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INTRODUCTION

The tomb of Asaf Khan is distinct in form, construction and finishes as compared to other Mughal monuments. Despite the ravages of the time, this once majestic and elegant edifice still retains much of its original grandeur. Although it was deprived of its costly finishes by the Sikhs, it did not receive adequate attention during either the British or post-independence periods. In March 2003, Global Heritage Fund, USA (GHF), initiated the project to conserve this monument, and official permission was sought in June, 2003, but the case remained in the court of the Department of Archaeology Pakistan for over a year. In November, 2005, the department signed an agreement with GHF to undertake the documentation and make conservation proposals. As a result Global Heritage Fund, Pakistan, (GHF-Pak) and a team of experts were mobilized to implement the project of conservation of Asaf Khan’s tomb. Systematic documentation of structures, materials as well as environment was undertaken. This report gives the methodology of documentation and identification of problems associated with the conservation and recommendations for the proposed work to be undertaken in future. This study was undertaken by the following Project Implementation Unit:

Kamil Khan Mumtaz   Project Director
Dr. Abdul Rehman   Project Coordinator
Sajjad Kausar   Landscape and Hydraulics
A. R. Khan Niazi & Amjad Niazi   Structural Design
Sardar Usman   Ceramics
Najma Kabir   Materials Analyst

The following methodology was adopted to study the monument:

- **Literature Survey**: Comprehensive literature survey was undertaken to know the history of construction and conservation, material of construction and finishes and landscape features. In addition comparative studies were done with the contemporary monuments.

- **Physical Survey of Site**: The physical survey of the site was conducted using electronic total station to establish levels and check any possible settlement of the structure. Datum lines were established and relative measurements of height were taken.

- **Field Measurements**: Field measurements were taken and triangulation method was used to identify the exact shape of the structure. The measurement on ground was compared with the measurement of the roof using plumb bob.

- **Photchival Research**: comprehensive research was undertaken to find out any visual or graphic image. In this connection several photographs were collected from different sources to compare the past and present condition of the monument.

- **Laboratory Research**: Samples of mortar were analyzed using X-Ray Diffraction Method. Still more tests are underway to check the nature and composition of materials and finishes particularly mortar and glazed tiles.

- **Structural Analysis**: Structural analysis was carried out for the south gate by preparing three dimensional models and testing them using ------ Software. Telltales have been ordered and it is expected that these will fixed to the main monument in coming days to know the possibility of structural movements.

- **Measured drawings**: After taking field measurements AutoCAD software version 2006 were used to plot field measurement and draw plans, elevations and sections of each building located within the premises. In the second stage, several hundred photographs were taken by using SLR NIKON Camera, the images were digitized and then applied on the CAD drawing using PHOTO SHOP software version7 to record the existing condition of the monument before conservation.

The findings on the existing state of preservation of each structure were discussed by the conservation team before arriving at a consensus on recommendations for future line of action and work required for each monument.

Finally Global Heritage Fund would like to thank officers and staff of Department of Archaeology for their help and support in the process of documentation and research.
Satellite Image Of Shubdara Complex Of Monuments
THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

Shahdara, Lahore. The two monuments, share a common wall. Although Asaf Khan’s tomb had an independent entrance but a small opening created during British period also provides access to the tomb.

Open fields once separated the tomb of Asaf Khan from the tomb of Nur Jahan, located on south west, during the Mughal period, which is also apparent in the early maps of British period. This separation was made permanent by Lahore-Peshawar railway line laid during British period. The tomb of Jahangir is situated east of Akbari Sarai. Thus the complex of tombs, gardens and Sarai at Shahdara represents one of the best sites of imperial Mughal monuments. The British period record, mentions Shahdara as part of Sheikhupura District, but today it is included in the territory of Metropolitan Lahore.

In the recent years the low lying area between the western wall and railway line was occupied by unlawful permanent houses which have changed its landscape character.

Today, a narrow street separates Asaf Khan’s tomb from residential constructions, although, according to the law, no construction can be carried out within 150 feet from the boundary of the monument. On the northern side and at the back of Jawab gate lies the tomb of Nim Pir, a saint of Mughal period. On the south a metaled road and green space separate the tomb from the residential area. This open space is being encroached and, if necessary measures are not taken at this point in time, the entire area will become victim of unauthorized construction.
Shah Jahan receives his three eldest sons during accession ceremonies.
Asaf Khan on extreme top left.

Asaf Khan witnessing the Weighing of Emperor Shah Jahan on his 42nd lunar Birthday.

Asaf Khan in the wedding procession of Dara Shikoh, son of Shah Jahan.

Detail: (Asaf Khan in white turban)

Detail: (Asaf Khan in white turban)
Mirza Abul Hasan, titled Asaf Khan, was son of I’tmad-ud-Daula and elder brother of Nur Jahan, the queen of Emperor Jahangir. He was also the father of Arjumand Bano, titled Mumtaz Mahal, wife of Emperor Shah Jahan, for whom the Taj Mahal was constructed in Agra.

Abul Hasan migrated to India from Iran while he was barely seven or eight years old. He was introduced, along with his father Mirza Ghias Beg, in the court of Akbar, the Mughal ruler of India. He gradually rose in rank and became a prominent figure in the reigns of emperors Jahangir and Shah Jahan.

Abul Hasan was given the title of Itiqad Khan during the sixth year of the reign of Emperor Jahangir. (Tuzuk I, 202). Few days later Jahangir presented him his special sword called Sar-Andaz (striker of heads). At this time his house was under construction at Agra. In the eighth year of his reign Emperor Jahangir along with ladies of harem visited his newly constructed house on the bank of river Jamna at Agra. According to Jahangir this delightful house pleased him greatly. Asaf Khan produced suitable offerings of cloth stuff, jewels and other things, laid before emperor and most of them were approved. (Tuzuk I 249).

