

HERITAGE STUDY OF MUSLIM WORLD

ALI RAZA SOOMRO



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Nurul Hamiruddin Salleh, PhD

Department of Architecture
Kulliyyah of Architecture and Environmental Design International Islamic University
Malaysia Kuala Lumpur Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Fire does not respect age or the importance of historical buildings as fire routinely destroys irreplaceable heritage buildings. An historic structure or authentic fabric lost to fire is irreplaceable and yet a series of major international heritage fire losses have occurred. This chapter reviews the literature on fire safety in heritage buildings which includes its objectives, design approaches and problems. The fire safety codes and guidelines for heritage buildings at international levels as well as in Malaysia are also highlighted in this chapter.

Keywords: fire safety, historical buildings, heritage buildings, codes, guidelines

INTRODUCTION

Indeed, fire does not respect age or the importance of historical buildings as fire routinely destroys irreplaceable heritage buildings (Brannigan, 2007). It is highlighted in the COST Action C17⁴ (2007) that any historic structure or authentic fabric lost to fire is irreplaceable and yet a series of major international heritage fire losses have occurred. For example, on the 11th of February 2008, the South Korean landmark of Namdaemun Gate in Seoul was destroyed by arson fire. In Scotland, it is believed that one important historic building is destroyed each month (COST Action C17, 2007). This is supported by Kidd (2008) that there is an average of 12.5 serious fires in Category A and B buildings⁵ each year

⁴ The COST Action C17 is a European research initiative entitled *Built Heritage: Fire Loss to Historic Buildings*, which was formally inaugurated in Brussels in December 2002 and concluded at the end of 2006. Through collaboration, the aim is to reduce the significant physical and cultural loss of Europe's built heritage to the damaging effects of fire.

⁵ Under the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, listed buildings and scheduled monuments is classified into three schemes: (1) **Category A**: "buildings of national or international importance, either architectural or historic, or fine little-altered examples of some particular period, style or building type", (2) **Category B**: "buildings of regional or more than local importance, or major examples of some particular period, style or building type which may have been altered", and (3) **Category C(s)**: