

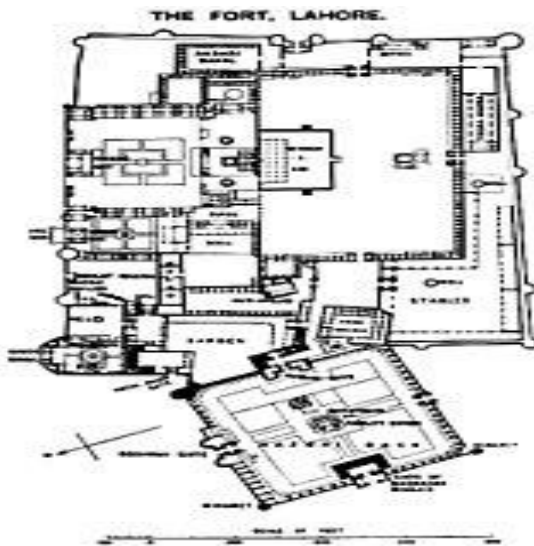
Rukhsana Iftikhar*

Lahore Fort- a Mughal Monument on the Verge of Decline

Abstract

Lahore remains a capital city from centuries because of its location and cultural activities. Mughals have also chosen this city as their center. Mughal king Akbar (1556-1605) ordered to re construct the building of Lahore fort again for royal use. Lahore fort is situation on the north of the walled city of Lahore. It had 21 significant monuments. The first structure of Lahore fort had traced back in 11th century. Mahraja Ranjeet Singh also used it as a royal residence. After the annexation of the British Empire ,Punjab was occupied in 1849 and fort was shifted to them. After independence this site was declared as world heritage site in 1981.This site was declared in danger in 2000 because UNESCO was not interested in its restoration .Many European countries like UK, France, Norway helped Pakistan for the restoration of Lahore fort and it again became a world heritage site in 2012. In spite of this extensive restoration many structures of this monument is declined. This paper is an attempt to explore the state of deterioration of Lahore fort, the major factors which are damaging its structure. This research will also highlight the solutions and remedies to preserve this historical site.

Key Words: Akbar, Diwan-a-Aam, Baradari, Mosaic, Shish Mahal,



* Dr. Rukhsana Iftikhar, Associate Professor, Department of History, University of the Punjab, Lahore.

Introduction:

Lahore is a capital city of west Pakistan, situated on the river Ravi. The origin of this name "Lahore" is obscure. The first documented historical source is Alberuni's book "Kitab-ul- Hind mentioned the city "Lauhavar" is situated on the east side of river Iravati(ancient name of river Ravi). Traditionally its name is attributed to the mythic Lau, a son of Lord Ram, the hero of Ramayana of legendary age. Fort is occupying the north west corner of the city. Its measurement is 1400 feet on the east-west side and 1100 feet on the north south side. River Ravi originally touched the moat of the fort shifted its course with the passage of the time. There are 21 notable monuments of different periods. The history of Lahore fort started from 11th century B.C. constructed with the mud bricks in the reign of Mahmood of Ghazna. It was destroyed by the Mongols in 1241 during their raids. Sultan Balban again constructed Lahore fort in 1267. This Fort was again destroyed by the raids of Timur until this palace came under the rule of Mughals. This period was the height of its splendor. Modern building of fort was constructed in 1556(in the region of Mughal King Akbar). Fort is also an evolution of Mughal Architecture. Akbar (1556-1605A.D) gave orders to construct the buildings of red sand stone Three main buildings like audience Hall , basements, mosque and quadrangle were the main contribution of Akbar. Emperor Jahangir introduced Persian styles with few additions. Shah Jahan period(1627-1668) was the age of marble and refinement. Aurangzeb added Alamgiri gate and Badhahi mosque . Many buildings of Lahore fort were demolished during Sikh and Colonial period. Fort remained the residence of Ranjeet sikh family till 1849. Moti Mosque was converted into Sikh temple. This fort was used as summer resort by the Sikh family. A three door pavilion was added in Sikh period to this fort. Naag temple of the fort was also destroyed in this period. Few portion of audience Hall were also destroyed during Sikh period. Mai Jindan Havelli was modified . British also tried to construct one of its floor in Lahore fort.

