

Park Mansions restoration complete, opens doors

HT Correspondent

■ letters@hindustantimes.com

KOLKATA: After five years of laborious restoration work, Block four of Park Mansions has opened its doors to interested businesses and visitors. The 113-year-old heritage building, part of which was heavily damaged in a fire in 1990, was bestowed the first KMC-INTACH Heritage Award on Friday (December 13).

The 1990 fire had ravaged the fourth block of the five-block building to such an extent that it was shut till 2008 when restoration work on the entire building began.

"The building has been the address of such notable companies as Bombay Photo Stores, Skyroom and S Mathews & Co. and even the French consulate in the past. It was one of the most upmarket and fashionable buildings of the city at one time, and people must understand and recognise the labour that has gone into restoring it," said GM Kapur, state convenor, INTACH.

While most restoration work was completed in 2010, work on Block 4 has been completed now, given the large-scale restoration which had to be done here.



■ The restored Block 4 of Park Mansions.

SURUCHI TULSYAN/HT

"Although we have tried to invite several European consulates here, nothing has materialised yet. The building, with high ceilings, can be a good destination for big retail businesses," said Karan Paul, the chairman of Apeejay Surrendra Group that owns the property and has spent ₹10 crore on the project.

"The flooring of the entire section has been redone. We did not get the same marble that was used originally, so the closest Italian marble was used. The roof of the three floors had given away and we reconstructed it totally," said Bibhas Kumar Sanyal, senior projects man-

ager, Apeejay Group. Dulal Mukherjee and Associates were the primary architects for the restoration work. (The building is spread over 1.77 acres of land.)

"The entire roof was taken off and remade. It was in a dangerous condition," added Sanyal.

As part of the restoration, the roof of the building has been connected to all the five staircases in it. Previously, only two emergency staircases were connected to the roof.

"Lime punning has been used in the restoration of the building, in accordance with laws laid by the Heritage Commission," said Sanyal.