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### **Analytical Study of Gurudwara Singh Sabha-Faisalabad**

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**Abstract:** This paper describes the architectural elements, decorative schemes and construction style of Sikh architecture. Lyallpur, a city in subcontinent is now known as Faisalabad, was a hub of agriculture and industry, the diverse cultures of the region and the presence of people from different religions, have left the traces of which are still found in the city today. A town recognized for its colorful tradition, music and historic importance, is domestic to several architectural landmarks that reflects the historical past of the region. Among those, the Gurudwara Singh Sabha exemplified out as an awesome gem of Sikh religious architecture. This Gurudwara is a place of worship but not only the purpose of worship it also portrays the Sikh ethnicity's existence and cultural presence in the beautiful and potential city. The study examines the historical past of Sikhism architecture, with its awesome styles & feature also study symbolic motifs which they use in their construction and also examine the adopted architecture features from colonial, roman or Mughal architecture and also compare the architectural features on the façade of the building that found in the gurudwara Singh Sabha with the historical examples and buildings of Sikh architecture that we found in the region. By inspecting these factors, elements and architectural styles and comparing the features with the case study a numerous elements and features elaborates the existence of Sikh ethnicity and cultural existence with in the city and detailing in Sikh architectural buildings. The Gurudwara Singh Sabha still stands as a testament of the rich architectural heritage of Sikh Community, blend of styles and features, complicated decorative elements and different materials with construction. It explains the diversity in culture existence in Faisalabad and portraying the dynamic interplay of tradition and innovation with in Sikh religious architecture.

**Keywords:** Sikh, Architecture, Gurudwara, Cultural, Heritage, Ornamentation, Community

## 1. Introduction

Faisalabad the city which was first called Lyallpur, which was founded in 1892 as for the agricultural and industrial zone at the time of British India. It has grown timely and become the Third largest city of Pakistan and make its name in the field of textile industry which enhance the economic stability of Pakistan. Faisalabad was firstly established at the British Colonial period in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This city was named on the name of Sir James Layall, the lieutenant Governor of Punjab at that time. This area is Fertile and Rich with Agriculture so Aimed to Develop this area a center for agriculture and commercial activities thus after the growth of the city it needs to be planed and well organized for the commercial operations the layout of the city was designed by the Captain Poham Young, with a design pattern of

Union Jack Flag and a clock tower was designed in the center of the plan which is now known as “Ghanta Ghar” and there are 8 bazars radiating outwards. It is also a main part of the west Canal

irrigation system that plays a role of rapid development of agriculture and trade in the region which laying the city growth to a major industrial and economic hub in Pakistan.

The plan of the city includes the mix city requirements including houses, mosques, gurdwara’s, churches, temples, schools, and madrasas with market shops. Faisalabad at the major levels divided into two parts the clock tower bazaar area and encompassing villages, known domestically as chaks system.

This new region starting with various kind of people which belongs to different regions of sub-continent Punjab like some of them belongs to present time Indian Punjab and some of them belongs to the present time Pakistani Punjab and the land allocated to these people. They belong to rich, well-organized families and extraordinary ethnicities and having diverse religious background including Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus. This City is the home center to these people and their values.

Before the partition of 1947, present-day Punjab in Pakistan was a significant region for Sikhs in the Indian subcontinent. A substantial number of Sikh families’ population cities all over Punjab whether it was in Pakistani Punjab or Indian Punjab mainly major cities in Pakistan like Lahore, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Faisalabad and also smaller towns Sikh major architectural existence like Nankana Sahib the birth place of Baba Guru Nanak Sahib. Home town to Gurdwara Punja Sahib Hassan Abdal and the life spending place was kartarpur Sahib particularly important religious sites.

After the Partition of 1947 Sikh belongs to the present-day Pakistani region of Punjab or surrounding migrated to Present day Indian regions and leaving empty handed and leaving behind their homes, agricultural lands and various their worship places including Gurdwara’s. Despite this migration, Sikh leave their heritage and values behind in the form of architecture which hold an immense emotional and religious value for them and those who pilgrimage their sites.



