

Losing out to down under

DR. NIZAMUDDIN AHMED

Roads in Dhaka and for that matter at every other urban centre in the country are becoming increasingly congested. The reason is, you would guess, the street is being put to many varied uses in addition to its primary function. In many places in the capital there is barely enough space for one moving vehicle to file past pedestrians and bystanders, vendors and hawkers, goods and foods, rickshaws and parked cars, never in any given order.

One idealistic way to mitigate this nuisance would be to free the street and the walkway, where available, of all illegal occupancies. While such an attempt may fail because of the several informal sectors and unknown factors involved, parked vehicles, by far the largest in volume, could be directed to designated places. To that end, there are building rules in place for the last over ten years that specifies, albeit inadequately, the number of car parking spaces that a building must provide in respect of its floor area and function.

Land being one of the priciest commodities in Bangladesh, little wonder then that building owners would not want to look silly and gobble it up to park mere vehicles, especially when the road supposedly belongs to their forefathers.

To fulfil governmental sanction requirements, underground basements are therefore constructed to increase floor area for car parking; all drawings approved by RAJUK and other city development authorities will show them as such.

Unfortunately, the narrow outlook of earning even more money and non-existent occupancy regulations have encouraged building owners to let out and/or sell basement space for illegal use, driving away the cars to be parked in public places. And then they join the rest of us to lament that Dhaka is becoming unlivable.

Furthermore, putting the basement to non-sanctioned use from x-ray labs to fast food kitchens can harbour health and safety hazards.

This week we present to our readers a sample of how the parking law is being violated, particularly with respect to the basement. The survey was conducted by final year students of the department of Architecture, BUET.

Let us look once again at the future of this city through the eyes of those to whom it belongs.

The author is professor of Architecture, BUET and Consultant to the Editor on Urban Issues, The Daily Star



Building Construction Rules 1996 (popular as Rajuk Rules) for parking

Residential Building	1 car parking for	3230 sft
Commercial Building	1 car parking for	2152 sft
Shopping/ Restaurant	1 car parking for	1076 sft
Hospital/clinic	1 car parking for	3230 sft
Educational	1 car parking for	2152 sft
Hotel	1 car parking for	2152 sft
Community	1 car / 20 person	



Case study on parking space of some buildings in Dhaka City

Hasney Tower



Building type: Office
 Location: Karwan Bazar, Dhaka
 Total floor area: 7830 sft.
 Number of parking required: 43
 Number of parking available: None.
 Basement parking: Currently in use as restaurant
 Parking ramp: Currently used as staircase for restaurant
 Number of stories: 11
 Number of staircase: 1

Sonar Tori Tower



Building type: Office
 Location: Sonargaon Road, Dhaka.
 Total floor area: 76340 sft.
 Number of parking required: 35.
 Number of parking available: 21.
 Number of stories: 19
 Number of staircase: 1

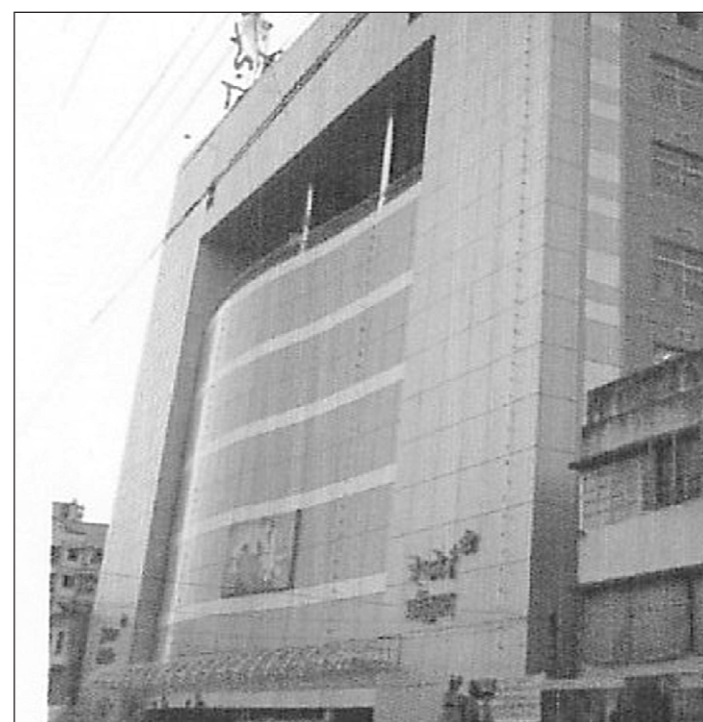
CRP (Mirpur Hospital)

