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THE NEED FOR SYSTEMATIC EVALUATION OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS WITHIN GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONAL CAMPUSES: A CASE STUDY OF BENGALURU

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ABSTRACT

Government institutional campuses constitute an important but often under-recognized layer of the architectural and cultural heritage of Indian cities. Unlike isolated monuments, institutional buildings remain active places of education, research, administration and public engagement, and therefore undergo continuous adaptation in response to changing functional, technological and infrastructural requirements. Such interventions, when undertaken without a systematic understanding of heritage significance, may result in the gradual loss of architectural character, historical associations, spatial relationships and institutional identity. This paper examines the need for a systematic approach to evaluating heritage significance within functioning institutional campuses, with Bengaluru as the study context. Four institutional campuses—Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB), Raman Research Institute (RRI), and National Institute of Design (NID), Bengaluru—are examined as comparative case studies. The study adopts a qualitative, exploratory methodology based primarily on documentary analysis, institutional histories, architectural documentation and relevant heritage literature. The cases are evaluated across parameters including historical significance, architectural significance, institutional significance, campus and landscape value, authenticity, integrity, continuity of use, functional adaptability and vulnerability to change. The analysis demonstrates that institutional heritage significance cannot be determined solely through age or statutory heritage listing. It may also emerge from architectural authorship, scientific and educational history, institutional continuity, association with significant individuals, spatial organisation, landscape character and collective memory. The paper proposes a preliminary framework for systematic evaluation that can support conservation, maintenance, infrastructure upgrading, adaptive intervention and future campus planning. It argues that heritage assessment should become an integral component of institutional master planning rather than being treated as a constraint imposed on development.

Keywords: Institutional Heritage; Heritage Evaluation; Architectural Conservation; Institutional Campuses; Adaptive Reuse; Bengaluru; Heritage Buildings; Campus Heritage.

1 INTRODUCTION

Built heritage represents the physical manifestation of the historical development of cities and contributes significantly to collective memory and cultural identity. Conventional heritage conservation practices, however, have predominantly focused on individual monuments, historic buildings, archaeological sites and formally recognised heritage precincts. While such buildings remain important, another significant category of heritage exists within functioning institutional environments such as universities, research institutes, government establishments and educational campuses.

Institutional buildings frequently possess heritage value because of their architectural character, historical associations, institutional continuity, association with prominent individuals, scientific or educational contributions, landscape and spatial organisation. In contrast to monuments that may be preserved primarily as historical artefacts, institutional campuses continue to accommodate changing academic, research and administrative functions. Consequently, they are subject to alterations, extensions, infrastructure upgrades, accessibility requirements, fire-safety interventions, technological installations and redevelopment pressures.

The issue becomes particularly relevant in rapidly transforming metropolitan cities such as Bengaluru. The city has historically developed as an important centre of education, science, technology and research. Several major institutions established during the twentieth century continue to occupy large and strategically located campuses within an increasingly urbanised environment. Their buildings and landscapes form important layers of the city's architectural and institutional history.

The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), formally established in 1909, represents one of the earliest major scientific institutions in Bengaluru. Its development involved the vision of Jamsetji Tata, support from the Government of India and the erstwhile Mysore State, and the allocation of a large tract of land by the Mysore Durbar. The campus subsequently developed through multiple architectural phases and became closely associated with India's scientific development.

The Raman Research Institute (RRI), founded in 1948 by Sir C. V. Raman, represents another important layer of Bengaluru's scientific heritage. Its origins are associated with land made available by the Government of Mysore in 1934, and its continued existence reflects a strong relationship between institutional continuity, scientific history and place.

In contrast, the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB), designed by architect B. V. Doshi and completed in 1983, represents a comparatively modern form of institutional architectural heritage. Its architecture integrates buildings, corridors, courtyards, vegetation, landscape and movement systems into a unified campus environment. Its significance therefore demonstrates that architectural heritage is not necessarily dependent upon considerable age.

The National Institute of Design (NID), Bengaluru, inaugurated in 2006, provides a further contrasting case. Although considerably younger than the other three institutions, it is associated with the history of design education in post-independent India and represents a contemporary institutional environment. Its inclusion challenges an age-based understanding of heritage and raises questions regarding how institutional, architectural and cultural significance can be recognised in relatively recent buildings.

The four cases therefore provide an opportunity to examine different pathways through which institutional buildings and campuses can acquire significance. Importantly, this study does not assume that all four campuses are formally designated statutory heritage sites. Instead, they are considered as institutional campuses with potential historical, architectural, cultural and institutional significance that warrant systematic evaluation.

The objective of the study is therefore to examine the need for a systematic evaluation framework for heritage buildings within functioning government institutional campuses, and to identify the parameters that can guide such evaluation in the context of Bengaluru.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Understanding Heritage Significance

Contemporary heritage conservation has progressively moved away from understanding heritage solely in terms of age, architectural style or physical rarity. The concept of cultural significance has become central to heritage assessment.

The Burra Charter defines cultural significance through values such as aesthetic, historic, scientific and social or spiritual significance. Such an approach recognises that a place may be significant because of its associations, meanings, use and cultural relationships in addition to its physical characteristics (Australia ICOMOS, 2013).

For institutional campuses, this broader understanding is particularly relevant. Their significance may arise from several overlapping dimensions:

- historical associations;
- architectural and aesthetic value;
- association with important architects or individuals;
- scientific or educational significance;
- institutional continuity;
- social and cultural associations;
- landscape and spatial value;
- technological or constructional significance; and
- collective memory.

Therefore, a systematic institutional heritage assessment should consider multiple values rather than relying exclusively on chronological age.

2.2 Heritage Beyond the Individual Building

Heritage significance frequently extends beyond the physical boundaries of an individual building. UNESCO's Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) promotes an integrated approach that considers buildings together with landscape, open spaces, social practices, infrastructure and broader urban context (UNESCO, 2011).

This approach is particularly relevant to institutional campuses because their character is often created through relationships between buildings, courtyards, pathways, vegetation, open spaces, institutional activities and visual connections.

In the case of IIMB, for example, the architectural experience is strongly dependent upon the relationship between built form, shaded corridors, courtyards and landscape. Similarly, the heritage significance of IISc and RRI cannot be understood exclusively by examining individual buildings without considering their wider campus setting and institutional history.

Thus, institutional heritage should be considered at two interconnected levels:

2.3 Adaptive Reuse and Functional Continuity

Heritage buildings frequently need to accommodate contemporary requirements. Adaptive reuse literature highlights the importance of balancing conservation with functional, economic, environmental and social considerations.

Bullen and Love (2011) identify adaptive reuse as an important strategy for extending the useful life of heritage buildings while retaining significant elements. Arfa et al. (2022) further demonstrate that adaptive reuse requires processes of heritage analysis, value assessment, significance mapping, evaluation of reuse potential, design development, implementation and continued management.

Vafaie, Remøy and Gruis (2023), through a systematic review of adaptive reuse literature, identify architectural, structural, socio-cultural, economic, environmental, energy, authenticity, legal, management and functional factors as important to successful adaptive reuse.

This is particularly relevant to institutional campuses because the objective is often not to completely change the use of a building. Instead, the challenge is to retain institutional use while adapting the building to contemporary requirements.

2.4 Institutional Campuses as Cultural Landscapes

Institutional campuses can be understood as cultural landscapes where buildings, open spaces, vegetation, circulation systems and institutional activities collectively create a distinctive environment.

IISc demonstrates the accumulation of architectural and scientific history over more than a century. RRI demonstrates the relationship between scientific history, institutional continuity and place. IIMB demonstrates how modern architectural design can acquire significance through architectural authorship and the integration of buildings and landscape.

These examples indicate that campus significance is not necessarily concentrated in a single building. Instead, it can be distributed across multiple structures and spatial relationships.

2.5 Research Gap

The review indicates three important gaps.

- First, conventional heritage assessment tends to remain building-centric, whereas institutional campuses require consideration of campus-level relationships.
- Second, heritage evaluation is often separated from functional planning, even though institutional buildings remain operational and continuously require adaptation.
- Third, there is limited discussion of a systematic evaluation framework specifically applicable to functioning institutional campuses in rapidly transforming Indian metropolitan environments.

This study therefore attempts to bridge these gaps through a comparative assessment of four Bengaluru institutional campuses.

3 METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a qualitative, exploratory comparative case-study methodology based primarily on documentary and secondary research.

The methodology was structured into four stages.

3.1.1 Stage 1: Literature and Conceptual Review

Relevant literature on:

- heritage significance;
- architectural conservation;
- institutional heritage;
- adaptive reuse;
- cultural landscapes; and
- historic urban landscapes

was reviewed to establish the conceptual basis for the evaluation.

3.1.2 Stage 2: Case Identification and Documentation

Four institutional campuses in Bengaluru were selected:

- Indian Institute of Science (IISc)
- Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB)
- Raman Research Institute (RRI)
- National Institute of Design (NID), Bengaluru

The cases were selected to represent variation in:

- institutional function;
- period of establishment;
- architectural character;
- institutional history;
- relationship between buildings and landscape;
- architectural authorship;
- degree of continuity of use; and
- relationship between historical significance and contemporary function.