Figure 1: Aerial View of Faisalabad Clock tower and 8 Bazaar mentioning the Gurudwara Singh Sabha (@UmerKamran96)



Figure 2: Front elevation of the Gurudwara Singh Sabha Faisalabad (Author 2024)

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Early Sikh Architecture (15th-17th Century)

The earliest samples of Sikh architecture can be traced back to the 15th century, coinciding with the establishment of Sikhism by Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Early development was simple and functional, often constructed using locally available materials. The architectural forms were influenced by the prevailing Hindu and Islamic architectural forms, yet maintained distinct features to serve the spiritual and communal needs of the Sikhs.

### 2.2 Mughal Influence (17th-18th Century)

During the Mughal period, Sikh architecture began to incorporate more elaborate designs and decorative elements. Gurdwaras from this period, such as the Golden Temple in Amritsar, exhibit complex frescoes, marble inlays, and expansive water features. The blending of Persian, Islamic, and indigenous Indian styles became more pronounced, creating a unique syncretic architectural identity.



Figure 1: Exterior of the Gurdwara Baba Atal, located in Amritsar, India (Wikipedia)

### 2.3 Post-Mughal and Sikh Empire Period (18th-19th Century)

The rise of the Sikh Empire under Maharaja Ranjit Singh marked a significant period for Sikh architecture. This era saw the construction of grand gurdwaras and forts, characterized by ornate domes, intricate carvings, and expansive courtyards. The use of materials like red sandstone and white marble became prevalent. Architectural characters such as chhatris (domed pavilions) and jharokhas (overhanging enclosed balconies) were commonly integrated.



Figure 2: Sarovar (sacred pool) at Gurdwara Fatehgarh Sahib, Punjab, India (Wikipedia)

### 2.4 Colonial Period (19th-20th Century)

The British colonial period introduced new architectural forms and construction tactics. In Faisalabad, many Sikh buildings, including educational institutions and religious structures, were constructed or renovated. These buildings often combined traditional Sikh architectural elements with colonial styles, creating a hybrid aesthetic.

## 4. Key Characteristics of Sikh Architectural Styles

#### 4.1 Gurdwaras

**Domes and Minarets:** Prominent features of Sikh gurdwaras include large, bulbous domes and slender minarets, often adorned with gold or gilded materials. (Fig-5-6)

**Arches and Jali works:** For the structural stability and beautification of building perforated stone and latticed screens used on the door openings and arches and jalis.

**Nishan Sahib:** for the Sikh religious sovereignty and community's spirit a tall flagpole, known as the nishan sahib symbolic feature of Sikhism.

#### Decorative Arts:

**Frescoes and Paintings:** Sikh history and teachings scenes were explained on the interior walls and ceilings with fresco decorative and paintings.

**Kaarigari (Craftsmanship):** High-quality craftsmanship is evident in the intricate Woodwork, stone carvings, and metalwork found in many Sikh buildings.

#### Spatial Organization:

**Courtyards and Sarovar's:** Open courtyards and water tanks (sarovars) are integral to the design, providing spaces for communal gatherings and spiritual reflection.

**Axial Alignment:** The spatial layout often follows a symmetrical, axial alignment, enhancing the sense of order and tranquility.

#### Structural Materials:

**Locally Sourced Materials:** Traditional materials such as red sandstone, marble, and wood are used extensively, ensuring harmony with the local environment.

**Colonial Influences:** During the colonial period, the use of brick and reinforced concrete became more common, leading to a blend of traditional and modern construction.

### 5. Results and Discussions

Faisalabad experience various Sikh families' existence and religious buildings one of them is Gurudwara Singh Sabha in Faisalabad which is an exemplary model of Sikh architectural form and style (Fig-7) also explaining the evolution of design elements and cultural significance. This building is a mix use complex in which gurdwara, a school and a guest house which is called (Musafir-Khana) which is arranged around a central courtyard. This layout exemplifies the typical spatial organization of Sikh religious buildings, emphasizing community and accessibility.

