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Role and Importance of Culturally Rich Traditional Residential Buildings toward Heritage Tourism and Digital Marketing in Historic City of Uch Sharif, Pakistan.

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ABSTRACT

As in other parts of the Country, traditional buildings are fast diminishing in city Uch Sharif, Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan as well. The irreplaceable examples of traditional wisdom and ingenious craftsmanship are being struck down one after the other by the cyclone of urbanization super-charged by market forces. Contemporary buildings are seemingly unable to provide what traditional buildings used to offer. It will give an insight to the solutions that were followed in traditional buildings as the most appropriate response to the multifaceted problem of thermal comfort, cultural appropriateness, and cost-efficiency. It will be of substantial academic and practical value to the present as well as future generation of architects and other building professionals in this region. This is due to a variety of technical and cultural aspects that have restricted and limited the use of sustainable measures for energy-efficient, culturally sensitive, and cost-effective building design. This research aims to identify and promote such design practices, and develop the community's acceptance and ability to use compatible designs, materials and techniques.

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Introduction

Area, Topography, Population

‘Uch’ factually means ‘high or lofty’ in both Hindi and Sanskrit. The city is higher than its surrounding areas and was probably named Uch because of this fact. It is believed that the city was situated where the five rivers of the Punjab met. It can be inferred from the topography and historical excerpts that the rivers did not fall into the Indus, but in fact met at Uch and ran parallel to it. It is around 1787-88 that the rivers changed their course. This also ties in with the hypothesis that the area was previously not as dry as it has become today.

Uch Sharif District Bahawalpur	Population	Male	Female	Pop. 1981	Pop. Annual Growth Rate	Avg. House Hold size
	20,4	10,6	9,8	13,3	2.5	7.4

Source: 1998 Provincial census Report of Punjab; Population Census Organization Statistics Division. Govt. of Pakistan. Islamabad. 2001

The city comprises three parts; each centered on three historical mounds. The three parts are Uch Bukhari, Uch Gilani and Uch Mughlan. Uch Bukhari is located on higher of the three mounds. Syed Surkh Bukhari and Bibi Jiwandi’s mausoleum complexes and the remains of a buttressed fortification located at the western end of Uch Bukhari are at the highest point of the city. They are at an approximate height of fifteen meters from the fields below. They constitute the south-western corner of a promontory which defines the western edge of Uch Bukhari, and on which the present Bukhari settlement is built.

When seen from the western side, this eroded edge reveals historic brick foundations and buried walls, which testify to the historic layering of the city. The river Sutlej flowed past this side of the city till the 16th century after which it shifted several times. The last of these relocations of the riverbed took place in the 19th Century when it swept away part of the Western part of the Bukhari cemetery where Bibi Jawandi tomb is located. The settlement of Uch Bukhari slopes gradually downwards towards the north and east from this point.

The maximum height of Uch Gilani is at its center, which is considerably lower than the highest level of the Bukhari settlement. From here the mound slopes gradually in all directions. Till the late eighties the two settlements Uch Bukhari and Uch Gilani were distinctively separated from

each other by the Mela ground¹. Over last two decades the Mela ground has shrunk in size. During this period a linear bazaar of kucha shops developed cutting the mela ground into two. This string of shops now connects the Gilani and Bukhari bazaars. Uch Mughlan is located two kilometres from the main city in south-east-south directions and sits on a much lower mound.

History of Uch Sharif

Uch is an ancient city of the state of Bahawalpur. It has been historically important to the subcontinent as it has seen the rise and fall of the Slave Dynasty, Khiljis, Tughlaqs, Syeds and also the local rulers like the Qureshis and the Langahs. During the Sultanic period, Uch was politically important. It was the capital of Nasiruddin Qabacha when he was the ruler of Sindh and Multan. The city culturally reached its climax during this time. However, it came under the Delhi Sultanate's rule at the time of Shamsuddin Altutmish when he defeated Nasiruddin Qabacha.

Historically, Uch has played an important role as a metropolitan and religious center, attracting foreign invaders and visitors alike, particularly since the 12th century beginning of Turkish rule in India. Prior to that time, there is only scant mention of Uch in local histories, though it has been suggested that the city may date to as far back as the Harappan civilization (3000-1500 BCE)² that was spread throughout much of the region.

