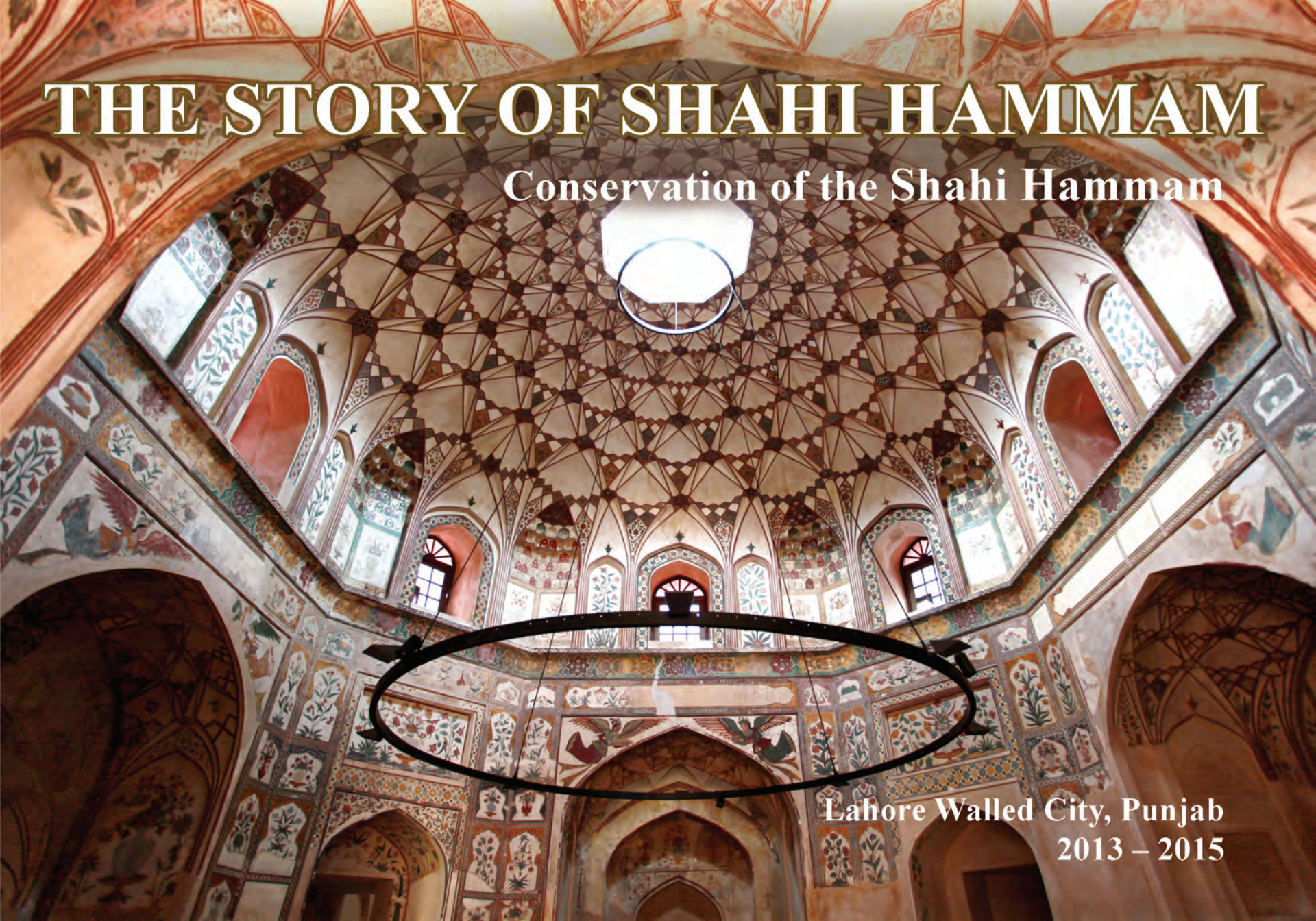


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THE STORY OF SHAHI HAMMAM

Conservation of the Shahi Hammam

Lahore Walled City, Punjab
2013 – 2015

The Story
of
SHAHI HAMMAM

CONSERVATION OF THE
SHAHI HAMMAM

Lahore Walled City, Punjab
&
Agha Khan Trust for Culture

2013 – 2015



Introduction of Shahi Hammam

In the heart of Androon Lahore, there stands a building with all its grandiose and stateliness. The structure and façade initiate a conversation before people actually start exchanging words and begin to listen to the guide relating the biography of SHAHI HAMMAM.



