

# PEOPLE'S SQUARE

(The Outdoor living Room of the Karachi City)

An initiative of Government of Sindh  
under Karachi Neighborhood Improvement Project (KNIP)



## **1. Need of urban Public Space:**

The happiness index of the residents is largely related to the quality and access to the public spaces. There is a saying that, "People in 'living cities' meet in public spaces and people in 'dead cities' meet in shopping malls". Karachi, the city of Lights has always been a "Living City", starting as a fishing village in 17<sup>th</sup> century, throughout under British colonial period and after Independence. Public spaces in urban areas are spaces for amusement, leisure, and interaction for the public at large. World over 'Piazzas' are celebrated spaces with points of interest, mostly heritage buildings, in surrounding along with large platforms for events and gathering of youth. These spaces are facilitated with pedestrian priority zones, food kiosks, security, seating, ancillary facilities, parking, access to public transport in an environment friendly manner, so that visitors may spend time in ease and comfort. However, the lack of interactive public spaces has severely affected the quality of life of Karachiites especially lower- and middle-income groups.

## **2. Rational for Public Space location in Saddar:**

The Karachi's old city forms 'diagonal grids' on late nineteenth-century 'Strachen map' having earmarked quarters, each having a defined land use. The 'Educational and Cultural Zone' forms part of Moulana Din Muhammad Wafai Road (James Strachan Road), Dr Zia-ud-din Ahmed Road (Kutchery Road), Muhammad Bin Qasim Road (Burns Road), Shahrah-e-Kamal Attaturk (Queens Way) falls under "Artillary Maidan Quarters" in close proximity of Ram Bagh and Serai Quarters. Well-known important buildings such as Sindh Assembly, Sindh Secretariat, Arts council of Pakistan, D J. Science College, NED University City Campus, Mitha Ram Hostel, S. M. Law College, S.M.Arts College, Burns Garden and Sobhraj Chettumal Terrace, National Museum and Supreme Court (Victoria and Albert Museum) are close to the current developed area. Every day thousands of visitors, students, and general public visit these important buildings which have historic value and any development in this area would have resulted in larger benefits and impacts. Therefore, this land-use provided a rationale for the selection of space for current development. The Shara-e-Kamal Attaturk and M.B. Qasim road, having its access in the majority of the buildings, was a parking yard before current sub-project. It provided an ideal location for a typical "Public Square". There is a huge demand for parking in the area with visitors to the secretariat, and other institutes, therefore, this demand was to be responded with the provision of a decent sub-surface parking with huge Public space at surface, its' parking facility and improvement in surrounding roads and pathways complementing each other.



*Top View of "People's Square" among the Urban Fabric*



Following are the buildings that interface the public space-square:

- **Sindh Muslim Arts & Commerce College** is a government college located in Karachi, Pakistan. It was founded by the founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah in 1943. The college holds morning and evening classes of intermediate and graduation.
- **Department of Architecture and Planning, City Campus of NED University of Engineering and Technology** is located at the Maulana Din Muhammad Wafai Road. It offers undergraduate and graduate-level education and research in the fields of Urban and Regional Planning and Architecture.
- **DJ Science College:** is a public Government College which offers Intermediate level education in Pre-Engineering and Pre-Medical field.
- **Sindh Muslim Law College:** The Sindh Muslim Government Law College also called S.M. Law College is one of the oldest law schools of Pakistan. It was established in 1947.
- **National Museum/Burns Garden:** The National Museum of Pakistan, Karachi was established in 1951 in the historical building of Frere Hall and continued to be there till July 1969. Meanwhile, the Government realizing the importance of the National Institution favored the construction of a separate building at Burns Garden. The new building's inauguration ceremony was performed by the then President of Pakistan on 21st February 1970. The Museum represents a complete vista of Pakistan's Cultural Heritage from Stone Age down to the birth of Pakistan. All galleries are set up in chronological.

### **3. The Vision, Design and Development of Public Space- Square**

The vision of Square is to upgrade the livability status of the neighborhood through environmental improvement, infrastructure rehabilitation and by creating spaces for social integration. A more livable neighborhood also looks into optimizing the still existent cultural, social and recreational potential provided by the relevant structures and spaces through utilizing them as catalysts for public space design interventions that are characterized by their inclusive, accessible, safe and comfort based designs - that rely on creating 'places' rather than 'structures'. The Public Square is the location where community comes alive, where bonds among neighbors are strengthened and where sense of belonging is fostered. The future of our communities and cities depend on great public places.

This Square in Saddar downtown has been developed by Government of Sindh with the support of World Bank under Karachi Neighborhood Improvement Project (KNIP) implemented by Planning and Development Department. The ground breaking of this Square along with underground parking plaza, enhancement of open spaces in Arts Council and adjacent roads development of educational and cultural zone was made by Syed Murad Ali Shah, Chief Minister Sindh in 2018 as single sub-project of KNIP. The sub-project with its all components including public square has been completed in August 2020.

