

**KEY WORDS:**

Leisure, Modernity, Public Park, Urbanity

# Spatialising Leisure: Colonial Punjab's Public Parks as a Paradigm of Modernity

Jyoti Pandey Sharma

Tekton  
Volume 1, Issue 1, September 2014  
pp. 14 - 30

## ABSTRACT

Among the cultural impacts of colonisation was the emergence of novel notions of urbanity as defined by the metropolitan ideal. As European urban institutions made their way to British controlled Indian Subcontinent, including Punjab, the meaning of leisure was redefined as a vital expression of colonial urbanity. Leisure was physically manifest in the colony via the metropolitan public park construct that went beyond catering to man's physical wellbeing to offer a breeding ground for cerebral leisure. Indeed, this imported public park model was regarded as an urban life civilizing instrument and went on to claim not only urban space in colonial Punjab's rapidly modernising cities in the late 19th and early 20th century, but also occupied the indigenous mindscape as a paradigm of modernity.

Public parks were laid out in the major cities of Punjab with Lahore's Lawrence Garden, Delhi's Queen's Gardens and Amritsar's Company Bagh,



**Dr. Jyoti Pandey Sharma** is a Professor in Architecture at Deenbandhu Chhotu Ram University of Science and Technology, Murthal (Haryana), India. She received her PhD in Architecture from De Montfort University, Leicester United Kingdom in 2005. She engages with built heritage and cultural landscape issues notably those of the Indian Subcontinent's legacy of Islamic and Colonial urbanism and has published widely. She has been a Summer Fellow at Dumbarton Oaks Research Library & Collections, Harvard University, USA in the Garden and Landscape Studies programme in 2011 and also a University Grants Commission Associate at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India from 2012-2014.

✉ [jyotip.sharma@gmail.com](mailto:jyotip.sharma@gmail.com)

epitomising the urban ideal. They offered a wellspring of cultural encounters between the indigenous and the imported via the designed landscape. While the Lahore garden was created as a new venture, those at Delhi and Amritsar were remodelled versions of pre-existing Mughal and Sikh Baghs (gardens) respectively. Both types, were typically perceived as a beacon of progress, with their medley of designed spaces, on the one hand, catering to leisure activities like walking, games and sports notably tennis and cricket. On the other, the parks satiated intellectual curiosity of their users through provision of spaces like a library, botanical gardens and menagerie, the latter two particularly contributing in promotion of a scientific temper in their users. Even as this new landscape catered to the urban elite, both European and indigenous, it also engaged with the masses to whom it denied entry, by casting a mantle of modernity over cities across the state that came to regard the Lahore, Delhi and Amritsar parks as archetypes. Punjab's colonial public parks continue to survive to this day. Their worth as agents of cultural transformation is highly undermined and their physical fabric is a victim of apathy and neglect. It is asserted that public parks also be regarded as a cultural resource within the large corpus of the state's colonial legacy, so that they can once again contribute meaningfully in shaping urbanity in cities of contemporary Punjab.

## **Introduction**

British colonisation of the Indian Subcontinent had a deep, multi dimensional cultural impact on the entire landscape particularly in the aftermath of the 1857 uprising. Among the several strands that made up the fabric of the incoming metropolitan institutions, was the emergence of novel paradigms of urbanity that included a redefined notion of leisure. While the cultural impact of colonial rule has been

scholarly examined in its various manifestations, this Paper revisits the notion of colonial urbanity from an architectural perspective. It asserts that the idea of leisure was physically manifest in the colony via the metropolitan public park construct that was regarded as an instrument of urbanity. The paper examines colonial Punjab's prominent public parks to demonstrate how this novel built environment intervention went on to claim not only urban space in Punjab's rapidly modernising cities in the late 19th and early 20th century, but also occupied the indigenous mindscape as a paradigm of modernity. Further, it is asserted that the state's surviving colonial public parks, their contemporary state notwithstanding, be valued and safeguarded as heritage whose contribution to the shaping of modern Punjab can never be underestimated.

### **Context**

British victory following the 1857 uprising unfolded a new chapter in the Subcontinent's history<sup>1</sup>. The victory marked the end of British East India Company rule and the beginning of Crown rule with the incumbent British monarch, Queen Victoria, declared as Empress of India. The blueprint for governance in the post uprising years was devised to unambiguously demonstrate British authority (Metcalf, 1965). The colonial state anxious to implement its post uprising urban ideal of a safe, healthy and insurgency proof environment undertook measures to improve the Subcontinent's cities. Attention was particularly focussed on cities, like Delhi and Lucknow, that had been transformed into battle sites during 1857-58 and were therefore regarded as hostile (Gupta, 1981; Oldenburg, 1984). Indeed, in the post 1857 scenario, a city

earned the disrepute of being hostile for having actively participated against the British in the events of 1857<sup>2</sup>. Even as cities in Punjab, with the exception of Delhi, were not regarded as having abetted the insurgency, they nevertheless became recipients of the colonial regime's urban transformative processes that were implemented across northern part of the Subcontinent to provide deterrence against any kind of revolt in the future. Delhi, a Residency under Bengal Presidency, was transferred to Punjab post 1857 as part of the government's punitive action for being the most important political centre of the uprising (Punjab Government, 1992)<sup>3</sup>. Delhi's immediate transfer to Punjab and the simultaneous acceleration of implementation of urban reprisal measures on account of it being hostile were likely to impact the refashioning of urban space in cities across Punjab, notably Lahore.