Abdul Rehman suggests that the city was founded during the 2nd millennium by Aryan invaders and then destroyed and founded again by Alexander the Great during his conquest of Asia Minor in the 4th century BCE.³ However, none of these claims has ever been substantiated by archaeological findings, particularly since no excavations of the city itself have been undertaken. Nonetheless, as Mohammad Rafique Mughal notes, it is unquestionable that Uch is a place of "considerable antiquity, dating originally to pre-Islamic times at least."⁴

The second influence on the city relates to its location with respect to the Delhi-based sultanates and kingdoms and, as mentioned above, its seat at the Panjnad confluence. Sitting on the western fringes of the Punjab, Uch represented a last defense and, thus, one of the goals of conquest for the many Muslim military campaigns sent from Persia, Syria and the Turkic-speaking regions of

¹ This ground is waqf land is owned by the Bukharis'.

²The Harappan period is divided into Early (3000-2500 BCE), Mature (2500-2000/1900 BCE) and Late (2000/1900-1500 BCE) periods. During the Harappan period, the plains benefited from the presence of another river, known as the Hakra, which ran roughly parallel to the course of the "Five Rivers". Most Harappan and pre-medieval sites are located along the former banks of this river, though it is possible that offshoots of the civilization may have sprouted along the Indus and its tributaries. However, this is only conjectural and archaeological investigations should be conducted in and around Uch to substantiate this claim. See Muhammad Rafique Mughal (1997), pp. 19-26 for a discussion of the Hakra valley, the course of its river, and the hydrographic changes in the region.

³Abdul Rehman, *Historic Towns of Punjab* (Lahore: Ferozsons Ltd., 1997), p. 108. The name of the city founded by Alexander the Great on the banks of the Sutlej River has been cited as Alexandria-Ussa by Alexander Cunningham, Basmad and Swandi in the *Kitab al Masalik wa'l Mamalik*, Chachpur, Askalanda and Iskandah in the *Tarikh-i-Sind* or *Chachnama*, a thirteenth-century Persian translation of an Arabic account of the conquest of Sindh by the Arabs in the early 8th century written by Ali, son of Muhammad Kufi, who became a resident of Uch in 1216 CE. Please note that the spellings used here and throughout this work in no way represent the only or most correct transliterations for the names of these ancient cities, although an effort has been made to adhere to a single system and follow spellings most commonly found in modern English-language literature where possible.

⁴Muhammad Rafique Mughal, *Ancient Cholistan: Archaeology and Architecture* (Lahore: Sang-E-Meel Publications, 1997), p. 113.

Central Asia. As the northern extension of Sindh, Uch and its surroundings represent one of the first areas of the subcontinent to be invaded, conquered and eventually converted by Muslims.⁵ Succeeding Muslim conquerors, such as the famed Mahmud Ghazni, who raided the city in 365 AH (1005 CE),⁶ had to take the city as a first step to conquering the Punjab plains and the wealth held therein. As a result of the many raids and conquests, it seems that Uch was razed and rebuilt numerous times before the establishment of the Mughal Empire in 1526 CE.

The third influence, and the most relevant to the monuments and to the present-day identity of the city, is the great religious significance attached to Uch as a result of the settlement of numerous Sufi⁷ saints. These religious philosophers and thinkers, in efforts to disseminate their teachings and establish orders of their own throughout the subcontinent, often founded sanctuaries and educational institutions in the region.

The first of these appears to have been founded in the late 10th century, contemporaneous with the initial Ghaznavid incursions from Persia, by Safi-ud-din Haqqani Gazruni, whose tomb lies in Uch.⁸ A fourteenth century manuscript mentions this “Gazruni” madrasa⁹ as still extant, together with the 12th century Madrasa-t-ul Ferozia in Uch. During the 13th century, the founding of the Suhrawardi (also Suhrawardia) silsilah¹⁰ in Multan would have great repercussions on Uch. Organized and mobilized by Shaikh Baha-ud-din Zakhariya, whose tomb in Multan is a worthy example of domed tomb architecture, the Suhrawardy order spread to Uch in the person of his disciple Syed Jalal-ud-din Surkh Bukhari (595-690 AH / 1197-1291 CE), originally from Bukhara in Transoxiana.

An incredible individual, his influence and demeanour resulted in the conversion to Islam of numerous Hindus, particularly members of the Rajput tribes of the Punjab.¹¹ His present tomb and dedicated mosque complex, constructed in 1845, abut the Bibi Jiwandi Monument complex to the southeast.

