



# Journal of Art, Architecture and Built Environment (JAABE)

Volume No.2 Issue No. 1 Spring 2019

ISSN: 2617-2690 (Print) 2617-2704 (Online)

Journal DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/jaabe>

Issue DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/jaabe.21>

Homepage: <https://sap.umt.edu.pk/jaabe/Home.aspx>

Journal QR Code:



Article: **Exploring The Colonial Era Developments of The Mall Road, Lahore**

Author(s): **Seemin Aslam**

Online Published: **Spring 2019**

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/jaabe.21.03>

Article QR Code:



Anam Ali

To cite this article: Aslam, S. (2019). Exploring the colonial era developments of the Mall Road, Lahore. *Journal of Art, Architecture and Built Environment*, 2(1), 30–46. [Crossref](#)

Copyright Information This article is open access and is distributed under the terms of Creative Commons Attribution – Share Alike 4.0 International License



A publication of the  
School of Architecture and Planning,  
University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan.

Indexing Agency



# Exploring the Colonial Era Developments of the Mall Road, Lahore

Seemin Aslam<sup>1\*</sup>

## Abstract

Lahore, a city with Aurenhammer, is the second largest city of Pakistan. The antiquities of Lahore span over three historic periods including pre-colonial, colonial and post-independence periods. Colonial period laid the foundations of modern Lahore with Indo- Islamic style of architecture. To connect Anarkali with the new British administrative area known as Mian Mir Cantonment, a public road was built that was later named Mall Road. This research paper is a descriptive evaluation of the literature available on Mall Road, Lahore and is an attempt to disclose the concept of this road and to unveil the developments on this promising public road made by the British; hence, it will provide the reader a glimpse of the Mall Road, Lahore. This paper concludes the Mall Road as the representative of a rich urban character and as a hub of different activities which made it the spine of the city during the colonial era.

**Keywords:** colonial era Lahore, origin and concept of Mall Road, public road, public square, urban development

## Introduction

Lahore is a cultural city with a rich architectural character. Lahore was the capital in the Ghaznavid period, attained glory in the Mughal era, witnessed the Sikh and British era, and finally, thrives in the post-independence era. Lahore mainly constituted of the walled city, with its monumental edifices, houses and street network belonging to the Mughal era; outside this walled city were populous enclaves adjacent to deserted mausoleums, temples and gardens, but later on these took the form of isolated settlements. A few miles from the walled city were scattered villages surrounded with agrarian landscape. This was the portrait of the diverse qualitative settings of Lahore when the British arrived. They developed the suburban areas (Glover, 2011). The British were interested in the fertile lands of the Punjab and wanted to collect the agricultural revenue; they had little direct interest in the city of Lahore itself and its urban development. From the beginning of

---

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer, School of Architecture and Planning, University of Management & Technology, Lahore, Pakistan.

\*Corresponding author: [seemin.aslam@umt.edu.pk](mailto:seemin.aslam@umt.edu.pk)

their rule they used converted buildings for administration and other purposes, rather than beginning the construction of new edifices. To highlight the British untiring works, Mall Road is selected which has a development history going back through decades. The Mall Road of the colonial era is now known as 'Shahrah-e-Quaid-e-Azam' and it was a hub of administrative, legislative, educational, religious, cultural and entertainment activities.

## 2. Research Methodology

This research is conducted to explore the colonial era Mall Road, Lahore and its developmental history. Data was collected through both means, primary and secondary. The researcher collected the primary data from Punjab Public Library Archives, where the original (written) data of the British period is available. Secondary data was collected by conducting an extensive study of literature available in the form of books, research papers, articles etc.

### 2.1. Origin and Concept of the Mall

The British built mall roads in all the cities they ruled. The origin of all mall roads is the famous 'Mall of London', primarily known as Pall Mall. The Pall Mall was one of the roads in London where the game of Pallemaille (with Italian origin; palla, ball + maglio, mallet) was played (Verma, [1998](#)).

The Anarkali area, famous for the tomb of Anarkali, was located to the west on the map of Lahore. Primarily, the 'Anarkali Station' comprised the Anarkali gardens and its adjoining areas used by the British forces. This station was already used by forces in the Sikh period partially as barracks (Chaudhry, [2000](#)).

