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## **British Architecture of Lahore: An Introductory Note of their Religious and Educational Buildings**

### **Abstract**

*The research paper deals with the art of building which was introduced and developed in Lahore during the period of British Raj. We have variety of buildings which were built during the British period. These can broadly be divided into two groups, namely, Religious and Utilitarian. These principally include Churches, Cathedrals, Lawrence and Montgomery halls, the Government College University, National College of Arts, Aitchison college, Punjab University, Lahore Museum, General Post Office, the Senate hall, Memorials, Railway Station and Bridges. The built heritage can also be termed as "Colonial Architecture". Unlike previous architectural traditions of the city, the British style has a distinctive character. When study deeply it provides us with matrix of eastern and western elements. Architecturally all these buildings are dominated by brick structures and represent separate school of architecture which is easily identifiable due to their particular architectural characteristic. The present work, however, provides an introductory information about two types of buildings, namely, Religious and Educational. Rest of the structure will be discussed at later stage in a separate article. Keeping in view present state of condition of the British built heritage, some suggestions are also given in order to preserve and conserve these buildings.*

**Keywords:** British, Colonial, Architecture, Church, University, College

### **Introduction**

Pakistan possesses rich cultural heritage represented by a wide variety of standing monuments and archaeological sites in different parts. However, among its cities, Lahore is particularly famous for being the inheritor of bountiful and diverse legacy and magnificent art of building. It is known for its monuments which are equitably enhancing its beauty and witnessed the history of Lahore. The art of building which flourished here is magnificently superb and unprecedentedly rich in its architectural context. Lahore, without any doubt the cultural capital of

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Pakistan is remarkable for its variety and exceptionality of architectural heritage spanning over three historical periods, i.e. Muslim, Sikh and Colonial period. It has been ruled by a number of dynasties, which impressively contributed and added up significant land marks in the assets of Lahore.

Lahore was occupied by Mahmud in 1021 AD. The Ghaznavid rule continued till the defeat of its last ruler Khusro Malik in 1186. After the fall of the Ghaznavid Empire, Lahore was ruled and plundered by a number of dynasties and hordes including the Ghurids (1186-1206), Slave dynasty (1206-1286), Khiljis (1289-1321), Tughlaqs (1321-1412), Sayyid (1414-1448), Lodhis (1448-1526), Mughals (1526-1707), Later Mughal (1708-1759), Sikhs (1768-1849) and the British (1849-1947). (Baqir, 1984).

Lahore touched the peak of glory and magnificently excel during the Mughal rule during. The splendour of province's capital of Lahore was almost fallen after the downfall of the Mughal Empire. The legendry grandeur of the city which once rivalled Delhi in splendour and magnificence was now a thing of the past. During the eighteenth century, Lahore suffered seriously from successive destructive raids when Mughal attention turned toward south to address threats from Deccan. By the end of the eighteenth century the Sikh ruler Ranjit consolidated his domain over the province of Punjab and established his court at Lahore. During nearly forty years of his rule (1799-1839) Lahore regained the population and wealth it had lost. After a brief period of half century Sikh rule over Lahore fell into the hands of new masters named Britishers. Many battles were between Britishers and the Sikhs. Finally, he British annexed the Ranjit Singh's former Kingdom. With the transfer of power from the East India Company to Crown rule in 1858, Lahore became the capital city of the Punjab province. (Glover, 2007).

Thus, Lahore enjoys a rich cultural diversity and exceptional architectural legacy which evolved within the course of centuries and stands the testimony of each historical period's individuality and unparalleled heritage. Pre Colonial and Colonial rule reveals tremendously rich and profoundly great architectural contributions. Leaders from all these periods have explored the power of architecture to symbolize their power and authority.