Main Buildings and its evolution during the various chapters of History:

Akbar ,s Quadrangle:

This was built in the period of Akbar. Another basement chamber was also the addition of this early period. The Masjid gate still stand in its original form . This gate was built with the orders of Maryum Zaman, Begum, the mother of Jahangir. Dault khana -a - Khas -o- Aam with Turkish Bath and an arcade of ornamental flat arcade in fine cut brick work are the main structure of Akbar period.

Dault Khana-a- Khas o Aam:

This hall of public and private audience was built in Akbar period. It include Jahorka (Balcony) supported with four brackets of red sand stone . Interior of double story apartment is decorated with stucco tracery in relief of geometric designs and floral designs. The serpentine red sand stone , brackets of the state balcony shows the influence of Hindu architecture which was strong in the buildings of Akbar period.



Tathkahana- Basement:

It is situated on the northern chamber of the Lahore Fort. This place was used as cool chamber in summer specially. This building was also used by the ladies also. Most of the area is closed not in the use of public.



Daulat Khana-e- Jahangir:

Commenced by Akbar and completed in the period of Emperor Jahangir at the cost of 7 Lakhs in 1617-18. In front, red sand stone is deeply carved in columns. The main building of the court which stand in the middle of north side is the sleeping chamber of king Jahangir now used as the armory Museum. The front side of this building is the construction of British period just to discover its original.

Turkish Bath:

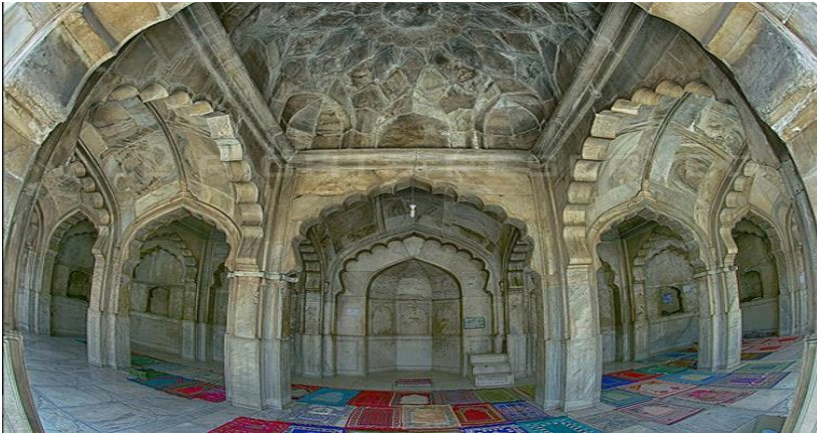
In the south west corner of the court lies a small room which was originally a bath having marble flooring, a central cistern for taking a dip and beautifully carved red sand stone. The walls are decorated with floral and lineal motifs in the fresco with some human and angelic designs having some mirror fixed in it. In British period this room was neglected. Later on a thick layer of plastic filled up and this room was used as kitchen.

Maktab kahana:

It served as a record room built in the period of Jahangir(1617-18). All the clerical staff enter from this gate.

Moti Masjid:

This mosque was built in the period of emperor Shah Jahan (1645).This mosque is adjusted with the building of the private chamber (Harem) of the emperor. Pearl mosque was built for the ladies of royal harem. The inscription disclosed the date of its completion 1598 with the efforts of Ma,arum khan. This worship place is 50 feet from the north to south and 33 feet from East to West. Maharaja Ranjeet Singh changed its name to Moti Masjid to Moti Mandar . In British period this building is used as state treasury.



Khawab-a- Shahjahani:

Emperor Shah built this sleeping chamber in 1633, comprised of five rooms in a row. It is lies on the opposite side of Diwan-a-Khas , in the south of Shahjahan quadrangle. All these building were constructed under the supervision of Wazir Khan , the Viceroy of Punjab in those days. This building has a novel feature having delicate screens (Jalis). Few painting of Hindu gods and goddess in this building probably the extension of Sikh rule.

Hall of special Audience:

Diwan-a-Khas was built in 1645 for the emperor Shah Jahan entirely built in chaste marble. Its Parapet is decorated with Pietra dura and the northern side of this place is covered with skillfully cut screens. The floor has different geometric designs. In British period this building was used military church. The marble slabs of the roof are suspended due to the beams passing through the end of this building.

Lal Burj:

Octagonal building lies adjacent Shah Jahan quadrangle. Its exterior is decorated with tile mosaic and filigree work while the interior is done with color paintings mostly added in Sikh period. Many of these painting damage in the British period. This burj is having three storey. The initial two storey are built in Mughal period and third one was the addition of Sikh period. it is decorated with pieces of original honey combed cornice with gild and paint works shows how lavishly the whole pavilion was originally embellished. The name of this building is of Sikh period.

