

Art and Architecture of Pharwala Fort, Islamabad

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This research presents the art and architecture of the Pharwala fort which is lying in oblivion, mourning its glorious past. Detailed study of the art and architecture of the fort has been undertaken recently on emergency basis, keeping in view its present highly dilapidated state of preservation. The art and architecture of the fort is mostly damaged but the remains and ruins are good enough to explain the story of its hey-days and still needed to be documented. The researcher visited the Gakhar Period sites and forts in the region, with focus on the Pharwala Fort. The fort is of great significance not only for its architectural glory and ornamentation, but on account of its greatly important role in shaping the history of the region. It is also viewed in comparison with other forts of the Potohar region, because it is very rarely discussed topic. Only general and historical background of the fort was discussed since colonial era but no archaeological documentation was undertaken before this work. This research focuses on architectural and artistic aspects of the monument as well as draws attention towards its rapidly deteriorating situation and determines its dire state of conservation and preservation. (All the photos and plans are prepared by researchers). The fort was handed over to Federal Department of Archaeology on 28-09-1980 under the Antiquity Act of 1975 by the Col Zahur Sultan Akhtar who is the chief of the Gakhars tribe.

Keywords: Gakhar tribe, Pharwala Fort, Military Art & Architecture

Pharwala fort was built by Kaigohar, the first Gakhar Chief who gathered all the potential of the clan and embarked upon this visibly challenging task in 1005 C.E.¹. The fort is located 20 Km from the Airport Chowk on the left bank of river Soan, about 30 Km on north-east of Islamabad(Adjacent to a small village Bagh Jogian). One has to pass through the shallow water of River Soan to reach the fort. It is ideally located and represents a model of typical military fort with all the features of a great safe-haven for a defensive fort.

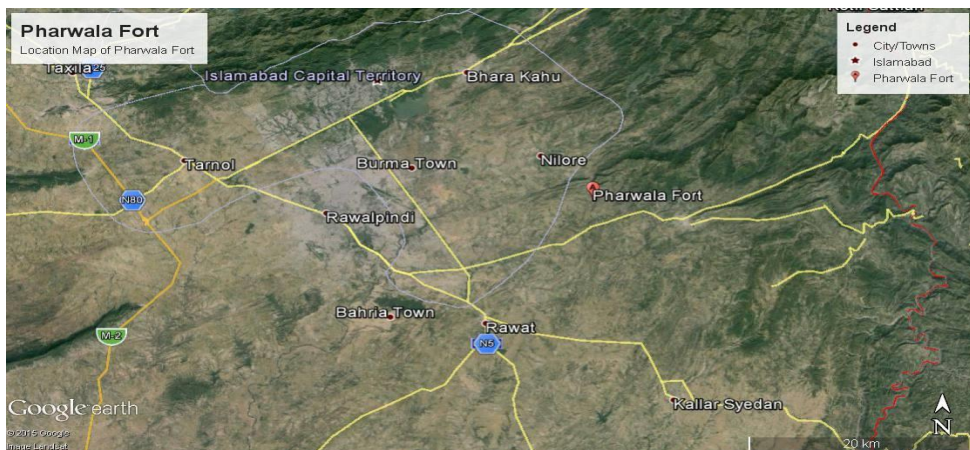


Fig. 1. Location Map of the Pharwala Fort (Google Earth)

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¹Personal communication with Col. Zahur Sultan, a person from Pharwala

Original plan of the fort is following the contour of the hills and the builders did not try to trim the tops, nooks and corners but utilised the space quite well to shape this naturally defended fort. It also resembles the Samarqand fort (Distt.Chakwal) in its location and landscape. Both hold strong strategic positions (Dar, 2000)². This paper focuses on the documentation and study of the surviving features as well as importance of the monument with retrospect of Gakhars and Islamic architecture.

Ancient Routes of Gakhars

This scheme of routes is the common factor that makes Taxila as a prime centre and the lay out shows that it was quite easy and dependable way to supervise the region and to maintain a check over the transportation coming from outside of Taxila.

Same way was adopted by the *Ghakhars* when they took over and set their seat of power at Pharwala, they followed the ancient routes. The strategic position of Pahrwala was so favourable that the traffic coming from Kashmir was also controlled through the fort. It is located at the ancient route called Shahrah-i Azam, also known as Utarpatha (Northern road), and Dakishinapatha (Southern road), explains Dr. Dar while referring Panini' (500B.C). He is of the view that Utarpatha probably was the same as Kautaliya's Haimavatapatha running from Valikh (Balakh to Bacteria) to Taxila". It came to be known as Grand Trunk Road (GTR) during Suri period and also as *Gernaili Sar'ak* (Dar, 1994).

During English period some changes were made, new road was started from Nikalson Monument near Giri fort, where 500 years ago Sultan Mehmud of Ghazna and Sultan Masud had stayed. From Attock, two roads originated at that time; one leading to the Salt Ranges towards Kashmir and the other moved from Jhelum to Kashmir (Rashid:2001). The second road was also used by Sultan Muhammad Ghouri and the route ends at Dhamyak. Dhamyak was the centre of Gakhar country: the place is famous for having tomb of Muhammad Ghouri, and also it is believed he was assassinated there by Gakhars, being a place in the heart of Gakhar country strengthens this argument (Nijar, 2008:102). From Khojeki Baoli (Jhelum) the road goes to Domeli and turns northward to Tarraki till it reaches the mountain ranges. Then it moves eastwards till the hills meet the plains. From here it moves northward along a nullah and then it reaches *Jalal Sar* (place that is associated with Gakhar ruler jalal), then *Dhamyak*, then *Pakka Serai*. From this point one can go to Rewat on the left or to Pharwala to the right. From Pharwala one can go to Shah Alladitta and to Giri in the Taxila Valley (Dar, 2000). Now Shah Allah Ditta road is called old Margallah Pass and at one side of Margallah is Taxila and on the other is Pharwala. From there one can go directly to Serai Kala and thence to Hasan Abdal for onward journey to Kashmir, to northern areas or to Peshawar to the west. Hasan Abdal was the turning point for travelling towards Kashmir.