When the British occupied Lahore they inherited extraordinary art of building and artistic traditions which can be observed in the form of mosques, tombs, gardens, fort, temples and gurdawaras. But they brought with them new conceptions and beliefs which marked contrast with those mores that already prevailed and introduced an entirely new kind of art of building termed as Colonial or British architecture. With the establishment of British rule at Lahore towards the latter half of 18<sup>th</sup> century, the architectural ideals of Europe began to be introduced in Lahore. It is the synthesis of several architectural traditions which predominantly represents the buildings of the Indo- Gothic style developed, a mixture of European and Indian-Islamic features. It incorporates Gothic, Victorian, Muslim and ancient Indian architectural element. Thus, Gothic architecture was originated by Greek and Roman, which in turn played vital role in the origin of the colonial architecture of Lahore.

The colonial rule brought a number of changes in the cultural life of Lahore. Taste, opinions, words, intellect all started to change and develop. Therefore, the style of architecture that evolved in colonial Lahore manifests a strong contrast with the traditions that already prevailed. Colonial architecture was meant for colonisers rather than the colonised and therefore language, structure scale as well as technology used for construction of building was very change from that available locally. It was alien to not only the immediate context but also the local culture and traditions.

However, the colonial architecture of Lahore marks a great diversity, regarding the nature of buildings. The type of architecture British evolved in Lahore was both functional and economical. (Gupta, 1985). At first, they utilised the existing old tombs and mosques of the Mughal period as offices and residences. But later on Beautiful private and public edifices were risen which include libraries, museums, town halls, rail road stations and other public amenities. British shaped such humble utilitarian structures in a formal way which announced the existence of British Raj in Lahore (Metcalf, 1989).

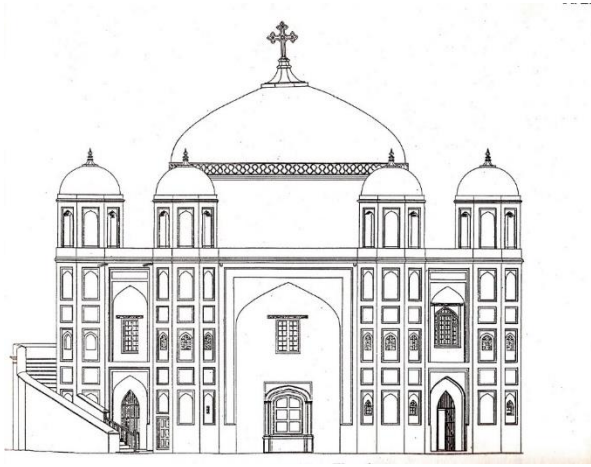
Colonial architecture of Lahore is mainly classified into two categories, including religious and secular. Both categories are marked by the various fine buildings which one after the other have added to its dignity (Chaudhry, 2000). These buildings, dominated by brick structures, principally include churches, Lawrence and Montgomery halls, the Government College University, National College of Arts, Aitchison college, Punjab University, Lahore Museum, Cathedrals, General Post Office, the Senate hall and Railway Station.

### **Religious Buildings**

Let us begin our study with the churches and cathedrals built during the British rule. In this regard we have following structures.

#### **Saint James Church, Lahore**

After establishing British rule in Lahore, initially the tomb of Anarkali was used to fulfill religious requirements of the British community. The tomb was converted into a Church in 1851 and as a result several alternations and more space was created by blocking most of its entrances and also by removing cenotaph. As basic need, new seating arrangements were made. The Church was named Saint James Church in 1857. An old drawing of the monument crowned by sleeve, clearly reflects its use as Church (Fig. 01)



**Figure. 01. Saint James Church, Lahore, (Tomb of Anarkali)**

### **Saint Mary Magdalene Church Lahore Cant (1856)**

This church is located within the Mian Meer Cantonment as it was also known as “Mian Meer Cantonment Church”. Later on it was called “Saint Mary Magdalene Church” till to date (Fig. 02). The construction of this building started in 1852 by J.N. Sharpe, an engineer by profession associated with Bengal Regiment. “Major J.N. Sharpe prepared the ground plan of Saint Mary Magdalene Church Lahore Cantt and formed a building committee under his supervision in order to plan its work of construction” (Aslam, 2002: 69).

Basic purpose of erecting this structure was to provide a place to the military officials living in the cantonment. The location was ideal and atmosphere was pleasant in the area of Mian Meer Cantonment. The church has historical as well as architectural significance. It was the first church built under the British rule of Lahore. The building itself portrays traditional Gothic style of architecture and it can be referred to as beginning of sacred colonial architecture in Lahore.