Hamman-e-Shahi (Royal Bath):

This bath is almost ruins now. It is attached with Shah Jahan Sleeping chamber. This bath has three different stages i-e dressing room (Jama Khana), Nim Gram (little hot) and Garm (hot) bath. The heating arrangement of this bath is on the western corner of this building. The center of first stage is occupied with a small water tank furnished with variegated marble. There was originally single baths or private rooms out of which two rooms are still exists. This bath was distrusted during Sikh period

Khilwat Kahna:

It was also called the bathroom of the emperor. Its court is divided into two portions. The southern part is a garden for ladies and northern part is the emperor residence. Mughal emperor was not generally reside in the Harem. The only northern pavilion and its ruins are surviving now a days. The rest of the building with the entire court is disappeared only foundations are left is the clear indicator of the both portions are surrounded by the rooms for guards and other establishments. This part of the court is also connected with a number of basement chambers used for the security purposes.

Paaien Bagh (Ladies garden):

This garden has a lot of paved paths used for the morning and evening walks of the intimates of the harems. Special plants, fruits tree were planted in this garden for fragrance and fruits. In the middle of the garden there is plate form around which grassy plots are quiet visible with a water basin in its center. Each of the garden is surrounded by the red sandstone railings.



Kala Burj:

this place is a summer pavilion which is similar to Lal Burj in certain aspects. There are some additions of Sikh and British period in this building. Mughal ruler decorated this place with floral paintings which later on covered with cement and plaster . It was used a liquor bar in later period. The eave of this burj is constructed in the interlocked brick work to make it stand without any reinforcement.

Athdara (eight doors):

Maharaja Ranjeet Singh built this with the marble obtained from the various other Mughal buildings. He used it as his court. Fresco painting of Lord Krishna was the addition of this period after the style of Kanagra painting in which lord is celebrating Holi, purely a Hindu festival with his female companions. In the center , there is a cradle in which Krishna is sitting with two girls. The town is shown in this painting is probably Mattura.

Shah Burj(Shish Mahal):

Built by Shah Jahan in 1631-32A.D., It was the residence of the King when he lived in Lahore. It is the most unique and well decorated residence of a emperor in the interior of the building are:



- Convex glass
- Mosaic work with stucco tracery.
- Gild work.
- Pietra dura.
- marble screen.
- geometric and tendrill designs.

- Small cascade with a tiny cistern. Different kinds of marbles were used in this building like variegated , yellow marble shaded black and white. All these pieces were fixed in beautiful patterns. The fountain of its center was blocked during British period. Another notable building is Naulakha, an edifice cost 0.9 million. This building is known for its delicacy in workmanship of minute pietra dura work especially the use of semi precious stones like agate, jade, gold stone and lapiz lazuli in it. It is one of the finest architectural achievements of Mughals in sub continent. The bee hive ornamentation of the half pillars contained miniature niches having floral patterns in it. That kind of miniature paintings are normally seen in Persian styles. The small pavilion has curvilinear roof which is now missing. It is structured as the shape of royal tent.



Hathi Pear(Elephant Path):

Starting from the elephant gate and end on the ruined entrance of the Shish Mahal. It is a staircase have 58 low and broad steps 216 feet in length and 18/8 feet in width. It is constructed with small bricks and lime plaster. This path was used for elephants carrying the royalty from and to the palace. The western wall has a niches both in the lower and upper storey. Royal guards, Khawja-Saras and Naqibs used to stand here just to announced the movement of royalty. The upper gallery of this building is connected with Shish Mahal, The high and panels walls of East and west are collapsed in 1841 in Sikh period .

Shah Burj Gate:

This gate was the private entrance of the Emperor and his family members. This gate was built with the orders of Shah Jahan in 1631-32. This gate lead to Shish Mahal , Harem and few potions of fort. The inscription of this gate indicates the date of its completion under the supervision of Abdul Karim.