The cases are not treated as equivalent statutory heritage categories. Rather, they are examined to identify the different attributes that may contribute to institutional heritage significance.

3.1.3 Stage 3: Comparative Evaluation

Each case was evaluated against the following parameters:

Table 1. Parameters Used for the Comparative Evaluation of Institutional Heritage Significance

Evaluation Parameter	Key Indicators
Historical significance	Age, historical events, associations, institutional history
Architectural significance	Architect, style, spatial organisation, materials, design principles
Institutional significance	Continuity, institutional identity, educational/scientific contribution
Campus/contextual significance	Landscape, open spaces, circulation, visual relationships
Authenticity	Original materials, design expression and character
Integrity	Retention of original form and spatial relationships
Functional continuity	Continued institutional use and relevance
Functional adaptability	Capacity to accommodate contemporary requirements
Vulnerability	Alteration, deterioration, infrastructure pressure and redevelopment

3.1.4 Stage 4: Development of Evaluation Framework

The comparative findings were used to identify a preliminary process for institutional heritage evaluation:

The methodology is exploratory rather than intended to establish statutory heritage grades. The comparative ratings presented below therefore represent preliminary academic assessments based on documentary analysis.

4 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Indian Institute of Science (IISc)

The Indian Institute of Science was formally established in 1909 following the vision of Jamsetji Tata and support from the Government of India and the erstwhile Mysore State. The Mysore Durbar provided approximately 371 acres of land for the institution. The foundation stone was laid in 1911, and the first students were admitted in the same year.

The campus has subsequently developed through several architectural phases. Its historic buildings, institutional landscape and scientific associations collectively contribute to its significance.

The campus is particularly significant because of its association with the development of scientific research in India and with prominent scientists, including Sir C. V. Raman. The architectural development of the campus also represents changing approaches to institutional architecture over different periods.

4.1.1 Key heritage attributes

- long institutional history;
- association with the development of Indian science;
- historic buildings and architectural layers;
- association with prominent scientists;
- landscape and mature vegetation;
- spatial relationships between buildings;
- continuity of institutional use;
- strong institutional identity.

The case demonstrates that the heritage value of IISc is distributed across the campus rather than being confined to individual buildings. A building-by-building assessment without consideration of landscape, circulation and institutional history would therefore provide an incomplete understanding of its significance.

4.2 Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB)

The IIMB campus represents a different form of institutional heritage. Designed by architect B. V. Doshi, the original campus was completed in 1983. The complex covers approximately 54,000 sq. m within a large 100-acre campus.

The architectural character of IIMB is created through a strong relationship between built form and landscape. Corridors, courtyards, vegetation, stone surfaces, light and shadow and transitional spaces contribute to the overall spatial experience.

The design has been described as drawing inspiration from traditional Indian spatial environments, including the architectural character of Fatehpur Sikri, while translating these ideas into a modern institutional campus.

4.2.1 Key heritage attributes

- association with B. V. Doshi;
- distinctive architectural language;
- integrated building-landscape relationship;
- courtyards and shaded corridors;
- spatial sequence and movement;
- material character;
- relationship between interior and exterior;
- strong institutional identity.

IIMB demonstrates that **modern architecture can acquire heritage significance without relying primarily on age**. The architectural authorship, design philosophy, spatial innovation and institutional association constitute important heritage attributes.

4.3 Raman Research Institute (RRI)

The Raman Research Institute was founded in 1948 by Sir C. V. Raman. Its institutional history can be traced to the provision of land by the Government of Mysore in 1934. The institute subsequently became an important centre of scientific research and continues to function as an autonomous research institution under the Department of Science and Technology.

The significance of RRI is strongly associated with Sir C. V. Raman and the history of scientific research in India. Its institutional continuity provides an important connection between its historic origins and contemporary research activities.

4.3.1 Key heritage attributes

- association with Sir C. V. Raman;
- scientific and research history;
- continuity of institutional function;
- historic campus setting;
- landscape character;
- association with scientific development in Bengaluru;
- institutional identity and collective memory.

The RRI case demonstrates the importance of **institutional continuity as a heritage value**. A place can acquire significance not only because of its physical fabric but also because of the activities, people and intellectual history associated with it.

4.4 National Institute of Design (NID), Bengaluru

The NID Bengaluru campus was inaugurated in 2006 at Yeshwanthpur. The campus occupies a comparatively small site of approximately two acres and represents the expansion of India's national design education system.