Connection with Silk-Route

Dar writes that "*Utarpatha* which then formed a part of Silk Road" Dar (2000) shows that *Ghakhars* were sharing their domain with the most important international trade route "Silk Road" as it is quite obvious that Ghakhars were ruling in neighbourhood of Silk Route. So, their link with Silk Route is most possible. If it was not direct, it might be through tributaries. They were not so keen towards economical proceedings, remained indulged in fighting with internal and external foes so their interest in socio-economic activities is mentioned nowhere. As per available textual record they appeared as barbarians and road robbers. They were used to threaten every passing convoy to collect booty from them. At one point of this route is located Taxila in the middle is Islamabad and then Pharwala, all leading to Sharah-e-Azam. These all centers of power are linked with other area through ancient routes.

An account of H.C Verma in "Medieval routes to India" explains the geographical and strategic position of *Pharwala*. Recollecting the Mughal emperor Babur he writes: "His route now preceded to *Kacha-Kot* (Haro River) Babur, it appears, had abandoned the Sha-Rah road and taken the road by Parhala (Pharwala) to Lahore. He gives the following reason for taking this route "the rainfall had been somewhat scant in the plains but seemed to have been good in the cultivated lands along the hill skirts for these reasons we took the road for

²Personal communication with Dr. Saif-ur-Rehman Dar who once conducted the survey of Samarqand fort

Sialkot along the skirt hills opposite Hati Kakar's country i.e Parhala (Hathi Ghakhar ruler of Ghakhars). This road perhaps met the Sha Rah near Rohtas on the Jhelum and ended there" (Verma, 1978: 110-111).

The Ghakhars ruled the whole Potohar Region that was then called Northern India (northern portion of Cis-Indus Salt-range Tract), they were contemporary to Awans and Janjuas, ancient rulers of the southern portion of the same tract (Ibbeston, 1883:165). Griffin says No Punjab tribe is more frequently mentioned in Indian history than Gakhars, they ruled for many hundred years. The reason of their strength was, they were united among themselves They were fond of wars and fights so the prominent feature of their domain was the military architecture, ruins of their monuments are witness to it (Griffin, 1890:351).

Why Military Monuments in Hilly Areas?

In *Arthashastra* word *Giri-Durga* or *Parvat-durga* is used for hilly forts (Nossov: 2006; 8). Forts were strategically planned, not always built on the main routes but their construction in the hilly areas is considered more favourable to chase enemies because it is difficult to run away from narrow lanes. Moreover, hillocks are most advantageous for hideouts and gorilla wars as compared to plains, because the area is open and perceptible from very far. That is the reason that forts were preferred to be built on hillocks. Potohar region snatched attention of warriors in all periods of time, Alexander too entered through this route. Some important buildings of his time are still witness of real grandeur of the era.

Plan of the Fort

The fort is irregular in plan, covers an area of 36 acres. This hill fort is atop a steep hill. Its coordinates are 33.371°N 73.175°E, at a height of 1728ft. and 1783 ft. above the sea level above the Soan River, flowing close to it. The massive monument was built over the steep rocks protruding into the perennial river Soan that protects it on the West, a natural blessing. It ensured uninterrupted water supply into the fort both for inhabitants and beasts during wars.

Some of the forts and monuments were protected by providing artificial ditches and dikes to channelize water around the building to make it tougher for enemy to cross and approach the fort. We find deep ditches dug all around the fortification wall of the Rohtas fort.

It was equally favourable for daily needs along with wars, for, enemy can become easy prey while quenching thirst of his men and beasts, which can be easily fired from inside the fort. The river gets narrower in this terrain and enemy can be easily chased. A fortification wall is running all around the fort with six arched entrance gates namely Lashkari Gate, Begum Gate, Hathi Gate, Qila Gate, Bagh Gate and Ziarat Gate. Arches of the gates are adorned with traditions Islamic patterns of ornamentation.

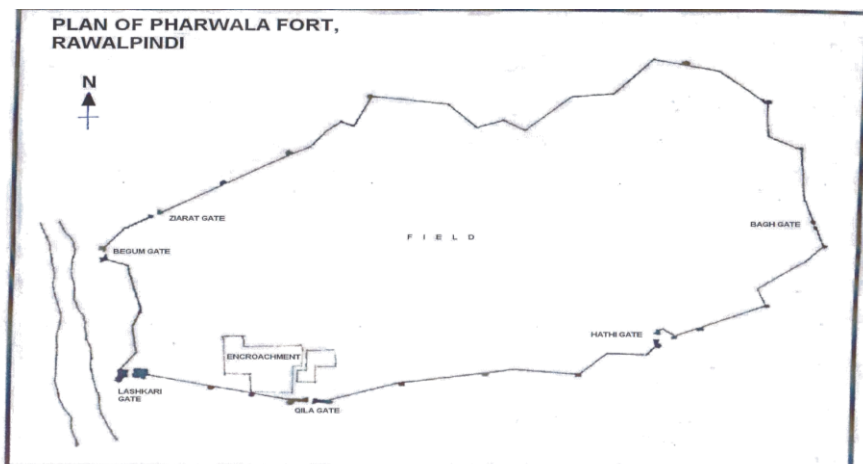


Fig. 2: Plan of the Pharwala Fort

Construction Material

In olden times edifices were constructed out of locally available material and so is *Pharwala Fort*. Lime stone was the only material available abundantly in this region, having lifetime sturdiness, the fort is also constructed with Lime Stone. Binding material was a mixture of lime plaster, mud and brick dust (Pulverized bricks mixed with lime commonly known as *Surkhi* plaster) all mixed with egg white and used as construction material³. Traces of lime plaster are still visible at some points. Lime *Surkhi* plaster along with gypsum was used for the first time in Banbhore (Dybal) and Mansura because with the arrival of 'Arabs' construction material was changed and then in the Giri fort and also in the mosque of the Ghaznavid at Taxila (Rizvi, 2012). It is meant the use of lime plaster for the very first Muslim monuments not first time in Sub-Continent because the use of lime can be traced far back to Indus and Gandhara Period. Use of Gypsum had also been known from Indus and *Surkhi* had been employed at Mohenjo Daro only. Author also endorses Irfan Habib's stance that medieval use of gypsum and lime mortar was became common due to the derived combination of building methods from Byzantium and Sassanid Iran under the Arab Caliphates (Rezavi, 2012:9-10).

Sharma claims that the use of lime was very limited in India before Muslims but after their arrival use of lime was extensively used in India. It was not only used as binding material but to plaster surface or for incised decoration and also for encaustic enamel work (Sharma, 2005:15). But usage of lime material in Sub-continent can be traced back to Buddhist Period. Buddhist monuments in Taxila like Dharma Rajika stupa, Jinna Wali Dheri, Badalpur and Julian monastery, Takht-i-Bahi monastery, Jamal Garhi in Mardan etc. are still bearing the evidences of the use of lime plaster and lime mortar. According to Samad the decorations were made from molded lime plaster, a medium, which was increasingly used in the later phases of Gandhara art in Taxila Region (Samad, 2011:161).

Construction Technique

Both dressed and undressed stones are used for construction of the fort. Percy Brown states that dressed stone masonry was introduced in India by Muslims in their buildings. He is of the view that early monuments of the Mohammadan Era, in other regions were built of bricks, plaster and rubble but the excellence of Indo-Islamic architecture was because of the skill of Indian craftsmen in stone masonry. Besides skill these were scientific and artistic productions (Brown, 1956:2).



Fig. 3 General view of fortification wall, Pharwala Fort

Fortification Wall of the Pharwala Fort

Fortification wall (Fig.3-4) is one of the integral parts of forts (Hassan 2005:10) because real defence of any fort lies in the impregnability of its fortifications. Structure, height and thickness of the walls depend upon the location, perceived threats, available construction material and availability of the finances. Naravane is of the view that the massive walls were more to satisfy ego and image of the king rather than meeting purely military requirements. Fortification consists of massive walls, which are pierced with monumental gateways. Provision of a rampart is somewhat necessary to strengthen walls of hilly monuments and supportive in patrolling or keeping

³ Personal communication with sultan Zahur Akhtar descendant of last independent ruler of Gakhars, Sultan Muqarab Khan

an eye on attackers. Otherwise defenders cannot fire the advancing enemy from bastions. It also makes escalating of enemy difficult. (Naravane, 1995:20). This technique was very much in practice during medieval period in India, Tughlaqabad city was provided with ramparts (Nossov, 2006). To build such huge and tough walls, and a deeply dug base is required, which was applied here.

Height of fortification walls is generally 28-30 ft. However, in *Pharwala* walls follow natural contour of the hills, height of the walls differs at different points. Though the wall has crumbled to dust at most of the points, still its intact parts are good enough to narrate original charisma of its past.

It is surmounted by battlements/merlons at irregular intervals, found in almost all the military forts throughout time, even these are used in residential forts as well, like in Lahore fort. False merlons are also used, but just for ornamental purpose. The wall is also provided with bastions from all around, total seventeen in number (Hassan, 2005). Among them a few are fully intact and some others are in advanced stage of crumbling. Broken parts of the wall reveal that it is double faced; outer and inner walls, while in between gap is filled with rubble.

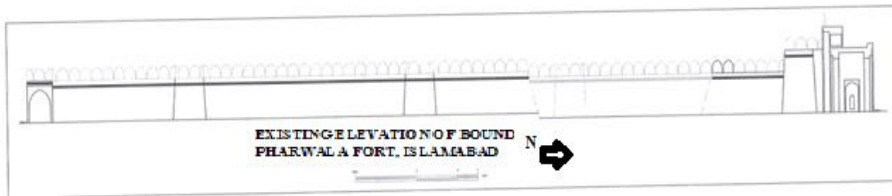


Fig. 4: Front Elevation of the fortification wall

Bastions of the Fort



Fig. 5 View of Bastions Flanking the Lashkari Gate, Pharwala Fort

Bastions are (Fig. 5, 4) also part and parcel of military architecture and usually built along the perimeter walls of buildings at regular intervals or according to the feasibility of the structure. Naravane (1995:20) explains that the bastions should be big enough to hold a body of troops and to mount a gun. Due to contour of the hilly terrain on which the fortification has been raised, bastions are not at regular intervals. Irregularly positioned bastions are close to each other and in defenceless places, for, topography delivers natural hitches. Bastions have usual tapering and semi-circular shape; having wide bases, gradually grow narrower by getting conical shape towards top, with highly pronounced projections. Many of the bastions are varying in shape; these seem to have inspired from the sloping height of the hillock on which the fort is situated.