Pictorial Wall of the Fort:

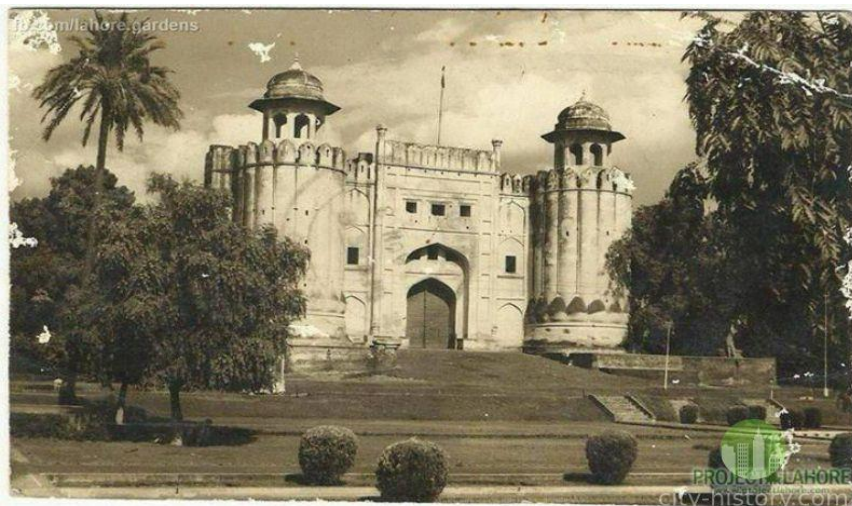
Commenced by the Emperor Jahangir in the 1624-25 and his son Shah Jahan completed it in 1631-32. A.D. This wall has elaborated and vivid mosaic decoration in different colors on plaster base, done on the northern extension. The extension on northern and north western portion is about 8,000 square yard. It depicts the different sports and other pastime of the Mughal emperors such as elephant, bull and camel fighting, a game of Polo. There are also geometrical and

floral designs. The human figures of that wall is also given the idea of dressing of that period from royalty to the common people of that time.



Alamgiri Gate:

The only building of Aurangzeb along with Mosque built in 1673-74. This monumental gateway is flanked by two semi circular bastions boldly fluted and decorated with lotus Patel designs at the base. The side basins are surmounted with by domed towers and pavilions in the corners. this gate way is approached by a ram. This gate is a military entrance in its character .



Deterioration of the Lahore Fort:

This place was deteriorated with the passage of time . Many buildings of this were demolished during Sikh period . Lahore fort was also attacked during many raids. After the Partition , this place was used as refugee camp. Already ill-maintained and ruined building was further deteriorated. Both Akbari and Alamgiri gates were bricked down during colonial rule. Department of Archeology was responsible for the maintenance and conservation of the fort. The director who has to look after the administrative affair reside in "Kala Burj". The Lal Burj was used for the storage of the cables and power connection for the supply of electricity in various state and other functions. There are some other buildings need immediate attention. The Naqqar Khana , which was originally used for the military equipments and musical instruments used in the war. The condition of this building is near to collapse. The pavilion and its roof have many cracks and it need . Once a structure is collapse it remains as heap and it extended due to the lack of maintenance. The brick works and mosaic both are damaging. Shahi Hamam (Royal bath)has a significant and rare due to its style . It is in the state of neglect since long. Funds are required to revive its Fresco work, water seepage and sanitation.





Some new buildings are constructed in Lahore fort without any planned structure looks very odd in this historical edifice. The newly raised structure exists near the old barracks where special branch (CID) police has its office and detention cells. This cells presents a horrible scene. Southern western side of the fort is an army camp , probably located for security purposes. In the center ,long way from Diwan-e- Aam (near the wall of the fort) toilets were constructed during 1960,s. There is a canteen which looks abandon now. The masjidi gate is also in the process of decay now especially the semi- octagonal panels. All the sides of Lahore fort has a wild growth of bushes, tress and other plants which creates a awful picture. The foundations of Akbari Mahal which were shown in the Sikh period is completely disappeared now. Only some closed corridors, massive arches with a lot of debris piled in stand on the Eastern corner of Diwan-e-Aam is totally ruined and closed now. The British military occupation was largely responsible for the destruction of Lahore fort. The use of Lahore fort as cantonment, conversions of various Chambers as barracks later on made this historical relic as a prison cell made this place horrible. 1799-1849 Lahore fort was the center of battles, conquests, assassinations and murders.



The underground Chambers of Jahangir Khawab gah are being used by the Archeology department as a laboratory with a lot of modifications. Near Arzghahi , a new tube well is under construction which again looks very odd.