A consultative planning and design approach were adopted, engaging stakeholders comprising residents' visitors' artists, students, women groups in the preparation of design brief, schematic designs and based on their comments/feedback the design was developed. The design process was led by design experts in PIU and proceedings were documented sensitively.

The consultations and workshops were also conducted with academia and civil society, based on their input the modifications of various design elements, piazza surface finishes were modified. The finalized designs were displayed on surrounding intersections, to seek public opinion on KNIP interactive web portal.



#### 4. The naming of Public Space- Square

In world over public spaces are popularly known as Squares or *Piazza* where people can come in contact with social world. It's a space that gives people a chance to see something new, feel differently, to learn and to be inspired. Public squares are regarded as landmarks in most of the major cities around the world. Many of them have witnessed events that has changed the course of history or even made history. Some of the squares have been around for centuries. Times Square in New York, Tiananmen Square in Beijing, People's Square in Shanghai, Red Square in Moscow, Old Town Square in Prague and Taksim Square in Istanbul are just to mention.

The name "**People's Square**" was finalized for this public space of Saddar downtown through vigorous stakeholders' consultation process. **At the first stage**, KNIP and NED University jointly organized consultation session with students, faculty of various institutes i.e., D.J. Science College, NED University City Campus, S.M Arts & Commerce Government College, S.M. Law College and Arts Council of Pakistan. Besides this, the representatives of civil society and citizens have also participated in the event.

The participants proposed the names in person during the consultation session. Besides this, the option of sending proposed name through email and post was also adopted.

**At the second stage**, a committee was constituted to review the proposed names received through consultation engagement to shortlist the names from a long list and communicate the final shortlisted names.

**At the third stage**, shortlisted names were submitted to the Government for approval of final name and the “**People’s Square**” was selected and officially notified by the Government of Sindh.



## **5. Prominent design features of People’s Square**

It consists of **8000 Sq/meter** with following salient features:

- Canopied and open seating on benches for **300** people (at one time)
- Event space for more than **2000** persons (at one time) at People’s Square
- **3** Lifts/staircase lobbies including security counters
- **11** Convenience/Food Kiosks
- Planters/Large Trees (Malaysian palm/Goldmohur) with seating
- Public Toilets (separate for women and specially-abled persons)
- Substation and backup Gensets.
- Entrance and Exit ramps with canopies
- Access gates to the surrounding buildings



### 5.1 Unique Location & Multiple Access Points:

The People's Square can be easily accessed from various parts of the old town, downtown and uptown through public and private transport. It has walking distance from densely populated old quarters of the city. The following are five entrance/ exit points of the Peoples' Square:

- ❖ From Deen Muhammad Wafai Road, in front of Sindh Secretariat
- ❖ From Muhammad Bin Qasim Road (Burns road) adjacent NED City Campus
- ❖ Adjacent to DJ College main gate on Ziauddin Ahmed Road
- ❖ Adjacent to S.M. Law College
- ❖ It is also accessible from the main entrance of National Museum/Burns Garden, DJ College, NED City Campus and SM Arts College. Ramps are provided on flanking major roads to accommodate vehicular mobility. The easy access to the newly developed space makes it a hub of Youth and Public gathering.

### 5.2 Freedom Movement Monument:

The Location of Peoples' Square is historic in nature where various public gathering, processions regularly convened during freedom movement of Pakistan. These gatherings occurred in nearby streets and Pakistan Chowk which is located nearby. The locality is known for temporary gathering of thousands of migrants after independence who were resettled in the adjacent buildings. Various articles for Pakistan movement were published by Deen Muhammad Wafai, who belonged to the same locality.

To commemorate and respect the sacrifices of people who were proactive during independence, a symbolic expression has been planned called '**Freedom Movement Monument**'. It is 40ft high, cubicle shaped tower emerging from a round base. The 4 corners on-base/and vertical column represent 4 provinces of the country. On top of the column is placed the globe, symbolizing the newly emerging nation on the map of the world. The water oozes out from the top of the column



and enters in the round base from cascading slant platform. The location becomes a selfie point for the youth, while seating on the outer edges is an ideal place for families.

### 5.3 Artwork on walls and Ramps:

The Artwork breaks the monotony of dead walls and creates an interesting space for all ages. This concept is used in People's Square and artwork has been done on the external walls of various structures such as toilet block and ramps by well-known artists. The beautiful artwork comprises of the painting of **'Historic Buildings of Karachi'** which includes Frere Hall, St. Patrick School/Church, Mohatta Palace, KMC building and also showing the tram life of Karachi in the centre. The painting is conceptualized by KNIP team and painted by Artist Mr. Wasi Hyder. The **"Harmony in diversity through colors/shapes"** is conceptualized and designed by Artist Mr. Sharjeel Baloch for the inner walls of the ramps.