The function of the bastion is to strengthen fortification wall and make it sustainable for years, and also serve during the time of war. The bastions of the Lashkari gate are measuring 25' 8" in height and 13' .9" in width, wall adjoining the bastions near the gate measures 41.1.3/4". This was the standard of construction mode. However, their height increases at some places according to topography of the hillock, and distance

between them is of more than 15 ft. Evidences show that fortification walls and bastions were surmounted by the merlons with loopholes in them for shooting.

Dressed stones of different sizes are fixed in a course, while bases of bastions are half filled with rubble. A slight dado level emerges at their lowest register and slight curvy flow leads to the top. During medieval era, solid talus⁴ or sloping base was very much in practice; one can see its implication in buildings of Tughlaq period, especially in military architecture. As a result of Muslim influence, for example at the base of the walls and bastions of Tughlaqabad, the third city of Delhi, (built 1321-25), are most pronounced (Nossov, 2006:27-29) that was practiced all over the region. The tapering height does not allow any intruder to get into the fort, for it will cause a bend in the ladder making it fragile as soon as weight is placed on it.

Merlons/ Loopholes/Machicolations



Fig.6 General View of Merlons/Loopholes/Machicolation

Merlons or battlements (Fig.6, 4) have been provided all around, at the top of the fortification wall. Presently the fortification wall is in bad state of preservation and fully collapsed at several places. But remaining part of it is good enough to identify its original state. It proves that fortification wall was once edged with a parapet that protected a walk-way along the inner side of the top.

In military forts, fortresses and monuments, parapet usually consists of merlons and crenels forming space between two merlons⁵. The four different forms of merlons are as follows:

- Bud-like
- Lobe-shape
- Upside down tear drop shape

But among these most common was flame like shape. It is believed that this flame shape flourished during Muslim period in Siri Fort built by Ala-ud-Din khilji in the second city of Delhi. (Nossov, 2006). Here, in Pharwala fort, we find same flame shaped merlons following the regular crenel order after every merlon. Some of the merlons are semicircular in shape, pointed at the top as it was typical form of merlons in India during medieval period. But at different points there is a series of merlons of typical flame shaped and edged merlons. The fort remained under the use of different peer groups and it was rebuilt or renovated during the period of Hathi Khan Gakhar (1524 A.D/9331 A.H). Another factor of variety is due to the techniques of different masons they hired from different backgrounds and expertise. These merlons have been pierced with two archery holes /embrasures pattern runs in all directions. It is square in shape, while at some points it varies to round and slightly triangular shapes. Width of the loopholes is 10 cm and height is 80-90 cm, easy to be used to fire long distant target.

Parapet of the wall is built with two tiers of loopholes, one is formed by holes in merlons of the parapet, and the other by slot machicolations directed downward from the walk way and emerging immediately under the parapet. These loopholes are narrow and vertical slits planned just for the archers. The height of the lower loopholes in outer wall is about 190 cm. These were used to stop on foot invaders, for hot water or boiling

⁴Talus: The sloping or scarped face at the base of a fortifications wall.

⁵The solid widths between the crenels are called merlons; merlons are also called cops and kneelers. A wall with battlements is said to be crenelated or embattled

oil is poured on the enemies. The design of double tier of loopholes is the characteristic of the medieval period, an apparent example of this scheme is at the tomb of Ghayas-ud-Din in Tughlaqabad (Nossov, 2006).

A frieze (Fig. 7) is separating the merlons from the lower part of the wall and is studded with minor dentals at bottom. This may be a representation of the tradition of spikes or just for the decorative purpose. Pharwala fort is not in single mode of construction, for instance while building merlons, bastions and curtain walls, stereotypical architectural traditions were followed by all means, depending upon the material and economical resources available at that time. The intact part of the wall shows that there was a solid parapet all around and true merlons were provided with regular intervals. The standard merlons have semicircular, slightly sharpened flame like shape in the upper half.



Fig. 7 View of merlons of Pharwala Fort

Merlons are pointed at top and semi-circular in shape, typical Indian style measuring $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft in thickness and 5 x5 ft. in height and width. Walkways are firm evidence to suggest that these were built only for the movements of the soldiers during warlike situations to move quickly behind these battlements which protected them from enemy fire.

Shape of the loopholes/ archery holes is normally vertical throughout the fort although some of the horizontal loopholes are also in use but these vertical loopholes were quite helpful to raise the weapon and with horizontal different ranges were covered to fire the enemy.

Gates

Lashkari Gate



Fig. 8 Lashkari Gate of Pharwala Fort

Lashkari gate (Fig.8) is located at the south-western corner of the fort and is in a good state of preservation as compared to other gates. It is quite close to the left bank of the River Soan. It is a majestic piece of architecture providing grand entrance. Approaching the fort from the west, one can easily see this gate standing on the other side of the river. Before entering the fort this is the magnificent and welcoming feature of the edifice. It is measuring 30 in width and 39-4" in height. A slender base is provided for the gate that is to raise a platform in order to level the hilly surface and to create balance so that a huge majestic gate could be erected. It is provided with projected façade with three arched-entrance gate flanked by two huge towers to house a number of defensive features including meurtriers, draw bridges, port cullises, etc.

