



A study on the historical architecture of Raja Sumer Singh's Fort

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Abstract

The city of Etawah, which can be found in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh and is situated on the banks of the sacred Yamuna River, is renowned not only for its historical significance but also for the breathtaking man-made creations that can be found there. These magnificent endowments, which range from the Raja Sumer Singh Fort and Victoria Park to the Kali Vahan Mandir, have more than enough to entice tourists from all over the world. Since, Etawah's very beginning, the Raja Sumer Singh Fort has stood as a symbol of the city's glory and splendor. It is currently considered to be the city's "pearl." The historical significance of this building, as well as its marvel of intricate construction, contribute to the tranquilly of this location.

In addition to being a well-known landmark, Victoria Park is also home to a number of historic buildings. Victoria Park, which is dotted with some of the most important places in the city, has also been attracting visitors from far-flung locations. The Kali Vahan Mandir, which is considered to be the quintessence of multi-cultural ethnicity, is another marvel that attracts a large number of tourists throughout the year, particularly during the festival of Navaratri. Regardless of the purpose of your trip to Etawah, it is highly recommended that you make a point to tour these locations as soon as possible because it will be an experience well worth having.

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1. History of City Etawah

According to legend, the Chauhan leader Sumer Singh was taking a bath in the Yamuna River when he noticed a goat and a wolf sharing a drink. Astounded by this sight, he consulted astrologers, who advised him to construct a fort nearby. They shouted "Int aya!" as

they came across a brick made of silver and gold during their excavations (Brick has been found) (Brick has been found). So, the city took the name Intaya, which finally becomes Etawah. Now, the fort of Sumer Singh has been the pride of Etawah. Raja Sumer Singh was a famous king known for his bravery. The pride of Etawah i.e. the fort at present is in the form of shattered remains. On this fort there was a Baradai, which had twelve doors, whose architecture was in such way that people get confused when they used to count because they get eleven or thirteen. On that place, there is a temple of Lord Hanuman and just adjacent to that there is a special guest house. Raja Sumer Singh built the fort in the design of Medieval Mahidarg which had a tunnel for security purposes and had underground rooms. Tunnel went into River Yamuna where the queens used to go for bath. One tunnel was linked up with Agra. The government has undertaken some restoration efforts. During the day, the fort looks very beautiful whereas in the night, the fort gets lit up by the moonlight, it looks like a wonder.

2. Medieval History

2.1. The Muslim peoples

With the fall of Delhi and Kanauj in 1193 A.D., the district came under the control of the Muslim power, which by the end of the century held all of Hindustan proper, with the exception of Malwa and some contiguous districts, in varying degrees of subjection; and from that time until 1801, if we except the brief Maratha occupation, it continued uninterruptedly to form a part of the dominions that owed real or nominal allegiance either to the Delhi court or its va Most likely in the first half of the thirteenth century, the Rajput clans invaded and colonised the area. According to legend, the Sengars expelled the Meos, who were semi-ape people, and took over a sizable portion of Bidhuna and Auraiya. Areas of Phaphund and Bidhuna that had previously been inhabited by Gaurs were taken over by Chandel immigrants from Mahoba close to the border with Kanpur. The Gaurs eventually did, though, lose these territories. The Parihars have settled in the uncharted territory of the Pachnada, while the Bhadaurias and Dhakras wind their way through the rough terrain between the Yamuna and the Chambal rivers. The western part of the district, which includes large tracts that are now in Mainpuri, was recently acquired by the Chauhan family. Along with these Rajput immigrants came Brahmans and Kayasthas, and the district's Hindu residents were dispersed throughout the area in a way that is very similar to how it is done today.