On the beginning of ninth year of his accession to the throne, Emperor Jahangir raised the mansab (rank) of Asaf Khan as a result he became one of the leading personalities of the reign. This time his mansab was raised from 2000 personnel to 3000 personnel and 500 horse, to 1000 horse. He was also distinguished with the title of Asaf Khan. (Tuzuk I, 260). Next year (March 1615) Asaf Khan was again promoted to 4000 personnel to 2000 horse. (I:281). A year later the rank of Asaf Khan was once again increased (C. 26 March 1616) by 1000 personal and 2000 horse and honored with drums and a standard. (I:317). In the 12th year of Jahangir’s reign, Asaf Khan was once again promoted to 5000 personal and horse.

Asaf Khan rose to unprecedented heights, achieving a status of commander of 9000 personal and 9000 horse, a mansab once reserved only for royal princes. (Lahori, II. Shah Jahan also granted him the title of Yamin ud Daula. These were the honors which no other person received outside the imperial Mughal family. Shah Jahan had high regards for Asaf Khan. In fact he helped him to come to power.

On the day of nauroz which fell on the same day as Id al Fitr (1st Shawwal 1044, March 20, 1635) the astrologers fixed upon the 3rd of Shawwal (22 March ) Shah Jahan appointed him khan-e khanan and sipah salar (Commander in Chief) (A K147-48). A year later he was appointed as Governor of Punjab.

The contemporary historian mentions that in the month of February 1639, Shah Jahan paid a visit to the mansion of Asaf Khan at Lahore, and performed customary observances of pa andaz and nisar and presented offerings to the emperor, part of which was accepted.

Asaf Khan died on 17th of Sha’ban 1051 (21st November 1641) at Lahore after a prolonged suffering from dropsy. The emperor therefore directed that he should be buried close to the late emperor Jahangir’s mausoleum and a lofty domed edifice should be erected over his tomb. (AK282)

Asaf Khan was a man of fabulous wealth. The vast properties belonging to him included mansion in Lahore, on which enormous sum of twenty lakh of rupees had been expended and took ten years to complete, the houses and gardens at Akbarabad, the valley of Kashmir and a serai between Agra and Lahore (AK 282). Asaf Khan also had a lot of interest in gardens and built Nishat Bagh in Kashmir.
Asaf Khan’s Tomb showing results of Sikh Period Ravaging.
Tomb in Contemporary Sources

The tomb of Asaf Khan has been discussed very little in the contemporary sources but it was only Abdul Hamid Lahori, official court historian, who described it at some length in Badshahnama in the following words:

“The tomb is situated to the west of Jalwakhana of Emperor Jahangir’s mausoleum. Form setah (Plan) to piskar it is octagonal in shape. It is 15 zina in diameter (circumference) from there onward to shuqqa, it is finished in qilb kari. In octagons inside it has beautiful eight nashmans (seats) and outside eight pesh-taq (entrance arches), each stylized as nim-musamman (half octagons) with length of 7 gaz. Izara (dado) of the building from inde is finished in white marble and from outside in Sang-i-Akri, and nouy-i-kari (surface) partially in white marble and partially in Sang-i-Zard and other variegated stones. The cenotaph as well as the chabutra or platform of its grave is finished with beautiful precious stones in pichin kari (pietra-dura) technique. The cenotaph upon the chabutra contains some Quranic verses and names of Allah written in the same technique. The interior floor of the building is set in girah bandi (geometric arabesque) by using various stones. Around the tomb there is an octagonal chabutra, 60 zarah (yards) in circumference which is completely finished in red sandstones. On each of the four sides of the tomb on the podium there are four Hauz (pools), each one 9 zira in length and 7½ zirah in width. This building has been erected at the centre of a char chaman (four parterre garden) covering an area of 300 zirah in length and width. This char chaman, surrounded by walls, is square in shape. Its enclosure wall in the east is the same of the jalwakhana to the west of Jahangir’s mausoleum. The western wall of the tomb has a magnificent and beautiful mosque. On the east of the tomb there lies Qarina-i-Masjid while in the centre of the southern wall, there is the high entrance gate. The whole of this building was completed in a period of four years, at a cost of three lakhs of rupees.”

Lahori’s description is very comprehensive and he has given the detailed dimensions as well as finishing materials applied in the interior and exterior of the tomb.

Muhammad Salih Kambo had only mentioned the emperor’s directive in the entry of 15th year of reign that the dome may be covered with white marble (Shahjahan nama, 1967 edt. Dr. Ghulam Yazdani, Majlis Taraqi –e Adab Vol II p. 290) However, Anayat Khan is completely silent on the construction of the tomb. He only mentions the emperor’s desire that Asaf Khan may be buried close to Jahangir’s tomb.

Tomb in the Sikh Period Sources:

Gujjar Singh, Lahna Singh and Subha Singh (1768-1797) known as Seh-Hakiman-i-Lahore (three rulers of Lahore) are recorded to be the first of the Sikhs Rulers of the Punjab, who treated Asaf Khan’s tomb and others cruelly. They damaged the tomb and injured its beauty through various steps of brutality. They grew two trees of pipals (ficus indicus) on both sides of chuna gach Chabutra (Platform), which proved, later on, a great set back to the natural view and beauty of the tomb. These trees stood there till the time of British Raj, when they were removed.

