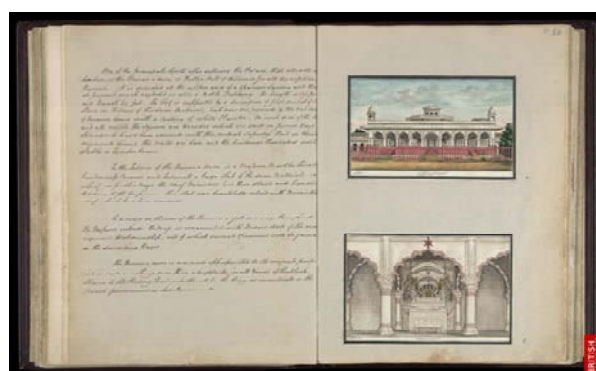
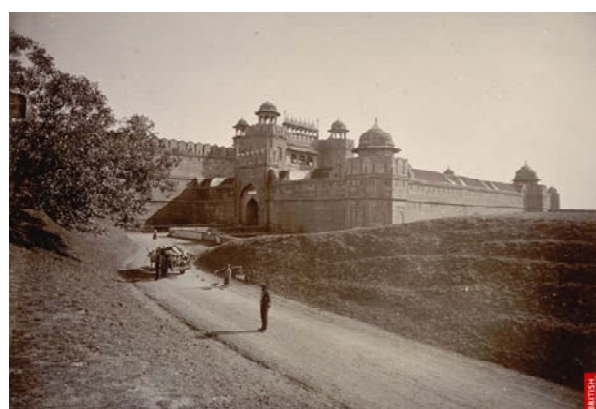


3 HISTORY

Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, who commanded vast territories stretching from Kashmir to the Deccan and from the North-West Frontier Provinces to Bengal, conceived of a new capital on the banks of the river Yamuna and in the vicinity of the erstwhile capital of preceding Islamic dynasties, the city of Delhi. Agra had been the capital of the Mughal empire during the long and fruitful reigns of Akbar and Jahangir, as well as in the initial years of Shah Jahan's reign. Before the Mughals it had been the capital city of the rulers of the Lodhi dynasty.

Shah Jahan's selection of Delhi as the site for the new capital may have been influenced by a range of factors. For one, its location on the bank of a river ensured abundant water supply as also protection to the city from attacks from at least one direction. Also, Delhi being upstream from Agra on the river Yamuna meant that transport and communication between the two cities could be easily and quickly conducted. Further, since Delhi was not too far from Agra, the transfer of the capital could be carried out relatively easily. Further, Delhi had a religio-spiritual legitimacy due to the shrines of several Sufi saints being located there. The existence of a canal, built under the Khiljis and extended during Akbar's reign, may have been a contributory factor in deciding the exact site for the city and the Fort.¹ Shah Jahan had this canal repaired and extended upto the chosen site.

The foundation for the palace in Delhi was laid on the night of Friday, the 25th of Zi'l- Hijja, in the 12th year of the auspicious reign, corresponding to 1048 (29 April 1639).² Ustad Ahmad and Ustad Hamid were the architects in charge of planning and executing the construction of the royal palace. They, in turn, were supervised by the governor of Delhi *suba* (province)³. Construction began on Friday, 9th Muharram/23rd Urdu Bahisht of the said year (i.e., 13 May 1638). On 24th Rabi-ul-awwal/20th Farwardin, AH 1058, the work was completed, and in consultation with astronomers, 24th Rabi-ul-awwal/3rd Farwardin, AH 1058 (18 April 1648) was selected as the auspicious date for the emperor to shift to his new palace, *Quila-i-Surkh* ['red fort'].⁴ The construction of the Red Fort at Delhi cost Rs. 60 lakh and took 9 years, 2 months and some days⁵ to be completed. Till 1857, the Red Fort at Delhi



From top to bottom:

Plate 3.1: Delhi Gate, 1857-58 (*see the crenellations of the barbican*); Robert and Harriet Tytler; Oriental and India Office Collection;

Plate 3.2: Delhi Gate, 1890s (*the crenellations of the barbican replaced by bunkers, foreground with mounds of debris*); Lala Deen Dayal; Curzon Collection- Oriental and India Office Collection.

Plate 3.3: The Diwan-i 'Am from the west (top right), The imperial jharoka in the Diwan-i 'Am (bottom right), 1840s; Mazhar 'Ali Khan; Oriental and India Office Collection.

was the seat of the Mughal emperor.

Over the preceding centuries, India had come to play a dominant role in the intra-Asian trade network, due, in part, to its strategic location. Also, India produced almost all the goods and commodities that were in demand in world trade. Indian cotton textiles were highly in demand in Southeast Asia where they were preferred to Red Sea bullion as a means of exchange – even the price of commodities was decided in terms of Indian cotton. Gujarat, the main producer of cotton, thus became prominent. It was not possible to invest in the spices of Southeast Asia without Indian cotton, leading to a preponderance of Gujarati merchants as powerful intermediaries in the trans-Asian exchange. Malabar pepper and easily procurable cinnamon from Sri Lanka were much in demand in the Red Sea region. The spices produced by Indonesia and Malaysia were also much more easily accessible to Indian merchants than to Arabs.



Plate 3.4: Naubat Khana, 1857-58 (*the Divan-i-Am forecourt was enclosed by an arcade, the principle entrance was through the Naubat/ Naqqar Khana*); Oriental and India Office Collection.

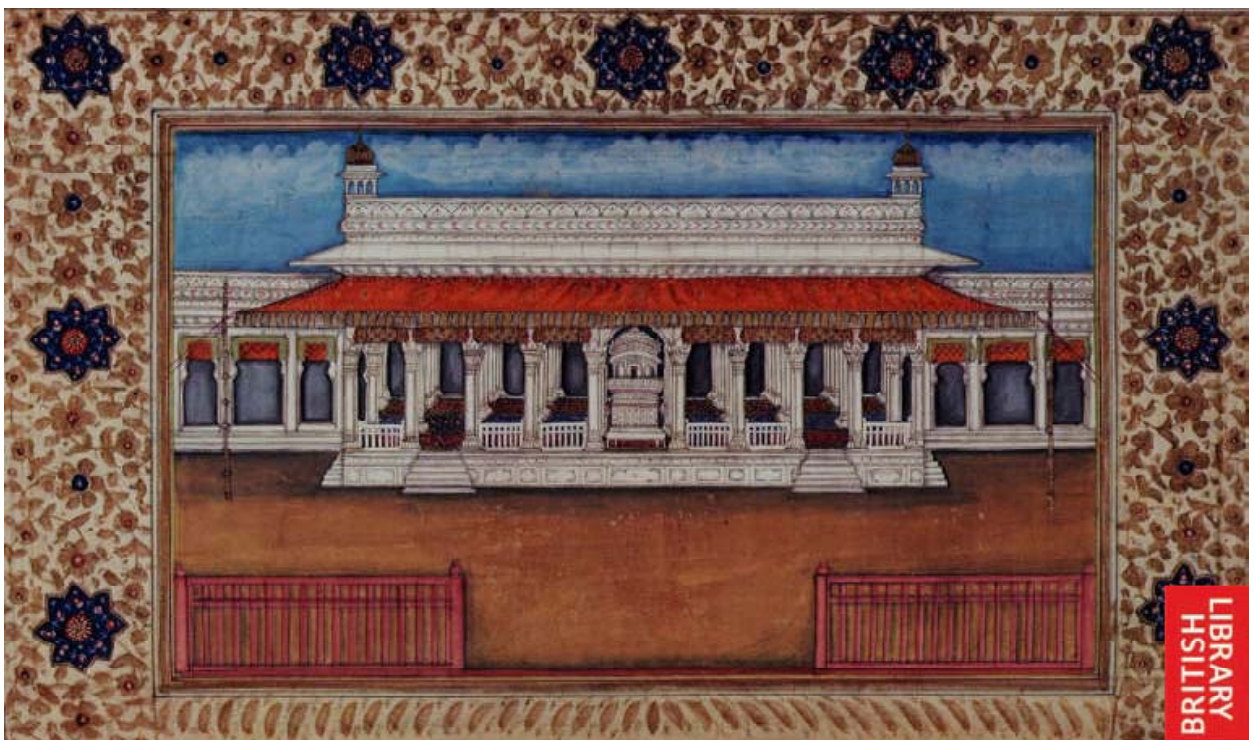
Indian ships thus carried cotton textiles to Southeast Asia, exchanging it for spices, carrying these all the way to the Red Sea ports, exchanging them for bullion which they then brought back to India. There was an unprecedented inflow of bullion into the Indian economy at the time due to heavy exports and minimal imports, a further testimony to the commanding role played by the Indian subcontinent in Asian trade from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries. A growing number of Indian merchants were permanently stationed at Arab, Persian and East African ports.

