

# **Royal Kitchens in Lahore Fort-A World Heritage Listed Entity, History of Evolution and Reasons of Decay**

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Conservation is the process of preserving the built heritage whether it is a historic monument or site or cultural property created in the past. This

process ensures to keep this heritage in a state that it remains a valuable source of knowledge, for the coming generations. Lahore Fort is one of the noblest structures of its kind in the World. Rising out of the north west corner of the walled city, it has been a symbol of its days<sup>2</sup>. The **Lahore Fort**, locally referred to as *Shahi Qila* is a citadel of the city of Lahore. It is located in the northwestern corner of the Walled City of Lahore. The trapezoidal composition is spread over 20 hectares.



<sup>2</sup> Qursehi samina, Moghul Moghul

### **Historical Back Ground of Lahore Fort:**

Origins of the fort go as far back as antiquity; however, the existing base structure was built during the reign of Mughal emperor Akbar (1556–1605), and was regularly upgraded by subsequent rulers, having thirteen gates in all. Thus the fort manifests the rich traditions of Mughal architecture. The origins of Lahore Fort are obscure and are traditionally based on various myths. However, during the excavation carried out in 1959 by the Department of Archaeology, in front of *Diwan-e-Aam*, a gold coin of Mahmood of Ghazni dated AH 416 (1025 AD) was found at a depth of 7.62 metres from the level of the lawns. Cultural layers continued to a further depth of 5 metres, giving strong indications that people had lived here, long before the conquest of Lahore by Mahmood in 1021 AD. Further mention of the fort is traceable to

Shahab-ud-din Muhammad Ghuri's successive invasions of Lahore from 1180 to 1186 AD.



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Lahore fort, which was inscribed in the world heritage list in 1981, is a sign of remarkable Mughal architecture. It is a unique ensemble of continuity of buildings of almost the entire Mughal era where the different phases of building art, from Emperor Akbar (1556- 1605) to Aurangzeb Alamgir (1658- 1707) are found.

#### **LAHORE FORT TIME LINE:**

It cannot be said with certainty when the Lahore Fort was originally constructed or by whom, since this information is lost to history, possibly forever. However, evidence found in archaeological digs gives strong indications that it was built long before 1025 AD.

- **1241 AD** - Destroyed by Mongols.
- **1267 AD** - Rebuilt by Sultan Ghiyas ud din Balban. **1398**
- **AD** - Destroyed again, by Amir Tamir's army.
- **1421 AD** - Rebuilt in mud by Sultan Mubark Shah Syed.
- **1432 AD** - The fort is occupied by Shaikh Ali of Kabul who makes repairs to the damages inflicted on it by Shaikha Khokhar.

**1566 AD** - Rebuilt by Mughal emperor Akbar, in solid brick masonry on its earlier foundations. Also perhaps, its area was extended towards the river Ravi, which then and up to about 1849 AD, used to flow along its fortification on the north. Akbar also built *Doulat Khana-e-Khas-o-Am*, the famous *Jharoka-e-Darshan* (Balcony for Royal Appearance), Masjidi Gate etc.

**1618 AD** - Jehangir adds *Doulat Khana-e-Jehangir* **1631**

**AD** - Shahjahan builds *Shish Mahal* (Mirror Palace).

**1633 AD** - Shahjahan builds *Khawabgah* (a dream place or sleeping area),

### *Hamam*

(bath ), *Khilwat Khana* (retiring room), and *Moti Masjid* (Pearl Mosque).