Ranjit Singh’s reign aggravated the misfortune of the tomb and other monuments at Shahdara. He removed the white marble of its interior, including floor, the variety of stones, embellishing its wall outside. He used all this material to decorate the Golden Temple at Amritsar and the marble Summer-house in the Hazuri Bagh of Lahore. William Moorcroft, a traveler of Ranjit Singh period who visited Lahore in 1820 and met with Ranjit Singh mentions all this loot in his travelogue, published later on. Moorcroft, says:

“He had stripped, the dome of the mausoleum of Asaf Jah, the brother of Nur Jahan Begum, of its white marbles, to apply them to the erection of some insignificant apartments in the garden court of the Mosque”. (Moorcroft vol.I p. 104-105)

Col. Wade and Lt. William Barr, visited the Asaf Khan tomb during the reign of Ranjit Singh in February 24, 1839 on their way to Kabul. As William Barr states: “…..and opposite to it (Jahangir’s tomb) he erected a smaller mausoleum in commemoration of the wuzeer Aziph Jah, and connected with Jehanguire’s by range of dervishes’ habitations, once the abode of piety and learning, now by a strange perversion of their original use, converted into barracks for Tezie Singh’s soldiers, who are generally quartered here. The ruthless hand of the despoiler has forested conquests due to time alone, and once the gracefully swelling dome of marble that protected the remains of Mohammaden noble has been shamefully removed to enrich the Sikh shrine at Amritsar, leaving in its stead an unsightly mass of brick work, to remind one of the uncivilized deeds perpetrated by the present Maharajah.”
Due to the brutal action of the Sikhs and interference of Maharaja Ranjit Singh these buildings were badly destroyed. The upper pavilion of Jahangir’s tomb was removed but the grave, minarets and tomb chamber remained saved. Grills and pillars were taken away, foundations were excavated which made it into ruined state. The tomb of Asaf Khan is bigger in length, width and height than other tombs of Lahore. Except the tomb of Ali Mardan Khan none is comparable to its size. The tomb was built on the order of Shah Jahan. Asaf Khan was brother of Nur Jahan, beloved queen of Jahangir, became Prime Minister of Shah Jahan. The monument, like others in the Punjab, got two phases of treatment during the British reign. During the first phase, from 1849 to the installation of Archaeology Department, in India in 1905, the British could not concentrate their attention on it as they were still consolidating their control here. The condition of the monument during this period is recorded by the contemporary historians of the period.

Nur Ahmad Chishti in his work Tehqiqat-e Chishti (1864) informs about the existing entrance gate, the tomb and its podium and the mosque. The main tomb was finished with white marble which were removed by the Sikhs. At present the tomb has a naked brick structure. According to him the garden was full of fruit trees. Chishti also specifically mentions that

Regarding the garden, Chishti writes,

“In those days the garden was in the estate of Bhay Wasti Ram and was possessed by two brothers namely Ghaus and Qutab. Both of the brothers were Mujawirs (tenants) by virtue of their inheritance. He further says that the garden covered area of 30 Begas. He observed date-palms and Beri trees in abundance.” (Nur Ahmad Chishti, Tehqiqat-e- Chishti. Alfaisal Publishers, Lahore report 1993. pp. 932-34)
after came to power with the support of Asaf Khan. Shah Jahan got extremely distressed on his sad demise; therefore he constructed his tomb close the tomb of his father. The tomb was completely covered with marble. The floor of tomb chamber, platform and the sarcophagus was also laid out with white marble. The eight dehliz, outer marghols (pishtaq) and tall pillars on each sides were built in red sandstone. The passages (doqayen) were finished with bronze (kansi) work. In the exterior of the tomb, there is a vast chabutra, slabs of white marble were fixed on it. The walls of the platform were cladded with red sandstone. The edges of the four hauz (tanks) in four cardinal directions were lined with slabs of white marble. The tomb was built in a vast and spacious garden which encloses three bigha land within its perimeter wall. A Hafiz Khana and kitchen, also located within its perimeter wall was also pulled down to acquire stone.”

which was all looted during the reign of three rulers. The trees were cut down and the lawns were converted into plane grounds (maidans). The structures, tomb and boundary wall survived from the hands of the Sikhs only because of their strength. Finally when Maharaja Ranjit Singh desired to send stone to Amritsar and constructed solid baradari in Hazuri Bagh, he removed stones from a number of tombs of Lahore. A number of them were raised down from foundation and their lands were auctioned during the British period. The brick sellers removed bricks from their foundations. Asaf Khan tomb was a grand edifice, cladded with stone of several lakh of rupees but on the orders of Maharaja Ranjit Singh it was removed from the tomb which transformed it into ruins. The strength of the tomb can be imagined from the fact that if it survive for another two thousand years, it will not be surprising.”

names of Allah in naskh were displaced which is still lying in tomb chamber.”

“The sacogaphus was made from a single piece of marble. The Quranic verses and ninety nine names of Allah are inscribed in a similar manner as found on the tomb of Shah Jahan. It has same design, form, dimensions, inscriptions and stone. The tomb has eight dehliz, outer marghols (pishtaq) and tall pillars on boundary wall survived from the hands of the Sikhs only because of their strength. Finally when Maharaja Ranjit Singh desired to send stone to Amritsar and constructed solid baradari in Hazuri Bagh, he removed stones from a number of tombs of Lahore. A number of them were raised down from foundation and their lands were auctioned during the British period. The brick sellers removed bricks from their foundations. Asaf Khan tomb was a grand edifice, cladded with stone of several lakh of rupees but on the orders of Maharaja Ranjit Singh it was removed from the tomb which transformed it into ruins. The strength of the tomb can be imagined from the fact that if it survive for another two thousand years, it will not be surprising.”