With the annexation of Gujarat and other prosperous ports, the Mughal rulers were able to command and channellise unprecedented resources due to the massive influx of bullion from overseas trade, combined with an efficient, sophisticated and effective military-revenue administration.



The Fort Palace

The boundary walls of the fort form a shape that is not totally -



symmetrical. This is because the fort was built adjacent to Salimgarh fort. It is possible that Salimgarh, which was used as a garrison at the time, complemented the Red Fort's planning and function: since the eastern side of the Red Fort contained all the private apartments, the Salimgarh garrison may have played a significant role in defending this part of the fort.

The fort has six arched gateways, each of which had a distinct function. The Lahori Gate and Delhi Gate were for ceremonial entries and exits and for the use of the general public. The Khizrabad Gate, under the Khas Mahal, was for the emperor's personal use, especially when embarking on a boat journey on the Yamuna. The fort has twenty-one *burjs*, of which 14 are round and 7 octagonal.

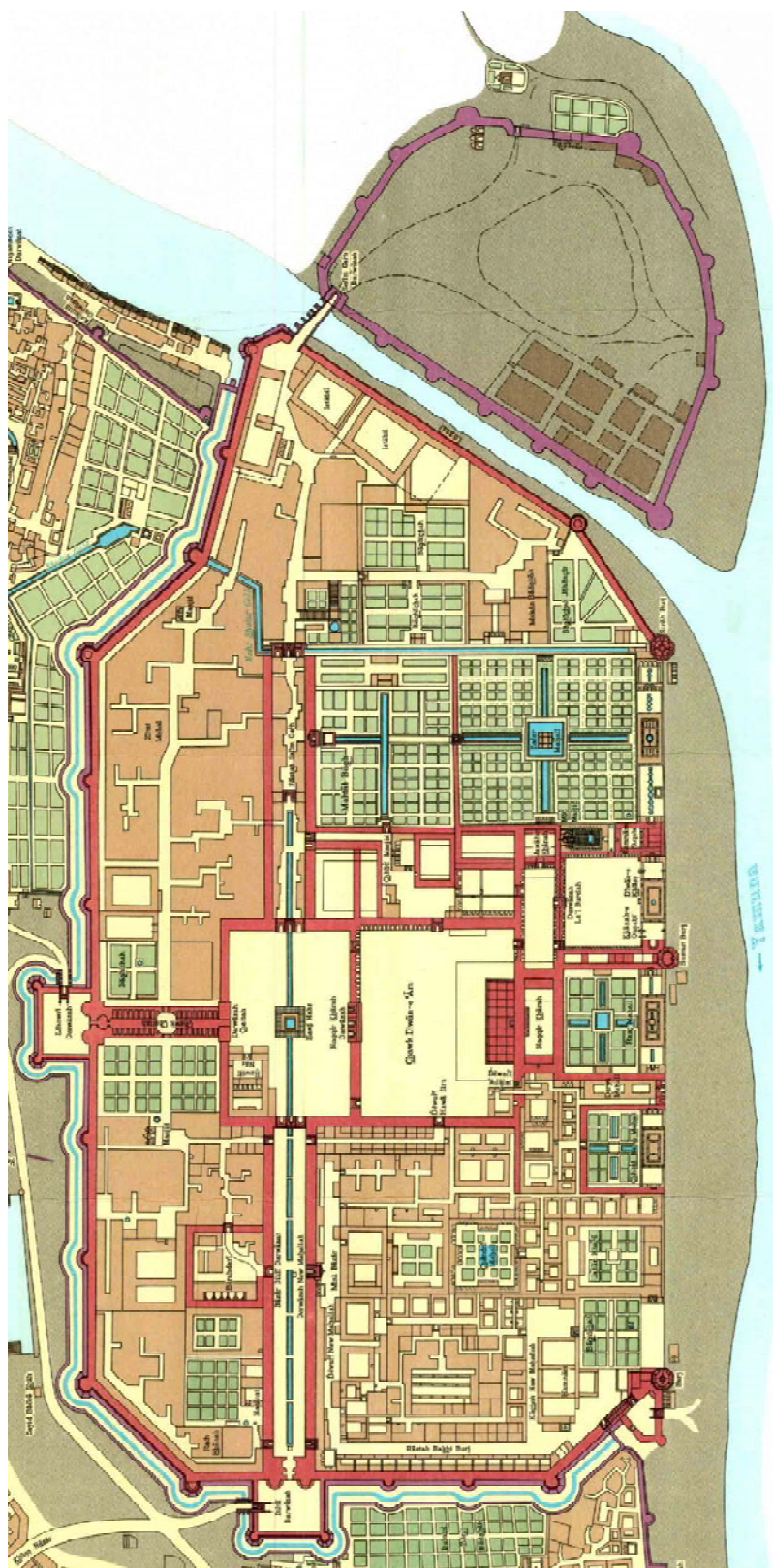


Plate 3.7: Red Fort Map 1850; source Shahjahanabad/ Old Delhi, Tradition and Colonial Change; Ehlers, Eckart and Thomas Krafft, 1993.

The principles of symmetry and hierarchy mark much of the plan of the Red Fort. In terms of symmetry, a clearly discernible central axis cuts through the centre of the Lahori Gate, Chhatta Bazaar, the Naqqar Khana forecourt, Naqqar Khana, the Diwan-i-Am forecourt, the Diwan-i-Am and the throne therein, the garden of the Rang Mahal, the Rang Mahal. Outside the fort, the main street of the city, Chandni Chowk also runs in a straight line on this very axis, which finally ends at the Fatehpuri mosque. Off the central axis ran a number of other streets. A street (at the centre of which ran a 4 *gaz* wide canal) perpendicular to the central axis terminated at the Delhi Gate. The point at which these two axes met was marked by a *banq* (tank) in the centre of the Naqqar Khana forecourt.

Plate 3.8: Shahjahanabad Map 1850; source Shahjahanabad/ Old Delhi, Tradition and Colonial Change; Ehlers, Eckart and Thomas Krafft, 1993



This north-south street continued north, past the Naqqar Khana forecourt to the Salimgarh gateway. Along the northern part of this street were located the imperial stables (*astabal*), while the southern part of this street (emerging from the Delhi Gate) was flanked on both sides by arcaded rows of shops. The imperial private chambers along the waterfront, on the eastern side of the fort, lay perpendicular to the central axis.

Thus, a walk along the central axis would take the visitor from fully public spaces (Chhatta Bazaar, Rastah Dilli Darwaza, the Naqqar Khana forecourt which was a gathering place for petty officials) to a slightly more rarefied but accessible space (the Diwan-i-Am forecourt) on to semi-private spaces (where only high nobles and dignitaries were allowed, such as the Rang Mahal, the Diwan-i-Khas and the Shah Burj). The demarcation along the vertical axis was in the form of significant perpendicular intersections

like the high fortification wall (and later the barbican of Lahori Gate), the imposing (visually and audibly) Naqqar Khana and the arcades that separated the Diwan-i-Am court from the courtyard behind it. Even within the Diwan-i-Am, spaces were hierarchically demarcated by railings of stone, silver and gold, designating the distance that people of different ranks were to maintain from the throne. Thus, during public audiences, the Diwan-i-Am was witness to a hierarchical progression along the central axis in the arrangement of attendees, culminating with the emperor on his throne. Another dimension of hierarchy apparent in the Red Fort is that some public structures were built of ordinary masonry and some of red sandstone, while public structures of imperial significance had touches of marble; the imperial private chambers were made entirely of marble.



Clockwise from bottom left:

Plate 3.9: Diwan-i-Khas, 1817-1852 (extensive use of textiles on the royal pavilions); Ghulam Ali Khan; Oriental and India Office Collection.