“This handsome Church, designed in the early English style, was built in 1854-56. It is entirely of brick, and the workmanship throughout is of first-rate excellence, and beautifully finished” (Medley, 1865: 7).



**Figure 02. Saint Mary Magdalene Church Lahore Cant.**

### **Saint Joseph Catholic Church Lahore Cant**

The church is situated at Sarfraz Rafique Road Lahore Cant. Originally it was a small wooden church which was burnt completely. More than one times, it was built and renovated. It is almost contemporary of Saint Mary Magdalene Church Lahore Cantt but it is not in original form now.

### **Holy Trinity Church**

The Holy Trinity Church was built in 1881 near Neela Gumbad, New Anarkali. The building was constructed under the same philosophy as to meet the religious needs of the community living in the area, however, a different character and scheme was introduced here (Fig. 03).



**Figure 03. Holy Trinity Church of Lahore**

The church has different kind of ground plan and external look. There is no use of lofty towers. On the other hand, the building was provided with a castle like look by adding bastions at four corners of its vestibule. Instead of lofty tower, a square-

arcaded verandah as vestibule is a distinctive feature of this church. Double panel of blind arcade run on and below the parapet wall of the building. So on the whole the Gothic style is missing here and outlook of the building resembles with the many other British period utilitarian buildings.

### **Cathedral Church of Resurrection Lahore (1887)**

The elegant church was built in 1887. From the architectural setting of the church it can be observed that colonial traditions had established strong roots. The style of architecture, as the building is laid in large red-brick structure, is also known as “Decorated Early English”. The material of construction including the grey stone was obtained from the Traaki quarries beyond the Jhelum. Historical records tell that expertise of different individuals including a renowned building contractor firm known as Messrs. Burn & Co. of Calcutta, were hired to complete this fabulous building. Mr. Atfiled, C took keen interest in managing all aspects related to construction of the gigantic building.

Among architectural features the building has a symmetrical net of flying buttresses raises its strength. Unit to whole scheme has been evidently applied here but no architectural technique was followed here of its ancestor except compulsory essentials of the church (Fig. 04)



**Figure 04. Cathedral Church of Resurrection Lahore**

This English style church is built with pink sandstone. Leonard Walker of England made its stained glass windows. Government of Pakistan granted to the church a treasure of Thomas Cross excavated from Sirkup near Taxila (Ali & Kazi, 2010).

According to Latif (1992) the church was used as “Station church” replacing the status earlier enjoyed by the tomb of Anarkali.

### **Saint Anthony's Church Lahore, formerly known as Railway Church (1899)**

This church was built in 1889. Building style shows that its architect was inspired by the French Gothic Style. Strings or ribs around the tower top are a distinctive feature. No layer of mortar is laid on its structure. Naked brick architecture is a special character of the buildings of colonial era. At later times the building was expanded and local Christian community gave donations for the work of extension of the church of St. Anthony Lahore, which was completed in 2007.

### **Cathedral of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (1903)**

Foundation stone of Cathedral of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was laid in 1903. The construction work completed in 1905 and then it was inaugurated in 1907. It has been built in Roman Byzantine Style. The architect was Belgian M. Dubbeleere who made this beautiful church (Fig. 05).



**Figure 05. Cathedral of the Sacred Heart of Jesus**

Four turrets support the dome which is 120 fit high and has clear cross impressions on it. In term of architectural components, the church provides us with the first use of domical treatment. Such treatment, on the whole, appears to be very rare when we compare it with rest of the churches built during colonial period in Lahore. Rest of the features such as use of loft towers, buttresses, shape of arches and roof, building material, necked brick style, setting of the interior etc, all comply with the general guidelines which are usually taken as integral part of all churches even from the period of Constantine.

### **Saint Oswald Church Lahore (1915)**

Saint Oswald Church was constructed in 1915 for the railway employees. In 1965, church of England took its charge directly but soon it was handed over to Church of Pakistan ultimately. This church is finished with naked brick architecture.