All the articles of this tomb, the lanterns (Qandil) of gold and silver and fanous (chandeliers) and precious flooring was not less then those of Jahangir’s tomb. The work of Syed Muhammad Latif (1892) is of significant importance. His work is built upon the works of earlier writers. The author has referred to the description of Abdul Hamid Lahori and states that

“The stone of the staircase was removed so brutally that it got deteriorated. The flooring of the tomb chamber was removed and platform was dismantled. The marble sarcophagus, inscribed with ninety nine
embellished with variety of stones, which were all removed by Ranjit Singh to decorate temple at Amritsar, and used partly in building the marble summer house in the Hazuri Bagh of Lahore. The edifice stands on a platform, the side walls of which covered with red limestone. At each of the four corners of this square is a reservoir of water, now however in ruins. The whole of this beautiful structure was in the midst of a spacious garden with fountains of water and beautiful walks, traces of which are still to be seen. Like the Serai of Jahangir Mausoleum, the high and majestic gate of the tomb is towards the south. The mosque attached to it has been converted into a private European residence

Syed Muhammad Latif in his book “Lahore its History, Architectural Remains and Antiquities”, published in 1892 describes the same deteriorating condition of the tomb. He also writes that the mosque of the tomb before 1880 A.D was used as residence, of European Railway Officer, after making certain internal adjustments

Dr. Abdullah Chughtai, who visited the tomb in 1905 as a boy of 8-9 years, found the sarcophagus lying in the south porticos. Dr. Abdullah Chughtai also states that outer octagonal podium of the tomb was fenced with barbered wire. He also says that there was a huge heap of soil hindering the approach leading to the tomb.

Lord Curzon, protection of the tomb and conservation efforts

In 1904-05 by the orders of Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India, the Department of Archaeology was established. Then the tomb of Asaf Khan received due attention. From time to time some steps were taken for its restoration, conservation and improvement. The sarcophagus was reset in its original position. The staircase, demolished during the Sikh high-handedness was rebuilt. It is beyond doubt the tomb still exists only due to repair conducted by the British Government.

The Annual Reports of Archaeological Survey of India produced by the British Government recorded the repairs or any other activity associated with the historic monument along with the amount spent during the financial year. According to Archaeological Survey of United Province and Punjab annual report for the year ending 31st March, 1904, special repairs were carried out at Asaf Khan tomb by spending a sum of Rs.2493. According to the report brick floor was provided, ceiling was repaired and plastered. Gaps in the tomb, north gate and east baradari (pavilion) was filled in; also south gate, east baradari and the main tomb repaired and plastered. (p. 11) After this elaborate renovation a small amount of Rs.60, and Rs.220 was spent in year ending 31st March, 1906, and 1914, respectively. (Annual progress report of AS Northern Circle. Allahabad P. 9& 61)

The tomb was declared as a protected monument in 1912 under serial No. 200. (annual report 1912 p. 16) which changed its fortune and British government started paying attention on it. It is however, worth mentioning that the garden remained under the control of its previous owners. The annual report for the year 1913 narrates that the garden of Asaf Khan tomb is also be taken in hand and notes have been submitted with respect to it. A plea has been recorded for the fine groups of palm and other large trees which surround the tomb. (pp 11-12)
under the Land Acquisition Act the enclosure was acquired for Rs.13,888.5-4. The owners however, appealed against this award and got it increased to Rs.39,885-5. The revised award was executed in favour of the owners during the year 1925-26. (ASI-AR-1925-26 p.17)

During the year 1919-1920, the garden of the tomb was in dilapidated condition and efforts were made to bring it to its original shape. An amount of Rs.13,200/- was spent on the enclosure walls. The work conducted was under-pinning and buttressing. The renovation work was carried out during 1920-21 at the cost of Rs.14,670/-. The conservation of the causeways and repairs to chabutra on which the tomb stands was under taken. According to the report for the year 1924-25, sanctioned estimate for the acquisition of land for improvement of Asaf Khan tomb were Rs.1569 out of which Rs.1318 was allotted and paid. In the same year Rs.1,050/- were spent for the improvement of the enclosing walls, garden and grassy plots. The report also records the removal of different trees grown on the brick-on-edge pavement to avoid further damage. Lastly the renovation of the garden was done during 1930-34. (ASI-25-26, page 16)

**Asaf Khan Tomb after independence:**

In 1947, when Pakistan came into being, the tomb came under the charge of Department of Archaeology. It was expected that it will be restored to its original position but even after the lapse of fifty eight years, the tomb could not receive due attention. Its naked bricks are still in the same condition as it was in early years of twentieth century. No major repairs were undertaken except the maintenance of lawns and minor repairs.

The Progress Reports of 1984-85 and 1985-86 of Northern Circle of Archaeology (Punjab region), mention that the bund indicating the outlines of lawns around the tomb has weathered away and presented an ugly look.

The work was taken in hand with original size brick laid in cement mortar and kankar lime pointed flush to open jointed masonry after racking and cleaning of joints. Therefore, restoration of bund on north-eastern lawns was taken in hand.

During the financial year 1986-87, the underpinning of external wall of tomb on southern side measuring 111 feet long and 8 feet in height was repaired with burnt bricks using cement sand mortar in 1:5 ratio. The continuation of the previous works, dwarf border walls of three lawns were restored as preliminary steps for restoring the walkway with special size bricks. The total work carried out and measured 3045 cft. The top course was laid and rubbed and dressed bricks in cement mortar of 1:5 ratio. The total expenditure involved in the works was Rs.95,144.80 (Progress report p.14)

The Annual Progress Report 1988-89 recognizes that the tomb is in worst condition. The flood water entered in this area by breaking wooden gate into pieces. The plinth of the perimeter wall was badly affected by dampness The main tomb with its structure and podium was however, safe. The pavement on the eastern side of the tomb, near Shahdara was damaged with racing water creating ditches there. (Annual Progress report 1988-89 p.11)
Finally the Annual Progress report of 1994-95 mentions the repair of 217.60 square feet wall area but is silent about the location of such repairs. (Annual Progress report 1994-95 p.12)

In the recent year the department prepared the master plan for the conservation of tomb complex but no progress was made for its approval of competent authority, therefore, the tomb remained in dilapidated condition. Today its naked chamber, floor and octagonal podium are in a miserable condition. Its dry fountains, cascades and water tanks are in wrecked condition.

