

## IDENTIFYING MUGHAL AND SIKH ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES IN A HISTORIC MONUMENT; A CASE STUDY OF HADUWRI BAGH BARHDARI LAHORE

Mohammad Z. Ashraf\*, Shaukat Mahmood\*\*, Maliha Khalid\*\*\*, Sumbal Shahbaz\*\*\*\*, Muti-ul-Haq\*\*\*\*\*, Amna Bashir\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Assistant Professor, Department of Architecture, University of Punjab.  
zeshan.cad@pu.edu.pk

\*\* Professor, Department of Architecture, University of Punjab.  
drshaukatmahmood@gmail.com

\*\*\* Professor, Department of Architecture, Lahore College for Woman University.  
malihaarch@hotmail.com

\*\*\*\* PhD scholar, Department of Health, University of Punjab.  
sumbalshahbazrana@gmail.com

\*\*\*\*\* Lecturer, Department of Architecture, University of Punjab.  
architect.tania@gmail.com

\*\*\*\*\* Amna Bashir, Lecturer, Department of Architecture, Lahore College for Woman University.  
amnabashirmughal@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

A country is mainly identified by its cultural heritage. Built form is a means of expressing this heritage in a tangible form Haduwri Bagh *barhdari* is a magnificent monument of its times. The paper aims to study the architectural features of the *barhdari* to better understand the architecture of the monument. The objective is to identify and differentiate the elements of Mughal and Sikh Architecture through a case study analysis.

Haduwri Bagh *barhdari*, is located on the west of Alamgiri Gate of Lahore Fort and east of Badshahi Mosque entrance gateway. The *barhdari* occupies a central position of the Haduwri Bagh making it a perfect symmetrical structure which is in no way dissonant with respect to its context. Even being constructed in Sikh period, *barhdari* features typical Mughal architectural elements making it doubtful that in which era it was constructed. The paper focuses on the study and analysis of architectural features and materials of the Monument which lies in the midst of Haduwri Bagh, Lahore Fort. This paper is an effort to highlight the fact that despite of being constructed in the Sikh period, the *barhdari* features typical Mughal architectural elements speaking of cross fertilization of architectural elements.

**Keywords:** Haduwri Bagh *barhdari*, Sikh Architecture, Monument, Mughal Architecture, Lahore

### INTRODUCTION

“*Barhdari*” is a combination of two words belonging to the Urdu language. *Bara* means twelve and *dari* which is a synonym of *dari* means door. So, *barhdari* is a twelve doored pavilion, rectangular or nearly square in shape with a tripartite arcade or colonnade on each of its side. In general, it can be called a “summer house” (Figure 1 and 2).

The Haduwri Bagh *barhdari* was constructed in 1818 A.D. by Maharajha Ranjit Singh, the founder and ruler of Sikh Rule in the Province of Punjab (Chaudry, 2000). Ranjit Singh remained emperor from 1799-1839. Ranjit Singh was

born in Gujranwala on November 13, 1780. Mahan Singh, his father named him Ranjit Singh. The Sikh Maharajha battled his first battle, when he was roughly ten years old. It was Sahib Singh Bhangi of Gujarat (a town in Punjab, now Pakistan) who declined to pay homage to Mahan Singh and his empire was assaulted by him. Sahib Singh locked himself up in the Fort of Sodhran, and the ceasefire of the Fort was hammered. Ranjit Singh assisted Mahan Singh. The siege went on for several months (Baqir, 1984).

Mahan Singh, Ranjit Singh’s father died in the year 1792. At the time of his death, Ranjit Singh was only twelve years old. He was too young to handle the complicated affairs of



Figure 1: View of Haduwri Bagh *barhdari* from West side

the estate. After the death of his father, his mother, Raj Kaur, was his ultimate guardian. Diwan Lakhpat Rai also extended his support to the Maharajha. Raj Kaur had complete faith in Diwan's honesty and integrity, but her brother, Dal Singh, did not really like his involvement in the administrative matters of the empire. So, Dal Singh formed an alliance with Sada Kaur, mother-in-law of Ranjit Singh, who had a lot of influence over him. Thus, two groups were formed, Diwan and Raj Kaur on one side, Sada Kaur and Dal Singh on the other. The maneuverings and counter-maneuverings soon made Maharajha tired of both of the groups (Chaudhry, 2000).