One of the finest public roads in Pakistan, the beautiful Mall, was conceived in 1851 by the Civil Engineer Lieut. Colonel Napier, and designated as "a direct road from the Anarkali to the cantonment of the Mian Mir". Two monetary estimates were suggested for its preparation, one of Rs. 12,544 for *kankar* throughout and another of Rs. 10,428 for an underneath layer of 6" thick broken bricks with a surface of *kankar*. He was of the opinion that the economical design would be appropriately durable. However, in conveying both estimates to the Indian Government, it was

remarked by the Board of Administration that in their opinion it would be the great thoroughfare, not merely with Anarkali but also with the city; hence, in the long run it would prove more cost-effective to sanction with the best materials, the higher estimates (Punjab Government, Revenue Department Proceedings no. 51-56, March [1851](#)). In April 1851, the Indian Government acknowledged the opinion of Colonel Napier and approved the lower estimate (Revenue Department Proceedings no. 48-49, 19<sup>th</sup> April [1851](#)). It is not known when the “direct road from the Anarkali to the Mian Mir” was formally pronounced as Upper Mall; however, the maps prior to 1876 mention it as ‘Lawrence Road’.

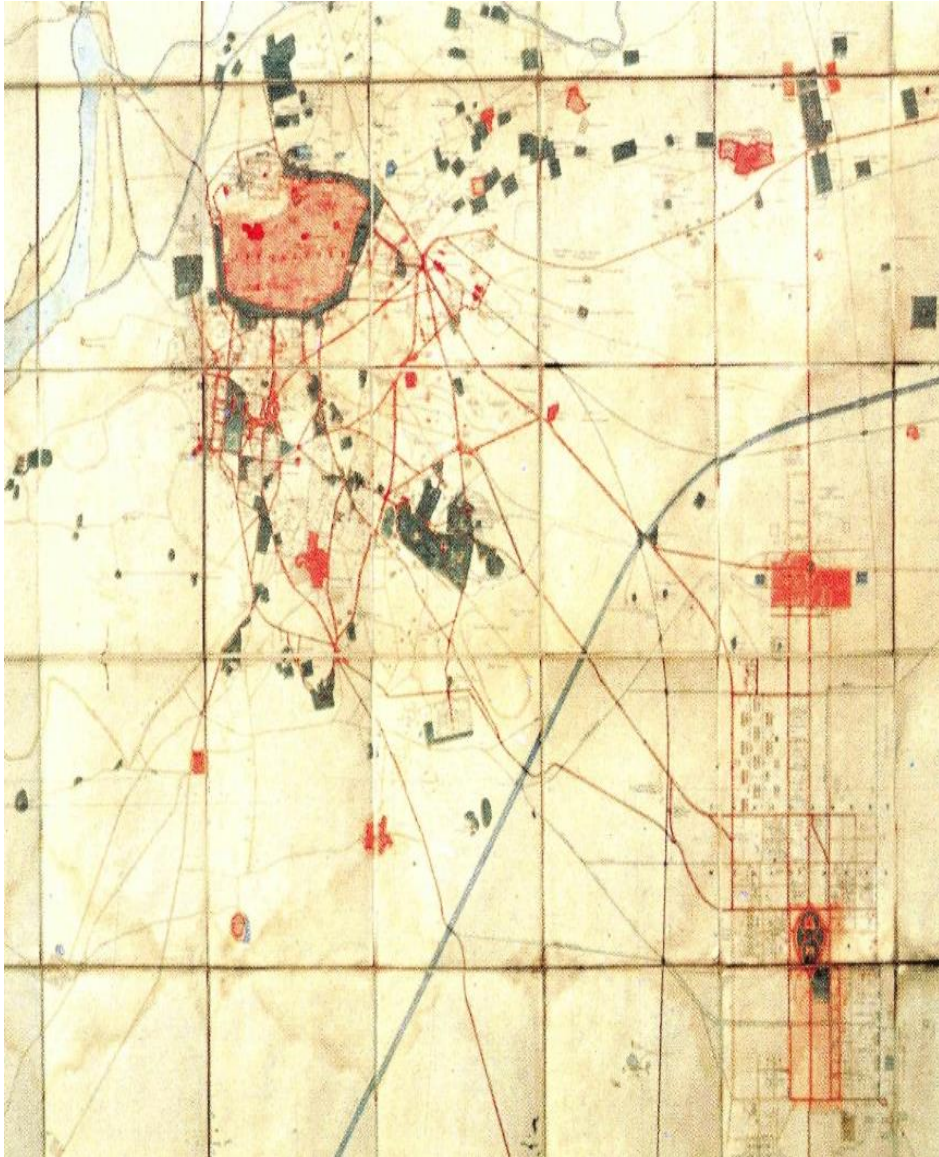
## **2.2. Mall Road Developments After 1851**

The development of the British administration along the Mall Road started with the conversion of Jamadar Khushal Singh’s house into a residency, its reconstruction commenced in 1851 and was completed in 1853 (Chaudhry, [1998](#)). An amount of Rs. 10,000/- was granted for this purpose. The building was utilized as Government House (Punjab Government, General Department, Proceedings 15<sup>th</sup> Oct [1853](#) no. 63-67). Henry Lawrence made it the residency and Sir Robert Montgomery used it as the Government House (Chaudhry, [1998](#)).

