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Analysis of Conservation Policies Imposed on Shahdara Complex Lahore, Pakistan

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Abstract

The cultural heritage of cities and towns is facing extensive collapse and deterioration due to natural and man-made disasters. In the current world, there is a big challenge to safeguard these cultural assets. A number of laws and policies have been formulated to protect the heritage sites and the urban fabric of the historic cities, giving respect to their integrity and authenticity. The core objective of this research is to identify the cavities between the policies and procedures. One of the core issues/A core issue is the inadequate implementation of legislation and strategies, particularly with respect to the antiquities, built heritage and the historic environment. The current research focuses on the natural and man-made hazards imposed on the historic structures causing worsening in/the deterioration of the historic monuments, especially in the Shahdara Complex, Lahore. An analysis of the policies and practices implemented on the selected heritage site has been done/was conducted. With the passage of time, the elements of the Shahdara Complex are disappearing under various evidences. This paper helps to understand the legislation, conservation practices and the impacts of these interventions on the Shahdara Complex. A comprehensive plan is proposed in this research to manage, protect and upgrade the heritage site through resource management and law enforcement while maintaining a balance between the urban sprawl, preservation works and the modern needs.

Keywords: conservations policies, cultural heritage, interventions, Shahdara complex, urbanization

Introduction

Historic monuments, buildings and historic cities showcase the cultural, religious, economic and social values of a society. They are exposed to natural calamities and human vandalism, causing immense harm which results in loss of history. There is a widespread international concern amounted to protect cultural heritage and properties. It is very important to anticipate possible levels of risks and to take appropriate steps to eliminate or mitigate impacts of all such dangers to cultural

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sites. To preserve and maintain social and historical contexts of the built heritage is really challenging. In order to overcome these hazards and to safeguard these historic properties, laws and policies have been constituted giving the requisite authenticity and integrity to these cultural assets. The current policies and procedures regarding conservation in Sub-Continent are the continuation of British legacy with some suitable adjustments to match the national needs and aspirations of the individual countries (Mughal, [2011](#)).

Pakistan is one of those countries which are blessed with a wealth of cultural heritage. Environmental damage deteriorates the historic assets of the country, resulting in the loss of its past. Along with different natural and man-made hazards, a cavity between policies and procedures also plays a vital role to threaten the cultural assets. There is a need to formulate a comprehensive and effective legislation linked with procedures and practices of conservation which still remains matchless.

It has been observed through the study of the conservation strategies and practices that most of these issues have been addressed in these laws and policies to protect the past. But there are a lot of hurdles to implement these policies at the time of conservation practices. All the stake holders failed to accept these solutions rather they prefer their vested interests. These cultural properties are playing vital role to define the social life of the certain area. It has been realized that they should be protected but there is a deficiency regarding the procedures to implement conservation works at site. While establishing these policies, the benefits and interests of the stake holders are not met appropriately thus failing to achieve the desired results.

Rapid urbanization increased tremendous load on the infrastructure of the area and caused problems for the native people of the cities. Lahore is a historic city of Pakistan and very rich in significant buildings, archaeological sites and urban historic landscape. Urbanization also affected its landscape which is famous for its gardens. Shahdara tomb complex has been developed according to the Mughal philosophy. The site where the royal tomb exists was initially a garden; Dilkushan Garden was developed by Empress NurJahan (Latif, [1994](#)). After the death of Emperor Jahangir, it has been converted into the burial place of the Emperor. Later on, Empress NurJahan and her brother were buried in the premises of Jahangir's tomb (Brand, [1996](#)).

The magnificent garden is not only important due to the burial place of the royal family, but also due to its architectural features. This historic complex has been damaged due to neglect and human threats. Current research shows that the

monument has lost its historic appeal due to the changes that took place during different time periods. The main issue is related to the implementation of the proposed conservation plan to achieve the desired outcomes. There is a need to analyze these policies and to implement them along with the conservation practices to save the original façade of the historic site.

