

**PREPARATION OF APPROPRIATE  
CONSERVATION PLAN FOR SHISH MAHAL  
LAHORE FORT, LAHORE**



**M.Arch. Thesis**

**By**

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**ABSTRACT:**

Lahore Fort is situated in north-west side of Lahore city near famous Azadi chowk and Minar-e-Pakistan. This fort is an important monument in Pakistan. Lahore fort is an icon for national identity and symbol of both historical and legendry versions of the past. It preserves all styles of Mughal architecture. The fort has more than 20 big and small monuments, most of them are towards northern side. Shish Mahal is one of them and was built in 1631-1632 by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan. Shish Mahal is also known as palace of mirrors and is most beautiful royal residence.

Shish Mahal has faced serious problems throughout the ages including dead load problems in Sikh and British period. Temperature changes, heavy rains, lightening and termite effect were serious causes of decays for Shish Mahal. With the passage of time remedial works were proposed for Shish Mahal and were implemented accordingly.

In 1991-92 serious cracks were observed in the ceiling. On the recommendations of experts the conservation of ceiling of Shish Mahal was carried out from 2003-2005.

It is seen most of the restoration is done for shish Mahal ceiling, roof, glass work, its plaster, side rooms, Naulakha pavilion and its main courtyard. But nothing is done for main load bearing walls of Shish Mahal on which it is standing. Shish Mahal is approximately a four storey high building, having two basements which are visible from outside towards north and west. From outside the poor condition of its walls which is also known as pictured wall can easily be seen. Patches of bricks deteriorated from walls, plaster is removed due to effect of weather conditions.

Major part of Lahore Fort is made of burnt bricks with lime mortar which is in continuous deterioration due to various reasons. The brick work in Lahore Fort and its special monument Shish Mahal is badly distressed. The study was aimed to highlight the root causes of deterioration of walls and bricks used in Shish Mahal. A research has been done to underscore the reasons behind decay of Shish Mahal load bearing walls.

Main objective of study is analysis/evaluation of the overall existing condition of the Shish Mahal particularly causes of decays of its load bearing walls and proposing remedial solutions for them.

Detailed remedial solutions have been proposed for every cause of decay emerging from the research.

Some meaningful results have also been discussed as part of this thesis report.

It's now required to refit the removed brick patches with same size historic bricks used in Mughal period. After fixing bricks, walls need to be plastered with kankar lime plaster which was used by the Mughals.

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## **PREFACE:**

The Lahore Fort locally referred to as Shahi Qila is a citadel in the city of Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan. It is located in the northwestern corner of the Walled City of Lahore. "Shish Mahal" or the "palace of mirrors" was built by Shah Jahan in A.D 1631-32 for the residence of the Empress.

It is one of the most beautiful royal residences in the world and is the selected site for the research. It is certainly unique and profusely decorated palace, containing not only beautifully executed inlaid stone work, but also magnificent glass mosaic work, and stucco tracery. There is also a very fine carved marble jali work and the whole area is paved out in beautiful white marble.

The main decorative features of Shish Mahal are (i) the Aina Kari or convex glass mosaic work with Munabat Kari or Stucco tracery (ii) gild work (iii) pietra dura work, specially in the spandrels of the arches and on the bases of the double columns carrying superb multi-cusp arches; and (iv) the marble jalis (screens) of extraordinary beauty and perfection and skillfully carved in geometrical and tendril designs.

Shish Mahal has faced serious problems throughout the ages; it has faced dead load problems in Sikh and British period. Temperature changes, heavy rains, lightning and termite effect were serious causes of decays for Shish Mahal. Remedial works were proposed for Shish Mahal with the passage of time and were implemented accordingly.

Shish Mahal is approximately a four storey high building, having two basements which are visible from north-west sides. The decayed condition of its masonry walls which is also known as pictured wall can

easily be seen. Patches of bricks have been deteriorated from walls; plaster and mortar is removed due to effect of various causes mainly due to weather conditions.

The conservation plan is needed for its masonry walls to stop further deterioration and to maintain it as long as possible for present and future generations.

The main objective of research is analysis and evaluation of the overall existing condition of the Shish Mahal along with the proposed conservation strategy.