Plate 3.10: Diwan-i-Khas, early 20th C (junipers in the green lawns, a transformed open space); ASI

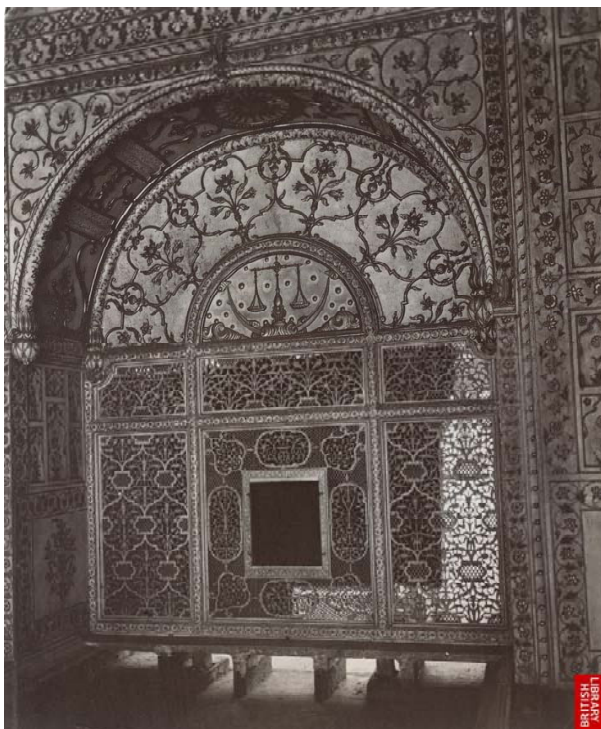
Plate 3.11: Diwan-i-Khas, late 20th C (bushes with topiary work in green lawns, altered open space); ASI

Gardens were central to the planning and layout of the Red Fort. The Mughals inherited their penchant for gardens from their ancestors who brought to the subcontinent West Asian imperial traditions of conceiving gardens virtually to represent paradise on earth. This conception included shade- and fruit-giving trees, flowers of varying colours and fragrances, and flowing water. The Mughals added to this the principle of symmetry.

The Hayat Bakhsh garden did not just aesthetically arrange flora, but incorporated built structures that complemented the garden and added to its beauty. The water channels, fountains, tanks, Sawan and Bhadon pavilions (which were decorated with inlay and stone work and illuminated with lamps at night) and intersecting pathways heightened the pleasures that the garden had to offer to each of the five senses. Adjacent to this garden was yet another one, called Mehtab Bagh ('moonlight garden'), at the centre of which was a red sandstone building called Lal Mahal. There is also reference to gardens such as Bagh-i-Angoor ('grape garden') and a garden between the Mumtaz Mahal and *Asad* Burj. Small gardens are also

said to have existed within the courtyards in the residential quarters. The city of Shahjahanabad, too, was dotted with large, spacious gardens.

The Red Fort combines influences of diverse origins, such as indigenous Indian architectural and decorative forms and European techniques and styles: for instance the *Bangla* roof, the *chawkbandis*, the relief work, the foliated arches and numerous other influences of subcontinental origin; and baluster column (as argued by Ebba Koch) and Italian inlay techniques and motifs of European origin (the figure of Orpheus in the Diwan- i-Am *jharokha*). From Jahangir's reign, growing inland forays by European traders brought with them specimens of European art and skills. It was the Europeans who introduced glass mirrors to the Mughals, who had till then relied on highly polished tin from Aleppo (Syria). Such glass mirrors were widely used for decoration in some chambers of the Red Fort. The influence of the Mughals' Central Asian nomadic ancestry was reflected perhaps in the open nature of the building constructed by them – partitions between the buildings and within the



Clockwise from bottom right:

Plate 3.12: East face of the Red Fort, 1840s; Mazhar 'Ali Khan; Oriental and India Office Collection

Plate 3.13: Screen with Scales of Justice in the Khas Mahal(1845-1907); Beglar-Joseph David Archaeological Survey of India Collections



buildings were created using curtains and tenting. Paintings and literary evidence suggest that large cloth canopies were extended beyond the pavilions to create large, sheltered areas. The continued usage of tents and fabrics in these built structures appears to have been a survival from their erstwhile nomadic days. This custom, may also have survived due to the high temperatures in the Indian subcontinent which were not conducive to closed housing. Islamic/West Asian principles, too, were represented in the emphasis on symmetry, the stress on flowing water channels and lush paradisiacal gardens.

The Fort thus encapsulates and expresses visually the history of the Mughals: their descent from Chaghtai and Timurid stock, the influences imbibed in West Asia, the foundation of an empire in India that was based on heterodox principles and a tolerant religious policy, the absorption of local practices and influences, and the assimilation of influences from the growing presence of the '*firangi*' (European).

The conception and construction of the Red Fort at Delhi occurred at a point in Mughal imperial history when the emperor was at the apex of a well-organised, powerful, revenue-military administration. The reign of Shah Jahan, appears to have been the zenith of Mughal rule and power in the Indian subcontinent. This command over resources and power was crucial for the emperor to execute without interruptions and as planned.

The Red Fort at Delhi, in its grand scale, lavish ornamentation and rigorously implemented planning is testimony to this. Behind the robust appearance of Shah Jahan's reign, however, there were signs of imminent decline. Historians have cited dilutions in the military-administrative structure during Shah Jahan's reign. High mansab ranks were given out, but the actual number of troops and horses to be maintained by the holder of such ranks was often reduced. This was due to the growing inability of the revenue machinery to extract from each *jagir* as much revenue as the state had assessed it to be worth.

By Aurangzeb's reign, this decline had become quiet deeply entrenched. He tried to counter it by cutting

state expenditure and issuing strict injunctions to his subjects to practice frugality. In his personal life too Aurangzeb followed strict asceticism. Due to financial stress on the state, life within the palace was also affected. For example, the *naqqarab*-band which had earlier been played throughout the day on the emperor's birthday was now to be played only at fixed intervals. Court patronage of music was discontinued as were musical performances. In addition, perhaps in order to please the conservative sections of his nobility, Aurangzeb decreed that the practice of *darshan* (i.e. the appearance of the Mughal emperor from the balcony of the Musamman Burj facing the bank of the Yamuna river bank, where crowds gathered to see him) was idolatrous and hence, it was discontinued.

In Aurangzeb's reign came the first alterations to the palace: the construction of barbicans in front of the two main gates (Lahori Gate and Delhi Gate) of the palace wall and the construction of the Moti Masjid (c. 1658-63) in the private quarters of the emperor. The construction of barbicans in front of the two gates changed the entrance route into the palace, making it circuitous and indirect. Shekhar-Mukherji argues that this mitigated the effect of the two central axes that ran through the palace and the city of Shahjahanabad. The physical presence of the barbicans can perhaps be interpreted as the beginning of a growing distance between the palace and its city, between the emperor and his subjects, at the heart of which was the growing sense of insecurity about the emperor's reign.

Further, the circuitous entry altered the layout of



Plate 3.14: Barbican of the Lahori Gate, 1857-58; Robert and Harriet Tytler; Oriental and India Office Collection

the gardens in front of the palace walls and ate up into most of the garden area, points out Shekhar-Mukherji. The introduction of the barbicans, however, was a response to military exigencies and the weakening hold of the Mughal empire upon its constituent parts. The construction of the Moti Masjid, however, did not greatly affect the plan of the fort, asserts Shekhar-Mukherji, since it stood in its own private and walled court, but it may have disrupted the boundary and entry into the Hayat Bakhsh garden.

During the reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1707), Salimgarh was used as a state prison. It was here that the princes Murad Bakhsh and Sulaiman Shikoh were kept prisoners before they were shifted to Gwalior.

Meanwhile, the weakening administrative structure allowed local elements to assert themselves and in nearly all the provinces of the empire, there arose unrest and often, rebellion (as in the case of the Sikhs, the Jats, the Satnamis and the Marathas). By his death in 1707, the treasury was empty and the 'emperor' had become a figurehead.

Aurangzeb's successors failed to arrest or reverse the decline and disintegration of the Mughal administrative structure. Thus the eighteenth century was for Shahjahanabad and its palace and populace a century of degeneration. The palace had been uninhabited by the emperor for thirty years until Jahandar Shah (who succeeded Aurangzeb's son Bahadur Shah) entered the Red Fort in 1712. He ruled for scarcely a year before he was murdered and replaced by Farukhsiyar. The disarray of the Mughal state and finances was reflected in the palace as well, the silver ceiling of the Rang Mahal is said to have been replaced with a copper one in order to raise funds. Shekhar-Mukherji concludes that in such a state of affairs, other parts of the palace too would not have received the kind of maintenance, repair and lavish decorations that they would have in the years of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb.

After a few more puppet rulers propped up by competing factions of nobles, Muhammad Shah acceded to the Mughal throne in 1719. He had a deep interest in the arts. He acquired the moniker 'Rangila'

(the Colourful) due to his skill as a writer and composer and his passion for the arts. However, he did not take an equal interest in reforming the administration and reviving the empire. In 1737 Shahjahanabad was attacked by the Marathas led by Bajji Rao Peshwa but the Mughals managed to thwart the offensive. The attack burdened the already weak imperial finances and led to a further loosening of the nominal hold that the Mughal emperor had on his territories, allies and nobles.