## **2.3. Mall Road: Developments in 1860s**

1860s was of historic significance for the Mall Road, as it marked the beginning of its landscape development. Map of Lahore: 1867 (Figure 1) was the first most comprehensive map after the occupation of Lahore by the British. The map shows the British development in the form of the cantonment at Mian Mir, civil station of Anarkali, gardens (now known as Bagh-e-Jinnah and Racecourse Park), railway buildings, and road infrastructure. The Anarkali area had a garden. The connection between the Upper Mall and Lower Mall near the present day Gol/Nasir Bagh, unlike today, was inclined towards south (Rehman, [2013](#)). There were initially small buildings surrounded by large open spaces. The Mall had the exhibition building, the Tollington market and central museum edifices. The major colonial edifices around Anarkali were later additions. The Mall Road in 1867 connected two marvelous edifices, that is, Lawrence and Montgomery Halls in the famous historical Lawrence Gardens. The

government house residency was situated opposite to Lawrence Gardens. This map also portrayed the layout plan of the cantonment at Mian Mir; its detailed layout is discussed with the map of 1893.



*Figure 1. Map of Lahore: 1867, source: Rehman, [2013](#)*



In 1861, it was determined to create agri-horticultural society's new garden known as 'Lawrence Gardens' on a suitable piece of ground in the vicinity of the Lieut. Governor's residence. In 1862, it was decided to build the Lawrence Hall in honor of Sir John Lawrence in the center of the botanic garden of agri-horticulture society (Punjab Government, Revenue Department, Proceedings 6<sup>th</sup> June [1863](#) no. 22-25). The segment between the Anarkali bazaar and Gol Bagh was known as Exhibition Road, in commemoration of the Punjab Exhibition held in 1864 in the building now known as Tollington market.

#### **2.4. Mall Road of 1870s**

Map of Lahore: 1875 (Figure 2) depicted two facts regarding the Mall Road. Firstly, there was only one Mall Road known as 'Old Mall', extending from the Deputy Commissioner's court to the junction of Multan Road. Secondly, the present Upper Mall was known as 'Lawrence Road' until 1875. The Old Mall and Lawrence Road were not directly connected as they are today. There was an extensive development of road infrastructure; a number of major existing roads (Hall Road, Abbott Road, Mayo Road, Mozang Road and Temple Road), which now cater the city's major traffic load, also appeared on the map of Lahore. These were the connecting roads to the Mall Road; thus this road was made the spine of the city's road infrastructure. A later addition to the map was the 'Beadon Road', that was another connecting road to the Mall Road. This map also shows a large area that was occupied by the Anarkali garden.

Now, we will have an in-depth glance at the works of 1870s. On a raised platform in front of the entrance of Lahore Museum opposite to the University of the Punjab was placed the famous gun Zamzamah, Kim's gun. It was positioned there in February 1870, on the occasion of the visit of HRH the Duke of Edinburgh to Lahore. It was made by Shah Wali Khan, a wazir of Ahmad Shah and was used in the battle of Panipat in 1761 (Latif & Bahadur, [1994](#)). One of the works of the 1870s worth discussing here is 'The Mayo School of Industrial Art', today's renowned as the 'National College of Arts' (Rehman, [2013](#)). In 1877, the campus of today's Government College University was shifted to its new building built according to the Gothic style of architecture.