Upper two stories are square that are supported by small buttresses at the corners. Overall, square tower over the vestibule gives upward diminishing effect. With broad Gothic arches this church is comparatively simple in its plan and representations of British period.

### **Educational Institutes**

The second group of the building under discussion is about the educational institutes built during the British Raj. Details of some of the major such building has been given in the following.

#### **Mayo school of Art (NCA)**

The Mayo School of Art generally known as National College of Arts (NCA) is located on Shahrah-e-Quaid-e-Azam, fronting and set back from the mall and just opposite to the University of the Punjab (old campus). It was established in 1875 besides the building of Lahore Museum (Fig. 06). The idea of this art school was conceived by Jhon Lockwood Kipling (Principal) in order to emphatically cultivate the ideas and methods of exquisite designs which must be peculiar in nature. However, it was materialized by Ram Singh, chief engineer of this project as well as the student of Jhon Lockwood Kipling.

The original structure of Mayo School of Art was 300 feet long and it was completed in a very short span of six months by the district engineer Edwin Baines. The theme of this original structure drew inspiration from English Belgian Gothic style but it meant to be temporary. However, Kipling seems to be interested in an entirely new form of building which must sought out its ideals from indigenous architecture particularly from Mughal and Sikh. He emphasized that “a building intended to be used as a school of instruction in oriental art and for the exposition of its best works should be conceived and designed in an oriental spirit.” He was greatly felt inspired by the buildings of Lahore and selected Wazir Khan Mosque as model which was constructed in 1634. It was built of brick and decorated with terra-cotta, tile work and delicate fresco paintings. Thus, it was proposed that building of Mayo School of Art will be constructed by using plastered bricks, based upon the Saracenic style (Bryant & Weber, 2017).

So, the new building of Mayo School of Art was raised in the honor of late lord Mayo who served as viceroy and governor general from 1869-72 (Lal, 1884). It cost 43000 rupees most of which was provided by the trustees of the funds raised in 1873 to commemorate Lord Mayo. At that time the structure of this building comprised of three wings which were covered around an open courtyard, accompanied with the partially double storied north wing facing the mall (Vandal & Vandal, 2006). The incorporation of indigenous architectural and artistic elements such as turrets, chattris, kiosks and *jali work* in the body of this building marks an amalgamation of traditions. Therefore, it marked a contrast to neo classical land marks nearby on the mall such as Lawrence and Montgomery Halls.

The primary objective of the school was the development and improvement of the indigenous art of Punjab. Students were trained in architectural drawing and designing, painting, modelling, moulding, stone and wood carving, particularly



focusing on the artistic industries indigenous to the Punjab. There were three major sections of the school devoted to construction, decoration and modelling (Walker & Esquire, 1894).



**Figure 06. Mayo School of Art (NCA)**

### **Government College**

The magnificent building of Government College stands near katcheri road adjoining the gardens of Anarkali. The present building of Government College was started to construct in 1872 and it took five years in the completion of this mighty institution which is also regarded as the central college of Lahore. It was designed by W. Purdon who was a superintending engineer at that time and constructed by Rai Bahadur Kanhia Lal at cost of 320537 rupees (Latif, 1992). However, it was originally established in 1864 in Raja Dhian Singh's Haveli inside the Taxali Gate as no proper building was constructed for this college. Dr. G. W. Leitner served as its first principal (Goulding, 2006) So far as the architecture of this college is concerned, it entirely represents Gothic style which penetrated in Lahore with British rule. The plan of the building is rectangular, aligned from north to south. It is a double storey building which accommodates rooms for college, a large examination hall, lecture hall and library. The most notable and interesting feature of this landmark is the erection of a clock tower that marks British influence.