The internal weaknesses of the empire left it vulnerable to external attack too, and in 1739 this came in the form of Nadir Shah, the Persian emperor. He easily defeated the Mughal army and plundered the Red Fort of its riches, including the famed Peacock Throne. He moved into the imperial private quarters relegating the emperor, Muhammad Shah, to the Shah Burj. As Shekhar-Mukherji contends, this was a turning point in the history of the Red Fort, apart from being a turning point in the history of the Mughals. For the palace, it was the first time that the private quarters of the palace were no longer the Mughal emperor's private quarters, but instead were open to a plunderer who needed a place to stay.

Nadir Shah's sack of Delhi and the large-scale killings altered the spirit of Shahjahanabad. At the end of three months, Nadir Shah left. Muhammad Shah the emperor of a destroyed city and a disintegrating empire. The century that followed witnessed frequent attacks and plundering raids by armies from neighbouring regions, such as the Marathas, Jats, Afghans, Gujars and Sikhs. The Red Fort was not the focus of these attacks but Shekhar-Mukherji asserts that a few stray cannon balls are known to have struck the palace at this time.

Muhammad Shah's successor, Ahmad Shah (r. 1748-1754) built a wooden mosque called Chobi Masjid, between the Diwan-i-Am forecourt and the imperial gardens. His successor, Alamgir II witnessed the crippling invasion of Shahjahanabad by Ahmed Shah Durrani and then by the Marathas. He was kept virtually a prisoner in his palace by his prime minister and was finally murdered there in 1759. His son, Ali Gahar, had already escaped from the fort by descending down the Fort walls using a rope and escaping onto the sandy riverbank. By this period,

the area around the Shah Burj had become a cramped living quarter for adult princes who did not have the means to support themselves.

The Marathas and the Jats seized the opportunity offered by the vacuum on the Mughal throne and attacked the palace. Heavy gunfire damaged the buildings on the eastern wall of the fort. The plundering armies stole precious decorative materials from the palace. Till 1771, rival factions continued to place puppet rulers on the throne in Delhi. In the meantime, Ali Gahar proclaimed himself emperor Shah Alam. He tried to assert control over his erstwhile territories and win allies but was defeated in 1761 (Bihar), 1764 (Buxar) and 1765 (Kora) by the British. Shah Alam's defeat led him to sign the treaty which gave the British the *diwani* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and left him under British protection. In 1771, Shah Alam succeeded in recapturing Shahjahanabad and the palace by joining hands with the Marathas, giving away the bulk of his territories in return for their support. This in itself is a fascinating development: Shah Alam preferred to give away his lands in Allahabad and Kora in order to gain the imperial capital and palace. This perhaps demonstrates that to a man who had yearned to be recognized as the Mughal emperor, being in control of Shahjahanabad and the Red Fort was essential to legitimising his claim.

With the relinquishing of territories to the Marathas what remained with Shah Alam was a small area in the vicinity of Delhi. The Rohillas, Jats and Marathas continued to mount attacks on Shahjahanabad. After establishing itself in the eastern provinces, the English East India Company (EEIC) realized that political power could maximize trading profits. In 1803, Shah Alam asked the British for help in countering the Marathas and, in the Battle of Delhi that followed, the British defeated the Marathas. Earlier, Shah Alam's authority and image had been dealt a severe blow by Ghulam Qadir, a Rohilla Afghan, who had dug up the floors and gardens of the imperial quarters in the belief that immense treasure lay buried there, and had subsequently blinded Shah Alam in the Diwan-i-Khas and imprisoned him in the Salimgarh fort. . While the Mughal emperor's inability to protect his private quarters from intrusion had already been demonstrated, this incident showed that the emperor

was now incapable of protecting even his own person from assault.

Akbar Shah, who acceded to the throne in 1806, introduced several changes in the outer boundaries of the Red Fort. He built masonry bridges, in the British style, over the moat that surrounded the Lahori Gate and Delhi Gate barbicans. A balcony with a curved Bangla roof was added to the Musamman Burj. The Asad Burj, which had fallen due to bombardment, was rebuilt. A two-storeyed pavilion with a well-laid-out garden was built by Akbar Shah in Salimgarh. That the king turned to Salimgarh to create a pleasure garden perhaps indicates that the imperial gardens of the Red Fort no longer offered the pleasures that they originally had and that there was little space available to the king to create a pleasing garden within the palace. The simultaneous decay and overcrowding was manifested in the smaller gardens and courts in the imperial private quarters and harem area falling into neglect. Unsuitable structures were built on the gardens and fountains in front of the Rang Mahal.

With the Battle of Delhi began a new phase in the history of the Red Fort and northern India. The successful British commander Lord Lake was



Plate 3.15: Diwan-i-Khas, c.1887; untitled

accorded ceremonial honours and invested with titles in the Diwan-i-Khas after the Battle of Delhi. Where once crucial decisions used to be taken by an elaborate apparatus of Mughal governance transformed into a site where the indispensability of the British to the survival of the doddering Mughal rule was recognized. The emperor's civil and criminal jurisdiction now became confined to the Red Fort – what had earlier been just his personal domain. The British took over the administration of the Mughal territories and installed a Resident at the Mughal court. The Mughal ruler was now retitled “King of Delhi” rather than “Emperor”, and became dependent on pension from the British.

The strict division between public and private spaces and the expression of hierarchy through the arrangement of and interaction between spaces was gradually violated during this period. As their sovereignty and resources received blow after severe blow, the Mughal rulers were unable to invest in the maintenance, repair or decoration of the spaces, buildings and gardens within the palace or adapt it to changing needs without diluting its beauty. The palace became overpopulated and minor buildings were built within it to accommodate the swelling numbers of princes and other dependants who had no resources to live independently.

The imperial private spaces soon lost their sanctity and opulence. European travellers who came to the court in the early nineteenth century were allowed access all the way till the Diwan-i-Am. Travellers and tourists could enter the innermost chambers of the Mughal imperial domain even while it was inhabited by the Mughal ruler. That the private domain was now thrown open to “tourists” while the Mughal ruler still lived in it, marked the beginning of the transformation of the palace into a relic of the past.

British control over the Mughals created a period of peace and stability in the Shahjahanabad area. There was an efflorescence of culture in the half-century that followed and interaction with the Europeans who had begun to settle in the city. This period was marked by uninhibited interaction between British officers and missionaries and the people of Shahjahanabad. According to Narayani Gupta, European facades and upper storeys were added to buildings along arterial roads, while the Mughal-period ground floors were retained, creating a curious mix. Urdu flourished and evolved as a literary language and a medium of communication. Court patronage of the arts continued, though on a smaller scale. In 1837 Akbar Shah was succeeded by his son Bahadur Shah II who is known for his love of poetry and who wrote under the pen name ‘Zafar’. The

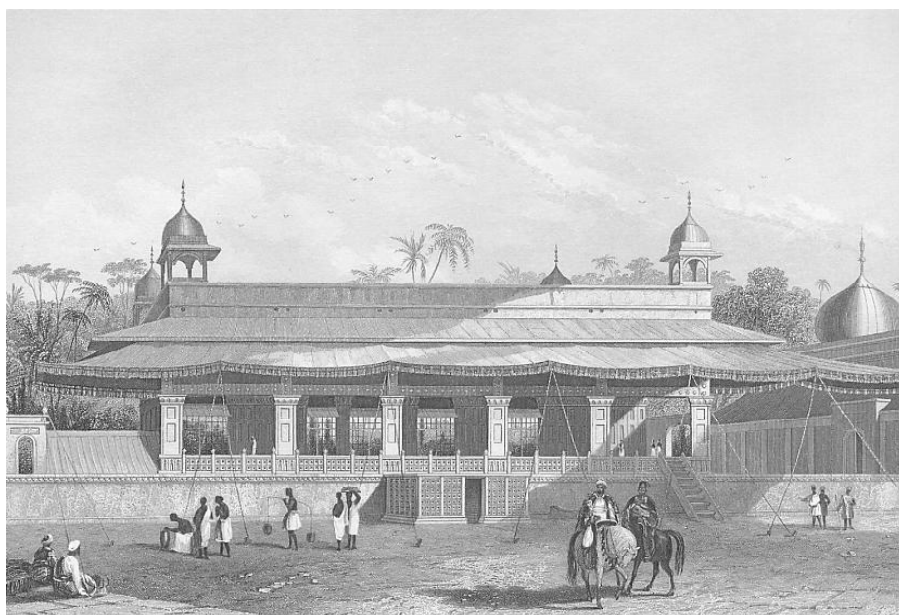


Plate 3.16: Diwan-i-Khas, c.1858; untitled; Source: Lombardmaps

court poet, Zauq, and Mirza Asadullah Khan ‘Ghalib’ wrote composed their renowned Urdu verses in Delhi at this time. The growth of printing presses had made books cheaper and easily available, promoting this literary efflorescence and the circulation of newspapers in Urdu. The Delhi College was set up to impart Western scientific education in Urdu, throwing up several bright scholars who rose to fame the world over. With the building of English gardens and churches, along with a bank, a hospital and a tank, the appearance of Shahjahanabad gradually changed in a way that detracted from the original principles of symmetry and hierarchy that had positioned the Red Fort at the height of the visual and spatial landscape.

