

# THE IMPACT OF INFRASTRUCTURAL SERVICES ON TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN FABRIC OF THE WALLED CITY OF LAHORE

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## ABSTRACT

Present Walled City of Lahore is essentially a traditional town transformed largely into a colonial city during 20<sup>th</sup> century in context of its built environment in general, and infrastructural services in particular. Ninety nine years of the British occupancy of the city has tremendously changed its physical character, layout plan, infrastructural services, road networks, construction techniques, building materials, and connection with outer settlements etc. The pace of these topographical changes within the Walled City of Lahore (WCL) remained slow, throughout the centuries. The housing units of the WCL have been demolished and reconstructed repeatedly. This process has re-shaped its urban fabric, changed its topography, internal layout, and the dynamics of streets.

Before the introduction of infrastructural services<sup>1</sup> the urban fabric of the WCL exhibited identifiable architectural characteristics. The unplanned and ad-hoc provision of infrastructural services has substantially damaged the heritage buildings<sup>2</sup> of the WCL, in particular during the last sixty years<sup>3</sup>. Today clean drinking water is not available to the inhabitants/residents of the WCL. Sewer and storm water drainage system is working inefficiently. The web of electricity and telecommunication cable has brought visual and aesthetic impairment to the façades and streetscape of the WCL.

This paper documents the extant situation of these infrastructural services, exploring their impact on traditional architecture and urban fabric of the WCL, concluding with recommendations for strategic planning to protect the

historical building remains and urban heritage belonging to different historical eras.

**Key Words:** Walled City of Lahore (WCL), Heritage, Urban Fabric, Infrastructural Services, Urban Design, Urban Planning, Restoration, Urban Conservation, Colonial City, Sustainable Development of Walled City, Traditional City.

## ACRONYMS:

LESCO:	Lahore Electricity Supply Company
PTCL:	Pakistan Telecommunication Corporation Limited
PHA:	Parks & Horticulture Authority
SNGPL:	Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited
SDWCLP:	Sustainable Development of the Walled City Lahore, Project
WCA:	Walled City Authority
WCL:	Walled City of Lahore
WASA:	Water and Sanitation Agency

## 1. THE CITY WITHIN WALLS

According to Lahore Master Plan 2006 (AKCSP 2008a), the larger city of Lahore measures an area of almost 2300 square kilometers with a population of more than seven million<sup>4</sup>. The Walled City of Lahore was an old settlement dating to before its occupation by invaders from Central Asia during 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. It had remained a nexus between Central Asian regions, Delhi and Multan Sultanate throughout the centuries. Within its walls, a dense urban fabric is present. The Mughal Emperors spent a few years of their lives in Lahore Fort<sup>5</sup> and constructed some significant historical buildings within the WCL. However, they mostly

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1 Infrastructural services include electricity, water supply, Sui gas, telecommunication, sewer and rain water drainage.  
2 Heritage buildings in WCL include multistory housing units, *havelies*, historical mosques and shrines, wrestling arenas, city gates, etc  
3 After establishment of Pakistan in 1947, the mass immigration of non-Muslims from WCL to India offered opportunity to settle new community that did not have any association with heritage buildings.  
4 Projected population is based on Census 1998 figure of 5.1 million.  
5 Only Emperor Akbar stayed for 14 years in Lahore from 1585-1599 A.D. he then again shifted his capital to Agra.