THE WALLED CITY OF LAHORE



Lahore is the cultural capital of Pakistan and one of the largest living cultural hubs of the world. Walled City Lahore represent the grandeur and beauty of centuries old civilization, like Afgans, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, British and post independence. The architectural beauty and the cultural richness reflect in each nook and corner;

the wooden balconies, jharokas, the winding narrow streets, the monuments, Mosques, World Heritage Site the Fort, the Havelis, the food and festivals, the color and hustle and bustle of bazaars etc.

Walled City of Lahore, ages back to antiquity and hold within it the stories and footprints of our ancestors landing here. Being the capital of many empires, Lahore has always been an attraction for the throne, writers, artists and tourists. It is a place with religious harmony, vibrant street life and enticing food.





THE ROYAL TRAIL



The Government of Punjab, with financial assistance from the World Bank, had initiated a Pilot Urban Rehabilitation and Infrastructure Improvement Project in a selected area in the Walled City in 2007.

The project area extends from Delhi Gate to Chowk Purani Kotwali in the heart of the old city, and is also part of the Shahi Guzargah (or the Royal Trail) known to have been used by Mughal royalty.

It includes several famous monuments: Delhi gate, the Shahi Hammam (a 17th century bathhouse), which dates back to the reign of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (r. 1628-58 AD), the Wazir Khan Mosque, Dina Nath Well, the Sonehri Mosque as well as The Lahore Fort to name a few.



THE SHAHI HAMMAM



It is not a mythical or a legendary tale when the idea of public bath seems only a fabrication of imagination to the modern humans enjoying the perks of attached bath in their houses. Can anyone even dream of the fact that in this very own city of ours, there exists a centuries old Public Bath aka Shahi Hammam inside the locale of Delhi Gate.

As one enters the gigantic Delhi Gate and takes first left turn what welcomes you is the Royal Bath or Shahi Hammam. Yes! How many of us have visited the Shahi Hammam that stands as a living sign not only of the great Central Asian/Turkish/Irani architecture and tradition of public baths but also as a living monument presenting the community life of the glorious and civilized past?

Not many! But it is never too late, the living public monument awaits the visitors who on daily basis visit the place and envisage the amalgam of different architectural traditions and patterns at one place.



EARLY RESTORATION AND USES



The primary purpose of the conservation was to bring this monument back to life as a witness to the tradition of bath house as a space of social interaction and the bathing activity as a socializing discourse in the lives of the citizens of Mughal era.



Designed as a public bath-house to serve both the visiting travellers as well as inhabitants of the city, Shahi Hammam serves as only living Community House from the old traditions of Mughals. It was built by Hakim Ilmud Din Ansari, who was granted the title of Wazir Khan, and also constructed the famous Wazir Khan Mosque further inside the Walled City.



The Hammam is a collection of 21 inter-connected rooms offering all the facilities found in a public bath including hot, warm and cold plunges, sweat rooms and an additional room which is set at an angle facing Makkah and has been used for offering prayers.



The travellers would enter Lahore via Delhi Gate, would freshen up at the Hammam that served as bath-house with facilities such as spa, sauna, massage and what not. It is commended that there was a caravanserai near the Hammam for travellers to stay over-night but it was demolished during Sikh Reign.



The entrance gateway on the west and the main hall in the northern part of the building are exquisitely adorned and decorated with frescoed panels depicting angels, animals, birds, floral and geometric designs. The building of the Hammam is still adroitly decorated with fresco work.

The cold bath area or the main hall is a spectacular success of fresco with all the walls and ceilings draped with colorful motifs and designs. This corroborates the Emperor's interest and attention to details for the public. Small openings in the ceiling of each room were made for ventilation and lighting purposes.