The pavements are broken. The majestic entrance gate is closed permanently for visitors. Nowadays a small opening in the western wall of Akbari Sarai on the south side of Sarai Mosque provides access to the visitors. The jawab of the entrance gate in the northern wall, retaining traces of its glazed tile ornamentation, is deteriorating day by day. The mosque on the west has lost its original form of beauty and needs special attention. The roof of the Qarina-e Masjid on the east has collapsed, except for a little portion standing buttressed on the northern side with kashi kari on the north and a portion of pillar on the north-western corner. The traces of glazed mosaic work and kashi kari surviving on the walls and interspaces of the peshtaq are gradually vanishing.

The tomb remained exposed to floods of the river Ravi. The flood of 1955, swept away half of its southern boundary wall of the east of the entrance gate. The remaining wall was plumbed and buttressed.

The 1973 flood caused serious damage to the buildings and surface decorations. The water-logging and salinity destroyed the brick masonry. Despite plundering of finishing materials during Sikh period, damage caused by river floods and constant to neglect the structure is still surviving with the ravages of time and it can still be saved.
ASAF KHAN TOMB: ARCHITECTURE AND CONSERVATION

Architect and Architecture

The tomb has distinct architectural form which is probably inspired from the tomb of mother of Ali Mardan Khan today known as Maqbara Ali Mardan Khan. Since it was built on the order of Shah Jahan, it is very much possible that Shah Jahan would have approved the design when he was here at Lahore at the opening ceremony of Shalamar Garden. The possible involvement of Fazil Khan, Ala-ul-Mulk Tuni can not be overlooked.

Who was the main architect (mimar) who worked day and night for the construction of this tomb? Historical records are silent in this regard. Dr. Abdullah Chughtai, a well-known architectural historian suggests Ahmad Lahori as the possible mimar of the tomb. His presumption is based on the fact that Ahmad Minar Lahori had been the chief architect of Haveli of Asaf Khan at Lahore.

The analytical studies of the plan of the tomb reveal some aspects which make it very distinctive. The chamber of the tomb is octagonal internally and externally, standing on an octagonal podium with four pools (hauz), one on each cardinal direction, is the characteristics of the tomb which few tombs of the Islamic world could achieve. Its double dome is “pear-shaped”. Internally the outer dome is hemispherical at the top and then continues towards the drum in the shape of melon. Its specific form makes it unique among all other tomb of Mughal empire.

Master Plan.

Asif Khan’s tomb was planned in the middle of a square walled garden. It is 300 yards square. The main tomb is located in the middle of a charbagh with walkways and water channels in the middle connecting four buildings located in the middle of the boundary walls in each cardinal direction. The main tomb rests on an octagonal podium surrounded by double walkways and water channel in the middle.

The majestic main gate is located in the middle of south wall, mosque in the middle of the west wall, Jawab of main gate in the north wall and Jawab of Masjid is located in the middle of the east wall. According to the original sources and existing evidences, Asif Khan’s tomb was one of the finest specimens of building arts and crafts.
As mentioned earlier, the tomb was open on three sides. Now unauthorized construction has encroached upon the tomb on two sides. The illegal encroachments abut the western half side of boundary wall whereas on west side a narrow passage 8 to 10 feet wide separates the boundary wall from encroachments. On south side a metalled road runs along the boundary wall. It is desirable that existing road abutting the wall may be shifted to further south to uncover existing wells and protect the open area from further encroachment on this side.

**South Gate**

The principal entrance to the *charbagh* is the south gate building, built in the south side wall facing *charbagh* and main tomb on the north side, the city of Lahore and landscape beyond on south side. It is a double storied high building, roughly square in plan with chamfered southeastern and southwestern corners to make room for half octagonal niches. The plan is divided into three parts on east west axis. The central portion has a main passageway with a double height *pesh-taq* (arched entrance) and main lobby. The *pesh-taq* was finished with stucco work. The immediate surrounding of the north side has exquisite brick on edge flooring in traditional *girah* (geometrical pattern).

The first floor is accessed from two staircases located on the side rooms facing north side. The flight of steps then turns and runs straight on the east and west side wall to the roof top. From the landings in the middle of the staircases one enters into rectangular chambers overlooking the double height lobby. The first floor is planned on three sides of the entrance lobby and has arched openings to overlook the main corridor. The roof of rooms in the middle of three sides is flat while the corner rooms on southeast and southwest sides have domical roof decorated with *qalib kari* (plaster relief).

The structure is sound except the minor settlement of 0.5 mm of entire south side. This is very much possible because of the age factor as well as vibration of moving traffic on adjacent road. The roof top is uneven resulting in inadequate disposal of rain water and therefore water seeps into the interior.

At present all lime concrete flooring has been destroyed. Plaster on ground floor walls up to dado level is mostly missing. Kankar lime plaster on interior walls at first floor is relatively in good condition but glazed plaster is missing in most places. Due the seepage of rain water from the roofs the plaster on the soffit of slab and dome is also damaged. Red sandstone dado on the exterior walls is in bad state of repair. Internal walls are covered with smoke. Roof over the two staircases have collapsed. The brick-on-edge flooring in the southern half of the gateway has partially settled down. The original wooden gate is missing. The entire structure needs cleaning and removal of dirt and dust.