Literature Review

Built heritage of Pakistan is comprised of diverse cultural heritage reflecting the materials, tools and construction techniques. The study of these monuments provides the procedures adopted to safeguard them. A thorough analysis of the conservation works and its relationship with the conservation policies shows that the major causes of inadequate conservation is not only related with the legislation and policies but lack of state interest, funds, information and research on historic materials and techniques.

Research Methodology

The present situation of the selected site is an example of not only the demolition of the cultural heritage but is also the destruction of the nearby residential areas. Illegal commercial encroachments and uncontrolled urbanization are the evidence of the typical urban decay of Shahdara Mughal Tombs. The data available, online and in libraries has been analyzed. Maps of different eras have been collected through:

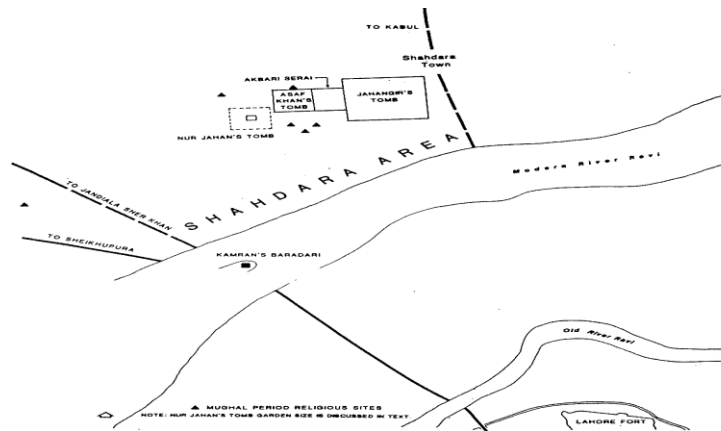
- Books (Mapping of Lahore, Lahore Recollected: An Album, Mughal Gardens in Lahore: History & Documentation)
- Google Earth
- Offices (LDA, Patwar Khana of Shahdara, Zilakhachehri for Masawies, Archeology Department)
- Online resources

A detailed Study of laws and policies with respect to antiquities and built heritage is included. The primary purpose of this study is to analyze to what extent are the relevant laws and policies implemented in the site?

Primary data and detailed analysis of history, the number of houses/ commercial areas and their demographic data, helped in building the conclusion. Analysis has been developed by overlapping the primary data with historical and environmental assessment. Recommendations have been given for the improvement and embellishment of Shahdara Mughal tombs.

Figure 1

Shahdara Showing Location (Aijazuddin, 2003)



Case Study: Shahdara Complex Lahore

These monuments are located on the north bank of the river Ravi opposite the citadel of Lahore. The name Shahdara is a combination of two names; Shah means king and Dara means Gate since it is located on the entry point to Lahore from Kabul and it was called King's Gate way hence the name (Brand, [1996](#)). Initially it was a Mughal Garden named Dilkusha Garden, it was transformed into Jahangir's mausoleum after his death and was also used as a funerary till 1640s (Wescoat, [1996](#))

Shahdara monuments are located on the north bank of the Ravi River; Lahore approximately 3.7 km. Shahdara served two purposes in the early Mughal period:

- Firstly as a stop for the Mughal camp after crossing Ravi along the road from Lahore towards Kashmir, Kabul, or the hunting grounds of Sheikhpura.
- Secondly as a recreation zone across the river from Lahore (Beach)

Sikh invasions sabotaged the historic monument, especially when it was used as residence by a French officer. During the same period, it was also used by Raja Ranjit Singh, who transferred its marble to Amrit Sir Garden's Darbar. The condition of the complex became worst when a railway line was built near Noor Jahan's Tomb, dividing it into two parts (Chishti, [2014](#)).

Significance of Shahdara Monuments

A very small number of tombs have been built by the Mughal Dynasty. Shahdara Mughal tombs are few of them. Shahjahan is known for his taste in arts.

Shahjahan's self-appointed historian Kanbo legitimates his emperor's passion for architecture, as a necessity of good rule (Koch, [1991](#)).

