

# RE-CONSTRUCTING A PUBLIC HERITAGE BUILDING CASE STUDY: WESTERN WING OF LAHORE HIGH COURT BUILDING, LAHORE

***Architect Ghafer Shahzad***

Director Infrastructure (SDWCLP)

Sustainable Development of Walled City Lahore Project, Lahore

## **ABSTRACT:**

Violating the Punjab Special Premises (Preservation) Ordinance 1985, Lahore High Court (LHC) authorities demolished an enlisted, protected public building i.e. Western Wing (W.W.) of Lahore High Court (LHC) Lahore in year 2004. The argument for demolition of 90 years old colonial building was based on “The Law of Necessity”<sup>1</sup>. To fulfill the immense need of accommodation of eight-number court rooms, LHC Administrative Authorities decided to raze the existing single storey heritage building of W.W. and construct a double storey structure. Architects, Archaeologists and Civil Society representatives launched an aggressive agitation to stop the demolition but authority proclaimed, “*LHC building is not a shrine that can not be demolished or re-constructed*” (Daily Times, 2004a).

*Lahorites* approached Supreme Court who passed stay order against demolition and directed LHC authorities to re-construct the razed building, following the ditto architectural features in its true spirit and using the similar construction materials. Supreme Court further desired to appoint an experienced Resident Architect for such specialty job of intricate nature.

This study reveals the integrated-coordinated efforts of administrative authorities of LHC<sup>2</sup>, technical and professional input of Communication & Works Department<sup>3</sup>, concern of architectural professional bodies<sup>4</sup> and supervisory role of Resident Architect working under government conventional system of execution, having expertise in re-creating the historic building of Colonial period having heritage value.

Study also presents a comparison between conventional methodology of execution of a public heritage building as practiced by Communication and Works (C & W) Department, Government of Punjab (GoP), and the integrated-coordinated design approach where Resident Architect and Client Department had played a vital role while working with the Contractor and Engineers of C & W Department.

**Key Words:** Colonial Building, Heritage, Lahore, Architecture, Archaeology, Restoration, Public Building, History, Lahore High Court. Brick Masonry.

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<sup>1</sup> The term is used in its popular idiom as defined by the LHC in its judgement whilst replacing the elected Prime Minister and imposition of Army Chief as Chief Executive of Pakistan.

<sup>2</sup> Administrative Authorities of LHC mean Registrar, Chief Justice, Judges’ Committee as constituted by Supreme Court in its decision.

<sup>3</sup> Offices of the Chief Architect and the Chief Engineer, Punjab.

<sup>4</sup> Pakistan Council of Architects & Town Planners and Institute of Architects Pakistan, Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi chapters.