Punjab's post 1857 urbanism was typically a metropole inspired civic-industrial-utilitarian landscape that was tangibly manifest by a number of built form types including the railway station (utilitarian), the factory and warehouse (industrial) and the town hall and public park (civic) (Sharma, 2005). These spatial interventions had cemented their place in the metropolitan city and were celebrated as icons of modernity in the 19th century industrialised and municipalised Victorian city<sup>4</sup>. The colonial state, like its metropolitan counterpart, relied largely on its municipal institutions to initiate a building spree that saw these novel architectural forms, often borrowing extensively from their overseas archetypes, being built in cities of Punjab. Needless to say, the alacrity that municipalities, represented not only by Europeans but also by the indigenous

elite, demonstrated in commissioning public architecture signalled that the Subcontinent's cities were on the road to progress<sup>5</sup>. The ratification came from the highest echelons of British authority with incumbent Viceroy lauding the country's embrace of modernity. A speech delivered by Viceroy Curzon on the occasion of the Durbar in Lucknow on December 13, 1899, was equally relevant to Punjab as he declared: 'Everywhere throughout India I observe an increasing spirit of public activity, and an awakening to the conditions of modern life, (...) This spirit, as is natural, is

**The quintessential public park, established itself as an essential ingredient of the 19th century metropolitan landscape not only on health grounds as an aerator of the overcrowded and polluted city, but also as a catalyst for cultural reform via institutions that offered moral and intellectual nourishment to all classes of city dwellers including the working class.**

most visible in the great centres of population, and in the districts which are traversed by main lines of rail. But it is also penetrating to unconsidered corners, and is slowly leavening the mighty mass' (Curzon as cited in Raleigh, 1906, p.22). Even as the colonial state vigorously championed the European model of progress, the indigenous response to modernity was far from homogenous. This response in the domain of the built environment, aptly, termed by Hosagrahar as 'Indigenous Modernity' ranged from enthusiastic acceptance to complete rejection of the metropolitan ideal

and all sentiments lying in between (Hosagrahar, 2005)<sup>6</sup>. The multiplicity of indigenous responses to the changes being ushered in the urban landscape notwithstanding, the permanence of new spatial interventions and their ability to impact city space not only imparted colonial architectural interventions far more visibility than other practices, notably education and lifestyle patterns, but also underscored their potency as markers of development in the indigenous mind space.

### **The Public Park As A Marker Of Modern age Urbanity**

The 19th century concept of leisure was no longer regarded simply as a tool of rejuvenation of human physicality, but had evolved into a bigger institution that contributed towards enriching man's emotional and intellectual faculties (Bailey, 1977; Elliott, Watkins and Daniels, 2007). As a corollary, the space designed for urban leisure, the quintessential public park, established itself as an essential ingredient of the 19th century metropolitan landscape not only on health grounds as an aerator of the overcrowded and polluted city, but also as a catalyst for cultural reform via institutions that offered moral and intellectual nourishment to all classes of city dwellers including the working class (Jordan, 1994; Taylor, 1995). Indeed, a park handbook published in 1872 stated that urban public parks aimed at providing '(...) what is in reality a moral, intellectual and physical sanatorium for the ailments that unavoidably attack crowded communities' (Malchow, 1985, p.102). Local bodies, notably municipalities were empowered by legislation to improve urban

areas through the provision of public parks. An array of design elements from water features, serpentine walks, avenues, sports grounds, bandstands and architectural embellishments to horticultural displays, greenhouses, tea houses, bath houses, library, museum and menagerie made public parks a place for '(...) rational recreation, aesthetic enjoyment and botanical experimentation'(Elliott et al, 2007, p.6). It was this ideal that made its way to the Indian Subcontinent post 1857.

The public park was among the 19th century cultural imports to the Indian Subcontinent's post uprising municipalized city (Sharma, 2005). The prevailing Victorian discourse on the benefits of urban open spaces was well known in the Subcontinent with colonial engineers and sanitarians championing the cause of park building. Public parks were laid out as botanical gardens, archaeological gardens, soldiers' gardens, memorial parks and municipal parks. Their management was largely state controlled with a large number being supervised by municipalities as well as by Agri-Horticultural societies established in a number of cities by the late 19th century to cater to the enthusiasm for botany and to explore the Subcontinent's botanical diversity <sup>7</sup>. Punjab's Lahore based Agri-Horticultural Society, formed in 1851 and completely supported by the colonial administration, aimed to improve '(...)existing modes of cultivation (...) and the systematic collection and diffusion of information of all kinds connected with Agriculture, Horticulture, Arboriculture and allied pursuits' (Kerr, 1976, p.260) <sup>8</sup>. To realise its goals the Society engaged in setting up and managing diverse forms of cultivation ventures including botanical gardens. Of all the park types, municipal parks

in particular were laid out through public subscription making them people's parks. Unlike their western archetypes that aimed at the cultural upliftment of all sections of society by providing leisure space for all including the working class, the public park model as adapted to the colonial context was an elitist space that catered to the urban elite both Europeans and acculturated indigenes. Entry of indigenes to this sanitised spatial domain was often regulated with Delhi's Queen's Garden permitting indigenes only on Wednesday and Saturday (Gupta, 1981) and Lahore's Lawrence Garden opening its doors to the indigenous residents of two settlements, Mozang and Ichhra becoming the first public park in the city to do so (Rehman, 2009).

**Parks not only offered a wellspring of cultural encounters to their users but also cast a mantle of modernity over the urban landscape, an attribute that was constantly underscored in both official as well as private publications of the day.**

Public parks could be designed as a new venture as seen at Lahore and more often than not could be a product of remodelling of a pre-existing, notably Mughal origin Bagh as attempted at Delhi <sup>9</sup>. Late 19th century sources both textual and visual, the latter including among others cartographic, drawing and photographic sources, permit the reconstruction of a typical public park <sup>10</sup>. The public park, in keeping with its metropolitan spatial ideal, had large expanses of grassy lawns punctuated with planting, walks and drives, public utilities and a host of garden furnishings

both imported and indigenous. Some of its chief attractions included a bandstand, pools with fountains, statuary and relics notably sculptures from the past used for garden ornamentation. The provision of a medley of designed spaces lent worth to its claim as a beacon of modernity. On the one hand, it catered to games and sports with tennis and cricket being most popular, on the other, it satiated the intellectual curiosity of the park goers through provision of spaces that honed the scientific temper of the users via a library and reading room, museum, botanical garden and menagerie. Municipal zeal in laying out public parks resulted in cities boasting of leisure circuits with a number of parks linked together. Both Delhi and Lahore took pride in their respective park trail that included both remodelled Mughal origin gardens as well as newly laid out parks <sup>11</sup>.