A unique synthesis of important architectural and landscape concepts in the selected Royal Tombs are as follow:

- The Char-Bagh or Foursquare garden of Persian
- The royal funerary tomb
- Networks of paths and waterways leading to the royal mausoleums.

Table 1

Values & Attributes of Monuments

Values of Shahdara Monuments	Attributes of the Values
Mughal concept of char-bagh and water	Original garden plan, pathways, fountains still exist and can be brought in use again in order to bring the glory of this monument back.
Range of important architectural plans, styles and decorative techniques	Original plans, decorative details and fabric exist which can be maintained to elevate the complex again.
Educational value as a tool to teach the historic past	The original complex still exists and so does its past. Authentic sources and information are also well known about it. Activities like story telling can be arranged within the site.

Identification of Research Area

The Antiquities Act ([1975](#)) Clause 22 and the Punjab Special Premises (Preservation) Ordinance state that no development plan, scheme or new construction within a distance of two hundred feet of a protected immovable antiquity shall be undertaken or executed except with the approval of the Director General. Fig.2 shows boundaries of the monuments and approximate extent of a buffer zone according to the national and provincial legislation. The selected site is densely populated and directly comes under 200' periphery.

It can be seen that this zone is encroached upon along the north, west and part of the southern side of the monument, where houses are constructed directly on to the outside of the historical perimeter wall or some walls of the houses are actually sharing the wall of the monument.

Figure 2

Showing Boundary Approx. 200 Feet Buffer Zone from The Site, Drawn by Author



Conservation & Strategies Implemented at Shahdara Complex

The three Mughal Monuments of Shahdara are under the protection of both federal and provincial laws of Pakistan. It comes under (The Federal Antiquity Act, 1975; Punjab Special Premises Ordinance, 1985). The tomb of Jahangir, Asaf Jahand associated Akbari Sarae were added in the tentative List of UNESCO, (n.d.) World Heritage as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Shahdara Monuments and Conservation Policies

Monuments	UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List (1993)	Federal Antiquities Act 1975	Punjab Special Premises Ordinance 1985
Jahangir's Tomb	✓	✓	✓
Asaf Khan's Tomb	✓	✓	✓
Noor Jahan's Tomb	✗	✓	✓

In spite of the laws present both at the national and provincial levels, the damage to the site is due to the poor enforcement of legislation while focusing on other development related projects. The legislation provides foundation for the conservation policies, finance and controls. All these rules and policies reflect the change in the attitude towards the heritage buildings of the past. Apart from these acts and ordinances, there are building bye-laws which help to regulate coverage, height, multiple buildings and architectural designs. They are mandatory and acceptable if they are enforced strictly.

No doubt, legislation plays a very important role in the protection of built heritage but at the same time, various other issues such as enforcement, political interests, public awareness and participation should also be given priority while managing the heritage sites. Conservation should be an integral part of the master plans of the cities. Master plans of the cities should incorporate conservation practices to restore the historic sites as they are an essential part of a city's heritage and past.

While developing procedures and practices to restore the historic sites, management and monitoring plans are framed out keeping in view the political and public interests rather than focusing on the authenticity and integrity of the monuments. During these efforts, legislation is often not implemented and thus the site loses its historic appeal. There is a need to implement the legislation through proper planning and to formulate bye-laws for their conservation.

UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List (1993)

Tombs of Jahangir, Asaf Khan and Akbari Sarai, Lahore have been submitted to bead in the Tentative List of UNESCO World Heritage by Pakistan. The World Heritage Committee has developed precise criteria for the inscription of properties on the World Heritage List and for the provision of international assistance under the World Heritage Fund. These are all included in a document entitled "Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention"(UNESCO, n.d.).

Venice Charter - May 25th to 31st 1964

The 2nd International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, met in Venice from May 25th to 31st 1964, and formed the Venice Charter. Article 1 and 14 are related to the selected historical site (ICOMOS, [1964](#)).