Triple arched entrance is delivered within a square frame measuring 10-10" in width and 19- 10³/₈" in height, followed by two more frames, width of this framed lay is 10 ft. and 4 feet recessed inside. Thick projections are supporting arched entrance. Spandrels are simple, without any adornment. There is nothing carved or relief work above the spandrels, only a line above the frame that is a thin beam decorated with brackets, a tradition borrowed from buildings of Tughlaq period, made as spikes specifically as elephant spikes in some monuments. These brackets are different as these look more like dentals than brackets.

Shape of the arches is true, pointed, and four-centered, springing from impost blocks measuring 3 ft. in width. Four-centered arch is also known as depressed arch or "Tudor" arch. This technical arch was borrowed from Timurid architecture after the decline of Saljuqian tradition of horse-shoe arch. This arch was being used in Timurid buildings universally and was also adopted by the masons of the northern India, which later proved to be technically and scientifically sound, so, extensively used in the religious and secular buildings of Sayeds and Lodhis (Brown, 1956:7). It is frequently used in Mughal monuments especially in the edifices of Akbar's era. To give a sharp and fine shape to an arch, dressed stones are used in diagonal and slanting manner. Thin fabric and sharp edged stones bring an accurate shape to the arches. Arches are constructed with corbelling which gradually get narrowed down towards key stone. Above the frame there is a damaged and destroyed arched opening measuring 3-8" x 4-8" that shows the presence of a room which has collapsed now. A similar room is still visible in a gateway of Rohtas fort.

At both sides of the façade there are two blind arches of similar shape. These arches are also fixed within a square frame. Due to crumbling condition, it is difficult to determine the presence of the decorative motifs over arches. These are not functional arches just for decorative purpose or to break monotony of the structure. Bottom of the façade is ornamented with a series of square panels; five at each side. These panels are above the base and over these panels a beam is provided, from where frame of the door and arched entrance takes start.

Lashkari gate is a double arched gate with false arches of small sizes, fixed within square frames are adorned both sides of the façade. These are four in number two at each side.

Features of the Lashkari Gate



Fig. 9 Small alcove on Lashkari Gate Pharwala Fort

There is a small alcove (Fig.9) in the shape of blind arch on the pier parallel southern spandrel of the Lashkari gate, adorned with six foliated rosettes on either side of the spandrels. Slightly recessed arch of the alcove is carved in white sand stone and fixed within the square frame since, there is symmetry in Islamic architecture but the miniature blind arch is only at one side of the gate. It might be present originally on the other side as well, but with the passage of time, during repair it would have damaged or ignored by the masons to be reconstructed. Blind arch is very small in comparison to the huge gate, not easy to measure but approximately according to the visual measurement it appears to be 1.5"x 1.5". This is very fascinating, because this feature is not present anywhere throughout the architecture of the fort. The rosettes are in the shape of Monocot flower family. Purpose of the alcove is not clear it seems to be just for ornamental.

Inside the gate deep recessed niches of more than human length are on either side, considered by Hassan (2005) as rooms for watchmen. But according to researcher's observation space is not enough to accommodate a man because it is only suitable for sitting. One can say it must be built for the purpose to break monotony and to provide surface vacuum in context of material economy.

By applying this technique, material, money, labour and time can be saved. The arched niches are also fixed within square frames and are multi-faceted. Shape of the arched niches is pointed and curvature takes start from impost blocks made of dressed stone. One among these is true pointed arch and the other is tunnel vaulted. Its key stone has fallen down. The material used in the furnishing of the gate is lime Surkhi plaster.

Miniature Alcove



Fig. 10 Miniature alcove inside the niche

Interior of the right niche is decorated with a miniature alcove (Fig. 10), forming true pointed arch curve. Cut stones of small sizes are positioned in radiating manner. Arch is shallow, does not contain a space to host an oil lamp. It seems non-functional; there is no symbolic use of it. It was built either from aesthetic point or to represent some sacred element, as this feature is mostly applied in the sacred Muslim architectural monuments, such as mosques.

Ceiling of the Lashakari Gate

The ceiling of the gate is made of stone and lime plaster is also used. Stones of different sizes are fitted and set in horizontal and vertical corners. Small stones are set in slanting or diagonal direction in order to support the curvature of the ceiling of the arch, that is semi vaulted and forming half squinch inside. Vaulted ceiling of arch is made of concentric technique. Small and big stones are used in concentric circles to knit a fabric for the roof to make it symmetrical and balanced. Structure was plastered with lime.

Slanting ceiling on the sides is supporting the flat and curvy zone of the roof. Concentric arrangement turns the structure narrower towards the central part of the ceiling, where it develops its curve. Thus a strong and stable ceiling has been provided that could have borne the burden of the upper storey, built of guard's rooms along a balcony, where watchmen stationed twenty four hours a day.

The upper side of the roof is plain. Structure once built over has collapsed. Upper portion was approached by a staircase which was built at the left side, inside the fort. This staircase led from a room built at the back of the bastion.

Hinges in the Ceiling

At the two corners of the ceiling of the gate, round stone slabs with a hole fixed within the structure are evident. These stones were serving as hinges to support the heavy doors to slide or swing. This gate resembles with the gate of Rewat fort surrounded by two bastions. According to Hassan this gate was specified for the movements of the fighting troops and infantry (Hasan: 2005). For this purpose this gate suited them very well, as it is on a point to target the enemy moving towards the fort. Perhaps this was the reason behind its

nomenclature, as group of fighters is called as Lashkar in Urdu. Another tell-tale belongs to this gate is that the gate was built during the period of Lashkar Khan, a Gakhar ruler from Pharwala, so, named after him.⁶

No proper passage is there, after crossing the river. One has to find one's own way through large size boulders to reach the gate. Large size boulders help as a staircase to approach the gateway. Boulders adjacent to the corners of the gateway or nooks of fortification wall are scraped. According to Kumar, (2003) to build forts on hillocks, sides of the hills were scraped for construction purposes, not paths of approach, usually left with natural rocks exposed.