### **Public Parks In Colonial Punjab**

Public parks were laid out in the major cities of Punjab with Delhi's Queen's Garden and Lahore's Lawrence Garden epitomising the urban ideal and inspiring park laying ventures across the state in the late 19th and early 20th century. Parks not only offered a wellspring of cultural encounters to their users but also cast a mantle of modernity over the urban landscape, an attribute that was constantly underscored in both official as well as private publications of the day. While district gazetteers never failed to omit public parks among places of interest in a town or city, tourist guidebooks that proliferated in the post uprising era recommended itineraries centred on public parks to potential travellers. The Gazetteer of Delhi recorded 'several fine gardens, both inside and outside the city' (Punjab

Government, 1988, p.184-85). While the former included Queen's Garden, Delhi Bank Garden and King Edward Park, the latter included Roshanara and Sirhindi Garden, Tees Hazari Garden, Qudsiya Garden and Nicholson Memorial Garden <sup>12</sup>. Syad Muhammad Latif's account of modern Lahore recorded that municipal initiatives in 1863-64 provided the city's periphery with gardens whose '(...) circuit extended for two miles, planted with trees and flowers, and intersected with walks and drives. These are now, in the afternoon, the favourite resort of vast numbers of the people of Lahore (...)' (Latif, 1892, p.290).

### **Lahore's Lawrence Garden**

Lawrence Garden was named after Sir John Lawrence and was located in Lahore's European enclave along the Mall Road opposite the Governor's House. T. H. Thornton's guidebook to Lahore written in 1876 stated that the Lawrence Gardens covering an area of 112 acres were 'the Kensington Gardens of Lahore (...)' (Thornton as cited in Aijazuddin, 2003, p.162). Like a typical metropolitan public park, the garden offered a venue for both recreation and learning. The site of the garden belonged to the Punjab Agri-Horticultural Society that had established a garden on it prior to the uprising (Kerr, 1976). By 1860 the Society's gardens had deteriorated and the area was a 'desolate wilderness' (Thornton as cited in Aijazuddin, 2003, p.162). The same year the laying of Lawrence Garden was initiated, an exercise that continued well into the 20th century till the 1930s.

Thornton's observation of 1876 reveals that the garden site was partly under Punjab Agri-Horticultural Society that developed a botanical garden under the supervision of a gardener



**Fig 1: 17th century Shahjahanabad:  
Form and principal elements ordering urban space**  
*Courtesy: Redrawn by Author after Delhi:1850 Map*

from London's Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew. This garden had three sections botanic; plant cultivation and pure agriculture and a green house to hold delicate plants (Latif, 1892). Another section of the site was occupied by a menagerie, locally called Chiriya Ghar (bird house) that had '(...) various species of animals and birds (...) and it is proposed to construct a pond for gold fish (...) (Latif, 1892, p.314). The Lahore Municipality developed another part with allocation of areas for games like badminton, archery and cricket. Mounds were created using bricks from abandoned, on site brick kilns, with one terraced into a garden to provide public seating (Aijazuddin, 2003). The Municipal section of the garden had a wide tree lined central avenue and a network of meandering walks. Thornton observed that the garden '(...) was watered by a cutting from the Lahore branch of the Bari Doab Canal and contains nearly 80,000 trees and shrubs of 600 different species' that were brought not only from various parts of the Subcontinent but the British Empire (Thornton as cited in Rehman,

2009, p.210-11). Two imposing cultural buildings were built in the garden in the Classical style, namely Lawrence Hall in 1861-2 (named after Sir John Lawrence) and Montgomery Hall in 1866 (named after Sir Robert Montgomery, Lieutenant Governor of Punjab: 1859-65) to cater to a host of functions such as meetings, dancing and theatre<sup>13</sup>. Subsequent additions included the Station Library, Reading Room, Tennis Club and the Lahore and Mian Meer Institute. The Society's botanical garden provided seeds and plants to the public thus earning a reputation as a place catering to interest in botany and horticulture (Latif, 1892). The Society also published four catalogues of plant material in 1921 as part of an endeavour to disseminate information to the public. The botanical garden also attracted science students of the newly established Government College and Punjab University for the scientific study of plants (Rehman, 2009). Thus over time, Lawrence Garden transcended from being a public leisure space to essaying a role as an institution of scientific learning in the service of the indigenes.

### **Delhi's Queen's Garden**

Queen's Garden was overlaid on a site where a 17<sup>th</sup> century Mughal Bagh called Begum-ka-Bagh and a Serai (guesthouse) known as Begum-ki Serai stood since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, both being built by Badshah Shahjahan's favourite daughter, Begum Jahanara in the heart of the bustling 17<sup>th</sup> century Mughal capital, the Badshahi Shahar (imperial capital), Shahjahanabad (Sharma, 2005). The garden was laid out as a pleasure retreat for the ladies of the imperial household and other elite women to partake of nature's bounty in the midst of the walled city. It was located north of

Shahjahanabad's famous east west bazaar street, whose most important landmark was the Chandni Chauk (Moonlight Square) (Fig.1). No firsthand account of the Bagh is available as its doors were closed to the outside world, however, it can be suggested that the Bagh subscribed to the by now well established Mughal leisure garden type. Indeed, Begum-ka-Bagh was laid out as the quintessential Char Bagh (four quadrant garden type), relying on water, planting and architecture to create the ambience for indulgence in sensually languorous pursuits, shielded from the prying eyes of the world. Begum-ki Serai, on the other hand was a public space, popular with overseas merchants hoping to sell expensive wares in the wealthy Mughal court. It finds a mention in coeval 17th century accounts including those of European travellers with Manucci calling it 'the most beautiful sarae in Hindustan (...)' (Manucci, 1705, p.212-213), while Bernier compared it to the Palais Royale in Paris (Bernier, 1670-1671).