**1645 AD** - Shahjahan builds *Diwan-e-Khas* (*Hall of Special Audience*).

**1674 AD** - Aurangzeb adds the massively fluted *Alamgiri Gate*.

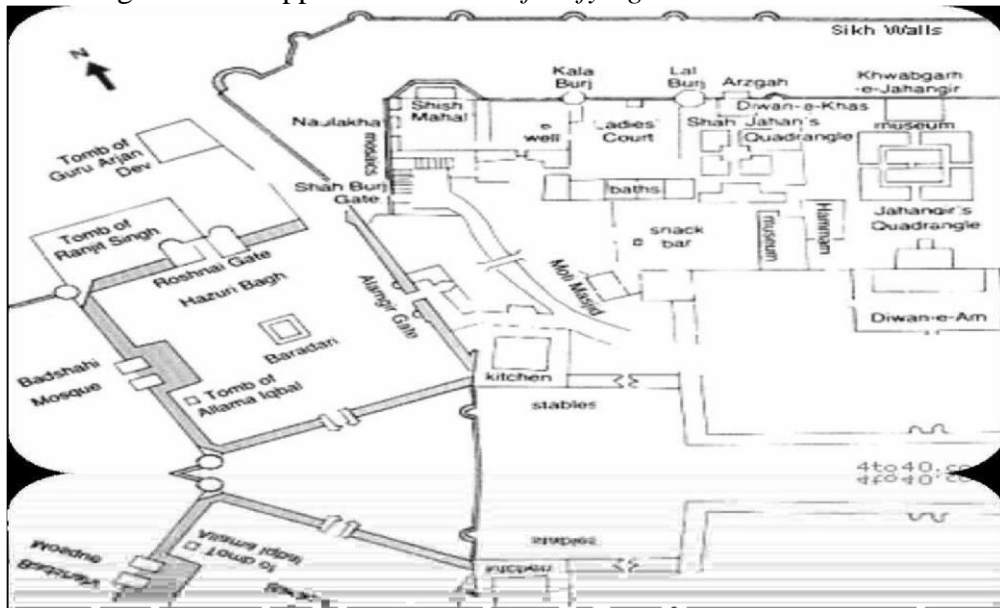
**1799-1839 AD** - The outer fortification wall on the north with the moat, the marble *athdera*, *Havaeli Mai Jindan* and *Bara Dari Raja Dhiyan Singh* were constructed by

Ranjit Singh, Sikh ruler from 1799-1839 AD **1846**

**AD** - Occupied by the British.

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**1927 AD** - The British hand over the Fort to the *Department of Archaeology* after demolishing a portion of the fortification wall on the south and converting it into a stepped from thus *de-fortifying* the fort.



Site Plan of Existing Lahore Fort

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The fort is clearly divided into two sections:

**THE ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION**, which is well connected with main entrances, and comprises larger garden areas and *Diwan-e-Aam* for royal audiences.

**A PRIVATE AND CONCEALED RESIDENTIAL SECTION** - is divided into courts in the northern part, accessible through 'elephant gate'. It also contains *Shish Mahal* (Hall of Mirrors of Mirror Palace), and spacious bedrooms and smaller gardens. On the outside, the walls are decorated with blue Persian kashi tiles. The original entrance faces the Maryam Zamani Mosque, whereas the larger Alamgiri Gate opens to the Hazuri Bagh through to the majestic Badshahi Mosque.

## **BRIEF HISTORY**

**MUGHAL PERIOD:** From 1524 to 1752, Lahore was part of the Mughal Empire. Lahore grew under Emperor Babur; from 1584 to 1598, under the emperors Akbar the Great and Jahangir, the city served as the empire's capital. Lahore reached the peak of its architectural glory during the rule of the Mughals, many of whose buildings and gardens have survived the ravages of time. During this time, the massive Lahore Fort was built. A few buildings within the fort were added by Akbar's son, Mughal emperor Jahangir, who is buried in the city. Jahangir's son, Shahjahan Burki, was born in Lahore. He, like his father, extended the Lahore Fort and built many other structures in the city, including the Shalimar Gardens. The last of the great Mughals, Aurangzeb, who ruled from 1658 to 1707, built the city's most famous monuments, the Badshahi Masjid and the Alamgiri Gate next to the Lahore Fort.

**SIKH PERIOD:** During the anarchy prevailing in the later half of the eighteenth century, after the collapse of Mughal authority and later during the Sikh civil wars in the nineteenth century, the Fort suffered great spoilage. The Sikh rulers converted many buildings for

7 | 2 3 different uses and made poor additions and alternations. They converted the Moti Masjid into a treasury by changes in its fabric. The arches built up with brick work and below the marble floor were excavated as a cellar for the reception of iron-bound chests of rupees. In early 1841, the Fort was besieged by Sher Singh who mounted his guns on the minarets of the Badshahi Mosque and bombarded. As a result the old gates at Alamgiri Gateway and Masti Gateway were destroyed and large breaches in the fortification wall occurred. The roof of the Diwan-e-Am and many other parts of the Fort were also severely damaged. In 1843, Hira Singh, son of raja Dhyani Singh, besieged the Fort and his soldiers rushing through the break in the defense wall, caused by the heavy guns of his artillery, indiscriminately plundered the Fort.