The main structure of the gate was built in brick masonry using lime mortar. The south façade was clad with red sandstone and white marble. Red sandstone dado is still preserved in the entire building in the interior and exterior facing *charbagh* while it is missing on walls located outside the boundary wall. The remaining three sides were finished with *pucca Kali* (glazed lime plaster) and *khat kashi* (deliniation) work. The ceiling of the lobby and the internal chambers has traces of beautiful stucco work in lime mortar.
EXISTING FIRST FLOOR CEILING PLAN

EXISTING GROUND FLOOR CEILING PLAN

SOUTH GATE: CEILING PLANS
TOMB OF ASAF KHAN
NORTH ELEVATION

SOUTH GATE : ELEVATIONS
TOMB OF ASAF KHAN

DATE: JUN 2006
SCALE: 1:500
TOMB OF ASAF KHAN
GROUND FLOOR EXISTING PLAN
SHOWING SPOT LEVELS AT PLINTH LEVEL

SOUTH GATE: ANALYSIS OF GROUND FLOOR
TOMB OF ASAF KHAN
SOUTH GATE: ANALYSIS OF ROOF PLAN
TOMB OF ASAF KHAN

DATE: JUNE 2006
Masjid (Mosque)

The mosque lies on the west of the tomb in the middle of the western wall with mihrab (niche) projecting outside the boundary wall. It is an important feature of the physical design of master plan and a common feature of Mughal funerary architecture of Shah Jahan period. The prayer chamber is divided into three bays by means to four centered arches. The mosque is rectangular in plan and has five arched entrances or openings, three on the east side overlooking the main tomb and two on north and south sides. The side bays have elliptical domes finished with qalib kari while the central bay has flat roof. The soffit of the arches is also finished with qalib kari and khat kashi work. The lower portion of the walls is eroded and needs underpinning. Similarly the western wall of the mihrab is also broken at places which provide opportunity for intruders to enter into the complex. The original floor is also missing.

The arched openings have remnants of plaster finish both in the interior and exterior. Above the arched openings on the exterior façade on north, east and south sides, runs an overhang made from projecting bricks one over the other. The overhang is broken in the southeastern corner on the south side. The façade ends with parapet wall which contains four parnas (rainwater spouts) of red-sand-stone.

The mosque was converted into a residence during the British period. At present it is in a very bad condition. The mortar is oozing at places. The building up to plinth level has been damaged by floods and now it is permanently suffering from water-logging and salinity. The walls have lost their plaster but some part of the plinth wall facing east was repaired with cut and dressed brick work. The mosque of Asaf Khan’s tomb is the only structure in the complex which received little attention since its construction.
PLAN AT +6'-5"

MOSQUE: PLAN

TOMB OF ASAF KHAN
PLAN AT +6'-5"
MOSQUE : SECTION
TOMB OF ASAF KHAN
SOUTH ELEVATION

MOSQUE: ELEVATION
TOMB OF ASAF KHAAN
EAST ELEVATION

MOSQUE : ELEVATION
TOMB OF ASAF KHAN
NORTH ELEVATION

MOSQUE : ELEVATION
TOMB OF ASAIF KHAN
SOUTH ELEVATION

MOSQUE : ELEVATION
TOMB OF ASAF KHAN
Jawab Gate:

To the north side of the tomb, in the middle of the northern wall lies the jawab gate (response to the south gate). It is a double storey building with staircases rising from inside of two niches on either side of the main niche. The structure was built in traditional bricks using lime mortar. Internally the structure was plastered and externally it was finished with kashi kari (glazed tile mosaic). The main façade of the jawab gate comprises of double height arched niche flanked by smaller niches one above the other on either sides of the main arch. The two corners are chamfered to incorporate square and rectangular panels of kashi kari work. These faces are defined by pilasters also finished with glazed tiles in chevron pattern, a common feature of Mughal architecture. The northern half of east west facades were also finished with kashi kari. The northern half of the east and west façade and parapet wall was simply plastered and finished with pucca kali work.

The 1960’s photograph shows that there were three openings, one in each niche, providing access the northern side. These openings were later blocked and it is not possible to open them again. The plaster and glazed tile panels up to five feet are damaged. Similarly the original floors also no longer exist. The plaster is mostly damaged on the walls and soffit of the niches. Two steps are missing on the west side staircase. The structure is sound but above work is required to prevent it from further decay.
PLAN AT +28'- 3"

ROOF PLAN

NORTHEN JAWAB GATE : PLAN (DIMENSIONS)
TOMB OF ASAF KHAN
SOUTH ELEVATION

NORTHEN JAWAB GATE: ELEVATION
TOMB OF ASAP KHAN
NORTHERN JAWAB GATE: ELEVATIONS
TOMB OF ASAF KHAN
NORTHEN JAWAB GATE : ELEVATIONS
TOMB OF ASAF KHAN
Jawab of Masjid (Eastern pavilion)

The eastern pavilion is attached to the west side of the Lodi period mosque in the Akbari Sarai. The pavilion has identical plan of the mosque except the mihrab. The plan is divided into three bays, separated by arches. The central bay is bigger and has flat roof while the side bays are smaller and have elliptical domes. The structure had five arched openings, three on the front (facing west) and one each on north and south sides. The roof over the eastern and central bay has totally collapsed while over the northern bay is partially surviving. The west facing arch on the northern side is also partially surviving. The north façade is completely intact while the finishes have deteriorated with the passage of the time. The pavilion was finished with kashi kari which has survived completely on the northern façade but is in dilapidated condition on the half arch of the west side and a fragment on the south side.

The half arches on the west and south sides were given support of brickwork to prevent them from further collapse. There is a horizontal overhang below the parapet wall. The construction techniques is similar to the one discussed earlier in the case of mosque. Like other buildings the original floor no longer exists and loose material is scattered all over the floor.