It is difficult to reconstruct the spatial organisation of the Bagh and the Serai conclusively owing to lack of contemporaneous 17<sup>th</sup> century cartographic sources. The earliest comprehensive sources enabling a reconstruction include a map of the walled city dating around 1850 (henceforth referred to as Delhi:1850 Map) and a painting of the walled city and its environs dating 1846 (henceforth referred to as Delhi: Panorama)<sup>14</sup>. The Begum-ka-Bagh, called 'Bagh Chandni Chawk' was represented on the Delhi:1850 Map, as lying on a north-south axis along Chandni Chauk and in alignment with the Serai, the latter abutting the bagh's southern edge. The bagh had a walled enclosure with gateways for access, with

one gateway connected to the Serai's northern entrance doorway. A branch of the Mughal imperial canal, called 'Nahr-i-Bihisht' (Stream of Paradise) (Khan, 1657-58, p.407) entered the bagh from the northeast corner and flowed from east to west branching out into smaller channels that broadened into pools with fountains carrying water to all sections of the garden<sup>15</sup>. The plantation, in all likelihood, comprised both flowering trees and fruit trees, and the builtform comprised Baradaris (arched pavilions usually with twelve openings) and walkways. The Delhi:1850 Map also showed the Serai, called 'Sarae Chandni Mahall' that like other Mughal prototypes, was an introvert built form enclosed by a wall with gateways. It comprised an arcaded courtyard with rooms along its periphery on two levels, the corners strengthened with bastions and the central courtyard provided with two wells and a mosque. The Delhi: Panorama, in contrast did not mention either the Bagh or the Serai but the site can be located on the painting as lying adjacent to a property that was identified as 'Kothee Begum Sumroo', the latter was the town mansion, indigenously called Kothee / Kothi, built by Begum Samru, a woman ruler of a small principality, Sardhana, near Delhi<sup>16</sup>.

The political events of the 18<sup>th</sup> century that followed the demise of Badshah Shahjahan's son and successor, Badshah Aurangzeb in 1707 made Shahjahanabad a hunting ground for military invaders with plundering sprees and civil wars being a common occurrence. This had a bearing on the Bagh and the Serai as both became victims of neglect owing to the unstable political scenario<sup>17</sup>. The Bagh was fragmented in all likelihood, with a plot carved out that was gifted to Begum Samru by the





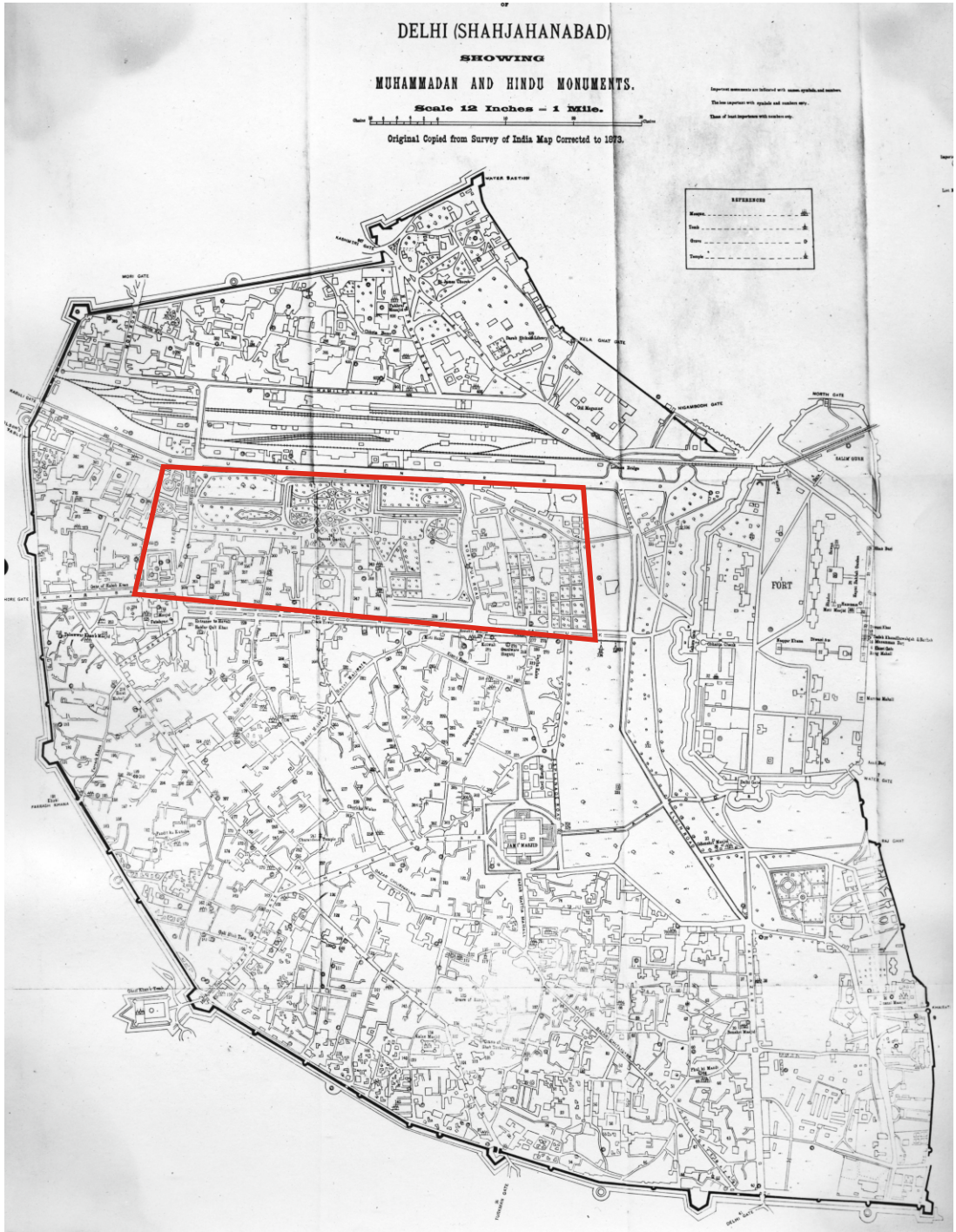
**Fig 2: Pre 1857 Delhi following British occupation: The Bagh fragmented into two separate sites**