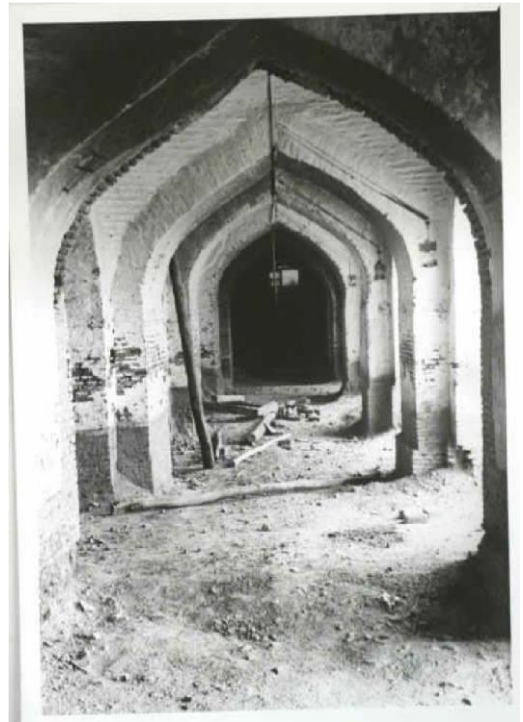
**BRITISH PERIOD:** From 1846 to 1927 A.D The Fort remained occupied by the British Military Forces. They made large scale additions and alterations in the buildings to convert them into barracks and residences of the officers. The beautiful Diwan-e-Khas (Hall of Private Audience) was converted into a chapel, the Diwan-e-Aam into a dispensary and the Shish Mahal into the residence of the commanding officer. The great tank in Jahangir's Quadrangle was also filled up and the lawns were converted into tennis courts<sup>3</sup>. During British and Sikh period precious stones were also stolen from decorated painted surfaces of Diwan-e-Khas, Shish Mahal and Royal Women Mosque. *After Pakistan Emergence:* When Pakistan came into existence, the Lahore Fort was given in the custody of the Archeology Department which carried out conservation measures on a limited scale. In 1973, a Master Plan for its Preservation and Restoration was formulated and work initiated in



1974. It has helped conserve some major buildings including the fortification walls, dalans or chamber in Jahangir's Quadrangle, floors in Shish Mahal, and Diwan-e-Am, basement chambers of Shish Mahal and some other buildings. However, the pace of deterioration has outstripped restoration and conservation efforts.



## STRUCTURAL PLAN OF LAHORE FORT



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### **CAUSES OF DECAY**

Due to political instability and financial constraints, the successive governments have taken little or no interest in preserving cultural heritage



and conservation and restoration of Lahore fort has been seriously neglected. Neglect of the built heritage results in weakening of the structures and allows other causes of decay to set in, such as material deterioration through accumulation of dust, growth of vegetation, dampness, etc. and ultimately neglect results in complete obliteration of the structure



## WESTERN SIDE OF ROYAL KITCHENS LAHORE FORT

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From 1947 to date, the following anthropogenic causes are responsible for the deterioration of beauty, aesthetics and architecture of Lahore Fort:

**1. *WEAKNESS INHERITED IN THE STRUCTURE:*** The red sandstone used in the building is not only prone to chemical weathering but has been used on wrong bedding i.e. vertically. Due to this inherent weak bedding of planes and joints, stone pieces have broken and fallen off. In mortars variable quantities of Ravi sand has been used. Ravi sand is fine grained, contains some clay and is poorly graded therefore it is not the best material for use in mortar. Because of its fine grain size even superficial weathering loosens sand grains which fall off exposing surfaces to degradation.



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**2. NATURAL AGENTS:** The site selected for Lahore fort was higher than Lahore city and it was situated close to river Ravi. At that time the surrounding area of Lahore Fort was barren and semi arid and there was little land colonization. Due to these reasons there were intense sand storms particularly in May and early June and such sand storms, because of land and arid conditions, carried with them silts and sand particles. This kind of particulate matter caused abrasion of stones, lime mortar and plaster and resulted in aesthetic degradation of marble, painted surface and glazed tiles. After combining with rainwater and moisture, clay particles accumulated on the surface of the material and caused soiling and discoloration.