In 1959 excavation of Lahore fort was started in the specious lawns in front of Diwan-a-Aam and continued three months. The depth of this excavation is about 50 feet, the level area outside the Lahore fort. It revealed different levels of Lahore fort which included British , Sikh , Mughal and pre Mughal periods. In Pre-Mughal period few remains of terracotta depicted mother goddess, horses, bulls and other figures of Hindu origin have been found. In the excavation a minted coin of Mahmmud of Ghazna dated 1025 was also found. Lahore Fort was added in the world heritage sites of UNISCO in 1981.

Conservation of Lahore Fort:

In 2004-05 in UNISCO master plan , Punjab government started the conservation and development plan of Lahore fort. In 2012 , world heritage committee had decided to remove this property from the list of world heritage in danger. Punjab government tried to raise its conservation plan according to the standard of world heritage conservation. All responsibilities were shifted to the Director of Archeology in 2014. The budget of conservation was increased from 300 million to 964.087 million for further conservation. Aga khan trust for culture also contributing in the conservation of pictured wall of Lahore fort. This organization also published the detail report of the conservation of this pictured wall.

The conservation of walled city Lahore plan is also attached with the conservation of the Lahore fort. Few buildings of this mega structure have started to recover like royal kitchen . A major portion of this kitchen was demolished especially the Eastern and southern walls. The soil tests of this place has extensively done and the construction of southern wall has started to save royal kitchen of this period. A general neglect of this fort is evident due to lack of skills to conserve this historical structure. First of all the cleanness of this building. Few effort were made to clean the marble of the fort. But the method which was used to clean has already deteriorate the existing condition of marble.

Few patches of the floor of southern corner of Lahore fort is also discovered and the construction has started to conserved . This project has completed in 2016. The cracks of this building created a great trouble for the conservation plan. So, telltales and glass pieces have been fixed in all the major and minor locations of this fort.

The conservation of the Shish Mahal is also initiated. The cleaning of this huge structure of mirror was completed. Mirror works of ceiling was discovered not its original form but local expert tried their best to discover its original plan. The chamber of the Sikh period on the northern side of Shish Mahal was also restored in 2006. The conservation of Musamma Darwaza (a gate built in the reign of Shah Jahan) of Lahore fort is also completed in 2015. The conservation of the pictured wall of the Lahore fort was initiated with the help of Norwegian government in 2016.

The wooden bridge of the Diwan-e- Aam is about to ruin . Many other bridges of this building are affected due to rains and termite . After long discussions and

meetings it has decided to replace the damaged portions of the bridge. Beams and steel girders are fixed. Department of Horticulture is also instructed to maintain all the gardens attached with the Fort. The sanitation and water facilities for this purpose are vigilantly observed. Although its conservation plan is detailed and very much highlighted by the archeological survey of Pakistan but there are certain observations on the conservation plan. In the report of Hadi Saliba, a complete proposal was made to sort out the issue of damp problem of Lahore fort.

- The original structure of Lahore Fort is not conserved due to lack of expertise. The paintings, mirror work, mosaic and Petra dura, are not recover in its original shape and style. The material and color which are presently used to conserve this building will be faded very soon.

- The original supply of water to the garden and waterways are disconnected. the artificial supply of water is damaging the structure of Lahore Fort.

- Those building which were damaged during the reign of Sikh are not renovated due to lack of the resources.

-The project of the conservation of Lahore Fort is attached with the Walled city. Funds of this building is consumed by the other project that why this building is ignored.

Recommendations:

There are few suggestions to improve the condition of this historical monument:

- Archeological survey of Pakistan should make Lahore for a separate entity and allocated more funds to conserve this building.

- This monument has fixed time in a year to conserve a year's destruction. Conservation is an ongoing process. It should not suspended but continue with new methods and techniques.

- Ticket houses should not be in built structure. Few moveable cabin are introduced.

- Special instructions for visitor/ tourist must be issued for the safety of this building.

- Complete prohibition of state dinners and musical functions in this building. light and sound shows in 1960,s and 70,s made a massive destruction. In the Lahore Summit of 1974, Lahore fort was used for cultural shows. For weeks Shish Mahal and its adjoining areas remained under use.

- Different sign boards for instructions must be pasted for visitors and tourist in the different portions of the building.

- For environmental protection the expertise of people hired for this purpose.

- Nailing, digging, fireworks, cooking, littering must be completely prohibited on this site.

- Different seminars, workshops and conference must be conducted on the Conservation of cultural heritage.

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- Print and electronic media should play a role for the public awareness of the cultural heritage.

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