Courtesy: ASI, Delhi, Vol. 12, 1931-32, 5802

incumbent Mughal ruler, Shah Alam II, in 1806 where she raised her mansion that the Delhi: Panorama identified as 'Kothee Begum Sumroo' (Sharma, 2010) (Fig.2). The site remained a victim of neglect during the first half of the 19th century that marked the British East India Company's occupation of Delhi. Both the Bagh and the Serai were in a state of dilapidation, their original roles as important urban landmarks in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Badshahi Shahar receiving a setback as urban institutions of British provenance began to make their presence felt in Delhi's urban landscape (Hosagrahar, 2005; Sharma, 2005). Delhi became the centre of the indigenous uprising against British colonial rule in 1857. The

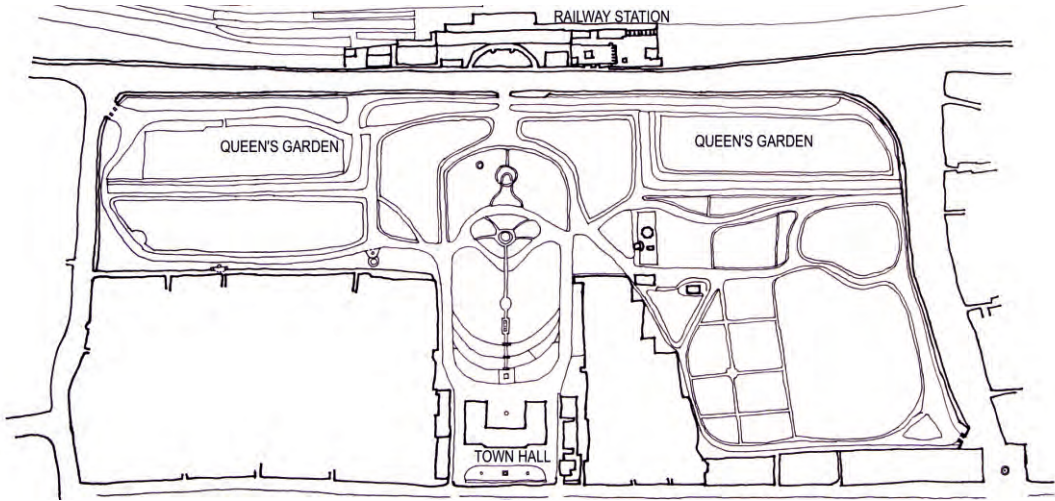
indigenous rebels disgruntled with British rule, took control of the walled city battling the British forces that occupied the Pahari (Ridge) north of Shahjahanabad transforming the city into a battlefield for five months in the summer of 1857. While sites like the city's Jami Masjid (Friday Mosque) served as a rallying space for the rebels, there is no definite record of activity at the Bagh and the Serai during 1857. It could be argued though, that the site was amenable to holding troops on account of its spatial character (Sharma, 2005).

Following a British victory over the indigenous rebels in September 1857, the walled city became a recipient of urban transformative



**Fig 3: Post 1857 Delhi: The Bagh and Serai transformed into the city's new civic hub.**

Courtesy: ASI, Northern Circle-Agra, Vol. 12, 1930-31, 5778



**Fig 4: Post 1857 Delhi: Queen's Garden with Delhi Institute**

*Courtesy: Redrawn by Author after 'Delhi Survey 1910-11-12' Town & Country Planning Office Collection, Delhi Govt., Sheet Nos. 102-116-130*

measures. While from the British perspective, the city was a hostile space in need of taming, in the indigenous mindscape, the myth of Mughal invincibility was completely shattered following British victory (Hosagrahar, 2005; Sharma, 2005). Both the Bagh and the Serai were confiscated by the colonial state as part of the urban reprisal programme initiated in post uprising Delhi. Subsequently, the site was transformed into a new urban landmark that drew on its metropolitan counterparts of urbanity, namely the public park and town hall. Delhi's new civic hub comprised a public park that replaced the Mughal Bagh, and the Delhi Municipality town hall that replaced the Mughal Serai. The public park was named Queen's Garden, after Queen Victoria but colloquially called Company Bagh, while the Municipality town hall, called Delhi Institute, also served as an educational and cultural institute. This new civic space shifted the public gaze away from the city's 17<sup>th</sup> century Mughal landmarks, namely, the Qila (Palace-fort) and

Jami Masjid (Fig.3). It is possible to establish the site's transformation from a Mughal Bagh to an English Park and from a Mughal Serai to a Municipality Town Hall by examining a set of survey maps that were commissioned by Delhi Municipality in the early 20th century under the supervision of Mr. A.J. Wilson from Survey of India <sup>18</sup> (Fig.4). Even as the size and limits of the original Mughal Bagh were retained, the enclosure wall was demolished and the garden was laid out under the supervision of a European gardener. Queen's Garden had a network of curving paths with lamp-posts at regular intervals replacing the Mughal walkways. A 'Pucca Road' skirted the southern limits of the Garden making its way through the site and opening it up to cavalcades that relied on exhibitionism in sharp contrast to the original patrons' notion of shutting out the outside world. This act of opening up the private garden realm to public park gaze, invited criticism even from the British with Constance Villiers Stuart lamenting that the