Gurudwara Singh Sabha is situated near to the clock tower Faisalabad which is known as Ghanta Ghar.it is surrounded by several of city bazaars. The prime location underscores its existence as a cultural and religious landmark with in the city. It is in between two major bazaars that is drawn from the clock tower called the Kechary Bazaar and Rail Bazaar (Fig-9).

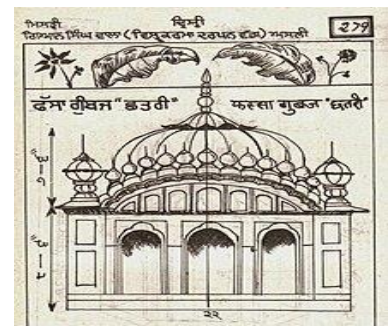


Figure 3: Sikh architecture building section (Building.co.uk)

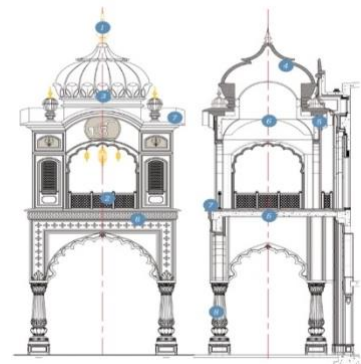


Figure 4: Architectural sketch depicting a dome design by Gian Singh Naqqash from page 279 of his book, Vishkarma Darpan, ca.1926 (Wikipedia)



Figure 5: Internal Facade of Gurudwara Singh Sabha from the courtyard (Author 2024)



Figure 6: Site map of the gurudwara and its Surroundings (M. Abdullah 2017)

The date of the Gurudwara construction is unknown and unverified but the stone carving written scripts on the walls which were called Gurmukhi (Fig-9) indicates the donation of various individuals. These stone carvings suggests that the building was constructed between 1911 and 1930s (Amir, 2017).one of the blogger and history enthusiast English translates these scriptures name Tariq Amit. The method of preserving the donors list and giving them the honor and dignity that they involved in the construction and wellbeing of the gurudwara. These wealthy people contribution of construction of gurudwara in Sikh architectural values.

Now-a-days Gurudwara Singh Saba stands as a significant and cultural landmark in the city. After the partition of Pakistan and India in 1947 Sikh population in the region has dwindled. It is the remain of Sikh cultural and religious symbol in the city like a heritage bit it is well preserved and continues to attract visitors interested in the rich history of Sikh community in Pakistan. Gurudwara is now converted into Government Girls School.



Figure 7: one of the Gurmukhi stone carved on wall (Amir-2017)

### 5.1 Architectural Elements

**Facade and Entrance:** The gurudwara features a grand entrance with an intricately carved wooden door, flanked by arched windows and niches.

**Dome and Minarets:** The central dome is a dominant feature, surrounded by smaller minarets, reflecting Mughal influences.

**Interior Decoration:** The interior is adorned with frescoes and carvings, illustrating Sikh religious themes and historical events.

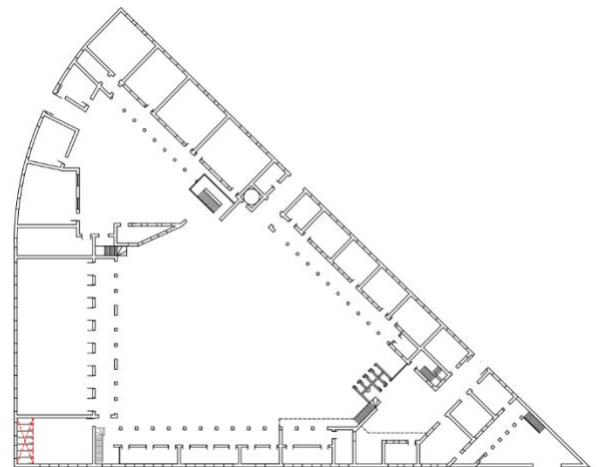


Figure 8: Plan of the gurudwara Singh Sabha Building Complex (Munir 2013)