Ranjit Singh learned to ride, shoot, and began drinking at a very young age. Drinking was not deemed evil in those times, so more one drank, the more reverence he showed to the sardars. It was seen as a source of dignity (Chishti, 1864).

Despite spending years in indulgence and dissipation, he was more drawn to the typical vices common to the nobles in those times. During his prime, though, Ranjit was exceptionally successful and outstanding horseman and well trained in all relevant to military feats (Lal, 1984).

Ranjit Singh was committed to Mehtab Kaur of Kanhaiya at the age of sixteen. This marriage pulled together two powerful estates. Then, in 1798, he married again the daughter of Khazan Singh Nakai, strengthening his power. Mehtab Kaur and Sada Kaur were irritated by Ranjit's second marriage. Mehtab Kaur moved to Batala and just visited Gujrawala on special occasions (Latif, 1916).

Until this time, Diwan Lakhpat Rai had been handling the operations of the estate. He had faith in Sardar Mahan Singh. Diwan was assassinated in Dhanni region for acquiring

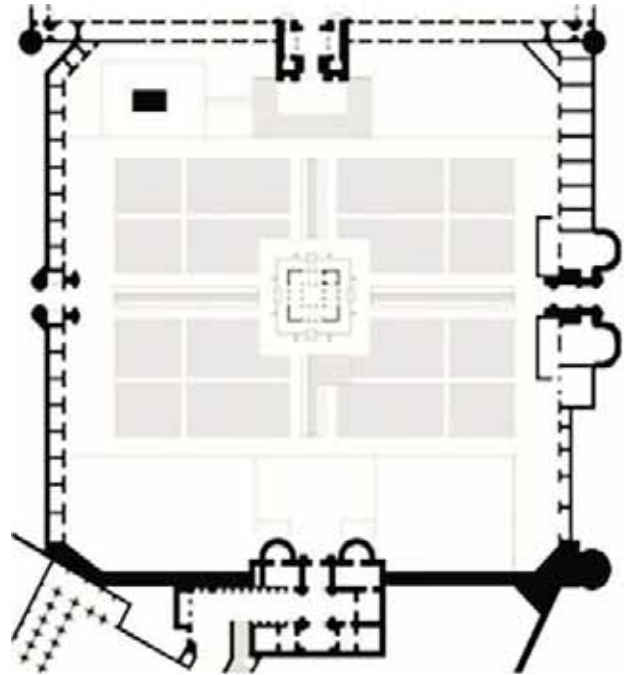


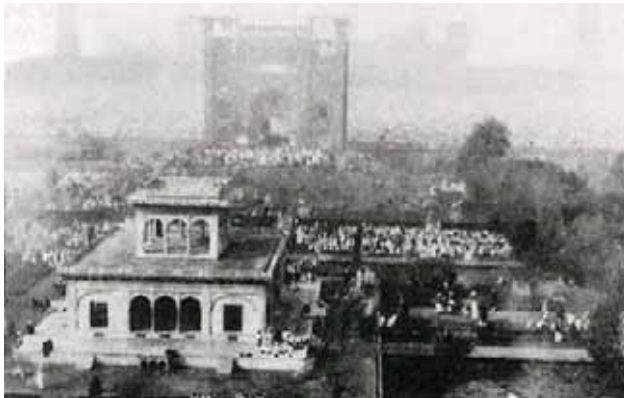
Figure 2: Location plan of Haduwri Bagh *barhdar*

major revenue central of the empire. It offered Ranjit Singh a chance to take over control of empire's administrative affairs (Latif, 1916).

Therefore, at the age of eighteen Ranjit Singh inherited the powers directly. Sada Kaur manipulated the status of Ranjit Singh, and she was the ladder through which Ranjit Singh attained the pinnacle of his strength. The artificial imagination of the little child was influenced by men and women with whom he had no strong theological and moral values to emulate. He was brought up more or less as a privileged boy (Baqir, 1984).