After several decades of the “English Peace”, tensions that had been simmering erupted. The Mughal ruler, though a mere figurehead, had continued to reside within the Red Fort at Delhi. Contemporary descriptions and British official documents indicate that the living quarters inside the Fort were bursting at the seams with several generations of male and female royal descendants living there. There was much construction activity and vast areas of the Fort, notably the southern half, took on the appearance of an overcrowded, poor locality. With the British

controlling the revenues of the Mughal territories, the royal descendants had to survive on the stipends that the British paid them. Their impoverishment and the humiliation of being dependent on the British created a high-tension situation within the Red Fort. Other groups whose welfare depended upon the Mughal state (military and administrative elite, poets, courtesans, artists, artisans, certain merchants) were also frustrated by the “English Peace”.

To meet military requirements, the British built a garrison at Daryaganj and a magazine and powder room near the Kela Ghat Gate of the city. They replaced the river front area chosen by the Mughals for residences and gardens of nobles and princes with European-style utilitarian buildings. Shahjahanabad, approached by boat in this period, now offered a transformed first sight to the visitor: an anarchic mix of structures and styles where beautiful mansions and gardens in a coherent Mughal style had once existed. A part of the British army also began to live in the palace.

When Akbar Shah’s son tried to murder the British Resident, the British at once found an excuse to build



Plate 3.17: Mussaman burj and Diwan-i- Khas, 1857-58; John Murray; Oriental and India Office Collection

permanent accommodation for the British Commandant of the Palace Guard. Now, as suggested by Shekhar-Mukherji, two separate social and cultural systems began to function inside the palace – the British and the Mughal. The upper rooms in the gateway of Lahori Gate were modified to provide accommodation for British guards and their commanders, and the veranda and arcades there were infilled. This facilitated surveillance over the Mughal occupants, since the top of Lahori Gate offered a bird's-eye view of the entire palace. British manning of the main and ceremonial entrance into the Mughal ruler's palace was another stark demonstration of where real political power now lay.

However, Bahadur Shah did manage to undertake some new construction and repairs in this period. The red sandstone arcades, called '*gulal bari*', lining the Diwan-i-Am forecourt were repaired. A small mosque was constructed south of Chhatta Bazaar. In the Hayat Bakhsh gardens, two pavilions were built: Zafar Mahal and Hira Mahal. The architecture and the planning of Hira Mahal was testimony to the highly diminished power of the Mughal emperor: It lay at the head of the subsidiary channels at the Hayat Bakhsh and thus drew attention away from the central axes of the garden. It also interfered with

the original number of pavilions planned by Shah Jahan, thereby disturbing the sense of symmetry and spaciousness of the Hayat Bakhsh. The Zafar Mahal was built in the centre of the Hayat Bakhsh within a tank that had existed since Shah Jahan's rule. This tank was deepened and the unique building made in it. Bahadur Shah tried to revive the water channels in the Hayat Bakhsh, and for this a well was sunk within the garden in 1840; however, the garden, it is said, continued to be uninteresting. Further, the Zafar Mahal obstructed the unbroken view of the central axes, planned by the Shahjahani architects. Bahadur Shah also built a fountain of red sandstone in Mehtab Bagh.

Several alterations in the palace's usage and buildings diluted its beauty and the principles that had governed its layout. A large building was built in the south-western corner of the Naqqar Khana forecourt which jutted out asymmetrically. The Diwan-i-Am forecourt lay bare and unadorned and its arcades were used as stables and storage spaces. Structures in an Indo-European style came up within the palace to accommodate the princes. The house of the heir-apparent was built right behind the Diwan-i-Am. Another prince made alterations to the Choti Baithak of the Rang Mahal which greatly diminished its

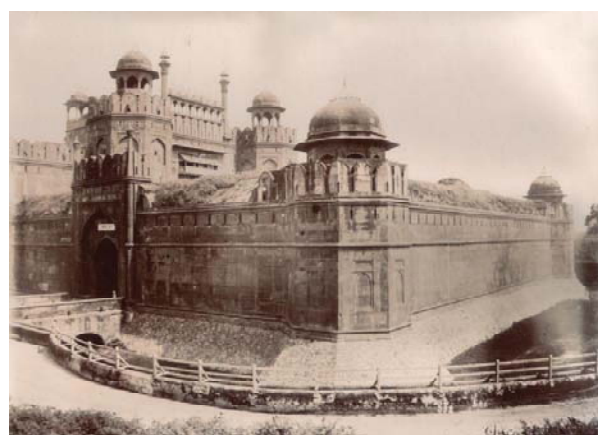


Plate 3.18: Lahori Gate, 1857-58; Robert and Harriet Tytler; Oriental and India Office Collection

beauty. The placing of the Darya Mahal too marked a departure from the carefully planned sequence of royal pavilions on the riverfront. The entrance axis from the Delhi Gate was occupied by the princes for residential purposes.

Contemporary official correspondence of the British reflected their suspicion and anxiety about the conspiracies brewing among the “classes of sultaneens [*salatins* or princes]” who lived in the Red Fort. The British felt that the Red Fort was a hotbed of intrigue and a threat to the stability of the British enterprise in the region. With its high fortification walls and commanding location, the Red Fort had the potential to become a stronghold if the rebels seized control of it. They thus decided to move the royal descendants out of the fort premises. Some officials even favoured the removal of the king and his retinue from the Red Fort to the Qutb area. As evident from official correspondence, Prince Mirza Fakhruddin had been recognised by the EEIC Governor-General as the heir to the throne as early as 1852 through an agreement one of whose clauses was that the king and all the residents of the palace would vacate it.⁶

The British attitude towards the Mughal king and his palace became increasingly impatient, often verging on insolence. Through means subtle and overt, the British made it apparent that they were not inclined to ensure the health of Mughal rule. They often turned down the Mughal ruler’s demands and breached court etiquette. In one such instance, the Acting British Resident, Francis Hawkins, went into the Diwan-i-Am forecourt and even the Diwan-i-Khas forecourt on horseback while the emperor was away. Several Europeans also reported to have entered the Jami Masjid and the Diwan-i-Khas with



Clockwise from bottom left:

Plate 3.19: Lahori Gate, 1857-58; John Murray; Oriental and India Office Collection

Plate 3.20: The Red Fort from the Jama Masjid, (1846-1912); Saché, John Edward; Oriental and India Office Collection

Plate 3.21: Lahori Gate, 1880's; untitled

their shoes on and seated themselves on the crystal seat therein – all highly offensive to the Mughal emperor and the populace of Shahjahanabad. When Thomas Metcalfe recommended in 1835 that Rs 5,000 be set aside monthly for the maintenance and repair of the Red Fort, the Council of the EEIC dragged its feet over the actual sanction of this grant.

British fears proved to be justified, for when the uprising of 1857 broke out, the incensed residents of Shahjahanabad were quickly drawn in. The Mughal emperor emerged as the symbolic leader of the resistance against the British and the Red Fort, as his residence, and the erstwhile palace of the long-reigning Mughal dynasty, emerged at the heart of the revolt.

Starting from Meerut, the uprising against the British government spread rapidly to other towns of north India. Not just soldiers but people from all walks of life came to Shahjahanabad, declared Bahadur Shah Zafar their leader and congregated on the banks of the Yamuna, seeking entry into the city. The British Resident, Captain Douglas, from the balcony of the Red Fort, asked them to leave. The soldiers, however, managed to gain entry into Shahjahanabad and also into the Fort to meet the king. They convinced him to join the revolt as its leader. This

done, the rebels embarked on an attack on all representations of British authority. They killed Captain Douglas and the Commissioner, Simon Fraser, drove out other British officials gathered on the ridge in the north and seized control of Shahjahanabad and its defence. The Red Fort remained the nerve centre of the uprising for several tense months. The artillery was placed in the Diwan-i-Am and the cavalry in the Mehtab Bagh⁷.