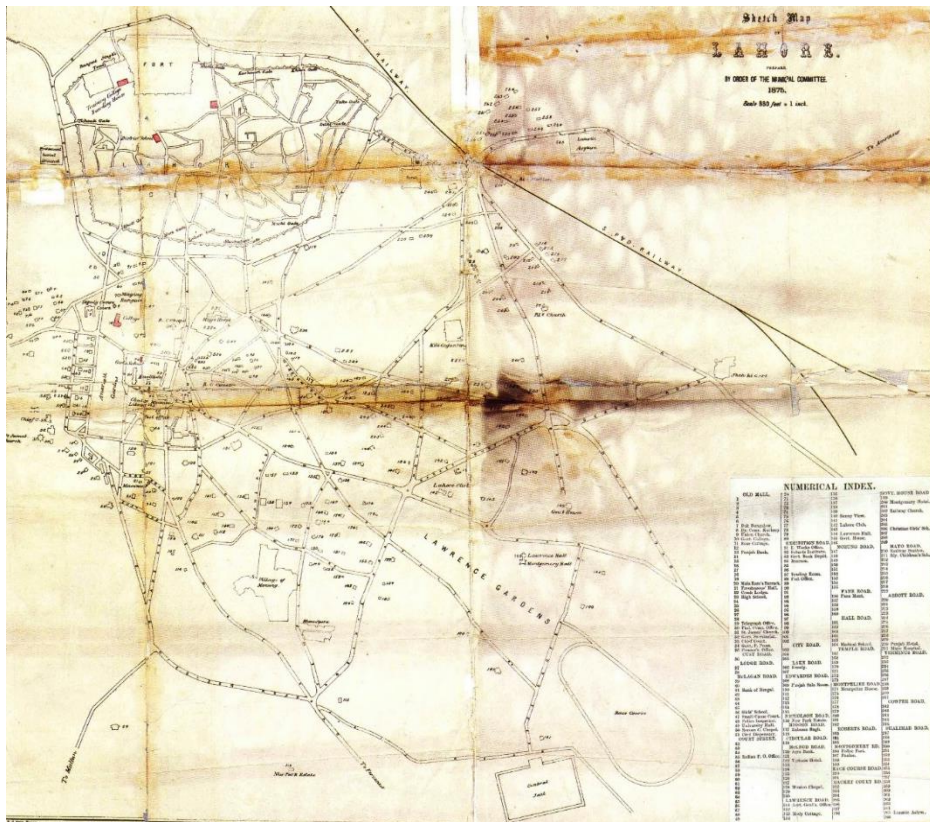


Figure 2. Map of Lahore: 1875, source: Punjab archives Civil Secretariat Lahore

H. R. Goulding, in his book ‘Old Lahore’ published in [1924](#), has described the Mall Road of **1875**. He wrote that coming from the side of Mian Mir, after crossing the canal on both sides of the road, there were only barren lands except on the left there was a double storied bungalow, then owned by HH the Maharaja of Patiala. Previously, it was Bishopsbourne and was occupied by the Anglican Bishop of Lahore for many years. Ramble down the Mall, on the right side was the Government House Residency with Lawrence Gardens, Montgomery and Lawrence Halls on the opposite side. Passing by the Government House Residency, the traveler approached Arundel, occupied by a succession of well-known officers and non-officials of Lahore. There was a plot of land between the Arundel

gateway and Kashmir Road, known as ‘Burney’s Garden’. Next, came a hideous barrack-like structure, the old Punjab club, a racket-court was present at its back which tells us why Egerton Road was famous as Racket Court Road for many years (Goulding, [1924](#)).

No buildings were present either on the opposite flank of the new Masonic Lodge or between the crossing of Charing Cross and Hall Road on the left, except Mr. Bremner’s photographic studio. Opposite to this road section were present three bungalows. The first at present is office of the Director of Industries; ‘Beau Parc’, then possessed by the Ford Motor Company, was also the office of the Military Secretary to Punjab Government in the early eighties, although it was not on the Mall fascia; now famous as Sunny View Hotel and built as a private residence by Mr. George, who was an ex-Postmaster of Lahore. In between Hall Road junction and the Lawrence statue, on the right was a single building known as the carriage shop; while two old bungalows were present on the left side known as ‘The Exchange’, that were destroyed to create space for Sir Ganga Ram’s chunk of business premises. The second building was of the Bombay Cycle and Motor Agency. A home, a square tower like building of ancient Punjabi bricks of an ex-British army officer, was in the vicinity of the Lawrence statue (Goulding, [1924](#)).

## **2.5. Mall Road: Developments of 1890s**

Map of Lahore: 1893 (Figure 3), showed the names given to different areas with the development of communities, such as Donald Town, Naulakha etc. The area of the civil station between Anarkali and Government House Residency was named Donald Town to honor Lieutenant Governor Sir Donald McLeod. The railway station area was named Naulakha. There were some more developments such as the Town Hall, G.C. University, Aitchison College, Chief Court and G.P.O building. The map also showed the loss of the large Anarkali gardens and the development of a road network in its place. The names ‘Upper Mall’ and ‘Lower Mall’ also appeared on the map. Both of these Mall Roads were not connected as they are today; the Upper Mall didn’t take a slight turn in the southward direction to connect with the Lower Mall. The road network consisting of major and minor roads in surrounding areas got denser in comparison to the road network shown by the map of 1875.