*"Historic buildings of Karachi"*





**“Harmony in diversity through colors/shapes”**



#### **5.4 National Museum Interface:**

People's Square makes an interesting interface with National Museum gate, which is already constructed by Culture Department. The structure having Mughal and Central Asian Architecture features makes vista with People's Square. The offsetting space, having beautiful green Burns garden in background becomes a selfie point for youth and children.





### **5.5 Elevators and Lift Lobbies:**

Three Elevators and lift lobbies are located on major entrances to facilitate vertical movement for people accessing subsurface parking. Each lobby is well furnished with modern material while exterior finishing's are customized to respect the surrounding elegant historic buildings.

**5.6. Kiosks:** There are eleven kiosks out of which eight are dedicated to food-related activities while three are reserved for books, souvenir etc. The Kiosks are located in such a manner that the visitors have plenty of space for seating.





*Picture showing series of Kiosk in People's Square*

### **5.7 Covered and Open Seating:**

The sitting arrangement caters for the requirement of people from all age groups. With more than 300 seats on both sides in open and covered space. The covered seating comprises of picnic benches for 8 to 10 persons under hyperbolic Teflon roof seating near kiosks dedicated for food serving, while the linear seating along service corridor is also available. The Victorian style and conventional benches are also placed on M.B. Qasim road and near Monument for families and elderly.



*“Seating designed at People’s Square”*

### **5.8 Hard and Soft Landscape:**

The People’s Square piazza level juxtapositions hard and soft landscape making magnificent vistas with the historic buildings in the background. The tiles, trees, benches, wall surfaces, cultural motifs and lighting transform the Square into a vibrant public space and provide a joyful and visually appealing horizon of the city's skyline.







### 5.9 Tree Planters:

Especially designed granite stone finished tree planters with Malaysian palm and Goldmohur trees have been constructed. The planters are designed in such a manner that **12 persons** can easily enjoy the ambiance while sitting around on benches designed around planters.



*“Tree Planters Surrounded by Seating Space”*

### **5.10 Public Toilets:**

The centrally located toilet blocks will serve to the visitors. Gender consideration has been taken into account and separate toilet has been constructed for women, men, transgender and specially-abled persons. The female toilets are equipped with a baby changes space with proper safety and security.



### **5.11 Covered Parking Entrance and Exit Ramps:**

The Parking ramps have especially designed hyperbolic shaped canopies which are lit with strip lights. The canopies provide light inside the parking levels.





*“Covered Parking Entrance and Exit Ramps”*

### **5.12 Safety and Security:**

The safety and security of visitors have been ensured both at People’s Square and Underground parking. The various measure have been taken in this regard such as, security booths are placed at each entrance and security checking counters, scanners are available in each lobby for safe vertical movement. Besides this, CCTV cameras are provided after 30m to 40m distance. A Security control room is available near the main entrance while all CCTV control systems are integrated & monitored through main monitoring room.

### **5.13 Lighting:**

The Square is well lit with specially designed street poles and garden lights for safe and secure pedestrian movement.