In these months, the etiquette and patterns of movement that the palace had hitherto been witness to were overturned. The protection of the river-facing side being essential, the newly arrived British trained soldiers were stationed there at all times to defend the palace and the city. Not accustomed to Mughal customs or etiquette these soldiers often committed appalling violations of time-honoured traditions of deference towards the king. These developments damaged the buildings and gardens of the palace and also, overstepped the boundaries between private/imperial and public spaces, as conceived in the palace's original plan and function. Interestingly, as pointed out by Mukherji, the Revolt also restored to several buildings of the palace their original function because decisions of importance once again were centred on the palace. So, the Diwan-i-Am, the Diwan-i-Khas and Salimgarh once again became sites of political decision-making and defense.

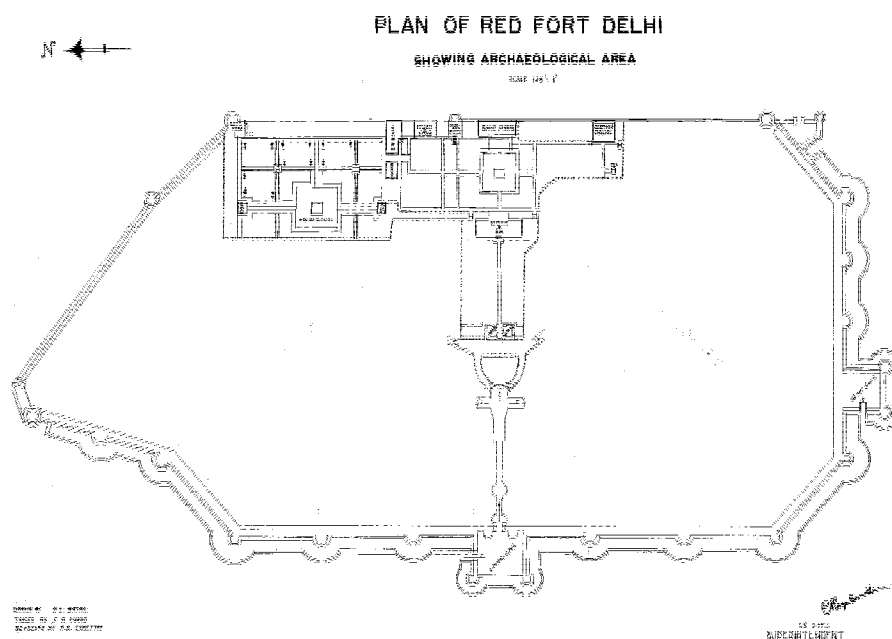


Plate 3.22: Red Fort Map, Archaeological Area-protected in 1914; ASI

In September 1857 the British attacked Delhi with the intention of reconquering it. They broke through the Kashmir gate and into the city, capturing large parts of it. This left the Fort as the last defense against the British onslaught. There was firing from both sides. The British bombarded the southern part of the Red Fort and the imperial apartments with cannon-balls, while the rebels responded with gunfire from the bastions of the Fort. The Military Secretary wrote to the Chief Commissioner of Punjab: “The king is reported to be in the Palace still – if so, his residence must be a very warm one, for our shells are pouring into the whole length of it from North to South”⁸. Eventually, on 20th September British made their way into the Fort through the Lahori Gate. There they found significant arms and ammunition and soon conquered the Fort. With the capture of the Red Fort and thus of Shahjahanabad, the British won a powerful strategic and symbolic victory. As suspected by the British, the emperor had already escaped from the Red Fort – the abode of the Mughal emperors for more than two centuries with his family.

The uprising gave the British an excuse to implement much that they had planned in order to make their control of Delhi more secure but had been unable to do earlier due to the civil unrest it might have caused. They captured Mughal king, in flight, and brought him to the Red Fort. There they put him on trial before the European Military Commission. Ironically, the site of the trial was the Diwan-i-Khas. The king was declared guilty of treason, rebellion and murder and banished to Rangoon in Burma along with his retinue. The palace was looted, the looting being given official sanction by the appointment of “prize agents” who assessed and systematically removed valuables from the palace and the city.

The events of 1857 marked a major watershed for the Indian subcontinent as well. The British were now the unchallenged rulers of vast territories and declared Calcutta as the capital of their empire. The Indian empire was now to be governed directly by the British Crown (1 November, 1857 onwards) and the EEIC was divested of much of its erstwhile power. Official correspondence of the period indicates that the British realised that the location of the Red Fort on an elevation, along with its sturdy high walls,

gave it a commanding position over the city which made it especially suited to being a garrison. The Red Fort was considered by the British army a strategically valuable possession.⁹

The British in 1863 demolished vast tracts of buildings outside and inside the Fort. Inside the Fort, only a handful of buildings were retained, mainly those along the central axis and the imperial private chambers. These were the Shah Burj, Diwan i Khas, Moti Masjid, Hammam, Rang Mahal, Mumtaz Mahal, Asad Burj, Diwan-i-Am, Zafar Mahal, Sawan and Bhadon pavilions, Hira Mahal, the Naqqar Khana, Lahori Gate, Delhi Gate and the fortifications. The courts, arcades and water features that connected and characterised these buildings were done away with. It was not just the overcrowded living quarters that were demolished but even the stables, the royal kitchen, the harem (with its courtyards and gardens), the colonnades, the canal and other structures of the Fort. The Mehtab Bagh and Hayat Bakhsh gardens were filled up. The

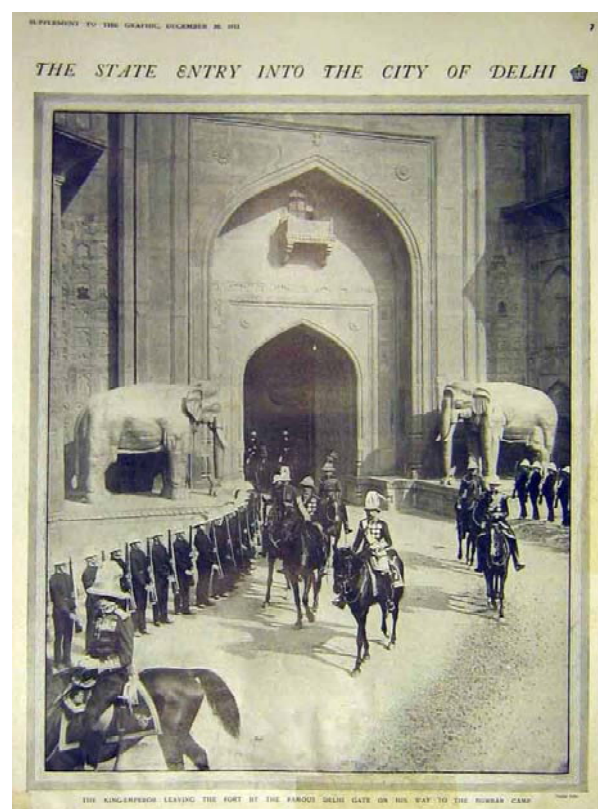


Plate 3.23: Delhi Gate, 1911 (as on the photo “The king emperor leaving the fort at the famous Delhi gate on his way to the durbar camp”); untitled

buildings that did survive were looted and stripped of every last valuable item. The gilded copper domes of the Moti Masjid and Musamman Burj and of the chhatris atop the Diwan-i-Khas were pulled down and sold. What had been conceived of, laid out and used for two centuries as a palace was now reduced to a military fortification. The Fort probably took on the appearance of a vast stretch of empty land, dotted with a few structures. Numerous barrack like structures were subsequently built within the fort precinct.

In addition, perhaps the long association of the building with a dynasty that had ruled the Indian subcontinent for nearly three centuries may have led the British to occupy it and appropriate it as a symbol of their own success and power.

From being the capital city, Shahjahanabad was reduced to a provincial town. Symbols of Mughal power (mosques, *serais*, gardens) were demolished and supporters of the uprising were persecuted. Conversely, those who had remained loyal to the British were generously rewarded. Shahjahanabad was given a new appearance with the construction of new structures, a clock tower at the centre of Chandni Chowk, a Town Hall on the main street of Chandni Chowk – all typical of a Victorian town of the period. Within the Fort, in the area north of Chhatta Bazaar buildings were constructed to house officers' families. Barracks and wash houses were put up in an unimaginative style. The Fort walls now had workshops and godowns of the executive engineer and the barrack master.¹⁰ Chhatta Bazaar became a market for soldiers' supplies. The Naqqar Khana was turned into the staff sergeants' quarter while the Diwan-i-Am served as a lounge for officers. The Rang Mahal briefly became a mess for soldiers, while Mumtaz Mahal was first a prison and then a mess for sergeants. The Musamman Burj and Shah Burj, too, appear from photographs, according to Mukherji, to have been used as barracks. The Zafar Mahal was turned into a swimming pool for officers.¹¹ Wash houses and urinals were built in front of the Sawan and Bhadon pavilions.¹²

The introduction of the railway in Delhi in 1864-5 led to further demolition within the Fort and the city. The railway line entered the Fort through Salimgarh fort, crossed a newly constructed bridge

and cut across the northern area of the Fort and its walls to enter Shahjahanabad. The railway did, however, boosted trade and fill the coffers of mercantile groups.