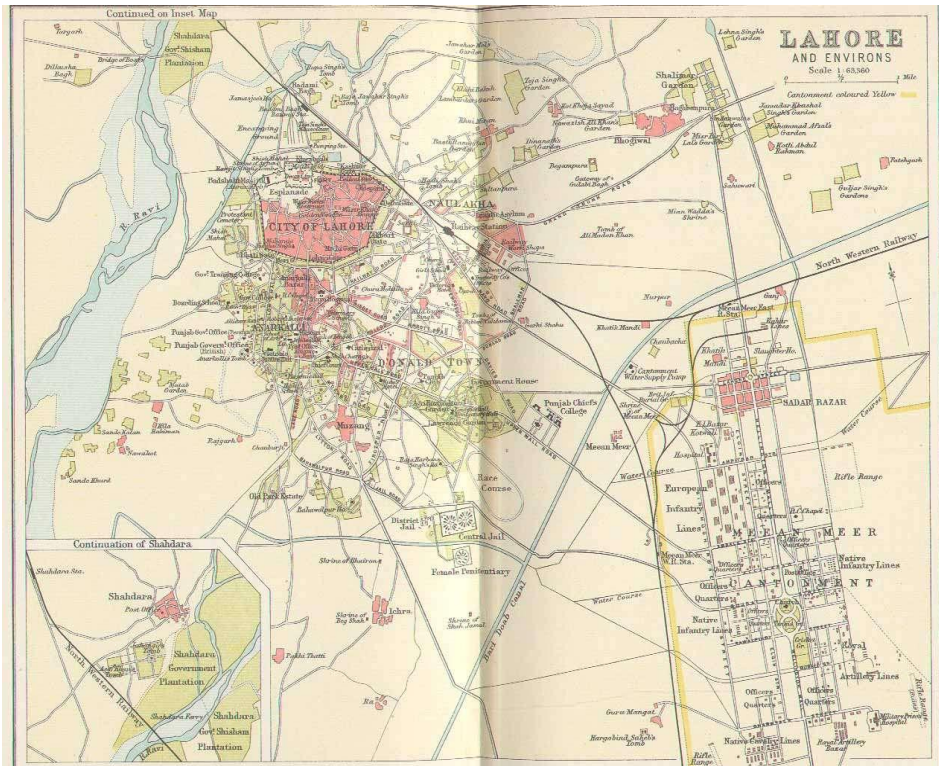


Figure 3. Map of Lahore: 1893, source: Punjab archives Civil Secretariat Lahore

Military engineers had conceived and laid out the cantonment at Mian Mir. The grid iron road network was proposed (Figure 4). Major roads were running in a north-south direction and were named after British officers (Wellington Mall, Elgin and Sir Hugh Rose streets). Minor roads were running in an east-west direction and were named after Indian cities (Amritsar, Gujrat, Murree and Lahore streets). There were also demarcated different functional areas in the layout, that is, military, commercial and recreational activities. For commercial activities of the civilians, bazars such as Saddar and Royal Artillery bazars were proposed at different locations. An oval shape ground was an element of attraction, having a church on one focal point, a tennis ground on the other focal point and a cricket ground adjacent to it. There were residential quarters for officers, a hospital and a post office (Glover, 2011).