⁵The first Arab invasion of India occurred in 712 CE in Sindh, led by Mohammad ibn Qasim. Sindh was captured in that same year and the Arab cities of Multan and Mansura were founded soon after. See Stanley Lane-Pool, *Medieval India* (Lahore: Sang-E-Meel Publishers, 1997) for a thorough introduction to Islam in medieval India.

⁶Mahmud of Ghazna, ruler of Khurasan, in Persia, led a total of 16 campaigns across India between 1000 CE and 1026 CE. See Mughal, p. 113 for reference to this raid on Uch in 1005 CE and Lane-Pool, p. 18, fn. 1 for mention of a raid on Bhatia in 1004 CE. In Rehman, p. 108 there is reference to “Bhatiya” as the Ghaznavid name for Uch.

⁷The term Sufi, thought to derive from the Arabic ‘suf (“wool”) relating to the simple wool garment worn by followers, refers to an esoteric sect of Islam that spread through Persia, Turkey and the subcontinent with great success. Its followers and pir (“saints”) were often untiring travellers who gained large followings and, once settled, assumed influential local political roles. For an introduction to the tenets of Sufism, see William C. Chittick, *Sufism* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2000). For detailed information on Indian orders of Sufism and their spiritual progeny, see M. P. Srivastava, *Social and Cultural Trends in Islamic India [1206-1719 A.D.]* (Allahabad: Vohra Publishers and Distributors, 1989), pp. 118-136.

⁸According to Abdul Rehman, this tomb is purported to be one of the oldest Islamic tombs on the subcontinent. However, Muhammad Rafique Mughal calls the simple flat-roofed structure a “recent construction” and explains that the date marked above the door (corresponding to 1300 CE), regarding what Rehman calls “repairs”, actually refers to the erection of the present tomb.

⁹College for theology and Islamic law.

¹⁰Religious order or sect.

¹¹Srivastava, p. 129 and Mughal, p. 114.

His grandson, Syed Jalal-ud-din Makhdum-i-Jahanian (Jahanian Jehanghasht), (707-785 AH / 1307-1383 CE) was one of the most famed *pir*¹² of the Suhrawardy order and is accredited with many miracles.

Disciple of Allama Qazi Baha-ud-din Uchhi (Baha'ul Halim or Bahawal Haleem), whose tomb is one of the three domed structures of the Bibi Jawindi Monument complex, Jahanian Jehanghasht was extremely influential in the political and religious life of Sindh, so much so that he was appointed Shaikh-ul-Islam by the Turkic Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq.¹³ The religious monuments related to the Suhrawardy order all rest within the boundaries of the appropriately named Uch Bukhari quarter of the city. Uch Gilani reflects the 15th century settlement of Makhdum Muhammad Gilani, a member of the Qadri *silsilah*.

It should be mentioned that both quarters of the city are still managed, at least in name, by descendants of these families or religious orders, so influential is the legacy of these early Sufi settlers. In addition, the physical structure and settlement pattern of the city still reflects the processes of growth and development associated with the expansion of the Sufi clans, and the religious centrality they brought to Uch. Uch Mughlan, outside the city borders, represents the site where groups of Mongols settled at the end of the 13th century.¹⁴

The city lost its political significance at its fall to the Delhi Sultanate of Iltutmish. The later history of Uch is concurrent with the region, it was ruled by the local Langahs dynasty, the Sikhs and finally became a part of the Bahawalpur princely state. With the shifting of Indus river in the seventeenth century with the it no longer remained a part of the revere trade

Significance of the Study

The basic purpose and importance of this is to identify the Architectural elements, features and space layout/organization performances that make any residential building in south Punjab, Pakistan, which makes him a culturally heritage of the region and its documentation in the form of literature, drawings and photos will contribute to our contemporary residential building challenges towards sustainability.

That knowledge will be based on experience of traditional building designs, materials, and construction techniques adapted to the current climatic condition, comfort standards, economic constraints and technological limits in the historical city of uch sharif. The reason behind selection of Uch City is due presence of rich Cultural and Architectural in tangible form, unattended,

¹² Spiritual guide, the more famous of whom are akin to saints and greatly revered even centuries after their death.