However, for a very long time, some of these tough tribesmen believed their allegiance to the various rulers of Delhi was merely nominal. They appear to have been able to resist the

western explorers with considerable success and to have done so with remarkable fortitude. It seems that hardly a year passed after the end of Firoz Shah's reign and the establishment of an orderly government before some expedition had to be sent against the "accursed in fields of Etawah" in order to recover the payment of taxes. This was carried out to make certain that the land was duly taxed. The trouble first began under Nasir-ud-din Muhammad Shah's rule, who ascended to the throne in the year 1389 AD. Following the defeat of Abu Bakr Shah and the old slaves of Firoz Shah near Hardwar in the year 1390 A.D., this Sultan travelled monthwards through the Doab to Etawah, where he was met by Vir Singh, the Tomar chief of Gwalior. This Sultan had solidified his position by being afraid of Abu Bakr Shah and the old slaves of Firoz Shah. As we read that the chieftain was graciously received and sent back to his kingdom while the emperor travelled back to Delhi along the Jamuna, it would appear that he had pledged his allegiance to the Sultan.

2.2. A Campaign Carried Out in Jaunpur

It would appear that the country did not have much of a chance to relax, as Jaunpur's forces, led by Mukhtass Khan, Ibrahim Shah Sharqi's brother, entered it almost immediately after the Delhi forces had left. The threat was immediately countered by dispatching an army from Delhi, and the arrival of a powerful force under the command of Malik-us-Sharq Mahmud Hasan had the effect of forcing Mukhtass Khan to withdraw and join his brother in the battle against the oncoming army. Mahmud Hasan withdrew to the Sultan's camp after numerous failed attempts to trick the Jaunpuri troops into engaging in combat, while Ibrahim Sharqi advanced along the Kali nadi to "Burhanabad in the district of Etawah." Although the battle between the two armies, which was inconclusive, was fought outside the boundaries of this district and is unrelated to it, it may have "given the infidels of Etawah" the chance to reject their nominal master in Delhi due to the conflict between the two armies' leaders. Outside of these districts, there was a battle. A force under Kamal-ul-Mulk could not be sent to force his vassals in Gwalior and Etawah until 1432 A.D. This was due to the Sultan being entirely preoccupied in other directions over the following few years, putting down rebellions by his disgruntled subjects or powerful amirs. At this time, the Saiyid empire was rapidly degenerating into disarray. Information that Ibrahim Sharqi had taken over several parganas and that the Rai of Gwalior and other Rais, most likely including those of Etawah, had stopped paying their revenue was received in the year 1437 A.D. The Sultan, however, steadfastly refused to take any action to defend his holdings. Qutb Khan, a person, was the governor of Rapri, Chandawar, and Etawah. He was the son of Hasan Khan Afghan. The

entire Delhi empire was divided into provinces, each of which had a strong ruler in charge. Of these kings, the Lodis were the most potent. Qutb Khan attempted to help Ala-ud-din, the last of the Saiyid Sultans, resist the growing influence of Malik Bahlol, along with Isa Khan, jagirdar of Kol and Jalali, and Rai Partab, who held the feof of Bhongaon, Patiali, and Kampil; however, these efforts were fruitless, and Delhi was captured by Malik Bahlol in April 1451.

Around this time, Kotah, about 260 miles south of Delhi, was surrounded by a sizable Maratha army commanded by Mulhar Rao and ApaSindhia. Negotiations were started by Safdar Jang with the commanders of this Maratha army. However, regaining the emperor's favour was the first action that needed to be taken. The Maratha force was brought into the imperial service through the good offices of Nazir Jawaid Khan, and after much intrigue, it was placed at Safdar Jang's disposal so that it could be used against the Afghans of Farrukhabad. Suraj Mal, the Jat prince of Bharatpur, joined Safdar Jang's army, bolstering it even more as the formidable force continued its advance across the Jamuna. Shahdil Khan, the amil of Nawab Ahmad Khan, was the opponent in the first battle, which was fought there at the end of March in 1751. The besieging of that fortress was abandoned as soon as Ahmad Khan in Allahabad heard the news, and he withdrew to Farrukhabad. Shahdil Khan was forced to flee after being cornered, which is why. The history of the Etawah district would be completely out of place if we went into detail about what happened at Farrukhabad. It suffices to say that, following a protracted period of bloody conflict with no clear winner, Safdar Jang and Ahmad Khan eventually agreed to a peace treaty at the beginning of the year 1752. As a result of this peace, Ahmad Khan was left in charge of repaying Safdar Jang's enormous debt to the Maharathas. It was agreed that the Marathas would receive 16 of the 33 mahals that made up the Nawab of Farrukhabad's domain in exchange for the payment of the sum. This served as the payment's security. As a result, if not the entire Etawah district, the Marathas were able to take control of a sizeable portion of it. The fort at Etawah appears to have been occupied by the Maratha governor and perhaps other positions as well, but it appears that Govind Rao Pandit, the Subabdar of Jalaun, was in charge of the entire region. This was the case up until the year 1761 A.D.