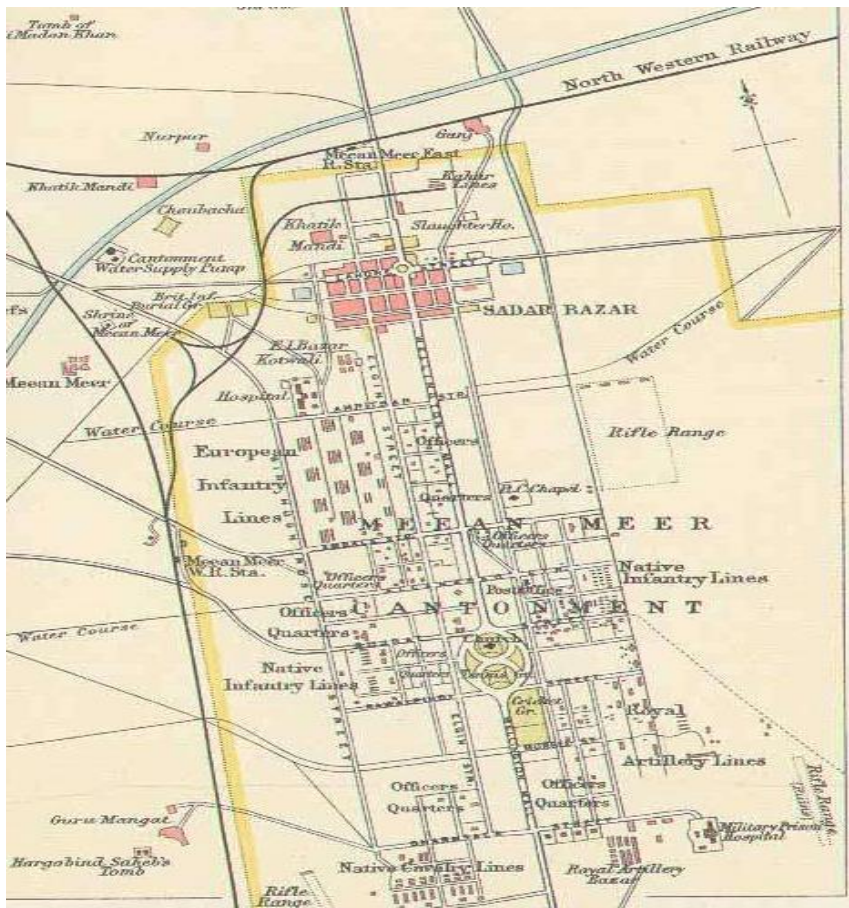


Figure 4. Cantonment Plan 1893, source Punjab Archive

## 2.6. 20<sup>th</sup> Century Colonial Era Developments on Mall Road

With the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, more public buildings began to be built. Map of Lahore: 1914 (Figure 5) showed that the densest construction outside the walled city took place around the Anarkali bazar. Government Officer's Residence and an extension and alteration of the Governor House were initiated (Rehman, [2013](#)). The General Post Office (GPO) building that stood at the junction of the Mall and the Nabha Road was constructed in 1904. The university hall at Punjab University (old campus) was built in 1905 and the university library was built in 1911 (Aijazuddin, [2004](#)).



Charing Cross also appeared on the urban fabric of the Mall Road, Lahore as shown in the Map of Lahore: 1914.



Figure 5. Map of Lahore: 1914, source: Rehman, [2013](#)

The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century marked a new era when the design of public square and urban spaces began to attract more attention (Rehman,

2013). Public square, an expression of open spaces on the urban canvas, is a powerful component of urban fabric and it plays a vital role in the built environment. Charing Cross, a public square inspired by the historical Charing Cross in London, was developed into its present form in a span of more than a century. Survey Plan of the Charing Cross: 1913 (Figure 6) showed an off-centered triangular open space with the Queen’s statue in the center and connecting the three main roads, that is, Ferozepur, Egerton and Montgomery Roads to the Upper Mall Road (Naz & Ashraf, 2008).

The commencement of an enclosed open urban space was initiated with the erection of imposing buildings including the Shah Din Building 1914 and Masonic Lodge 1917. These two identical buildings, being a mirror image of each other, created the impression of much needed order into a disorderly assemblage of streets and an obscured urban environment (Rehman, Almas, Naz & Khan, n.d.).

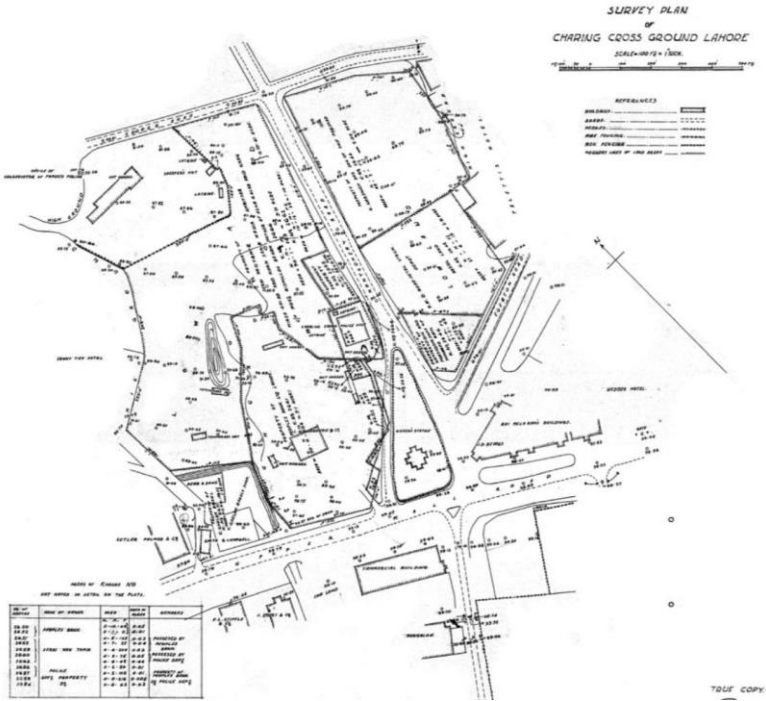


Figure 6. Survey plan of the Charing Cross Ground (1913) source: Naz and Ashraf, 2008

The transformation of the urban square took place in 1915. Improvement Plan of the Charing Cross: 1915 (Figure 7) showed that the central triangle was replaced with an oval and a semi-circular open space and all the neighboring buildings were placed around it. The remodeling of the Montgomery Road was proposed to align it directly with the Ferozpur Road. The Queens Canopy was relocated to the center of the oval part; this statue divided the oval space into four sections (Naz & Ashraf, 2008).