(Right) Jawab Of Masjid In 2005

(Above) Detail Of Glazed Tile On North Façade
(Left) Detail Of Glazed Tile On West Façade
WEST ELEVATION

EAST PAVILION: ELEVATION
TOMB OF ASAIF KHAN
NORTH ELEVATION

EAST PAVILION: ELEVATION

TOMB OF ASAF KHAN

DATE: JUNE 2006
The Tomb

Chabutra Podium

The Chabutra or the podium of the tomb is octagonal in form. It is 3 feet 9 inches high from level of the surrounding pavements. Each inner octagonal face is 38 feet 8 inches whereas the outer octagonal face is 66 feet 3 inches wide and the platform is 35 feet 2 inches deep. The original floor is missing. According to Lahori, it was finished with red sandstone. The podium is accessible from four sides by two flights of steps with waterfall in between the two, falling in four pools. The restored waterfall on eastern face survives today. The podium contains four rectangular tanks or hauz, designed in the middle of the terraces on each cardinal direction. Each hauz is 20 feet 1 inch in length, 17 feet 3 inches in width and 4 feet in depth. At each chamfered corner a step has been designed to reach to the bottom of the water tank.

This podium serves two important functions. The first one related to aesthetic i.e. to elevate the main structure of the tomb, therefore to dignify the entire façade and secondly, to protect the building from dampness and possible floods of river Ravi. The plinth of the solid masonry wall of podium has some traces of original stone revetment. These evidences can help to restore original features. The traces at western side show that the façade begins from a baseline with ghalata (concave molding) in red sandstone. A band of sang-abri (grey limestone) is placed over it which supports overhead slabs of sandstone. Today the entire façade of the podium is in fair face brickwork with traces of slabs of red sandstone adjacent to the steps on north, west and south sides.

The 1930’s photographs indicate that the podium was in bad shape before it was repaired during the British period.

Pesh-taq

In each octagonal face a high pesh-taq marks the entrance to the tomb. Each of these eight pesh-taq is 9 feet 4 inches in width from its front and 5 feet 2 inches in depth. The pesh-taq comprise of five faces. The two faces each on one side of the central axis are equal in size with the two on opposite side. The outer and the next one are 59 inches high and 92 inches in width respectively. The central one is 98 inches in width and contains two openings, above and beneath. The lower one, measuring 98 inches wide and 113 inches high, is a passage to the tomb while the upper one is serving the purpose of a ventilator in the “Ghulam Gardash”.

The ceilings of these pesh-taq are hemispherical and soffits and interspaces between arch and entrance retain elaborate mosaic and painted tile work which is of its kind is unsurpassed in Pakistan. These hand painted tiles are rather rare. In the hemispherical domes the mosaic tile work is paneled in conformation with the lines of Qalib Kari (intersecting tracery), and each panel has a distinctive color scheme - yellow, blue, green and dark brown - are rhythmically arranged. The patterns are predominantly floral, and combine strength with grace and gaiety. In the lower jambs are remains of square painted tiles - a rare instance of this technique at a time when mosaic tile work was the dominant fashion. The arched entrance in the pesh-taq on the north and north east sides retains a few traces of blue kashi work as border.

The work that has survived has sparkling and bright colors that are very pleasing to the eyes and retain their freshness even after the lapse of several centuries.
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MAIN TOMB: PESH-TAQ
TOMB OF ASAF KHAN
Interior of the Tomb

The interior of the tomb chamber is raised 2 feet 4 inches above the floor level of the podium. It contains eight pesh-taq (porticos) or arched entrances facing outward. Each half octagon is 7 feet from front and 5 feet 2 inches deep. From the eight pesh-taqs one enters tomb chamber through series of arched and flat roofed alcoves designed within the thickness of the wall supporting the two domes and parapet wall. The spaces widens towards interior.

The internal chamber is octagonal in plan. Each side of the octagonal face has arched opening and solid masonry wall. The walls are plastered and decorated with recessed panels carved out in plaster. Above the eight arched openings there are arched balconies referred by Lahori as nashimans. The soffit of the arches are finished with qalib kari. There are some minor cracks at the crown level of all the arches.

A staircase leads to first floor from the western passage where a central corridor joins all nashimans towards the interior and overlooks towards pesh-taqs on the exterior. The passage has flat roof. The passage receive natural light from the eight opening set within the pesh-taqs. The springing point of the dome lies just above the crown of first floor arches. The soffit of the dome was beautifully decorated with qalib kari which continues below to fill the corners of the walls. The dome is hemispherical from the interior and outer side under the double dome it has offsets in fair face brickwork. The qalib kari under the soffit of the dome is missing on east and south east side.

According to Lahori, internal walls were clad with marble dado. Above dado walls were plastered with kankar (natural hydraulic lime) lime mortar and finished with lime cream plaster. To break the monotony of plane surface, the walls were embellished with low relief panels carved in the lime plaster.

A staircase leads to roof top from the south western side of circumambulatory corridor. The space between the circular drum and octagonal wall forms the roof of the lower stories and is finished with lime concrete. The parapet wall is eight feet high and two feet six inches thick. The circular wall of cylinder supporting outer dome is 4 feet thick and has two openings on north and south side providing access to the interior. In the interior the internal dome rises up to five feet three inches. The springing point of the dome lies 10 feet above the floor of roof level. Internal wall has fair face brick work and are in good condition except few bricks are missing at different places. The exterior of the dome was finished with white marble. Traces of dowels of white marble are still apparent in the exterior. The outer surface of the dome is in good condition except the cleaning of the entire surface and minor repairs.

On the inner side of the parapet wall, the openings of parnulas (waterspouts) are arched shaped. These parnulas project outside the walls. The parapet walls were finished with lime plaster which is missing at some places. The lime concrete flooring is also uneven; therefore, the dampness has affected the stucco plaster under the soffit of the dome.