¹³ Srivastava, p. 129 and Rehman, p.117. It should be noted here that the Punjab State Gazetteer, vol. XXXVI A., Bahawalpur State, 1904 (Lahore, 1908), pp. 385-392 provides information regarding the background of the important historical religious figures of Uch as well as descriptions of the monuments dedicated to them as recorded by the British.

undiscovered in urban settlement. This study will also correlate the diachronic and synchronic influences from historical monuments and built heritage in the form of urbanization and vice versa.

Methodology

Identification of Traditional Buildings in Uch

Definition of a traditional building

A residential building having age more than 100 years was named as a traditional. Typology of traditional buildings in Uch It refers to which types of planning exist in such building.

Selection of traditional buildings for documentation

On the basis of above information one building will be selected

Documentation of the selected traditional buildings with the following information for each building:

Plans

Construction techniques used

Specifications of construction materials (structural, cladding, and finishes)

Identification of Traditional Buildings in Uch

Therefore, in the field survey of Uch Sharif, one traditional building was evaluated for selection on the basis of following information:

Approximate age of the building

Less than 50 years

50 to 100 years

More than 100 years

Size of the plot

Not more than 5 *marlas* (1125 sq ft)

Not more than 10 *marlas* (2250 sq ft)

More than 10 *marlas* (2250 sq ft)

Owner's profession

Number of inhabitants

Number of levels

Basement

Lower ground level

Ground level

Mezzanine level

First level

Second level

Degree to which the original design was modified

House in its original form

Change in roofs/walls construction materials, and/or ceilings/walls/floors finishing materials

Removal of walls/ceilings and/or addition of new spaces

Inhabitants' satisfaction

Environmental comfort in terms of temperature and relative humidity

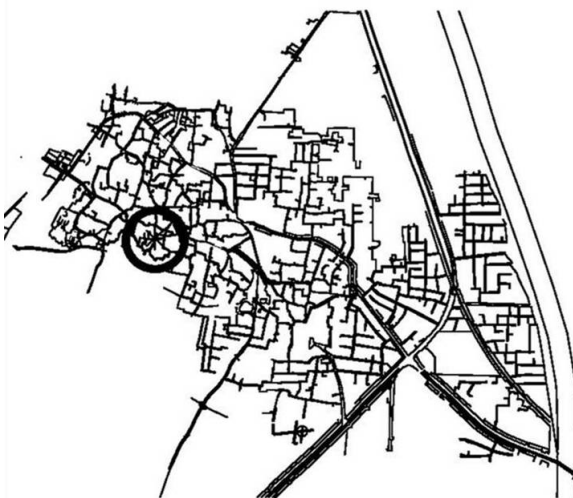
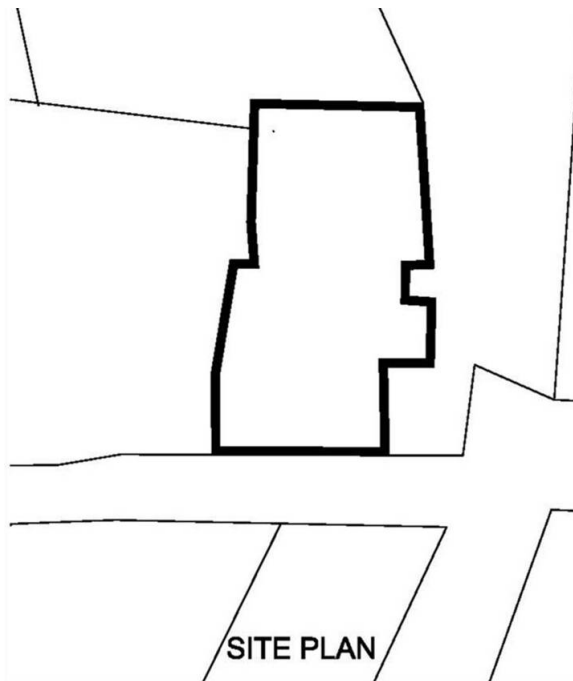
Layout type

Part of cluster/Common walls

Independent structure

Spatial elements

Salient features of selected building:



LOCATION PLAN

The traditional building selected for detailed documentation & study in the field survey is marked on the City's map. It is located in UCH-Bukhari, *mohalla* Pir Mana, about two Km North-West of Shamas Chowk. Entrance to the house is from a 2712 mm wide *koocha* on its South. Back wall of the house towards North marks boundary of the rear neighbour's courtyard. On East and West sides, double and single storey houses flank the house.