3. Modern History

3.1. Etawah under the Rohillas and Oudh Government

❖ Within the Rohillas' Domain

Ahmad Shah Durrani launched an invasion of India in the year 1760 A.D. He was met with resistance from the Marathas on the field of Panipat in 1761, where they suffered a humiliating loss at his hands. In addition to the deaths of other Maratha chieftains, Govind Rao Pandit also perished in the conflict. Before leaving India, the chief of the Durrani tribe gave large swaths of land to the chieftains of the Rohilla tribe. Dhunde Khan was given the city of Shikohabad, and Inayat Khan, son of Hafiz Rahmat Khan, was given the district of Etawah. During that time, the Marathas were in control of this, so in 1762, a Rohilla force led by Mullah Mohsin Khan was dispatched to wrest the allotted property away from the Marathas. Pandits led by Kishan Rao and Bala Rao fought against this force close to the town of Etawah; however, they were ultimately unsuccessful and were forced to seek refuge on the other side of the Yamuna. Following this, Mohsin Khan besieged the fort of Etawah; however, the fort's commander quickly abdicated, and the Rohillas took over the region.

3.2. The Rebellion of 1857

❖ The Mutiny

However, in Etawah, there was nothing but hope and peace. In other places, it's possible that the disaster's shadow may have preceded it and diffused a general feeling of unease and alarm "Public libraries and numerous schools offered ample hope for future development; new communication channels were opening up quickly; the railroad was ripening; the great canal, with its daily multiplying branches, steadily diffused fertility; crime was, and had been for the previous two years steadily decreasing; and the money came in without the need for resorting to a single coercive process. The work that had been done for years suddenly seemed to be undone when the Mutiny broke out." According to Mr. Hume, who was the district collector at the time, the news of the uprising in Meerut reached Etawah through Agra on May 12, 1857, two days after it started there. At that time, Etawah was home to a section of the 9th Native Infantry and a detachment of the 8th Irregulars. All reasonable measures were taken to ensure the capture of evading mutineers, and these were immediately used in conjunction with the police to patrol the roads.

4. About Raja Sumer Singh's Fort

It is a historic fort that was constructed on a mound close to the bank of the river Yamuna. The pride of Etawah has always been the fort that Sumer Singh built. He was a famous king who was known for his bravery, and his name was Raja Sumer Singh. On this fort was a Baradai, which had twelve doors, but its architecture was designed in such a way that when people counted them, they would either get eleven or thirteen. This caused people to become confused. This neighbourhood is home to an impressive example of ancient architecture.



Figure 1: View from the fort

Etawah, a city that was located on the border line of their poorly defined "spheres of influence," remained for the most part a battle ground between the two armies that were competing with one another. Mallu Iqbal Khan's invasion of this region took place between the years 1400 and 1401, and it was met with resistance from Rai Sumer Singh or Sabir of Etawah.



Figure 2: Fort of Raja Sumer Singh

Architecture of Fort of Raja Sumer Singh

Conscious efforts have been made to select the building materials in consonance with the theme. Black rough granite from Jhansi has been used in the exterior. Outer walls have been made in black granite masonry. The structural system is a normal framed RCC structure. Grand steps of guest room block have been finished in granite, while dining and conference block has white marble in flooring. Red sandstone has been used in landscaping and black Kadappa stone has been used for highlighting the solid plinth.

The site has two prominent mounds with a narrow passage between them. Keeping the site condition in view, it was decided to have two separate blocks on each mound and depression in between was used as the grand entry to the courtyard, around which the guest house is planned.