Fig. 11 Ground Plan of Lashkari Fort Pharwala Fort

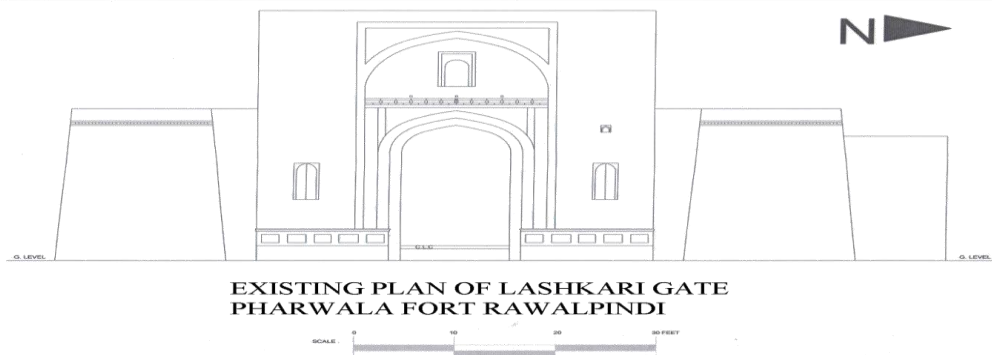


Fig. 12 Elevation Plan of Lashkari Gate

Relief Painting of the Mansion in Pharwala Fort⁷

Pharwala fort was badly damaged by the Sikhs when Gakhars were defeated by them. Presently no structural remains of residential area are left, only a specimen of relief is found from the descendent of the fort. The worth watching relief depicts one of the original mansions of the fort, as mentioned by Babur in his memoirs Baburnama. He says that he stayed at the palace of Tatar Khan in the fort. This mansion, according to Akhtar, was behind the Lashkari Gate overlooking Soan on the west side. Here Kamran Mirza was imprisoned, and blinded at the orders of his brother Hamayoun⁸. In the relief, door hosting a room was the exact spot where Kamran was imprisoned. Relief sculpture depicts the original plan and shape of the mansion, consisting of triple-arched entrance veranda from where a staircase leads to the roof of the room. Room adjacent to veranda was

⁶Personal Communication with Chief of Gakhars, Sultan Zahur Akhtar, descendant of last independent ruler of Gakhars, sultan Muqarab Khan

⁷Antiquity from Pharwala in custody of Sultan Zahur Akhtar

⁸Personal communication with Sultna Zahur Akhtar

domed and the dome was standing on a drum, resembling the dome of Asif Khan in the tomb complex of Jahangir in Lahore. Above the curvature dome varies in shape than Asif Jah's tomb. It was like a pointed dome. Pointed dome was practiced in tomb of Ghay-ud-Din in Tuglaqabad. This dome was also known as "Tatar" dome and became a prominent characteristic of Indo-Muslim architecture (Brown: 1956:21). Relief depicts a circular window pierced, in the frontal wall of the room. Double leaf door of the room was hosted by a true pointed arch that is overlapped by another semicircular arch. Pillars of the arches were supported by square bases, which are running upward in three steps in ring circles. Plain shafts of the pillars are provided with square shaped impost points from where arches are springing and forming a curvature of semi-circular shape. Courtyard in front of veranda seems to be provided by a railing.



Fig. 13 Relief depicting mansion at Pharwala Fort

Qila Gate of Pharwala Fort



Fig. 14 View of Qila Gate Pharwala Fort

This gate is standing in the North-East of the Lashkari Gate. This is a double arched entrance. Outer and inner arches are fixed in square shaped frame. Upper part of the gate is missing. The present day residential area inside the fort is accessible through this gate. Currently this gate is also in deplorable condition. There was a palace of Tatar Khan, near this gate, where Babur stayed once.

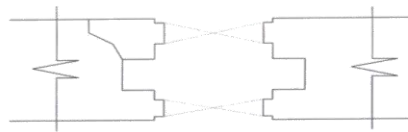
Inside the entrance deep recessed and sunken niches are provided at both sides, to light oil lamps and perhaps for breaking monotony, measuring 3.6" in width and 18 in height are remarkable for their aesthetic value.

These arches are also fixed within square frames. Spandrels of the gate are empty. No carving or relief work is found. This gate is constructed within curtain wall. There is no bastion or flanking towers. Stones are fixed in radiating manner, forming true arch. Cut stones are used to give a sharp and refined shape to arches that are true-pointed arches. Both inner and outer arches are intact and the roof of the gate is stable in its position.

Technique of ceiling is indigenous in style just knitted stones with the use of rubble and lime mortar. Evidences of the use of lime mortar are visible and fragments of remaining parts reflect that once it was plastered.

Stone Hinges in the Ceiling

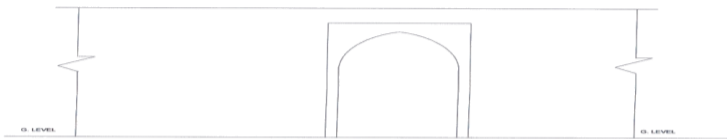
At the four corners of the ceiling a round shaped stone with one wide hole have been provided at corners. These have been used to support the gate to slide and swing. Same stones were provided at the bases of the gates, also used in Rewat fort of Gakhars and their usage has also been seen in Buddhist monasteries⁹. The gate covers 30 ft. area in width and 28ft. in length. The stone masonry is laid in lime plaster. Styles of gates vary from one another which show that these were not constructed at one time rather in different eras. Qila Gate seems to have constructed earlier from others. Apparently, this gate is on the corner of the fortification wall but it leads to the central part of the fort inside, the very reason for its sobriquet Qila Gate, meaning fort gate.