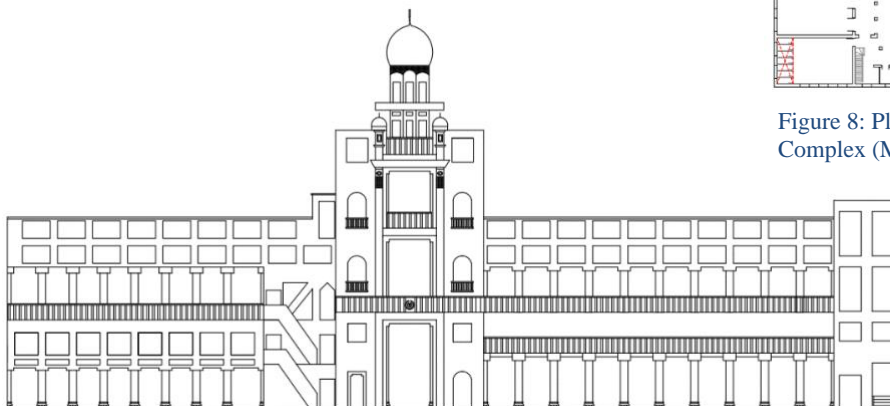


Figure 9: south east Elevation of the building complex from inside the main central courtyard (Munir, 2013)

## 5.2 Decorative Schemes Classification

Decoration of the façade of Gurudwara Singh Sabha is the blend and drew notion from Sikh architecture and Mughal architecture functions. Sikh Architecture like Domes, arches and ornamental detail while Mughal architecture consist of arches, symmetric layout and jail work.

**Construction material:** Building is constructed with the local available materials which are of various kinds and skills that are used in the building is also locally skilled labor work and also according to the political stability. This building mainly ornamented by means of Stucco, Brick work, Terracotta and wood. (Fig-12) The skill of execution of these materials explains and identifies the tradition and styles of Sikh building art.

**Elements of Decoration:** Elements that are used for the decoration of the building are balcony cantilevered, Doric columns, pointed arches, jharokas, jail works. Some other architectural elements such as niches, arches and columns which equally enhance the beauty of decoration of the building that applied to the body of Gurdwara.

**Doric columns:** Doric columns are a style of classical architectural column originating in historical Greece and later used appreciably in ancient Roman structure. They are one of the 3 main orders of classical Greek structure, the alternative two being Ionic and Corinthian. Doric columns (Fig-15) are characterized with the concept of their simple, strong design. They usually include a cylindrical shaft this is typically fluted (with vertical grooves), a capital (top component) without complex decoration, and a plain, rounded abacus (the topmost part of the capital). The shaft rests without delay at the sty lobate that is the uppermost step of the temple platform. These columns have been regularly utilized in Greek temples, in which they supported the entablature (the horizontal shape resting on the columns), which included the architrave, frieze, and cornice.



Figure 10: brick work and arches with cantilevered features (Author 2024)



Figure 11: Brick work and Wood work on the Facade



Figure 12: inside elevation of the building block from the central courtyard (Author 2024)



Figure 13: Doric Columns in the Veranda /corridor of the building (Author 2024)



Figure 14:north-West side elevation from the central courtyard (author 2024)



Figure 16:Stairs With Spiral Design and terracotta railing(Author 2024)



Figure 15: inside view of the building with Wood Roof (Author 2024)

**Pointed arch:** A pointed arch, additionally known as a Gothic arch, is a type of arch characterized through its pointed apex in preference to a semicircular or rounded shape. It is a defining characteristic of the Gothic architectural fashion, which emerged in the 12th century in France and spread during Europe for the duration of the medieval length. Pointed arches provide several structural and aesthetic blessings over spherical arches: Height and Stability, Thrust Management, Aesthetic Appeal. (Fig-19)



Figure 17: Inside view of the main building having pointed arches (Author 2024)

**Terracotta railing:** Terracotta railing refers to a railing pattern made primarily or completely from terracotta fabrication. Terracotta, a type of clay-based ceramic, has been used in architecture for years due to its durability, versatility, and aesthetic appeal.