CURRENT RESTORATION (2013-2015)



Exploring, discovering, then conserving and restoring the lost galore and majestic architecture from the past is one of the many prime objectives of WCLA. The project of the conservation of Shahi Hammam was though not the main part of the Royal Trail Project yet WCLA persuaded Agha Khan Trust who were ask to access the Norwegian Govt. fund and carry out the conservation of the Shahi Hammam.

It stands as an archeological piece of art as one of the best project in Pakistan that can truly match international standards. It's a great specimen of collaborated work of WCLA, Agha Khan Trust and Norwegian Govt.



Before

After

CURRENT RESTORATION (2013-2015)



The building of Shahi Hammam under-went various transformations during different eras, eventually being buried under the encroachments and shops till WCLA took the initiative of bring the old building back closer to its original face. Its heating system was destroyed during the Sikh rule and many ornaments were pulled out of the ceilings and walls.



During the British era it was transformed into an accommodation for the police and soldiers. After 1947 it was changed into a boys' primary school, a girls' vocational school, a dispensary and also served as office for various government departments. Rooms to provide residences for the government employees were also erected on the roof top.



CURRENT RESTORATION (2013-2015)



The northwestern rooms (Hujras) were rented out as shops by the Department of Auqaf and additional shops or encroachments were made on the northern, western and southern façades of the Hammam.



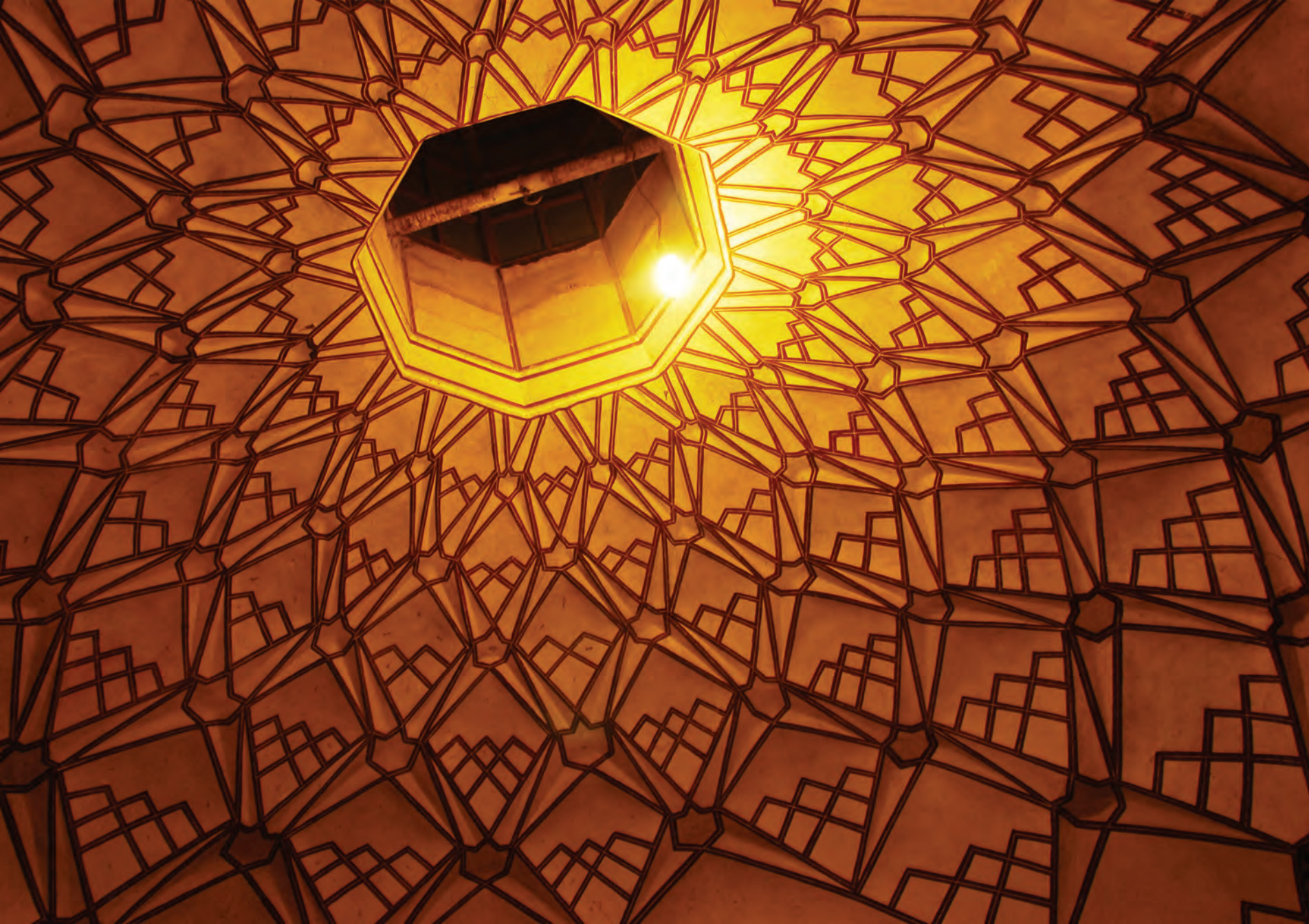
These encroachments resulted in damaging the structure as well as water ingress in the foundations. In short, every effort was made to destroy the elegance of Shahi Hammam but somehow it survived.