EXISTING PLAN OF QILA GATE
PHARWALA FORT RAWALPINDI



Fig. 15 Ground Plan of Qila Gate



EXISTING PLAN OF QILA GATE
PHARWALA FORT RAWALPINDI



Fig. 16 Elevation Plan of Qila Gate

Hathi Gate of Pharwala Fort



Fig. 17 External and Internal View of the Hathi Gate

⁹Personal communication with Dr. M. Ashraf Khan

Hathi gate (Fig 17, 18, 19) is facing south-west location. This gate is flanked by two huge towers. This gate is located at a sloping point. This gateway covers an area of 30ft. in width and originally it was 34-7" in height. Right bastion measures 26-8" and left 33-4". Coming from South, one has to cross a small tributary of the river and a hillock to approach this gate.

One bastion has fully collapsed while the other one is half intact and is in standing position. It depicts the original shape and plan of the gate. Blind panels are made on the exterior of the gate. This is a double arched entrance. Both arches are four centred and fixed within a square frame. Thick projections are supporting the main arch and giving sharp edged look. Finely dressed stones, positioned in radiating manner, forming a refined arch. Arch is springing from impost block that is based on a stone slab finely dressed.

Face of the gateway is embellished with square shaped small blind panels at the base level. Those have been made on bottom of the pier of the gate. Plate) Two blind rectangular framed arches have been made on both sides of the façade; those are ornamental, reflecting taste of the time that maintains appealing charms of the entire composition. These blind arches also enhance strength of the structure.

Within the frame, over the arch, a row of dentals has been provided, running over the spandrels. Spandrels of the entrance arch are also empty. A unique feature of this gate is recessed niches inside the gate.

Decorated Spandrels of Inside Hathi Gate



Fig. 18 View of inside Niche decorated with rosette

Spandrels of the arches of inside niches are adorned with beautiful rosettes (Fig. 18) or (*Shamsa*) medallion pattern, carved in high relief, the technique adds delicacy and texture to the petals. These rosettes are round and delineate stylized design of flowers. There are four numbers of rosettes on two arches. This rosette (*Shamsa*) is divided into three parts, petals are carved in three concentric circles, and these circles subsequently get narrower. This rosette shape also resembles sun or *Suriya* also called *Shamsa*. One can see application of rosettes in another fort, contemporary to Pharwala that is famous Rohtas Fort; it is on the entrance gateway and the mosque inside the Rohtas fort. Decoration of spandrels is continuation of the Hindu tradition of depicting Lotus flower as ornamental motif, also labelled as *Shamsa* of Muslim Art or Surya motif of Hindu art. Hindus were used to carve their sun-god in their temples and other buildings as figural depiction is prohibited in Islam so Muslims took this tradition in symbolic manner and started designing sun as decorative motif¹⁰.

Pointed niches are decorated with rosettes and fixed within rectangular frames. Ruins of the staircase leading to the rooms over the gate are visible at the inner side of the right bastion. Right now, these niches are blocked by the residents of the fort. Interior of these niches is decorated with blind three pointed rectangular arches running inside.

There is a double tier of three pointed blind arches; one tier of large size arches asurmounted by small arches. The blind arches are deep sunken and framed. These arches are lacking symmetry in their style and construction. No geometrical pattern is followed in construction. Some arches are narrow some are wide, but in crude form and technique. Some of these arches resemble in shape with unique miniature false arch made on

¹⁰ Personal communication with Dr.Saif-ur-Rehman Dar, Dr. Memoona Khan and Dr. Ghazala Misbah

the façade of Lashkari gate. All these arches are three pointed. This technique is used for breaking monotony and for material economy as well, also to increase strength and stability of the structure. The roof is thatched with rubble stone, dressed stone and lime plaster.

This gate is called as Hathi Gate as it was specified only for the movements of big animals like elephants, horses and animals (Hasan: 2005). Another assumption about the sobriquet is that it might have built during the rule of Hathi Khan, Who was the successor of Kaigoahar and had a fight with Mughal emperor Baber.

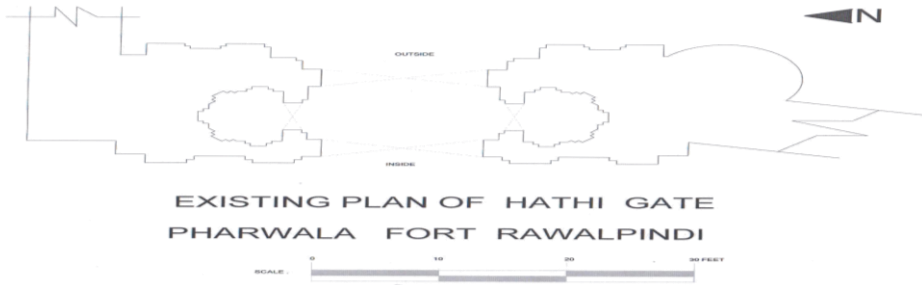


Fig. 19 Ground Plan of Pharwala Fort

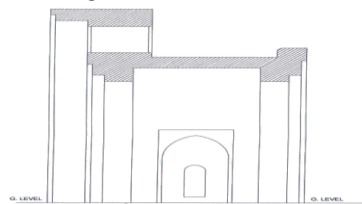


Fig. 20 Elevation plan of Hathi Gate

Ziarat Gate



Fig. 21 View Ziarat Gate Pharwala Fort

Ziarat gate (Fig. 21) is located along the North-West direction of the fort. This is a single arched entrance from inner side. Gateway is fixed within fortification wall. This gate leads to the shrine of a holy saint straightway inside the fort that is of the grandson of the Kabul Shah, an eminent and most revered saint by inhabitants of the region that is why it is called Ziarat Gate¹¹.

