· These areas contain some of heritage buildings however there are still opportunities for improvement. Smaller changes such as high quality developments on carefully selected sites will continue to maximize the historic character of these areas.
· Innovative and creative interventions possible, but must respect context.
· Areas to be protected from insensitive constructions
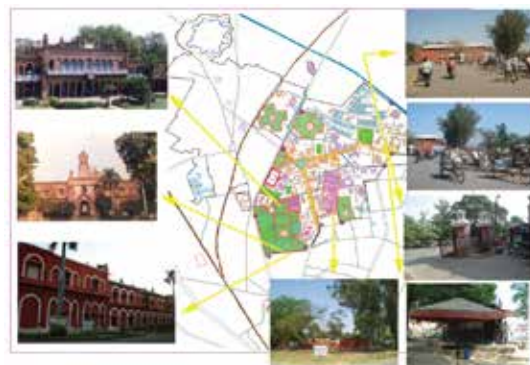· Neglected green areas to be developed with high quality public realm

Fig. 4.2: Buildings and activity in different zones

5.0 Conclusions

The University campus has great demand for expansion, and to meet the need scattered and patchy developments on the out skirts of the main campus are being observed. This development is unable to secure its boundaries as well as integrity of the campus. Moreover in the development process there is a gap of urban design which causes deterioration in imageability and identity. So a stage has reached which requires that all the development within and in the immediate vicinity of the university area should be critically appraised and the existing lacunae and short comings in the development of the campus should be identified.

A comprehensive plan existing and new development for future expansion of the campus should be prepared keeping in mind the urban design guide and public realm framework which will help to have strong planning regulations to ensure well designed high quality buildings and public places, and help to guide how we want the campus to look in the future.

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