NID itself was established in 1961 as a Government of India initiative and has played an important role in the development of design education in India. The Bengaluru campus therefore represents a relatively recent layer of institutional and design history.

4.4.1 Key heritage attributes

- association with national design education;
- institutional identity;
- representation of post-independent Indian educational development;
- design-oriented institutional environment;
- continuity of academic use;
- potential architectural and spatial significance.

The inclusion of NID Bengaluru is important because it demonstrates that **heritage significance should not be determined solely by chronological age**. At the same time, its relatively recent age means that its architectural heritage significance requires more detailed assessment before assigning any formal heritage value.

4.5 Comparative Analysis

The four cases demonstrate different pathways through which institutional significance may emerge.

Table 2. Comparative Evaluation of Heritage Significance and Vulnerability across the Selected Institutional Campuses

Parameter	IISc	IIMB	RRI	NID Bengaluru
Historical significance	Very High	High	Very High	Moderate
Architectural significance	High	Very High	High	To be established through detailed assessment
Institutional significance	Very High	High	Very High	High
Campus significance	Very High	Very High	High	Moderate
Landscape significance	High	Very High	High	Moderate
Continuity of use	Very High	High	Very High	High
Need for documentation	Very High	Very High	Very High	High
Vulnerability to change	High	High	High	Moderate-High

Note: The above ratings are preliminary comparative judgements derived from documentary analysis and are not statutory heritage grades.

The comparison reveals that no single parameter is sufficient to establish institutional heritage significance.

- For IISc, significance emerges strongly from historical depth, scientific associations, campus morphology and institutional continuity.
- For RRI, scientific history, association with C. V. Raman and institutional continuity are particularly important.
- For IIMB, architectural authorship, modern architectural significance, spatial organisation and landscape integration are dominant.
- For NID Bengaluru, institutional and educational significance are more prominent, while its architectural heritage value requires further detailed investigation.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Heritage Significance is Multidimensional

The comparison indicates that heritage significance should not be reduced to the equation:

Age = Heritage

Instead, institutional heritage can be understood through a combination of:

Historical Value + Architectural Value + Institutional Value + Contextual Value + Cultural Association + Continuity

The four cases illustrate this clearly. IISc and RRI possess considerable historical and scientific associations, whereas IIMB demonstrates the significance of modern architectural authorship. NID Bengaluru demonstrates the possibility of institutional significance emerging from relatively recent educational and design history.

Therefore, an evaluation framework must be capable of recognising different forms and degrees of significance.

5.2 From Building Conservation to Campus Conservation

The study demonstrates the need to move from a building-centric approach to a campus-level approach.

At the building level, evaluation should examine:

- architectural elements;
- materials;
- construction;
- spatial organisation;
- interiors;
- original details;
- alterations; and
- physical condition.

At the campus level, evaluation should additionally examine:

- landscape;
- open spaces;
- courtyards;
- circulation;
- vegetation;
- visual relationships;
- building-to-building relationships;
- important vistas;
- institutional activities; and
- collective memory.

This broader approach corresponds with the principles of the Historic Urban Landscape approach, where heritage is understood as an interconnected physical, cultural and social environment.

5.3 Heritage Conservation versus Functional Requirements

A major challenge for institutional campuses is that they cannot simply be preserved as static monuments.

Research institutions may require sophisticated laboratory services. Educational institutions require digital infrastructure, accessibility, fire safety, environmental systems and changing classroom arrangements. Administrative spaces may require technological upgrades and improved services.

Consequently, the question should not simply be:

“Should the building be preserved or modified”

Instead, the more appropriate question is:

“Which elements are significant, which can be modified, and what degree of intervention is appropriate?”

This requires a prior understanding of significance.

5.4 Need for Systematic Evaluation

The study proposes that heritage assessment should precede major interventions within historically or architecturally significant institutional campuses.

A systematic evaluation can follow the sequence:

- Identification

Identify buildings, landscapes, spaces, objects and associations that may possess significance.

5.4.1 Documentation

Prepare architectural drawings, photographs, historical records, material documentation and institutional histories.

5.4.2 Significance Assessment

Assess historical, architectural, institutional, contextual, social and landscape values.

5.4.3 Condition Assessment

Document deterioration, structural issues, material degradation and maintenance requirements.

5.4.4 Alteration Assessment

Identify original elements, previous modifications and incompatible additions.

5.4.5 Functional Assessment

Evaluate present use, accessibility, infrastructure and future functional requirements.