Antiquity Act 1975

The Antiquity Act of (1975) ensures the protection of cultural resources in Pakistan. This Act is designed to protect antiquities from destruction, theft, negligence, unlawful excavation, trade and export. The following clauses could be implemented when it comes to the conservation of the selected site:

- Clause 1 Definition of Antiquities,
- Clause 19,
- Clause 22 and
- Clause 23 (Government of Pakistan, 1975)

The law contains detailed provisions related to antiquities and national monuments, and empowers the federal government to make rules for their preservation and protection. The government has the authority to restrict mining activities in the vicinity of protected and immovable antiquities. Importantly, the Act prohibits new construction in the proximity of a protected antiquity and empowers the Government to prohibit excavation in any area that may contain articles of archaeological significance. No development plan or scheme or new construction on, or within a distance of two hundred feet of, a protected immovable antiquity can be undertaken or executed except with the approval of the Director of Archeology, Government of Pakistan. If during construction stage, any antiquities are found, the Department of Archeology must be informed, immediately, and work must be suspended until clearance from the Department.

Guidelines for Sensitive and Critical Areas, 1997

The Guidelines officially notify to conserve the sensitive and critical areas in Pakistan, including critical ecosystems, archaeological sites. The current checklist also highlights the need for the environmental assessment to be carried within and around such sites.

It has the checklist for environmental assessment procedures for archaeological sites, monuments, buildings and cultural heritage and it has also pointed out that the Jahangir's Tomb, Noor Jahan's Tomb and Asaf Jah's Tomb are all listed as protected sites under the Antiquities Act (1975). They are thus classified as sensitive areas as per the Guidelines (Government of Pakistan, 1997).

It is the duty of the relevant Departments to inform their respective province about the need for any particular development. As per new requirements, without this specialist input, comment and recommendations, the Environmental Report will not be acceptable to the Punjab Environment Protection Act.

National Conservation Strategy (NCS), 1991

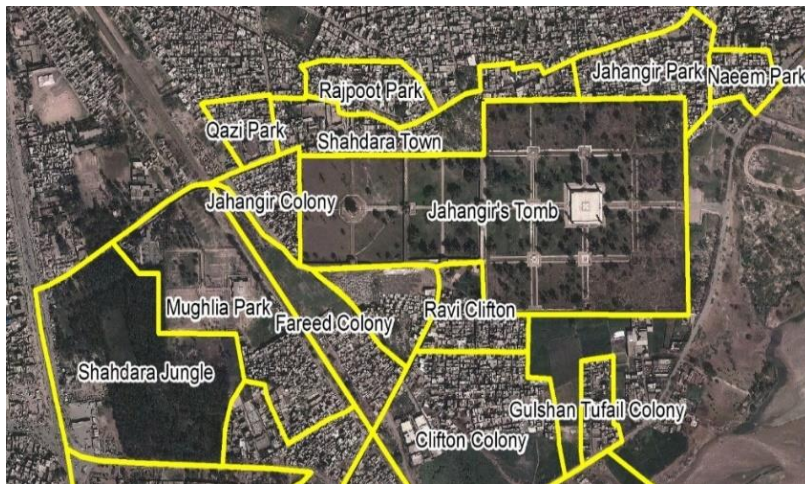
The National Conservation Strategy, 1991 (“NCS”) was designed as a road-based policy program aimed at the sustainable use of renewable resources, preventive action against pollution and other adverse effects of industrial and urban growth.

The NCS has following three strategies:

- Conservation of natural resources.
- Sustainable development.
- Improved efficiency in the use and the management of resources

Figure 3

Settlement Pattern and Neighborhood of Shahdara Mughal Tombs. Source is LDA



Punjab Special Premises(Preservation) Ordinance 1985

This act is applicable to the province of Punjab only, the Ordinance seeks to protect built heritage declared as special premises. Clause 1 Definition-Special Premises, Clause 10, Clause 11, and Clause 12 are applicable to the Shahdara Tombs (Govt., n.d).