Building type: Hospital and rental office
 Location: Mirpur, Dhaka.
 Hospital space: 77136 sft.
 Office space: 62300 sft.
 Number of parking required: 65
 Number of parking available: 51
 Hospital space: 23; Office space: 28
 Ramp slope towards basement: 1:8.
 Ramp slope for carrying stretcher: 1:12.
 Number of stories: 12; Number of staircase: 3

Landmark Building

Building type: Mixed use
 Location: Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka
 Total floor area: 80780 sft.
 Office area: 68300 sft.
 Shopping area: 6480 sft.
 Restaurant area: 6000 sft.
 Number of parking required: 54
 Office area: 34.
 Shopping area: 2.
 Restaurant area: 18.
 Number of parking available: 14.
 Basement for parking: Currently used as restaurant.
 Parking ramp: Current used as staircase for restaurant
 Number of stories: 15
 Number of staircase: 1

Eastern Mollika



Building type: Shopping
 Location: Elephant Road, Dhaka.
 Total floor area: 278382 sft.
 Number of parking required: 86
 Number of parking available: 61.
 Number of stories: 6
 Number of staircase: 2

Rapa Plaza



Building type: Shopping
 Location: Mirpur Road, Dhaka.
 Total floor area: 7200 sft.
 Number of parking required: 67.
 Number of parking available: 41.
 Slope of basement ramp: 1:6.
 Number of stories: 6
 Number of staircase: 2

Plaza A.R.

Building type: Shopping
 Location: Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi, Dhaka.
 Total floor area: 76200 sft.
 Number of parking required: 70
 Number of parking available: 52.
 Number of stories: 6
 Number of staircase: 2

Central Hospital



Building type: Hospital
 Location: Green Road, Dhaka
 Total floor area: 98000 sft (approx)
 Number of parking required: 37
 Number of parking available: 42
 Surface = 12 cars
 Basement = 30 cars
 Number of stories: 7
 Number of staircase: 1
 Basement: Space for 30 cars
 Double-loaded parking with 20-foot wide driveway
 Absence of sufficient light & ventilation
 A stair in the lift lobby at ground floor is not properly placed
 No drop-off space on ground floor for cars entering basement
 Difficult for cars to turn in tight space
 Ramp has ratio of 1:7 instead of minimum legal requirement of 1:8
 18 feet-wide ramp is about 8 feet below ground level
 The ramp is partly exposed to open sky

Mina Bazar



Building type: Shopping
 Location: Shat Masjid Road, Dhanmondi, Dhaka.
 Total floor area: 29748 sft.
 Number of parking required: 27
 Number of parking available: None.
 Basement parking: Currently in use as shop.
 Number of stories: 6
 Number of staircase: 2

Bel Tower



Building type: Office
 Location: Dhanmondi, Dhaka.
 Total floor area: 73000 sft.
 Number of parking required: 33
 Number of parking available: 13.
 Number of stories: 14
 Number of staircase: 2

Iqbal Center



Building type: Shopping and office
 Location: Kamal Ataturk Avenue, Banani, Dhaka.
 Total floor area: 25580 sft.
 Shopping area: 9280 sft.
 Office area: 9500 sft.
 Restaurant area: 6800 sft.
 Number of parking required: 93
 Shopping area: 30 ; Office space: 45.
 Restaurant area: 18.
 Number of parking available: 38
 Surface parking: 19.
 Basement parking: 19.
 Number of stories: 18; Number of staircase: 2