## MATERIALS AND METHOD

Information on the revered architectural structure of the Haduwri Bagh *barhdari* was gathered from primary and secondary sources of historical literature. The collected information was also confirmed by an on-site review of the heritage monument. Various visits and detailed observations were carried out for close examination of architectural features. The information collected was examined with respect to its architectural arrangement of horizontal as well as vertical configurations and embellishments in its exteriors as well as interiors. The sources and origins of adornments and architectural decoration were mostly identified by



**Figure 3:** Haduwri Bagh (*barhdari*) Aerial View East Side Before 1932  
Source: Department of Archeology, Government of Punjab



**Figure 4:** Haduwri Bagh (*barhdari*) West Side View Before 1932  
Source: Department of Archaeology, Government of Punjab



**Figure 5:** Haduwri Bagh (*barhdari*) West Side View Before 1932  
Source: Department of Archeology, Government of Punjab



**Figure 6:** Haduwri Bagh (*barhdari*) West Side View Before 1932  
Source: Department of Archeology, Government of Punjab

historical literature (Baqir, 1984, Chisti, 1864; Lal, 1984) and also through contrasting with specific structures constructed during the Mughal and Sikh period.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Construction of Haduwri Bagh *Barhdari*

The construction of Haduwri Bagh was in accordance with the orders of Ranjit Singh and was done under the supervision of Faqir Azizuddin. The *barhdari* had been constructed on Jamadar Khushal Singh's suggestion to mark a monument of the Sikh era which was of great historic value (Figures 3-6).

Ranjit Singh ordered the plantation of the Haduwri Bagh to celebrate the capture of the renowned Koh-e-Noor diamond from ruler Shah Shuja of Kabul, Afghanistan on 1st June 1813. He was keen to erect right in the middle of the garden, a *barhdari* which would subsequently acquire the status of a magnificent monument. Since at that time

many tombs and shrines of muslim elite were present just outside the city and these were adorned with marble, a similar trend was to be followed for this monument. Thus it was ordered to deprive the muslims of the stone and affix it to the *barhdari* (Hina, 2013). Hence, the Tomb of Zibunisa' was the first victim whose marble was taken off for this purpose. Next it was the Tomb of Shah Sharif located in front of Bhatti gate which met with a similar fate. In short, marble from innumerable tombs was taken off to complete this building. Even then, there was a shortage of stone and consequently limestone was relied upon as the last resort (Lal, 1984).

During his lifetime, the pavilion remained a favorite resort of Ranjit Singh for pleasure and to conduct other businesses, including all official matters. The peaceful days of the marble *barhdari* ended with his death, which immediately commenced the long period of civil and military strife and confusion, usually called the Great Anarchy. During these days, the pavilion stood serene in the midst of war, murder, assassination and plunder (Tufail, 1962; Singh, 1999).



Figure 7: A View of *barhdari* from North-West Side



Figure 8: Interior View of Ground Floor



Figure 9: Interior View of Ceiling Stucco Work with Decorated Concave Mirror



Figure 10: Red Stone Floor (Interior View)

## Description of the Building

At the time of construction, it consisted of a basement, a sub-basement and two stories (ground floor and first floor). Although the *barhdari* was constructed in the Sikh era, it clearly portrays late Mughal architecture. It is almost a square shaped building with each of its side an imitation of the other (Figure 7).

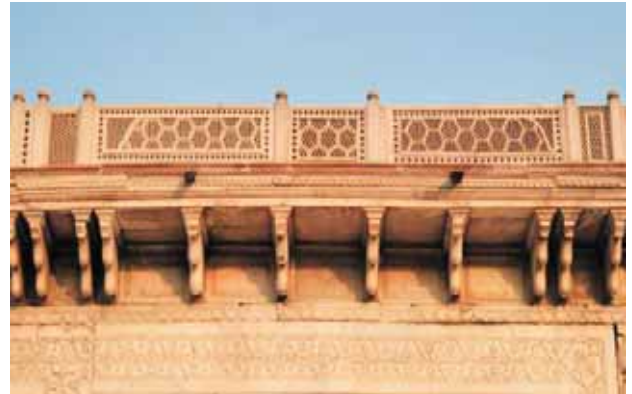
### Ground Floor

The ground floor is built on a raised platform which is accessed by staircases on each side. This podium approximately sixty five feet by sixty five feet, encloses the *barhdari* on all four sides and is three feet high from the ground. In the center of each side of the platform is an extended platform which has three cusped arches and a height of three feet and seven inches approximately. These extended platforms are also known as "Shah Nasheen" as the Emperor Ranjit Singh used to sit on them. The podium and platform floor are made of marble with inlay of colored stones in different patterns, arranged in haphazard manner.