**Mughal jali work:** Mughal jali patterns and works refers to the intricate lattice or filigree work experienced in Mughal architecture, particularly during the Mughal Empire in the Indian subcontinent from the 16th to the 18th centuries. The term "jali" itself is compiled from the Urdu word "Jal" which means "net." "Mughal jali (Fig-19) work is characterized by way of its delicate and ornate styles, often created by way of carving or perforating materials such as marble, sandstone, or wooden. These complicated designs are generally geometric or floral in nature and serve each ornamental and functional purposes in Mughal structure.

**Jharokas:** Jharokas are a characteristic architectural element found in traditional Indian architecture, particularly prevalent in Rajasthani and Mughal styles. The term "jharoka" is derived from the Hindi word "jhar," meaning "to flow," and "oka," meaning "protective cover" or "window." Jharokas are essentially overhanging enclosed balconies or windows that project from the wall of a building (Fig-16)



Figure 18:jali Work on Every Floor of the building (Author 2024)



Figure 19: Semi circular arches on the top of Windows on the Building Facade (Author 2024)

**Semi-circular arch:** A semi-round arch is a kind of arch characterized by way of its half of-circle form. It is fashioned with the aid of a non-stop curve that rises from every quit of the arch's span and meets on the apex, forming a great semicircle. Semi-round arches are a few of the handiest and most commonplace sorts of arches used in structure.

**Sikh molding:** Sikh molding, also known as Sikh architectural ornamentation or Sikh architectural details, refers to the decorative elements and motifs found in Sikh architecture. While Sikh architecture is primarily characterized by its simplicity, functionality, and focus on communal spaces, it also incorporates certain decorative elements that reflect Sikh cultural and religious identity.in this building we have so many Sikh moldings like shown in the picture

**Onion domes:** Onion domes" are a distinctive architectural feature usually related to Russian and Eastern European structures, in particularly within the context of Orthodox churches and other spiritual buildings.

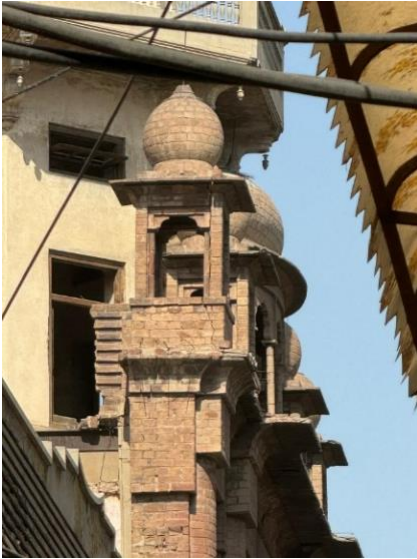


Figure 21: A Jharoka shape structure and an onion dome on the top of it (Author 2024)



Figure 22: Sikh Moulding Design on the parapet of the building (Author 2024)



Figure 20: Domes structures on the top of the building (Author 2024)

The term "onion dome" refers to a dome form that bulges outward in a shape resembling an onion or a bulb. Onion domes are maximum normally associated with Russian architecture, wherein they have been used inside the creation of church buildings, cathedrals, and other spiritual buildings due to the fact that medieval instances. However, comparable dome styles also can be observed in different Eastern European nations with Orthodox Christian traditions.

**A cupola dome:** A cupola dome, also known simply as a cupola, refers to a small, often domed, Structure or detail positioned on top of a bigger constructing or roof. It usually serves as an ornamental or practical architectural feature and might have diverse functions depending at the building's design and use. Cupola domes can be located in an extensive variety of architectural styles and building types, along with churches, authorities' homes, barns, and residential areas. They have been used traditionally in numerous cultures around the arena and stay incorporated into cutting-edge architectural designs for both realistic and ornamental functions.