This also depicts the solid structure and stability of the building material that was used in its construction. The building passed every test of turbulence successfully.



WCLA facilitated the removal of all commercial encroachments around the Shahi Hammam complex. A total of 52 shops were removed from the building's external premises.



CURRENT RESTORATION (2013-2015)



The WCLA then carried out the requisite tasks to consolidate the structure of the northern façade and also added a retaining wall on the same side to protect the Hammam. The real magic was to bring the original Hammam back to its real structure so that the visitor could experience the way people in the past have had used the Hammam.



With the help of Agha Khan Cultural Services Pakistan the major conservation work started. In order to understand the system initially exploratory excavations were carried out, when the remains of Hammam were discovered. Team AKCS-P unearthed the water supply system, drainage system and steaming system.



CURRENT RESTORATION (2013-2015)



The massive achievement was to make the visitors understand the function of Hammam and various systems operative there. The Cold Bath area was buried under the shops which was disinterred and various surface decorations and wall paintings were discovered.

These surface decorations were excavated, studied, conserved and then were presented to the general public as artifacts. Most of Hammam's original form is conserved and restored and the building is now opened for the tourists.





The tourists love to visit the Hammam at day time too but evening is even beautified and illuminated with lights that lit and mystify the aura of the Hammam. The building is also facilitated with a video room, souvenir shop and public toilet.

It is no doubt a treat to visit the Hammam and one who misses the opportunity, is certainly deprived of one of the lifetime experience of being a part of this Royal Hammam which can match any conservation Project at the International level.



BEFORE



AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER





BEFORE



AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER



CURRENT RESTORATION (2013-2015)



In 1955, Shahi Hammam was recognized as a cultural asset and declared a protected monument by the Department of Archaeology. In 1991, under the Punjab Urban Development Project (PUDP), a joint initiative of the Government of Punjab and the World Bank, infrastructure in a substantial part of the Walled City was upgraded.



Sometime during its history, the building was converted into a boys' primary school, a girls' vocational school, a dispensary and it has been used as offices by various government departments. Makeshift structures, to provide residential accommodation for some of the staff, were added on the roof.



Currently, WCLA's project partner AKTC-AKCSP carried out the restoration of the Shahi Hammam, with grant support from the Royal Norwegian Embassy. The conservation project been in the range of USD 1 million and the RNE contributed USD 650,000.



In 2013, the AKCS-P team in Lahore initiated the process of documenting the historic building with electronic distance measurement tools and photo ortho-rectification. Several phases of exploratory activities were then carried out to study the causes of decay to the building's structure and architectural features.

PROJECT TEAM

WCLA:

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Sajid Mehmood (Chief draft men)
Hafiz Umer (Supervisor)
Talib Hussain (incharge North Facade)

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Nek Ali Surveyor
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