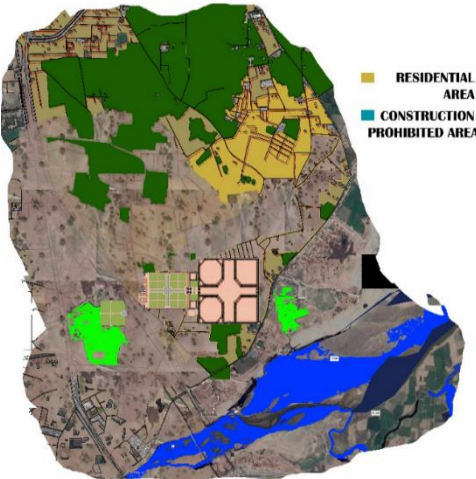
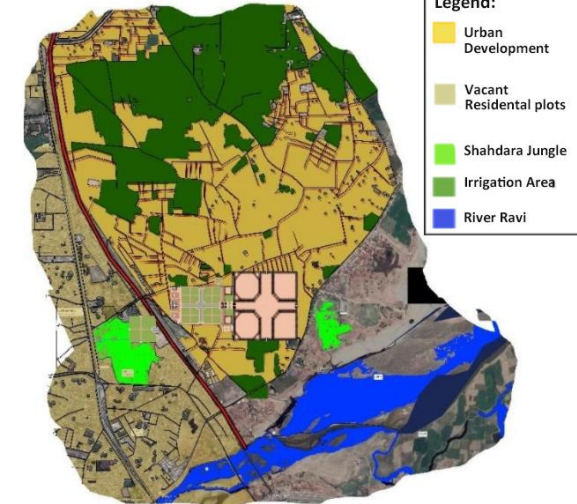
The Ordinance prohibits an authority or local body to approve any plan in relation to special premises without the prior permission of the Government or a Committee. The Ordinance further prohibits, from putting any neon signs or other kinds of advertisement on or near to any special premises without the prior permission in writing of the Government or a Committee.

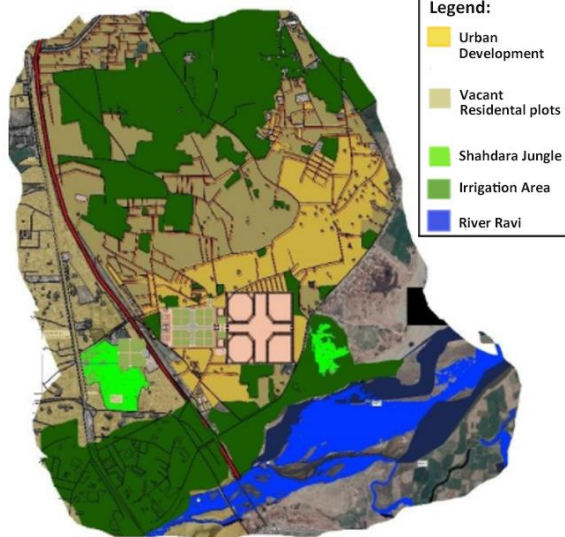
Results and Analysis

Shahdara Mughal tombs are facing serious problems due to urban sprawl. The analysis shows the impact of previous efforts to protect the monument and recommendations has been suggested to implement the conservation strategies. A study has been done to see the urban sprawl affect according to the timeline.

Table 3

Urban Growth Pattern of Lahore and Surroundings

MAPS	Concluding Remarks
 <p data-bbox="554 651 668 724"> ■ RESIDENTIAL AREA ■ CONSTRUCTION PROHIBITED AREA </p>	<p data-bbox="796 571 1219 638">The plan shows urban growth till 1867.</p> <ul data-bbox="796 644 1100 748" style="list-style-type: none"> • No railway line • No Illegal Settlements • No encroachments
 <p data-bbox="625 1081 768 1317"> Legend: ■ Urban Development ■ Vacant Residential plots ■ Shahdara Jungle ■ Irrigation Area ■ River Ravi </p>	<p data-bbox="796 1070 1219 1137">The plan shows urban growth till 1967.</p> <ul data-bbox="796 1142 1190 1579" style="list-style-type: none"> • Railway line dividing the Mughal Tombs premises in two parts. • Illegal settlements are observed. • International Charter of Venice was not followed/implemented on the respective Research Area. • No ordinance/ legislations of Pakistan, for the protection of these Monuments.