*Sang e Badal* and *Sang e Aabri* are used in the flooring of the podium, which has now lost its polish. Moreover, fish design was used for the marble inlay work on the east and west floor of the podium. Some of the floor patterns are now missing or severely damaged. Various types of marble pieces are used in the monument; whereby some of the pieces in the facade are bulging outwards. Identical to these are three more enlarged archways on the entrance of *barhdari* with a pair of doorways on either side. One can also see the ventilators of the basement opening into the ground floor. The central room of the *barhdari* can be accessed via three cusped arches from the podium. The ceiling of this room is decorated with stucco tracery inlaid with convex mirrors. The curved border of the ceiling is also decorated with mirrors. The ceiling of the surrounding corridors is now made of deodar wood. In the past it also had a mirror ceiling, similar to the central room (Figures 8-11).



**Figure 11:** Podium /Platform Floor is of Marble With Inlay of Colored Stones



**Figure 12:** Marble Screen Supported by Marble Brackets



**Figure 13:** View of Basement Showing Typical Sikh Style of Architecture



**Figure 14:** View of Basement and Sub-Basement

## Roof Top

The roof top is approached by a "L" shaped white marble sixteen stepped staircase having a tread of ten and a half inches. The staircase leading to the roof top has stone inlay work on one of the steps. The landing of the staircase indicates earlier plundering and it shows stone inlay work in trefoil arch pattern with flowers at spandrels.

At the center of the roof top, there is an approximately twenty feet by twenty feet square platform with a twenty inch plinth. The sides of the roof top platform have been covered with red sandstone slabs, which were originally part of the dado that must have been removed from some other monument, as there are line inlay work with black and yellow stone. This is a typical feature of dado used in monuments of Mughal period (Figure 12).

The roof top has a parapet made in white marble. The parapet has beautiful marble screen supported by marble brackets. The marble *jali* (screen) has prominent hexagonal patterns arranged in various manners. The parapet is one feet nine

inches high and projects one feet six inches outwards, forming a cantilever (*chhajja*). The parapet is out of plumb and some of the marble post/ crown of the *muttakas* are missing. For lighting the *barhdari* on special occasions, lights hung from marble screens of the parapet.

This depicts that the structure, a replica of the ground floor, which stood before the *barhdari* was struck by lightning in 1932. The platform is made of red sandstone bordered by white marble, while the rest of the floor has a layer of concrete. The first floor provides a good view of the vicinity of the *barhdari*.

## Basement

The lower level (basement) is accessed by a flight of fifteen steps. The staircase is made up of red sandstone. Ensuing the stairs, there is a level which is used as a foyer and has a threshold on three sides made up of marble (Figure 13).

The basements are constructed entirely of brickwork with lime mortar finishing. Under-burnt bricks are used in some



Figure 15: West Side Elevation Showing a Single Massive Composition



Figure 16: The Central Part, Based on Typical Three Openings of *barhdari*



Figure 17: Shah Nasheen with Same Detail as in Elevation



Figure 18: Detail of Column in Marble Carving

places. Burnt clay bricks have been used throughout in the stretcher-bond, characteristic of the Mughal period. These bricks had slightly concave faces; hence the gap formed between two bricks laid was filled with the binding material. Sub hydraulic lime mortar was used as a binding material, finished with glazed lime plaster.

In the middle of this basement there is another level with twelve openings, three openings on each of the four sides. Furthermore, in each direction there runs a corridor which gest light via ventilators in the level above.

#### Sub-Basement






The sub-basement has two parts, led by stairs from the basement. The ceiling of the room of the sub-basement has collapsed. The adjoining room's entrance is through three archways and the second room has decorative patterns of arches embossed on the walls, with three arches on each wall (Figure 14).

#### Elevation description

The elevation of the building is a flat mass with embossed detail and projected parapet resting on marble brackets. The central part has three openings covered with multifold arches based on decorated pillars. There are two doorways on either side of the opening with flat beam, thus the whole mass is divided in three parts with border of floral motifs carved in marble. The central part is based on typical three openings of *barhdari*, the spandrel of each arch is three inches depressed from the main mass with embossed floral motifs on each spandrel. The central opening has even more decorative spandrels with floral bunch instead of a single flower. Each spandrel has a decorative border. The multifold arches of the three openings have decorative border with central arch again having more decorative motif. These arches rest on decorative pillars (Figures 15-16).

The whole pillar is carved in marble and its base rests at the plinth level of the main *barhdari*. This kind of construction could be found in the era of the Mughal emperor Jahangir.