With the gradual restoration of peace and stability, the opinion that efforts should be made to remedy the wanton destruction of the Red Fort began to gain ground. Between 1901 and 1913, much work was done to arrest the decay of the Fort buildings and restore whatever possible of its past glory.

By virtue of it having been the palace of the Mughal emperors and central to the events of 1857, the Red Fort never faded into oblivion as yet another barrack. Mukherji argues that the Red Fort was a reminder to the British of their success in 1857 in defeating the Mughal ruler. It was perhaps due to these associations that the Red Fort remained integral to British coronation durbars. In 1877, a Durbar was held in Delhi to welcome the Prince of Wales to India and as part of the celebrations, a ball was held at the Diwan-i-Khas. In 1901, John Marshall prepared recommendations for the conservation of the Fort. He suggested that the eastern row of buildings be taken from the military and protected, and that gardens be laid out in the open spaces. In 1902, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) was established. So, when preparations for the Durbar of 1903 were being made, these recommendations were kept in mind. Once more, in this Durbar the buildings of the Red Fort saw numerous ceremonies and functions that celebrated the British Empire.

However, Marshall's suggestion that interventions be limited to preservation as far as possible was not adhered to. Instead, a policy of restoration was adopted. Decorations and architectural features were sought to be restored and parts of the Fort that had been removed to other locations were reinstated. In 1904, the Shah Burj was damaged in an earthquake and the ASI had to rebuild it. Excavations were carried out in the Hayat Bakhsh gardens from 1904-05 onwards. Gordon Sanderson's suggestion of planting shrubs to mark the boundaries of courtyards was implemented. Mukherji questions the viability of this policy on two counts.¹³ First, the layout, organisation, visual effect and ambience of the original Shahjahani courts could not be achieved

by the planting of shrubs. Second, to recreate the original dimensions of the courts, as symmetrically and carefully laid out in the Shahjahani period, shrubs would have to be planted directly on the extant foundations of the boundary walls, and this would damage these foundations. The first notification of the site was made under the then Ancient Monuments Preservation Act Number VII of 1904 and the site was classified as 'Mughal Group of Monuments'. The buildings protected under this notification were Naubat Khana, Diwan-i-Aam, Mumtaz Mahal, Rang Mahal, Baithak, Mussaman Burj, Diwan-i-Khas, Moti Masjid, Sawan and Bhadon pavilions, Shah burj and Hammam.

ongoing construction of New Delhi and the concentration of the wealthy and powerful there, south of Shahjahanabad, greatly eroded in the vitality of the walled city. Space constraints had by now led to a westward extension of the city and large stretches of the city walls had been demolished to facilitate expansion and easy movement.

The Coronation Durbar of 1911 to mark the coronation of King George V and to lay the foundations of a new capital city in Delhi is a major event in the history of the Red Fort. Since the Fort was to be the setting of many of the ceremonies and celebrations associated with the Durbar, efforts to conserve and preserve it took on a new vigour and received generous grants. A grand garden party was planned at the Fort and in order to suitably host the event. Military structures were removed from the Hayat Bakhsh, the Nahr-i- Bahisht revived, excavations were speeded up and a revitalisation of the garden undertaken. The courts in front of the Rang Mahal and the Diwan-i-Khas were excavated. The Rang Mahal saw much conservation work while, the Mumtaz Mahal was turned into a museum.

When the King and Queen of England arrived in Shahjahanabad, it was by the railway line via Salimgarh. They disembarked in the Fort and gave 'darshan' from the Musamman Burj balcony just as the Mughals used to do. Crowds had gathered on the river bank to catch a glimpse of the visiting monarchs, just as they had in Mughal times. This underlines the significance of the Red Fort to the British due to its imperial past as the palace of the emperor of India.

In the decades that followed, the pace of conservation once again slowed down. The Red Fort witnessed the last colonial ceremony when the Duke of Connaught visited in 1921 and inaugurated a Permanent Chamber of Princes in the Red Fort. The

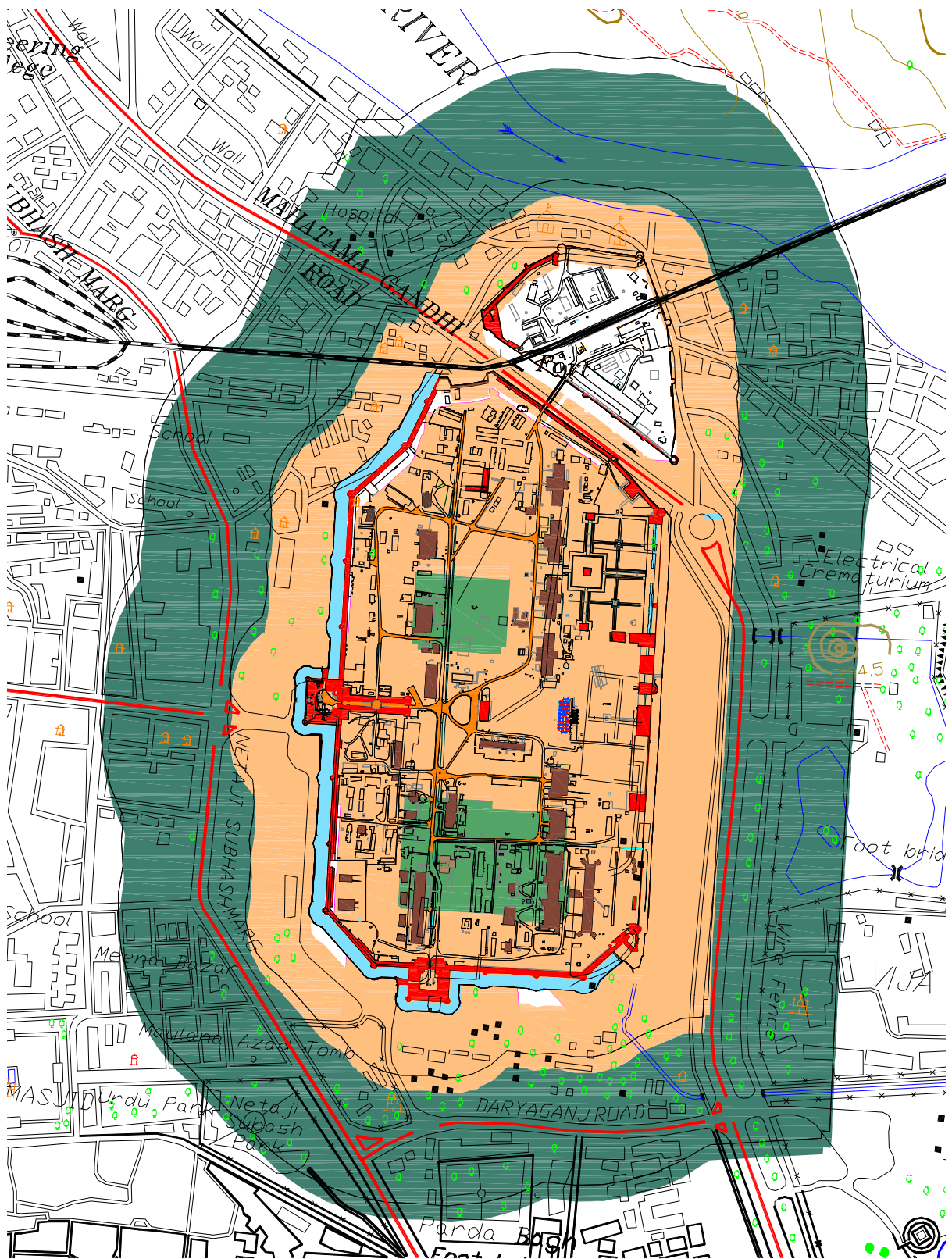


Figure 3.24: Plan marking the buffer areas of 100metres and 200 metres, CRCI

The world wars and the freedom movement in India stalled conservation efforts. From the 1930s to 1947, some buildings in the Red Fort were used as high-security cells for alleged war criminals and illegally for housing political prisoners, such as Sheel Chandra Yajee, Vice-President, All India Forward Bloc in 1945.¹⁴ On 15 th August 1947 Jawaharlal Nehru stood on the bastions of the Red Fort to deliver a historic speech announcing India's first steps as an independent nation.