5.4.6 Vulnerability Assessment

Identify risks from redevelopment, infrastructure upgrades, deterioration, environmental factors and changing institutional requirements.

5.4.7 Intervention Prioritisation

Prioritise buildings and spaces according to significance and vulnerability.

5.4.8 Conservation and Adaptation Strategy

Develop appropriate strategies ranging from maintenance and repair to adaptive intervention and carefully planned additions.

This approach would enable institutional development and heritage conservation to operate as complementary rather than opposing objectives.

6 CONCLUSION

Government institutional campuses constitute an important and complex layer of the architectural heritage of Indian cities. Unlike isolated monuments, these campuses remain active environments for education, research, administration and public engagement. Their continued functioning inevitably requires adaptation, making the management of heritage significance particularly challenging.

The comparative examination of IISc, IIMB, RRI and NID Bengaluru demonstrates that institutional heritage significance can emerge through different combinations of historical, architectural, institutional, contextual and cultural values.

IISc represents significance through scientific history, architectural evolution, institutional continuity and campus landscape. RRI demonstrates the importance of scientific association and institutional continuity. IIMB illustrates the heritage potential of modern architecture through the work of B. V. Doshi and its integrated architectural-landscape environment. NID Bengaluru highlights the need to consider institutional and design significance beyond conventional age-based definitions.

The study therefore argues that systematic evaluation should precede major alteration, redevelopment or infrastructure intervention within significant institutional campuses. Such evaluation should extend beyond individual buildings to include landscapes, open spaces, circulation systems, spatial relationships and institutional associations.

Most importantly, heritage conservation within institutional campuses should not be understood as an attempt to freeze buildings in their original state. Rather, it should be understood as a process of identifying significance, documenting important attributes, managing change and enabling continued use.

A systematic evaluation framework can therefore provide institutions with a practical basis for balancing heritage conservation with functional requirements, technological advancement and future development. In the context of Bengaluru, such an approach can contribute to retaining important layers of the city's scientific, educational and architectural history while allowing its institutions to remain relevant and adaptable.

6.1 Recommendations

Based on the comparative analysis, the following recommendations are proposed.

6.1.1 Preparation of Institutional Heritage Registers

Institutions should prepare internal heritage registers identifying:

- significant buildings;
- historic structures;
- courtyards and open spaces;
- significant trees and landscapes;
- memorials and commemorative elements;
- important interiors;
- circulation systems;
- important views and spatial relationships; and
- historically significant institutional associations.

6.2 Campus-Level Documentation

Documentation should extend beyond individual buildings to include the entire campus. Architectural drawings, photographs, historical records, landscape documentation and institutional histories should be systematically compiled.

6.3 Periodic Heritage Evaluation

Heritage assessment should not be considered a one-time activity. Periodic reviews should be undertaken, particularly before:

- major renovations;
- additions;
- demolition;
- infrastructure upgrades;
- landscape restructuring;
- redevelopment; and
- changes in functional use.

6.4 Heritage-Sensitive Infrastructure Upgradation

Contemporary requirements such as accessibility, fire safety, electrical systems, ICT infrastructure, energy efficiency and environmental services should be introduced through carefully designed interventions that minimise damage to significant architectural elements.

6.5 Prioritisation Based on Significance and Vulnerability

A simple decision matrix can assist institutional planning:

Table 3: Prioritisation Matrix Based on Significance and Vulnerability

Significance	Vulnerability	Suggested Approach
High	High	Immediate conservation/documentation
High	Low	Preventive conservation and monitoring
High	High functional inadequacy	Carefully designed adaptive intervention
Moderate	High	Detailed assessment before intervention
Low	High	Compatible redevelopment may be considered

6.6 Recognition of Modern Institutional Heritage

Heritage assessment should not depend exclusively on chronological age. Architecturally significant modern and post-independent institutional campuses should also be assessed for:

- architectural authorship;
- innovation;
- design philosophy;
- institutional importance;
- cultural associations;
- technological significance; and
- contribution to architectural history.

6.7 Integration with Institutional Master Planning

Heritage evaluation should become part of the institutional master-planning process. Before decisions concerning demolition, major additions, infrastructure replacement or redevelopment are taken, the heritage significance of affected buildings and spaces should be assessed.

6.8 Creation of a Campus Heritage Management Framework

Large institutions could establish a multidisciplinary heritage management team involving:

- architects;
- conservation architects;
- historians;
- landscape architects;
- structural engineers;
- facility managers; and
- institutional representatives.

Such a team could periodically review the condition, significance and vulnerability of important campus assets.

STATEMENTS ON COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

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