**Fig 5: Queen's Garden: Tennis Courts as surviving today.** Courtesy: Author



**Fig 6: Queen's Garden: Mughal Nahr with shady trees and marble basin from the Qila in the distance as garden ornament.** Courtesy: ASI, Northern Circle-Agra, Vol. 12, 1911-12, 2410

new road ' (...) ruined the Queen's Garden. (...) the winding drives cut up the garden with their broad bare gravel sweeps' (Villiers-Stuart, 1983, p.113). Besides provision for walks and drives, the garden also had space for games along the periphery with tennis courts on the north east and north western corners, the latter called 'Aitcheson Tennis Courts', while a cricket ground was laid out along the eastern edge (Fig.5). The 17th century Mughal Nahr (canal) that had been the focus of the Mughal Bagh was retained along with the trees that lined it to offer the park goers a pleasant promenade (Fig.6). Planting included fruits trees like mangoes and pomegranates, beds with strawberries as well as potted plants (Cooper, 1863). Surviving Mughal garden structures notably Baradaris were re-adapted, one to house a library and the other a 'well supplied menagerie that attracted large crowds' (Punjab Government, 1988, p.185). Further, the Delhi Municipality survey maps indicate that Mughal era wells, notably 'Badshah Pasand Well' and 'Barwala Kuan' (Kuan meaning well) were retained. Furthermore, objects of antiquity, including an elephant statue with a rider and a

marble basin from the Mughal Qila were set in the parterre as park embellishments that were subsequently moved back to the Mughal Qila<sup>19</sup> (See, Fig.6). The most notable new addition was an ornate bandstand that stood in the garden as a focal point in alignment with the Delhi Institute that was built to replace the demolished Mughal Serai (Fig.7). The Delhi Institute was also called Lawrence Institute after Sir John Lawrence, first Chief Commissioner of Punjab from 1853-57 and subsequently, Viceroy of India from 1864-1869, after whom the Lahore garden was also named. The Institute housed municipal offices and the chamber of commerce, a Durbar Hall and also had a club, library and museum. It was regarded as a venue to '(...) improve the local mind and to forward intercourse between Europeans and Natives' (Gupta, 1981, p.84).The building was built in 1860-65 in the Classical style and relied on urban ornament to create an impressive foreground, with a bronze statue of Queen Victoria, flanked by fountains and a Neo-Gothic clock tower, erected by filling up the Chandni Chauk pool (Fig.8). The Institute also brought out a bi-monthly publication, *The Delhi*



**Fig 7: Queen's Garden: The Bandstand replaced with a statue of Mahatma Gandhi in the post independence years.** Courtesy: Author



**Fig 8: Delhi Institute: The Town Hall building today with its former foreground lost to rampant urbanization.** Courtesy: Author

*Institute Journal* since 1861 that aimed to communicate '(...)' in a familiar manner to the natives, all news of public and domestic interest (...) questions of social interest, of public improvements, of municipal reforms, of education, (...) Articles on modern science ... will also find their place, for the purpose of diffusing mechanical and scientific information' (Goulding, 2006, p.39-40). Additions made to Queen's Garden in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century included the Station Library and Hardinge Library, the latter built as a thanksgiving gesture for Viceroy Hardinge's escape from a failed nationalist assassination bid in Chandni Chauk. While the *Delhi Gazetteer* described Queen's Garden as 'a considerable space, (...) giving an appearance of freshness and verdure to Delhi not often met with in a native town (...) ' (Punjab Government, 1988, p.206), it was gaining popularity with the city's indigenous intelligentsia who increasingly began to use it as a venue for professing nationalism from the 1880s onwards. Indeed Delhi's Queen's Garden, like it's Lahore counterpart, had transcended its role as a European leisure space to serve the indigenous cause for freedom from British rule.

Even as both Lahore's Lawrence Garden and Delhi's Queen's Garden vied with each other in terms of acreage, facilities and visitor numbers, they served as archetypes for public parks throughout Punjab. Municipalities laid out public parks in cities like Amritsar, Gujranwala, Multan and Sargodha among others. These were often referred to rather ubiquitously by the indigenes as Company Bagh after the British East India Company. Regarded as civic icons marking colonial authority, public parks created a genteel leisure landscape in the city. Further, they also acted as urban lungs and sanitizers as well as agents of disease control besides serving as instruments of cultural reform.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Following independence, Punjab's public parks underwent transformation that began with renaming and was followed by introduction of new interventions. Lahore's Lawrence Garden, renamed Bagh-e-Jinnah, fared better than its Delhi counterpart. It was retained as one of the major parks in Lahore and was used by the public for recreation. Delhi's Queen's Garden, renamed Mahatma Gandhi Park, became a

victim of encroachments and incompatible usage even before 1947, following the building of New Delhi whose extensive parks and open spaces became the new leisure space for the city's elite. The garden's degeneration was hardly checked in the post independence era as it was parcelled into smaller lots to create smaller parks, parking lots and wholesale

**Indeed Delhi's Queen's Garden, like it's Lahore counterpart, had transcended its role as a European leisure space to serve the indigenous cause for freedom from British rule.**

markets. Issues of neglect, absence of maintenance, misuse and introduction of incompatible functions prevailed across public parks. Delhi Institute continued to function as the head quarters of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi post independence, with the premises having been recently vacated following the allocation of a new office<sup>20</sup>. Post independence interventions, for example in Amritsar's 19th century Sikh pleasure retreat turned public park, fragmented the park's built forms with the entrance gate popularly called Deori isolated as a traffic rotary due to a newly laid road network completely undermining the site's original integrity<sup>21</sup>.

Punjab's colonial public parks continue to survive to this day in both India and Pakistan. Not only is this corpus's worth as an agent of cultural transformation highly undermined, but the physical fabric of the parks has also been under threat due to apathy, misuse and overlays of landscape ideas that undermine

their historic value. It is asserted that public parks also be regarded as a cultural resource within the large body of our shared colonial legacy making them worthy candidates for conservation so that they can once again contribute meaningfully in shaping urban life in our cities today. ■

### Acknowledgement

The Author would like to acknowledge that this Paper draws partly from research undertaken by her at Harvard University's Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections (USA), as a Summer Fellow in 2011 in the Garden and Landscape Studies Programme. Further, this Paper is a revised and elaborated version of a paper presented by the Author at an international seminar on 'The Making of Modern Punjab' organized by Punjab University, Chandigarh, to commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary Year of Professor Ruchi Ram Sahni & Punjab University Foundation Day Public Lecture (2013) from October 24-26, 2013. The presented Paper formed a part of the published conference proceedings. The archival images in this Paper have been reproduced by kind permission of Archaeological Survey of India (henceforth ASI), Photo Archives, New Delhi, India.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Sources for the 1857 uprising are too many to be included in their entirety. For the British perspective, see, J.W. Kaye & G.B. Malleon, (1888). History of the Indian Mutiny. London: W. H. Allen, 6 Vols.; and for the indigenous account, see, Moin-ud din Hasan Khan and Munshi Jivanlal. (1898). Two Native Narratives of the Mutiny in Delhi. Trans. Charles T. Metcalfe. London: Archibald Constable and Co.