¹¹Personal communication with Chief of Gakhars, Sultan Zahur Akhtar, descendant of last independent Gakhar ruler Muqarab khan

The inner arch is pointed and vaulted arch but outer side of the gate is badly damaged. Its outer face does not reflect its original majesty. However, a blind framed arch is still intact on side of the gate way. The interior of the gate is provided by a miniature framed false arch. The false arch is missing on the other side. Gate is not shouldered by any bastion or towers. Of the deep recessed niches provided inside only one is remaining, which measures 7ft. in width and 18ft. in height. Niche is 3.5 ft. recessed inside and deeply sunken.

There is a miniature niche inside that is hosting trefoil arch, measuring 2 x 1.3" and is recessed. These miniature niches are also common in tombs and shrines of saints where people go to light oil lamps as an offering. The gate opens to a steep slope measuring approximately 30 ft. in downward direction.



Fig. 21 Miniature Niche, Ziarat Gate Pharwala Fort

Spandrels of the gate are empty. There is a line of triangular dentils over the frame of the arch those are not so clear. The same technique is repeated on the outer side of the gate with an additional square framed blind arch on the right pier of the gate. The arch is trefoil in shape. Half of the gate is collapsed it is not possible to explain whether it was single storied or double. Ruins are showing the curvature of the arch where only half part of it is intact even key stone has fallen. Breadth of the gate is 28' with approximation, height of the gate is equal to height of the adjoining wall.

Presently, adjacent to the holy shrine there are the remains of Muslim graves in monolithic form. Some of the graves are covered with monolithic slabs. Some graves bearing a description in Persian about the body underlying.

This gate bears the evidence of a stone hinge at the ground level. A hinge is intact, surviving as support of the gate to let it slide or swing. When Babur attacked the Pharwala fort he and his forces entered from this gate after defeating Hathi Khan¹².

Bagh Gate



Fig. 22 View of Bagh gate, Pharwala Fort

¹² Personal Communication with Col. Sultan Zahur Akhtar

Bagh Gate (Fig 22) is totally destroyed only ruins of the gate are visible. The structure consists of only two pillars and an entrance that was once hosting an arch but now it is only a semicircular curve. These were seeing through two pointed arches. Evidences indicate that structure was either a gateway or forming a veranda. The surrounding evidences indicate that, this was tripartite. There is a clear evidence to show that the central arch was followed by two more arches of the same size and height. It was probably a triple entrance gateway to the fort.

These square shaped pilasters are medium in size and made by dressed stones. No evidences of bastions surrounding this gate are found. But sharp edges of the pillars show that there were projections on the façade, broader enough and heavily ornamented. According to locals this gate was provided with the system of emergency alarms for the inhabitants, in case of attack by enemy. There was once a room that was specified to watch over the surroundings of the fort. Terraces and patches of the ground still exist to identify that once there was a garden.

Begum Gate



Fig. 23 View of Begum Gate Pharwala Fort

Begum Gate is situated along north-west direction and is standing as structural leftover (Fig 23). This gate was associated with female royal members of Ghakhar family as they used the gate for their entrance and exit in the fort. Once there was a palace of Mai Mango adjacent to this gate.

Begum gate was also used as escape exit of the fort (Zahur: 2004:136). Gate is of the human length. It does not seem a full fledged and traditional gate, though it is also adjacent to a bastion that could serve as shutter in emergency. Structure is based on a semi-circular true arch, built of radiating technique and fixed within a square frame. Forts are always seen with tunnels and underground passages for emergency exit. This fort was also provided with tunnel which led towards Lehtrar road¹³. Lahore fort was also provided with underground tunnel but *Hassan* (2005:15) explains that in Lahore and Attock forts one cannot find any mention in the contemporary accounts about their purpose to facilitate the stealthy escape of the inmates of the forts in grave emergencies. Gate is standing in south-west direction parallel to Hathi Gate.

Conclusion

It is thus concluded that architecture of Pharwala fort is remarkable in its beauty and charm. Being on a formidable site it is one of the best examples of the military deterrent and defensive architecture. Fort's architecture is telling the story that it was one of the dynamics of engineering. One notable feature of the fort is the symmetry in its features particularly arches of gateways either four centered or simple circular or true in shape all are very refine and accurate in technique and construction. Pharwala fort is an example of living history and archaeology. It is national heritage and pride of our past. Fort belongs to the early Muslim period and played a part in the history of eight hundred years. Unfortunately nothing has been done for its scientific conservation and preservation. The inhabitants of the fort are ignorant people they are not aware of its historical and cultural value, as a result fort is in advance stage of decay. Being on the bank of river, lying in nelegence and apathetic

¹³Personal communication with Chief of Gakhars, Sultan Zahur Akhtar, descendant of last independent Gakhar ruler Muqarab Khan

attitude of heritage professionals towards this magnificent architecture is good enough to prove this saying true as **Richard Nickel says**;"Great architecture has only two natural enemies: water and stupid men."

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