Figure 24: jharoka, terracotta jali, arches and columns on top of the building (Author 2024)

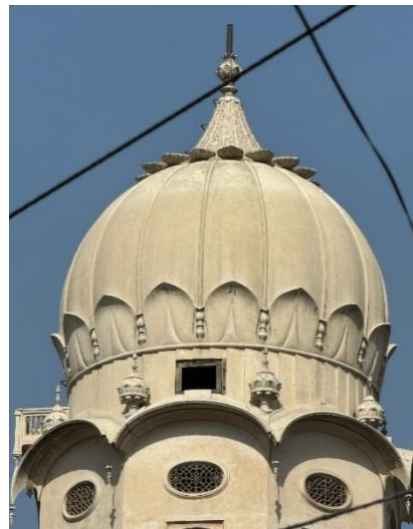























Figure 23: A cupola Dome on top of the building (Author 2024)

The Gurdwara Singh Sabha in Faisalabad, exemplifying Sikh Architecture, blends traditional Sikh elements with influences from Mughal and colonial styles, showcasing a rich cultural heritage. Architectural features like domes, jharokas, columns and arches which we found in the Sikh region architecture are similarities to with the case study façade elements shown in the table.

Sr no	Names	Description	Actual Form in Sikh architecture or colonial designs	Similar form use in gurdawara Singh sabha
1	Material	Various materials like stucco, brick, terracotta, and wood are used for decoration		
2	Elements of Decoration	Includes cantilever balconies, Doric columns, pointed arches, and niches.		
3	Doric Columns	Simple, fluted columns originating from classical Greek architecture		
4	Pointed Arch	Gothic arches known for their pointed apex, providing height and stability		
5	Terracotta Railing	Durable and versatile ceramic railings used in architectural designs		
Sr no	Names	Description	Actual Form in Sikh architecture or colonial designs	Similar form use in gurdawara Singh sabha
6	Mughal Jali Work	Intricate latticework often made from marble or sandstone in Mughal architecture.		
7	Jharokas	Overhanging enclosed balconies typical of Rajasthani and Mughal architecture.		
8	Semi-circular Arch	Arches with a perfect half-circle shape, common in various architectures.		
9	Sikh Molding	Decorative elements in Sikh architecture reflecting cultural and religious identity.		
10	Onion Domes	Bulbous domes associated with Russian and Eastern European religious buildings		
11	Cupola Dome	Small domed structures on top of buildings, serving decorative or functional purposes.		

## 6. Conclusions

The Gurudwara Singh Sabha in Faisalabad serves as a remarkable testimony to the wealthy architectural history of the Sikh network in Pakistan. This observe highlights how the Gurudwara, with its unique blend of stylistic functions, tricky ornamental schemes, and diverse production materials, embodies the essence of Sikh religious architecture. From the grandeur of its domes and minarets to the detailed frescoes and carvings, the Gurudwara stands as an image of the enduring cultural and spiritual legacy of Sikhs inside the place. The historic evolution of Sikh structure, as seen in the Gurudwara Singh Sabha, reflects a continuous interaction among lifestyle and innovation. The integration of Mughal and colonial influences, along conventional Sikh elements, illustrates a dynamic architectural narrative this is both adaptive and resilient. The use of domestically sourced substances and conventional craftsmanship in addition enhances the Gurudwara's ancient and cultural significance. The gurdwara is having an immense story of Sikh culture and heritage through its color and architecture and material. Despite of the partition of 1947 it has the dignity and detail ornamentation of Sikh culture and architecture.

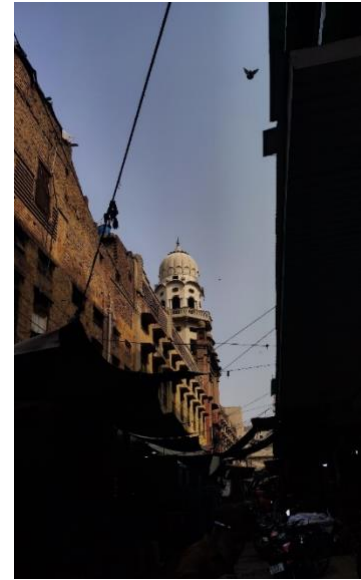


Figure 25: Outside of the Gurudwara view from the street (Author 2024)

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