<sup>2</sup> Cartographic sources drawn after the 1857 uprising, like 'Cruchley's New Map of India: The seat of the

Mutinies' identified 'Delhi, Meerut, Cawnpore and Lucknow' all part of Bengal Presidency as major centers of the uprising.

<sup>3</sup> Declaration of Delhi being ceded to Punjab was made under Act XXXVIII of 1858. See, Punjab Government. (1992). *A Gazetteer of Delhi (1912)*. Gurgaon: Vintage Books, 2nd edn.

<sup>4</sup> The Victorian city has been a popular subject of scholarly discourse. For a comprehensive account of the Victorian city, see, Asa Briggs. (1993). *Victorian Cities*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion on the role of the indigenous elite in the municipalisation of city space, see, Siddhartha Raychaudhuri. (2001). 'Colonialism, Indigenous Elites and the Transformation of Cities in the Non-Western World: Ahmedabad (Western India), 1890-1947', *Modern Asian Studies*, 35, no. 3, 677-726, see, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/313185><Accessed August 28, 2010>.

<sup>6</sup> Hosagrahar's commentary on colonial Delhi presents an exhaustive account of the indigenous attitude towards colonial spatial interventions. For an account of Lahore, see, William J. Glover. (2007). *Making Lahore Modern: Constructing and Imagining a Colonial City*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion on the role of the Agri-Horticultural Society in agrarian improvement, see, David Arnold. (2005). 'Agriculture and 'Improvement' in Early Colonial India: A Pre-History of Development', *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 5, no. 4, 505-525, doi: 10.1111/j.1471-0366.2005.00110.x <Accessed September 19, 2013>.

<sup>8</sup> For an account of the transactions of Punjab's Agri-Horticultural Society, see, Punjab Government. (1868). *Select Papers of the Agri-Horticultural Society of the Punjab from its Commencement to 1862*. Lahore: Lahore Chronicle Press.

<sup>9</sup> For a detailed discussion on Delhi's colonial public parks created via remodelling pre-existing Mughal gardens, see, Jyoti P. Sharma. (2007). 'The British Treatment of Historic Gardens in the Indian Subcontinent: The Transformation of Delhi's Nawab Safdarjung Tomb Complex from a Funerary Garden into a Public Park', *Garden History*, 35, no. 2, 210-228. For the introduction of the colonial public park type in Lahore, see, Sayeeda Rasool and Amita Sinha. (1995).

'Transformations in the cultural landscape of Lahore, Pakistan', *Geographical Review of India*, 57, no. 3, 212-222.

<sup>10</sup> Cartographic sources drawn up in the post uprising era included maps of cities like Agra, Delhi, Kanpur, Lucknow and Lahore indicating colonial public parks as part of the colonial state's urban remodelling programme. One recommended source is J. G. Bartholomew. (1908). *Imperial Indian Gazetteer Atlas*. Edinburgh: The Edinburgh Geographical Institute. On the other hand, literary sources including among others official records notably Gazetteers, and travel guidebooks, offered descriptions of public parks as part of places of interest.

<sup>11</sup> See, J. G. Bartholomew. (1908). *Imperial Indian Gazetteer Atlas*. Edinburgh: The Edinburgh Geographical Institute, for Delhi, *Delhi and Environs*, Plate 55 and for Lahore, *Lahore and Environs*, Plate 61.

<sup>12</sup> The Map *Delhi and Environs*, Plate 55 indicated the parks both within the walled city and in its north western hinterland.

<sup>13</sup> For a discussion on the nature of entertainment organised in Lawrence and Montgomery Halls, see, Henry Raynor Goulding. (2006). *Old Lahore: Reminiscences of a Resident*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 39-40 and for an account of their architecture, see, A. Khan, S. Arif, A. Rehman *et al.* (2013). 'Stones of British Colonial Lahore: a study of two remarkable buildings of earlier period of British Colonial Architecture', *Pakistan Journal of Science*, 65, no. 2, 303-09, see, <http://www.paas.com.pk/images/volume/pdf/1121355571-25.pdf><Accessed September 21, 2013>.

<sup>14</sup> Map - 'Plan of the City' IOR: X/1659 OIOC Collection, British Library, London, United Kingdom. The Map has been redrawn by Eckart Ehlers, Thomas Krafft and Jamal Malik as 'Shahjahanabad: Delhi Around 1850' (Geographische Institute der Universitat Bonn, 1992) and has appeared as an accompaniment to Eckart Ehlers and Thomas Krafft.(Eds.) (1993). Shahjahanabad / Old Delhi - Tradition and Colonial Change. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag. Another visual source is a panorama of the city painted in 1846 by Mazhar Ali Khan, that offers a 360° bird's eye view of the city prior to 1857. This painting is archived as 'The Panorama of Delhi', Add.Or.4126, OIOC Collection, British Library, London, United Kingdom. For a detailed account of this painting, see, J.P. Losty. (2012). Delhi 360°: Mazhar Ali Khan's View From The Lahore Gate. New Delhi: Roli Books.

<sup>15</sup> Badshah Shahjahan's chronicler, Inayat Khan, author of the Shahjahan Nama provided an account of the building of the canal to bring water from the river Yamuna upstream to the imperial capital. For a complete account, see, Inayat Khan, (1657-1658). Shahjahan Nama, A. R. Fuller, (Trans.) and W. E. Begley and &Z. A. Desai, (Eds.) (1990).Delhi: Oxford University Press.