Post independence the Fort transformed from being the preserve of a single imperial entity into a precinct with single ownership *but multiple managements and occupants*. While the area notified in 1912 continued to be under the jurisdiction of the ASI, the Chatta Bazaar area came under the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, and the Red Fort was occupied and managed by the Indian Army. There was much building activity in the Army-occupied area through the second half of the 20th century.

Indian Army Units in the Red Fort till 2003

1.	14	DOGRA	1949-50
2.	04	GUARDS	1949-51
3.	01	GUARDS	1950-56
4.	02	GUARDS	1951-54
5.	15	KUMAON	1951-52
6.	07	J&K RIFLES	1954-57
7.	03	GUARDS	1956-59
8.	04	GUARDS	1957-59
9.	13	PUNJAB	1958-60
10.	5	SIKH	1959-61
11.	4	GRENADIERS	1960-62
12.	1	GUARDS	1961-63
13.	1/1	GARHWAL RIFLES	1962-64
14.	14	PUNJAB	1964-66

15.	03	GRENADIERS	1966-68
16.	02	RAJPUT	1968-71
17.	2/8	GARHWAL RIFLES	1971-73
18.	1/11	GARHWAL RIFLES	1973-75
19.	08	MARATHALI	1975-76
20.	03	KUMAON	1976-79
21.	2/3	GARHWAL RIFLES	1979-81
22.	10	MAHAR	1981-84
23.	05	GARHWAL RIFLES	1984-87
24.	06	DOGRA	1987-90
25.	27	MADRAS	1990-93
26.	14	JAT	1993-96
27.	04	BIHAR	1996-99
28.	07	RAJPUTANA RIFLES	1999-2003
29.	04	SIKH	MAY DEC, 2003

The Red Fort was an important tourist site through the 20 th century though access was restricted to designated areas. The outer areas of the fort too came to be actively used as a seam between the Fort and the residential and commercial areas of Shahjahanabad. While the forecourt became the site for such uses as vehicle parking for visitors to the Red Fort, bus parking for pilgrims visiting sacred sites in Shahjahanabad (Sikh Gurdwara, temples, mosques), sports activities (foot ball, cricket, wrestling). One the other hand there were livelihood activities like rehearsals by bands, dyers dying clothes and drying them in the area, animal fights (cock fights, goat fights). Events such as circus shows, Ramlila and Dusshera celebrations drew huge gathering. The eastern edge held a weekly bazaar (popularly known as the Chor bazaar) for second-hand goods.

The cultural activities which were held within the Fort precinct include an annual *Mushaira* (a public function for Urdu poetry recitation) and sound and light shows in the forecourt of the Diwan-i- Khas. On the occasion of the 50 th anniversary of the Quit India movement in 1992, five barracks of historical importance in Salimgarh fort were protected by a notification under the ASI Act. Also, the Fort and

the barracks were repaired and an informal garden was developed as a memorial to the freedom fighters. The northern gate built by Bahadur Shah II in 1852 which had been lying blocked was reopened after extensive clearance and repairs. The two barracks that had been used to imprison Shah Nawaz Khan, Prem Kumar Sahgal, Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon and hundreds of other soldiers of the Indian National Army (Azad Hind Fauj) were also repaired. Efforts were made by the National Archives of India to install a permanent exhibition depicting the role of women in the freedom movement. A museum to the Independence movement was set up in one of the barracks in the Red Fort to mark 50 years of Independence.

In December 2003 the Indian army handed over the areas in its possession to the Ministry of Tourism and Culture to facilitate the restoration of the monument. In 2002 other parts of the fort were

protected. These buildings were the Asad Burj, water gate, Delhi Gate, Lahori Gate, Jahangir Gate, Chatta Bazaar and the entire stretch of fortification walls, bastions and the moat. Thus it was after nearly a 100 years of the first notification that the entire site got protected.

It was in 1992 that another notification was issued regulating development within 300 metres of protected monuments under which in 2003, activities considered detrimental to the Fort were removed. In place of what was a vibrant though disorderly space out of context parks were laid in the same area. With the army having left the fort, the fort has till date large empty barracks and vacant open spaces. Some conservation related institutions have been moved into few of the barracks such as the office of the Delhi circle of the ASI, Institute of Archaeology. Some of the barracks and later buildings (built by the Indian army) in Salimgarh are being used as

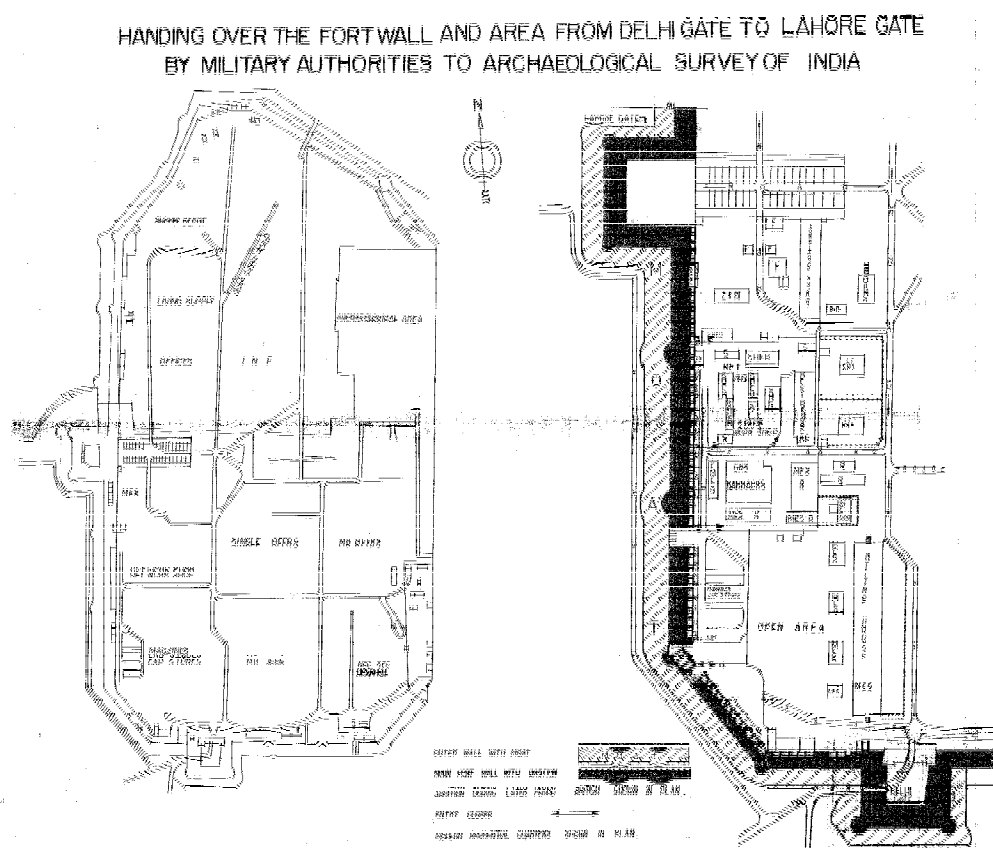


Plate 3.24: Red Fort Map-between Delhi Gate and Lahori Gate, when occupied by the Indian army; ASI

accommodation by the security staff (CISF and SIS).

The forecourt of the Red Fort continues to be used on the two most significant national events namely the Independence Day celebrations on 15 th August and on 26 th January, when the Republic Day Parade culminates here.

The Red Fort is an indisputable national icon. It is this position of the fort that makes it hugely vulnerable to security threats. The immense value of the site lies in both its tangible and intangible heritage. A great challenge lies ahead in conservation of the site and further revitalizing it so that while the visitor can experience the rich layers of history on one hand, on the other the revitalization is in harmony with the tangible and intangible values of the site.

END NOTES

- ¹ The *Padshahnama* of Muhammad Waris, tr. Dr. Yunus Jaffery
- ² *Shahjahan Nama* of Inayat Khan, c. 1656, tr. Begley and Desai, p. 406
- ³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴ *The Shahjahan Nama of Inayat Khan*, c. 1656, tr. Begley and Desai, p. 406
- ⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁶ National Archives of India, F.C., 29 August, 1856, No. 189
- ⁷ Mukherji, Anisha Shekhar, *The Red Fort of Shajahanabad*, p. 192
- ⁸ N.A.I., S.C., 30th October, 1857, No. 81
- ⁹ N.A.I., S.C., 18 Dec., 1857, No.439, p. 21-31
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.* P. 209
- ¹¹ Gupta, Narayani, *Delhi Between Two Empires*
- ¹² *Ibid*
- ¹³ Mukherji, Anisha Shekhar, *The Red Fort of Shahjahanabad*, p. 227.
- ¹⁴ National Archives of India, Home, Political, 44/28/45, 1945