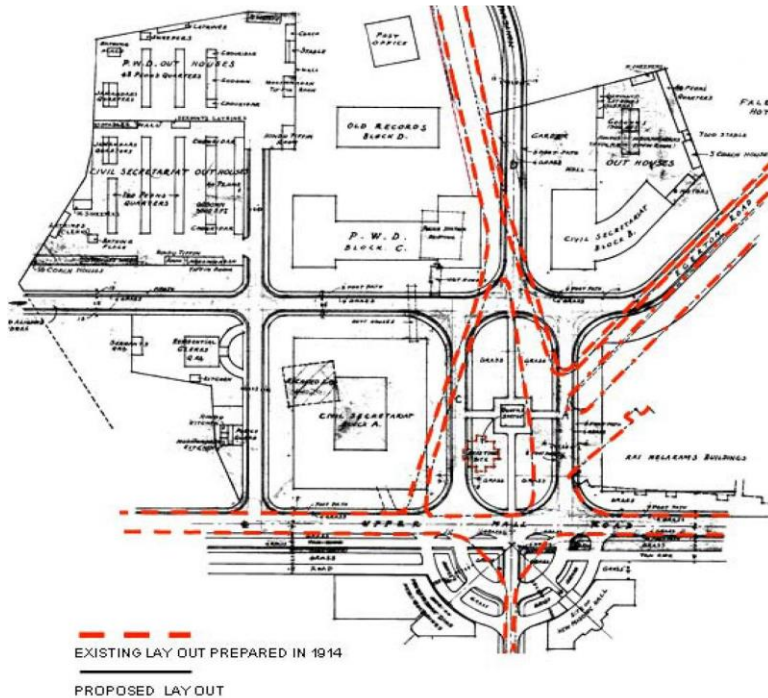


Figure 7. Improvement plan of Charing Cross (1915) source: Naz and Ashraf, 2008

Figure 8 demonstrates the existing plan of the Charing Cross. In 1981, the urban node was retitled as ‘Faisal Chowk’ to pay tribute to King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and to memorialize the 2<sup>nd</sup> Islamic Summit held in 1974 in Lahore. The neighboring buildings completely acquired the existing configuration in a span of 70 years and it is appropriate to describe that all the built structures played an influential role in transforming a road junction into a significant enclosed space (Naz & Ashraf, 2008).