In spite of negligence in its maintenance and restoration, the main building of the tomb is structurally safe and could be made even safer with minor repairs.
MAIN TOMB: FIRST FLOOR PLAN (EXISTING)
TOMB OF ASAF KHAN
Exterior of the Tomb

As far as the external decoration of the exterior façade is concerned, it is almost non-existent in its original condition; it is difficult to imagine its original finish and arrangement of various kinds of stones. However, traces of stone cladding here and there indicate the qualitative work once undertaken here. Only Mullah Abdul Hamid Lahori writes in his Badshah Nama, and some surviving traces retained here and there, lend us some help in this respect. This vertical arrangement comprises of base-line; ghaltas, paneling and dasa (decorative molding at plinth level). Base-line and ghaltas are in red-sand-stone. Above the border lies a panel having base of red-sand-stone inlaid with white-marble in a delicate manner. This beautiful finishing is further shown by handsome lining of Sang-i-Musa (dark grey stone) and Khatta (yellow limestone) enclosed on both sides. Above the arched openings rises solid brick masonry wall. In the façade, there were some traces of slabs of red-sand-stone embedded in the wall.

The Izara or dado, as Mulla Abdul Hameed Lahori calls it was embellished with Sang-i-Abri. This Izara may have been executed up to the height of springing level of arches under eight pesh-taq, This height of Izara from the Dasa to the springing points was 5 feet 1 inch. About the rest of façade, Mullah Abdul Hameed Lahori says, that it was decorated with white marble, and Sang-i-Abri, yellow stones and other variegated stones. The author does not mention how this variety was set in. In this respect Muhammad Wali Ullah Khan’s remarks are worth quoting. He says "The façade of the tomb was mostly in marble with a sprinkling of Sang-i-Abri and other variegated stones".
WEST ELEVATION

MAIN TOMB: ELEVATION

TOMB OF ASAIF KHAN
EAST ELEVATION

MAIN TOMB: ELEVATION
TOMB OF ASAF KHAN
The Dome

The dome at Asaf Khan’s tomb, commonly known as “bulbous dome”, gained popularity during Shah Jahan’s period although this type of dome exists even from Akbar’s period. The tomb of Hamza Ghaus at Sialkot built by Raja Man Singh belongs to this category. The external dome stands on a high drum. The neck wall is 80 inches in thickness constructed with Lahori bricks measuring 8 inches by 5½ inches by 1 inch. The plaster layer on the outer surface of the wall was 4 inches in thickness. The polygonal portion contains two outlets or arched openings, each 37 inches in width and 66 inches in height, up to the key stones. These outlets, one in the north and the other in the south, are to reach the void between the interior and outer domes. The top portion of the dome is uneven and does not match with rest of the construction. It appears to be a later reconstruction.

The swelling of the upper dome begins from the point where the neck ends. This swelling, like that of the Taj Mahal, does not increase in size abruptly. Contrary to Taj Mahal, its gradual growth gives it a shape of melon. This is why it is called “melon shaped bulbous dome”. The internal surface of the wall and ceiling of this dome is a naked brick structure. The walls have holes which might have been left during the erection of the structure. Some of these holes are now the nests of pigeons.

Irrigation System

Originally the water supply for irrigation was drawn from the wells located on the south and west side of the perimeter wall. There were three wells in all, on the south, north and west sides of the enclosure wall, but none of them survived even today. The northern and western wells were encroached upon by modern unauthorized constructions. The southern well was filled up in the recent years. The water drawn from these wells was taken to aqueducts constructed on top of perimeter walls by a Rehat, (Persian wheel) system. The aqueducts were directly linked with the fountains located in the four **hauz** of the podium through underground terracotta pipes. The *overflow* of water then fell through four cascades located in between the steps and then proceeded towards the water channels from where the lawns were finally irrigated.

The four **hauz** of the podium are in Baghdadi shape, the two sides of the rectangle are 20 feet 10 inches in length, 17 feet 3 inches in width and 4 feet in depth. The corners of these **hauz** are chamfered and two steps have been designed in the corner. What were the original finishes of the **hauz** is not known.

Each tank has two overflow drains above and below, for flow of water into the four tanks located on walkways below the main podium. Each of these tanks is 9 feet 4 inches in length, 5 feet 6 inches in width. Traces of red sandstone lining of 2 inches thickness are visible in the northern tank. These basins are further connected with a water channel running between two pavements around the podium. The water channel is 7 feet 4 inches wide. There were small culverts, two on each alternate side of octagonal water channel, to provide bridges for the walkways located across the channel. Each culvert had three aqueducts supporting slabs of red sandstone. Now the slabs over the culverts are missing.

The original irrigation system of Asaf Khan’s tomb is now out of order from long time and no serious effort has been made to revive it. All the four **hauz** along with their fountains have ceased to work. The water tanks are broken and the water channels are dry. In recent years a new tube well and water supply line has been installed to irrigate the lawns. GHF has financially supported the installation of a transformer.

The Garden

This tomb of Asaf Khan rests in a spacious garden. This garden was maintained with well designed water system mentioned above. Mullah Hamid Lahori, the contemporary author, describes it a “Chahar Chaman” measuring 300 by 300 **zira**. Nur Ahmad Chishti mentions the area of the garden as 30 **bighas** (land unit of approximately 3000 square yards).
When the garden was completed for the first time it must have been one really befitting the matchless tomb of Asaf Khan. What trees and flowering plants were grown in the garden at the time of its finishing, contemporary historians are silent on this subject. At present only mango and date palms, also of later date exist in the charbagh. All trees, says Kanaya Lal, were cut down during Sikh period.

During the British Raj several steps were taken for the improvement of the garden but it needed constant care and today it is in miserable condition.