This more than one hundred years old house is presently owned and occupied by Mr. Ghulam Qadir Chishti, a teacher by profession. His family has six members. On 22 May 2002, noted

temperature in the house was 32.2 and relative humidity was 40.8%. Average electricity bill for this house ranges from Rs. 200-250 per month and that of natural gas from Rs. 150-200 per month. Total area of the plot is 245 Sq-m. A room (*Hujra*) with an area of 39 Sq-m is in the basement. All other rooms are on ground floor, covering an area of 208 Sq-m. There is no construction on first floor.

The ground floor construction comprises of a Drawing Room (*Baithak*), five multi-purpose rooms (*Kotha*), two small Bathrooms (*Hammam*), Verandahs (*Suffa*), and a courtyard (*Agwar*), which is in the centre of the house. Kitchen (*Ridhy*) is in the veranda. Room sizes are round 3mx4.5m, except the Drawing Room (*Baithak*), which is 3mx7.5m.

The courtyard is 5mx6.5m. Plinth of the house is 1250 mm above the street (*Koocha*) level. Ceilings of the rooms are 3000 mm, and parapet on roof is 1250 mm high. Walls of the house are thick with varying thickness (700 mm average) made with brick tiles (210 x 145 x 31 mm) and mud mortar. A thick layer of mud plaster is applied finished with lime wash in the interior of the walls. Floors are of brick tiles set in mud mortar. Doors and windows are wooden double-leaf with thick wooden frames.

Looking at the materials used in walls and roofs, and through discussions with the owner, it was found that some original (wooden beams) roofs were replaced with contemporary materials (steel girders). Over steel girders are wooden battens placed 175 mm apart, which are covered with brick tiles. Polythene sheet is spread over brick tiles, then a layer of mud, which is finally covered with brick tiles in mud mortar.

Arches of the veranda and walls of the *Baithak* are of thicker bricks, which do not belong to the time of construction of this house. The house acquired electricity, water, and natural gas connections in 1970's. The supply comes from the distribution lines passing through the *Koocha*. There is no underground sewerage system in this neighbourhood. Therefore, wastewater coming out of this and other houses flows through open drains in the *Koocha* and goes into the surrounding agricultural fields.

The room in the basement (*Hujra*) is the most comfortable space in the house, especially in the summers. One obvious reason is that the heat penetration in the room through walls and roof is cut off due to its location in the basement and due to having a room on top of it. The other reason is an innovative and interesting architectural detail that facilitates ventilation and air-changes in the room. Air ducts are created in the two opposite longer walls of the room.

The ducts in the longer wall towards the street (*Koocha*) have openings towards the street and have openings inside the room at a lower level. Air from the street enters the room through the ducts. Whereas, the hot air of the room escapes through the ducts at a higher level on the opposite wall. Air Movement Pattern in Summer & Winter of selected building were adjusted.

Results and Conclusions

This research identified the hidden architectural elements, space layout performances and others as common factor which are responsible to make any residential building culturally suitable in the city of Uch Sharif, south Punjab. It also determines the level of directly or indirectly proportionality with the criteria of sustainable architecture. Houses were included in study as residential buildings due to their maximum user in the target area.

Research reveals that a number of architectural elements, vistas, features and space layout organization performances are present in these houses as common denominators which are directly responsible to full fill the criteria of sustainable architecture and compatible with the culture of the region. Furthermore, level of compatibility between all these elements present in this house compelled toward the criteria of sustainable architecture. All such common denominator like age of building, level of alteration in the original design, use of indigenous construction material, plan type of the house, environmental comfort and other architectural elements found in houses were analyzed with each other and finally with parameters of sustainable architecture. Study shows that all such specific features are responsible to make a house compatible with the criteria of sustainable Architecture.

The main contribution of the study is that it expands the literature and documentation of vanishing history in the form of digitization of drawings in the field of culture, archaeology, regional study and sustainable architecture foot prints in the region of south Punjab and that will fill the gap. A number of such types of building are present in the city of Uch Sharif and also in other cities of southern Punjab Pakistan, which needs to be documented to preserve indigenous construction techniques and lessons, learned from trial-and-error methods may be shifted in the construction of contemporary residential buildings.

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Srivastava, p.(n.a) 129 and Mughal, p. 114.