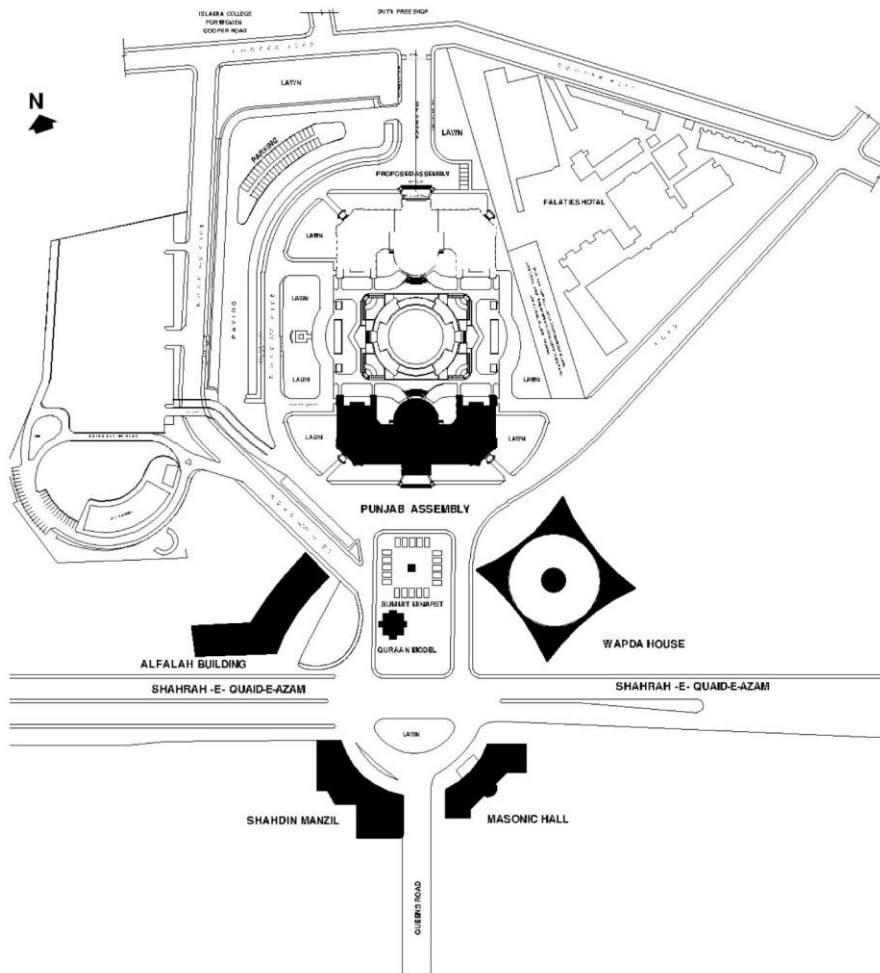


Figure 8. Existing plan of the Charing Cross. source: Naz and Ashraf, [2008](#)

In 1914, a new residential scheme named ‘Government Officer’s Residence (GOR)’ was planned on eastern side of Charring Cross, Mall Road to fulfil the residential accommodation for high officials of the Punjab Government. It was planned keeping in view the concept of ‘The Garden City’ over an area of 192 acres and was completed in 1920s (Rehman et al., [n.d.](#)).

The alignment of the Mall Road remained unchanged until 1920, where after extensive developments were made in the eastern sections of GPO crossing by Sir Ganga Ram, Executive Engineer. The Mall Road was modified on its existing lines in the personal supervision of Chief Engineer, Mr. Du Cane Smythe and Lieutenant Governor, Sir Charles Rivaz when the section of the Mall Road opposite to Mayo School of Arts was realigned and widened (Chaudhry, [2000](#)).

Lahore and its environs 1926: survey sheet no. 3 (Figure 9) showed an important feature of the junction of Upper and Lower Mall. The Upper Mall took a slight turn in the southward direction and connected with the Lower Mall by passing in front of the Town Hall. The Nasir Bagh at that time extended up to the Town Hall building (Rehman, [2013](#)).



Figure 9. Lahore map 1926, survey sheet no.3; source (Rehman, [2013](#))

### 3. Conclusion

Mall Road is a classic example of colonial era Lahore that has a developmental history to be unveiled. It is a road with various building typologies accommodating a number of functions and remains a hub of different activities with a rich architectural character. This public road shows the vision of the British who envisaged its conception keeping the

future scenario in view. The extensive road infrastructure development in the form of major roads that are connecting roads to the Mall Road is now catering the city's major traffic load; thus making Mall Road the spine of the city's road infrastructure. From the conception of Mall Road to the erection of public buildings in a sequence according to the need of time, the landscape development and designing of urban open spaces in the form of public square, all of these show how the British transformed the urban development of Lahore.

### References

- Aijazuddin, F. S. (2004). *Lahore recollected: An album*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel.
- Chaudhry, N. A. (1998). *Lahore: Glimpses of a glorious heritage*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel.
- Chaudhry, N. A. (2000). *A short history of Lahore and some of its monuments*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel.
- Glover, W. J. (2011). *Making Lahore modern*. Karachi: Oxford Press.
- Goulding, H. R. (1924). *Old Lahore: Reminiscences of a resident*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel.
- Latif, S. M., & Bahadur, K. (1994). *Lahore history architectural remains and antiquities*. Lahore: Sange-Meel.
- Naz, N., & Ashraf, Z. (2008). *Transformation of urban open spaces of Lahore: From charring cross to Faisal square*. Pakistan Journal of Engineering & Applied Science, 2(January),
- Punjab Government, Revenue Department. (1863). *Department revenue proceedings 6<sup>th</sup> June 1863* (Pt. no. 22-25). Unpublished manuscript. Civil Secretariat, Lahore, Pakistan.
- Punjab Government, General Department. (1853). *Department general proceedings 15<sup>th</sup> October 1853* (Pt. no. 63-67). Unpublished manuscript. Civil Secretariat, Lahore, Pakistan.
- Punjab Government. (1851). *Department revenue proceedings March 1851* (Pt. no. 51-56). Unpublished manuscript. Civil Secretariat, Lahore, Pakistan.

Punjab Government. (1851). *Department revenue proceedings 19<sup>th</sup> April 1851* (Pt. no. 48-49). Unpublished manuscript. Civil Secretariat, Lahore, Pakistan.

Rehman, A. (2013). *Mapping Lahore tracing historical geography of a city through maps*. Lahore: Al-Mezaan.

Rehman, R., Almas, R., Naz, N., Khan, M. A. (n.d.). Basil Martin Sullivan: Architectural contributions of a legendary British architect of colonial Lahore. *GBER*, 8(1), 2–22.

Verma, D. (1998). *Word Origins: Enrich your Grammar*. New Dehli: Sterling.