### **Punjab University**

Punjab University is one of the unprecedented landmarks which was produced during the British Raj as it is the true manifestation of the imperial culture and knowledge. This grand edifice is situated on katcheri road near Anarkali. It was established in 1882 and up till now it is serving as the largest and oldest seat of learning in Pakistan. Originally, the primary purpose of Punjab University was

merely to serve as examining body to judge the persons who have acquired proficiency in different branches of literature, science and arts (Walker & Esquire, 1894). Gradually it turned into a learning institutes and several new structures were constructed inside the Punjab University such as oriental college, Pharmacy College University Hall and library. Overall, the architecture of Punjab University predominantly incorporates several indigenous features such as terracotta *jallis*, multi foiled arched openings of verandas, brackets, *jhorakas*, kiosks, *chatras* and dome. (Fig. 07)



**Figure. 07. Punjab University**

### **Lahore Museum**

Among many milestones of the British Raj Lahore museum that presents a profusion of domes, small balconies, exquisite red sand stone lattice work and a marvelous façade is the masterpiece of Colonial architecture. It is located on the Mall road abutting to National College of arts. It was originally established in 1856 at Wazir Khan's Baradari. However, the foundation of museum's present building was laid down on February 3, 1890 by the price Albert Victor. It was completed in 1893 under the supervision of Rai Bahadur Ganga Ram, who was the Executive Engineer of Lahore. It was opened for the public in 1894 on the silver Jubilee of Queen Victoria. This building is standing from last 123 years and still holds a very prominent position in the monumental stock of Lahore. The masterly conception of Lahore museum, causes the eye to be drawn instinctively toward its building and utterly manifests its breadth and mass. Although it was erected to meet the needs and economical approach but still it reveals a striking transformation of various architectural features. (Fig. 08)



**Figure. 08. Lahore Museum**

### **Conservation and Preservation of Colonial Buildings**

As far as conservation and preservation of the British architectural heritage is concerned, it is in better state of preservation as compared to awful state of rest of built heritage of Lahore. Since establishment of these institutions, one way or another, these have been remained occupied permanently and have hardly changed over the years. On the other hands, certain alternations took place within the actual structure of these architectural gems. Mainly, some additional structures, has been added in order to double the size of actual building. Moreover, other human factors such as pollutions caused by heavy traffic, establishment of markets, new constructions of buildings and roads, new buildings projects, have been causing either structural or artistic beauty of colonial built heritage. In addition to this natural factors have also caused some serious damages.

How we can minimize, if cannot eradicate, intensity of the factor responsible damaging this particular heritage. In this regards following suggestions can be useful:

The foremost step related to entire range of our rich built heritage is to create public awareness. Public talks, workshops, seminars, exhibitions etc should be organized to create sense of responsibility and owning the heritage. Resources should be mobilized to use social, electronic and print media as well.

Once the awareness is there, responsible institutions such as Ministry of Culture and department of archaeology at federal and Provincial level, need to appoint expertise to look after the state of preservation of the buildings. At least one professional must be appointed in each and every monument, whether religious or secular. He should be consulted prior to making changes and alternations in the building. He should also be responsible to identify any sort of damage.

At next stage a team of professionals consisting of archaeologists, art historian, architects, engineers should be constituted for carrying out the work of conservation and preservation. While doing conservation original material should be used and after conservation and thin layers should be added in order to highlight areas of repair. Furthermore, professional training course need to organized to impart technical knowledge of the conservation and preservation process.

This brings us to another suggestion according to which proper legislation should be done and guidelines must be formulated and circulated to all the present custodians of the colonial buildings. Strict policy and punishment should be followed in case of causing any damage to the originality of these buildings.

### **Conclusion**

The Colonial architecture of Lahore drew both European classical styles and Indo-Islamic forms. Whether derived from Indian or western models, they did not simply transplant their parent forms, but rather transformed them to fit the colonial environment as clear and visible symbols of authority. Britishers tried their best to assimilate the eastern architecture while retaining its European character and spirit alive. However, the case is different with their religious architecture. Here they preferred to use their own “Western Style” and majority of the churches were constructed following traditional style. For more than a century their building traditions changed over all complexion of the build heritage of Lahore. Their monuments scattered in the city represent specific style of construction. The impact of colonial style of buildings is still visible. So in order to understand genesis of this period, need of the hour is to make comprehensive study of these monuments under the heading of “British School of Architecture”.

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