Table 1: Segregation of Sikh and Mughal Architectural Features of Haduwri Bagh barhdari

Sr. No.	ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES OF MUGHAL ERA	ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES OF SIKH ERA
1.	The monument is based on the plan form of existing Mughal Tombs and monuments.	<p>Some motifs used in the monument shows the Sikh influence with respect to Architecture. Examples are Peacock with a necklace in beak, Jar of Wine (drinking wine was a pride in Sikh Period)</p> 
2.	Plan is symmetrical (square), and proportion is the same as in Mughal monuments.	<p>Motifs of Sikh Era</p> 
3.	Marble was chosen to make the monument. Reason being the Mughal monuments were customarily adorned with the marble. This monument was completed by taking the marble from existing Mughal tombs and other monuments.	<p>The most prominent detail showing Sikh Architectural detail with a long curve at the top.</p> 
4.	The embossed decorative patterns laid in marble present on faces and floor of the monument are the characteristic of Mughal Architecture.	<p>Top of a column embellished with lotus flower is a characteristic feature of Sikh Architecture.</p> 
5.	The side of the raised platform on the roof is covered with red sandstone. These red sandstone slabs appear to be a part of dado ornamentation which is characteristic of Mughal Period as these stones are laid in with black and yellow stones.	<p>Motifs used on base of column is also a characteristic feature of Sikh Architecture</p> 



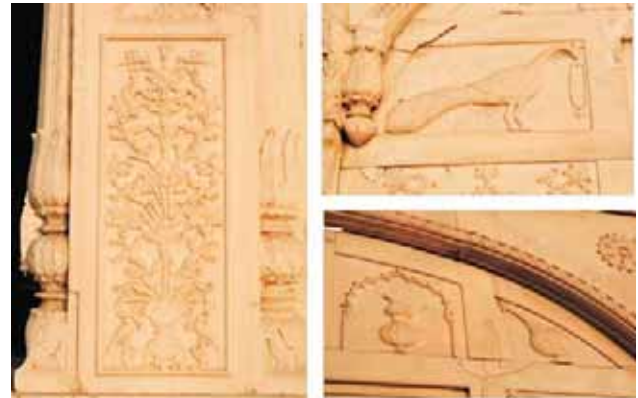
**Figure 19:** Detail of Impost and Springer in Marble Carving Related to Jehangir's Period.

The base of the pillar starts with a square shape and turns into a round with inverted floral motifs. It finally forms a neck, than a dilt, than again a neck, that leads to the shaft, which starts from a lotus flower detail and narrow downs as it rises above. Then again there is a neck shape design which leads to the capital of the pillar, which also has the leaf carving detail. The impost of the arch is also very decorative with rich carving detail. The central arch rest on two pillars, whereas arches on either sides rest on pilasters (Figures 17 - 19).

On either side of the two openings, there is a door way with similar detail. The doors are surrounded by a depressed square mass with pilaster on both sides, which is covered with engraved depressed semicircular arch. The spandrel of the arch has single floral motif on either side. The internal area of the arch has engraved paneling with carving of food items and birds (Figure 20).

#### **Segregation of Mughal and Sikh Architectural Features**

A discussion about the identification of Sikh and Mughal architectural features of the monument is necessary, to relate the monument to a time period and to attain the objective of the study. The different types of features have already been discussed in the section above. A table has been formulated in order to have a clarity and highlight the distinction between the architectural features related to Mughal period and Sikh periods (Table 1).



**Figure 20:** Detail of Engraved Panels Showing Vine Ports and Birds Related to Sikh Cultural and Floral Motifs

#### **CONCLUSION**

Haduwri Bagh appeared on a horizon having the historical insight. The reflection of Haduwri Bagh in the history has a very key role, because of its location and its historical linkage. The sandwiched raised structure is the prime character of the area that lies between the Fort and Badshahi Mosque. This *barhdari* appeared on the same spirit as the Mughals perceived their aesthetics. It had the royal appeal of construction and it was perceived that this whole structure might have been migrated from another site as the elements used in the *barhdari* do not reflect the architectural elements of Sikh architecture.

Although the use of the Sikh elements can be seen in the basement and the lower basement of the *barhdari*, but their proportions and their massiveness compare to the Mughal architecture. This speculation proves that the *barhdari* which was constructed by Maharajha Ranjit Singh was not the vision of the Maharaja.

The Haduwri Bagh *barhdari* reflects Mughal taste and vision. In the mature asthetic outcome, it is observed that the *barhdari* being the social interaction space unfolds its meaning and narrates a certain history.

#### **Acknowledgement:**

All pictures are credited to the author, except where otherwise mentioned.

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