<sup>16</sup> Begum Samru was born and raised as a Muslim but embraced Christianity following matrimony with a German military adventurer. She entered into alliances both personal and political with Europeans including the British thus becoming exposed to the metropolitan world that provided her with a worldview that eluded most of her gender in the Indian Subcontinent. For a detailed discussion on the Begum, see, Nicholas Shreeve. (1998). Dark Legacy: the fortunes of Begam Samru. Calcutta: Rupa and Vera Chatterjee. (1979). All this is ended: the life and times of H. H. the Begum Sumroo of Sardhana. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.

<sup>17</sup> For a discussion on the political scenario in the post Aurangzeb era, see, Jadunath Sarkar. (1932-50). Fall of the Mughal Empire. Calcutta: M.C. Sarkar & Sons, 4 Vols.

<sup>18</sup> The description of Queen's Garden and the Delhi Institute is based on Delhi Municipality Survey sheets. The following have been examined: *Delhi Survey 1910-11-12*, Sheet Nos. 102; 116 & 130, Municipal Corporation of Delhi Collection, Delhi, India. The examination of archival sources has been supplemented with on-site fieldwork for both the Garden and the Town Hall.

<sup>19</sup> For an account of moving back of the elephant statue with rider to the Red Fort, see, John H. Marshall. (1907). 'Restoration of Two Elephant Statues at the Fort of Delhi', in Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India 1905-06. Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 33-42.

<sup>20</sup> Among the proposals under consideration by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi for the adaptive reuse of the vacated premises are a city museum, cultural centre and heritage hotel.

<sup>21</sup> For a historic account of Amritsar's Company Bagh, see, Mona Malhotra. (2013). 'A Study of Conservation Interventions at Ram Bagh, the Summer Retreat of Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Amritsar', *Creative Space*, 1, no. 1, 39-61.

## References

Aijazuddin, F. S. (2003). *Lahore Recollected: An Album*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel.

Bailey, Peter. (1977). A Mingled Mass of Perfectly Legitimate Pleasures: The Victorian Middle Class and the Problem of Leisure, *Victorian Studies*, 21(1), 7-28, Retrieved 12/09/2010, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3825932>

Bernier, Françoise. (1670-1671). *Travels in the Mogul Empire, AD 1656-1668*, Trans. Irving Brock, Ed. Archibald Constable. Delhi: S. Chand and Company, (1968). Reprint Edn.

Cooper, Frederick. (1863). *The Handbook for Delhi*. Delhi: Delhi Press.



- Elliott, Paul; Watkins, Charles; and Daniels, Stephen. (2007). Combining Science with Recreation and Pleasure: Cultural Geographies of Nineteenth-Century Arboretums, *Garden History, Supplement: Cultural and Historical Geographies of the Arboretum*, 35, 6-27, Retrieved 12/07/2011, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25472374>
- Goulding, Henry Raynor. (2006). *Old Lahore: Reminiscences of a Resident*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel.
- Gupta, Narayani. (1981). *Delhi Between Two Empires: 1803-1931 - Society, Govt. & Urban Growth*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Hosagrahar, Jyoti. (2005). *Indigenous Modernities: Negotiating Architecture and Urbanism*. New York: Routledge.
- Jordan, Harriet. (1994). 'Public Parks, 1885-1914,' *Garden History*, 22 (1), 85-113, Retrieved 05/07/2011, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1587004>
- Kerr, Ian J. (1976). The Agri-Horticultural Society of the Punjab, in H. Singh and N. G. Barrier (Ed.), *Punjab Past and Present: Essays in Honour of Dr. Ganda Singh*, (pp. 252-272), Patiala: Punjabi University.
- Khan, Inayat. (1657-58). *Shahjahan Nama*, A. R. Fuller, (Trans.) and W. E. Begley and Z. A. Desai, (Eds.) (1990). Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Latif, Syad Muhammad. (1892). *Lahore: Its History, Architectural Remains and Antiquities*. Lahore: New Imperial Press.
- Malchow, H. L. (1985). Public Gardens and Social Action in Late Victorian London, *Victorian Studies*, 29 (1), 97-124, Retrieved 12/09/2010, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3827567>
- Manucci, Niccolao. (1705). *Storia do Mogor or Mogul India 1653-1708*, Trans. William Irvine. (1907-1908). London: John Murray, Vol.I.
- Metcalfe, Thomas R. (1965). *The Aftermath of the Revolt-India 1857-1870*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Oldenburg, Veena T. (1984). *The Making of Colonial Lucknow - 1856-1877*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Punjab Government. (1988). *A Gazetteer of Delhi (1883-4)*. Gurgaon: Vintage Books, 2ndEdn.
- Punjab Government. (1992). *A Gazetteer of Delhi (1912)*. Gurgaon: Vintage Books, 2nd Edn.
- Raleigh, Sir Thomas. (1906). *Lord Curzon in India: Being a Selection from His Speeches as Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1898-1905*. London: Macmillan and Co.
- Rehman, Abdul. (2009). Changing Concepts of Garden Design in Lahore from Mughal to Contemporary Times, *Garden History*, 37(2), 205-17.
- Sharma, Jyoti P. (2005). *Colonial Intervention and Urban Transformation: A Case Study of Shahjahanabad / Old Delhi*, Unpublished Thesis, De Montfort University.
- Sharma, Jyoti P. (2010). Kothi Begum Samru: A Tale of Transformation in 19th and 20th century Delhi, *Marg: A Magazine of the Arts*, 61(4).
- Taylor, Hilary A. (1995). Urban Public Parks, 1840-1900: Design and Meaning, *Garden History*, 23(2), 201-221, Retrieved 12/09/2010, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1587078>
- Villiers-Stuart, Constance Mary. (1983). *Gardens of the Great Mughals*. Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 2nd Edn.