The plan shows urban growth till today.

- The societies developed in the premises of Shahdara Mughal Tombs are not planned and legal which shows the negligence of Government towards the Monuments.
- Infrastructure is also unplanned and not sensitively designed.
- The settlements have eaten up the green area of Shahdara as well.

Above plans show the following findings:

- It proves that site has the potential to expand as the residential part which is being expanded till today.
- Illegal settlements are observed in the prescribed area since 1966.
- The societies developed in the premises of Shahdara Mughal Tombs are not planned and legal which shows the negligence of Government towards the Monuments.
- There is no proper division of commercial and residential areas.
- Infrastructure is also unplanned and not sensitively designed.
- The settlements have eaten up the green area of Shahdara as well.

Recommendations

A special plan is required for Mughal tombs of Shahdara as it comes directly under the danger of heritage umbrella. Although neighborhood is very essential and plays a pivotal role in the quality of life, the selected site's neighborhood commodities have taken no role in improving the environment of this space. The implementation of the proposed plan requires the involvement and engagement of the civil society.

The historic character of this area is severely undermined by tarmac road network, overwhelming infrastructure forest and next door encroached neighborhood. The highly dense and rapid pace of construction around the tombs

has not only violated the legislation but is also problematic when it comes to issues like sanitation and ventilation within homes.

Issues and responsible agents are as follow:

Table 3

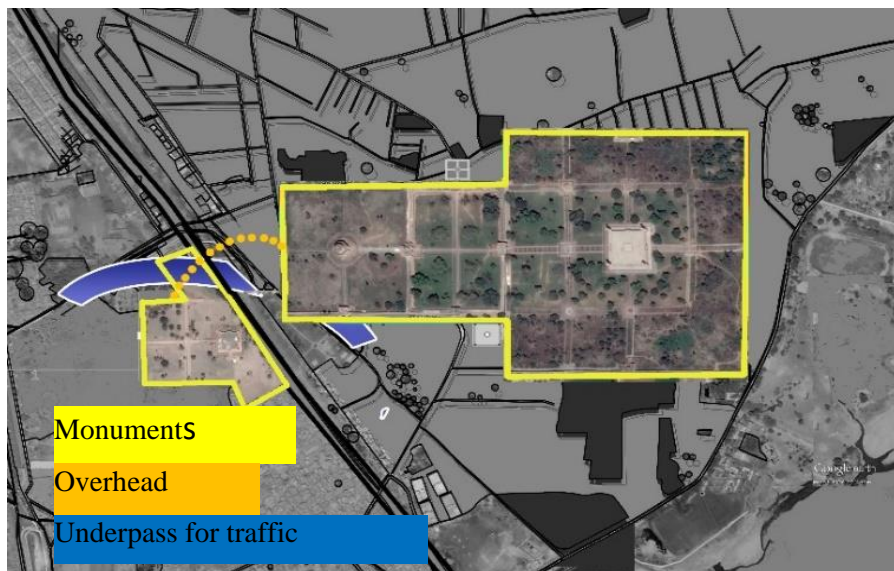
Responsible Agents for Issues around Shahdara Monuments

Sr . No	Issues	Responsible Departments
1.	Garbage Collection	Town & City government
2.	Shifting of Market/ Business	Punjab government
3.	Re-Routing	City Traffic Police
4.	Pedestrianized area	Town & City government
5.	Plantation and improvements of parks in periphery	Town & City government

This tomb is one of the few intact Mughal funerary gardens. The major issue it is facing these days is the division and fragmentation of urban development, roads and rail lines. It can be resolved through unification and insertion of pathways and other internal corridors to link Asaf Jahan’s tomb to the isolated tomb of Noor Jahan.

Figure 4

Funerary Gardens in Shahdara



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