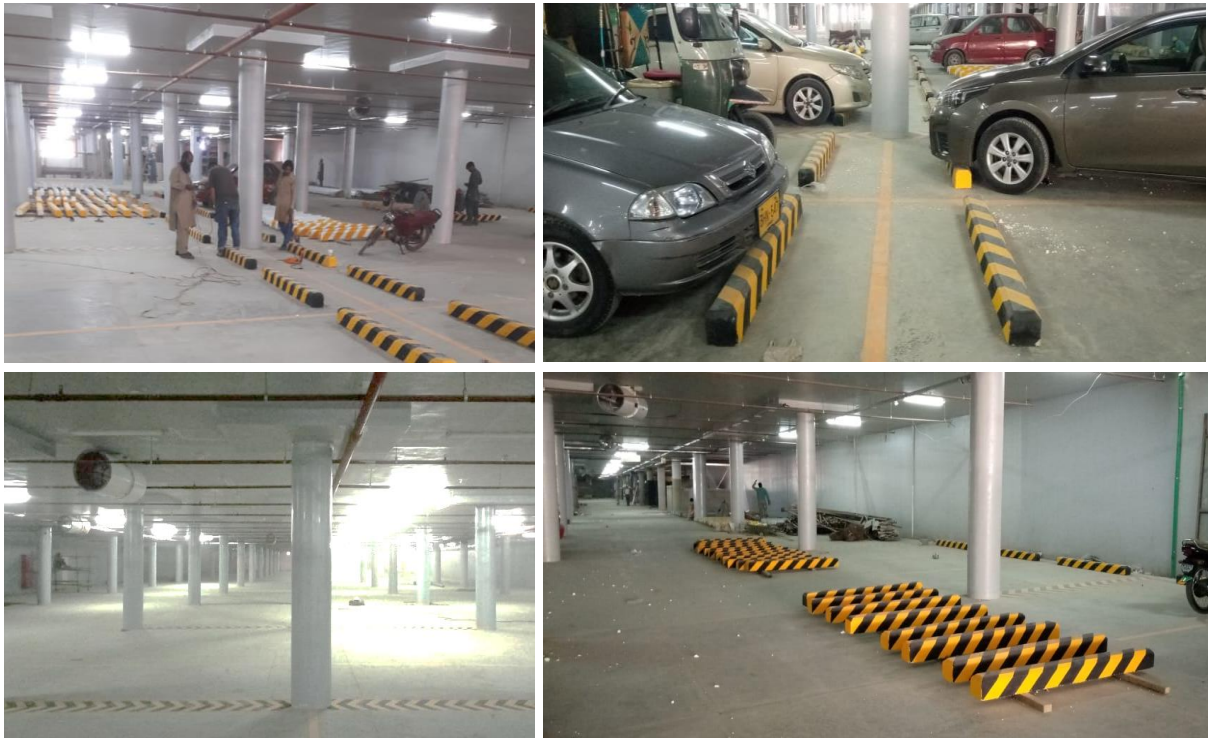


#### **5.14 Mechanical ventilation systems and Ancillary Facilities:**

**Four** Nos. Ventilation shafts cater to an especially designed mechanical ventilation system for parking levels. The System is fully automated and designed for **Six** air changes per hours in normal mode while **Ten** air changes are for emergency, with dedicated Gen-Set, to cater for carbon monoxide accumulation. All ancillary facilities such as **Two 175 KVA** backup generators, substations, storm water pumps, fire pumps, Parking management system, and public address systems etc **are provided**

#### **5.15 Parking Levels:**

There are **two** parking levels, **level 1** is accessed from both main roads while **level 2** is approached from level 1. Each level has one **four parking bays** and **two driveways**. Accommodating **350** vehicles and **400** bikes. 2.5 to 3 times usage of lots is expected each day. The lift lobbies and staircases are accessible from each parking level.



## 6. Initiatives are taken to re-invigorate the surrounding heritage fabric:

The following tasks were performed to add value in People's Square:

- 1) The erection of exterior walls, where required, including paint works, pavers etc.
- 2) Surface cleaning of the external walls, where required
- 3) The architectural thematic façade lighting of NED old campus
- 4) Removal of visual obstructions facing old buildings
- 5) Surface cleaning of the stone cladding of external boundary of DJ College
- 6) Integration of storm drainage with People's Square network
- 7) Along with entrance portal of Museum (Monument structure) facing People's Square, pavers laid and side grill erected
- 8) Hard and soft landscape works on the outer periphery in line with sub-project theme

## 7. Benefits of the People's Square:

The 'People's Square' is among the first of its kind public space in the city created and carved out of congested pockets. It is a gift for the people of the Karachi by Government of Sindh. This space with its facilities, events spaces, parking facility will set a trend for the similar spaces in other parts of the, mega city, Other cities of the province and all over the country. There are many social, economic, cultural and health-related benefits of People's Square.

### ▪ Social Benefits:

The location of People's Square is very unique. It is surrounded by many famous places such as Sindh Assembly, Sindh Secretariat, Burns Garden, Art Council, NAPA, Supreme Court and four



famous educational institutes i.e. NED City Campus, DJ Science College, SM Law College and SM Arts College. There is no place around these institutions where people and students can interact socially which is a very important aspect of their personality development. People's Square will provide a very conducive environment for social interaction not only to the students but also to other community members.

- **Economic Benefits:**

The people's Square has 11 Kiosks for various kinds of business such as food, educational material, books and cultural shops. It will be ensured that 50 per cent of kiosks will be allocated to women, elderly and especially-abled persons to provide economic opportunity to them for uplifting their economic status. Besides this, when an area is improved the cost of surrounding properties also increases.

- **Cultural Benefits:**

A conducive space is one of the necessary elements to promote cultural activities. Unfortunately, there is a huge shortage of places in the city and especially in Saddar for cultural activities. People's Square will fill this gap in the city of light as it has a huge space for various cultural activities such as exhibitions, musical night, and other activities.

- **Health Benefits:**

Open and public space plays an important role in the mental and physical health of an individual. Unfortunately, there is a huge shortage of public spaces in the city, the People's Square will fill this gap and provide a good public space for the citizens.

## BEFORE



## AFTER