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**3. Biological Decay:** Biological decay means any deterioration brought about by the microbial growth of various groups. In Lahore Fort 17 species of fungi belonging to eleven different genera have been identified. Biological population resulted from moisture and humid conditions and some specific chemicals and pollutants in the surrounding areas also encouraged their growth.





NORTH EASTERN SIDE



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**4. VEGETATION:** Humid weather and moisture not only give birth to fungus species but also small vegetation like ferns which may grow on floors amid void spaces. This causes further deterioration in the structure, as has happened in the Lahore Fort.

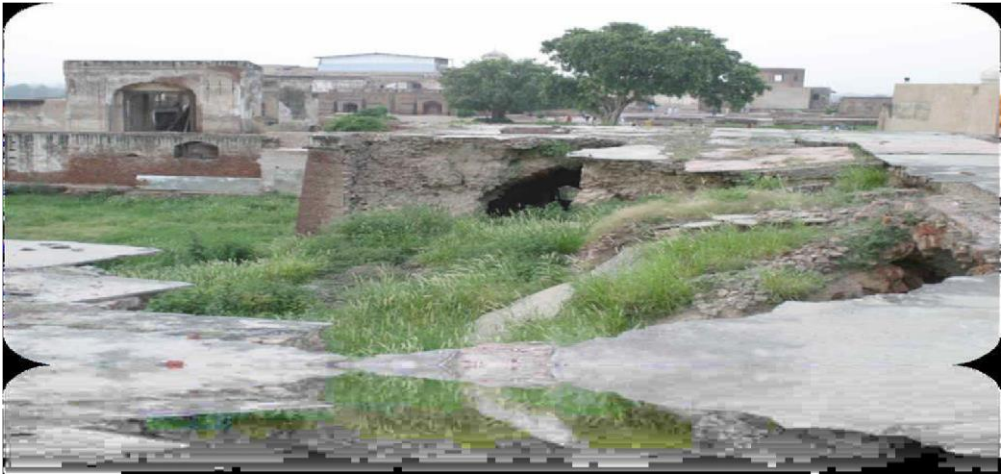


## NORTH WESTERN SIDE

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**5. HUMAN VANDALISM:** Ever since Lahore Fort was given under the custody of the Department of Archeology, it is being used for official as well as residential purposes. This has led to conversion of rooms into laboratories of scientific work and has damaged the original building. The department also replaced the original lights and changed the whole architecture. During restoration and renovation (particularly of Shish Mahal) original architectural aspects have not been preserved.





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**6. UNAWARENESS:** The deterioration and decay of Lahore fort is also due to the lack of awareness regarding the importance of cultural heritage. Ignorant visitors throw garbage and waste products here and there, spit on the floors and write on the walls. Writing on the walls not only soil the surface but also cause aesthetic decay due to inevitable cleaning and scrubbing of these walls to remove writing stains.



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**7. AIR POLLUTION:** Among man made deteriorative factors, air pollution, which in general is the by-product of the industrial and vehicular emissions, is one of the most significant agents. For six pollutants, U.S.E.P.A (United States Environment Protection Agency) has established air quality standards designed to protect the buildings and monuments. These pollutants are ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matters (dust, grime, smoke, etc.) and sulfur dioxide. Exceeding levels of these pollutants are a threat to buildings and monuments in various ways like loss of mechanical strength, leakage, failure of protective coatings and loss of details. Vehicular traffic along the streets of Lahore is an identified source of suspended particles. Other sources include engine emissions and diesel vehicles. The number of vehicles passing near Lahore fort at peak hours is in thousands. The particulate matter is responsible for pitting of pictured wall where at some points figures of animals and flowers have lost their identity. Dust particles in the air have soiled the marble and mortar surfaces.



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Sweeping and cleaning also cause the soiling of surfaces when particles move here and there and are accumulated on rough surfaces causing discoloration



and aesthetic decay especially of white marble, red sand stone and lime mortar. Smoke and dust together with moisture have settled on carving and networks of white marble in the form of black crust and soot.



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## ***CONSERVATION IN PAKISTAN***

The major constraint in heritage conservation is the fact that this issue has not been given due recognition by the state and is not accorded the priority which it requires in the development programmes. Urban development authorities are responsible only for looking into development and provision of utilities and services in cities irrespective of the historical or cultural qualifications of the area. Legislation: There are two legislations in the country which provide a legal framework for protection of the built heritage; a. Antiquities Act 1975

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b. Punjab Special Premises Act 1985 Besides these two Acts, there are other legislations which provide for the protection of built heritage. These include the Pakistan Environmental Protection Ordinance 1983, Land Antiquities Act, the Industrial Factory Ordinance Act, etc. These laws, if implemented in their true spirit, would certainly lead to conservation of monuments that are now in decaying conditions. The Antiquities Act, 1975, which is concerned with the conservation of built heritage, clearly spells out the restrictions on use, destruction, damage, repairs and renovations and measures for preservation of the heritage. However, as far as the implementation of this law is concerned much leaves to be desired. Moreover, in this Act, there is no clear cut law for factors related to air pollution like vehicular traffic and industrial emissions. Besides, The Antiquities Act, 1975 was made in 1975 when population levels, urbanization trends and global climatic conditions were totally different than today. It does not address the influence of air pollution on monuments and buildings and there is no perfect clause in it to protect the monuments and buildings from hazards of air pollution. As far as the implementation of the conservation legislation is concerned, it is restricted due to lack of resources, administrative facilities and lack of coordination between protection agencies and the local community.

## **RESTORATION WORKS BY ARCHEOLOGY DEPARTMENT**

Restoration of Royal Kitchens was carried out recently to save the structure. Restorative efforts in Royal Kitchens seem to be at a very slow pace. This portion gives an image of neglect





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## ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

### **a. Physical Measures**

**1. Controlling air pollution:** In order to avoid pollution damage there is an urgent need to reduce pollutants. This reduction should involve preparation of inventory of emission sources, measurement of pollutant levels and mapping of the corrosivity in the premises of Lahore Fort. Road improvements, better traffic management and conversion of vehicles to Cleaner fuels will reduce emissions, minimize damage to the Fort and provide improved air quality for the local population. In this context relocation of Lorry Ada from existing place is recommended. Drivers of

public and private transportation can contribute a lot in reducing pollution level by following these simple measures: - Avoid high speed

- Do not over fill gasoline tank
- Keep the engines well maintained, especially the emission control system.
- Keep tyres properly inflated.
- Maintain the vehicle's air condition system- do not allow it to leak.
- Don't stop in areas surrounding the Fort.

**2. Seepage Control:** Good drainage system should be provided and water should not be allowed to collect along the walls, over the roofs and in the lawns. For better management of water, 'Khurras' or pipes should be provided under the water taps. These Khurras make it possible to use water only when necessary.

**3. Solid Waste Management:** Hundreds of visitors to the Fort daily throw their waste products, garbage, containers, empty cans, etc. It is therefore essential to provide drums, baskets or dust bins everywhere in the corners of lawns and various buildings.

**4. Cleaning and Scrubbing:** Vigorous cleaning and scrubbing of surfaces can damage the walls. Measures should be taken to check people's writings on the walls. **23 | 23**

**5. Implementation of Law:** Public interest lawsuits should be used to enforce existing laws. Better legislation relating to pollution control should be enacted; commitments to international agreements relating to global climate change should be implemented. - Following the Antiquities Act, 1975, Fort building should not be used for residential and official purposes.

- For cooking of the residential staff there should be proper arrangement.
- Livestock population should be removed from residential areas of the staff. **b.**

#### **Awareness and Advocacy**

Local community is the most powerful mechanism for any policy reform.

There is a need to educate people about conservation. In this context, a proper campaign by electronic media is necessary through which the significance and values of cultural heritage and its conservation should be focused upon. Brochures, pamphlets and colorful charts of different historical buildings should be distributed free of cost to visitors, especially children, to convey conservation messages. A built heritage is an asset as well as a reflection of values and culture developed through generations. It has architectural aesthetic, archeological, economic and social and even political

and spiritual or symbolic values. To preserve these values, heritage conservation is the responsibility of not only the state but also the community.

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