Both the blocks are approached through a flight of grand steps from this courtyard. These blocks are connected at entry level itself. The passage connecting the two blocks crosses the double-height main entrance at the upper level. There is an imposing circular viewing tower in the middle of the guest room block to have a view of the majestic landscape of ravines of Yamuna.



4.1. Who was Raja Sumer Singh

The Maharaja Sir Sumer Singh of Jodhpur lived from 14 January 1898 until 3 October 1918. Sumer Singh was Maharaja Sir Sardar Singh, GCSI's oldest child by his first wife. He was born on January 14, 1898 in Mehrangarh, which is located in Jodhpur. In March of 1911, when he was only 13 years old, he took over as gadi of Jodhpur after the death of his father. He was educated at Wellington College in Berkshire and Mayo College in Ajmer. For five years, he ruled under the rule of his great-uncle Lieutenant General Maharaja Sir Pratap Singh of Idar, who had abdicated his throne at Idar to take charge of the Jodhpur regency. During this time, he was also the ruler of Jodhpur.

4.2. During the time of the war

When the First World War started, the young Maharaja offered to fight, and in October 1914, he was appointed an honorary Lieutenant in the British Army. He was promoted to Lieutenant for his participation in combat. On February 26, 1916, Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy of India, granted Sumer Singh full executive authority. This happened a month after Sumer Singh reached the legal drinking age. The Jodhpur Imperial Service Lancers were under his command as he led them into battle in France and Flanders shortly after he left India and arrived on the Western Front. He received an honorary promotion to the rank of a Major in the British Army in 1917. Sumer Singh received recognition for his contributions and a decoration, and in 1918, he was knighted. In the Order of the British Empire's Military Division, he received the title of Knight Commander (KBE).

4.3. Personal

Sumer Singh wed on December 9, 1915, the daughter of Sarodar's Kumar Shri Jivansinhji Jhalamsinhji Sahib. A branch of the Nawanagar royal family is the Sarodar family. He married Maharani Shri Umrao Kanwarji Sahiba on May 23, 1918; she died on November 30, 1949. She was Thakur Shri Suraj Malji of Sointra's daughter, which is located within the jurisdiction of Jodhpur Marwar.

4.4. Death

At the beginning of 1918, the Maharaja made his way back to Jodhpur, but he passed away on October 3 at the Ratanada Palace. At Mehrangarh, he was cremated after his death. After his passing, he had only a daughter to leave behind, so his younger brother Umaid Singh took over the family business.



Figure 3: Portrait of Maharaja Sumer Singh

5. Modern form of Raja Sumer Singh Fort

Etawah is a district office in Uttar Pradesh that is very old. It is situated alongside the Yamuna River on the Grand Trunk Road. Etawah is sometimes referred to as the entrance to the well-known Yamuna and Chambal ravines. Etawah was founded in the eighteenth century. Outside of this city, the terrain is hilly and challenging.

This VVIP Guest House, also known as the Param VishishtAtithiGrih, is situated on a barren mound along the Yamuna River, with views of the untamed terrain extending for miles in every direction. The area is called Raja Sumer Singh ka Qila, which translates to "Fort of Raja Sumer Singh," but apart from the name of the location and a tall retaining wall that guards the mound, there are no ruins or other signs of the fort.



Figure 4: Geographic view Raja Sumer Singh Fort

The location, the surrounding landscape, the place's name, the expansive view of ravines, and the massive retaining wall below all encourage and push for a building to have a fort-like appearance. Uttar Pradesh RajkiyaNirman Nigam in Lucknow's architect KK Asthana, along with the rest of his team, came to the conclusion that the best use of this hilltop would be to recreate the once-great fort built by Raja Sumer Singh.



Figure 5: Fort of Maharaja Sumer Singh

The selection of the building materials has been given careful consideration with the goal of

achieving a harmonious flow with the overall concept. The exterior is finished with a rough black granite that was sourced from Jhansi. Masonry made of black granite has been used to construct the exterior walls. The structural system in question is a normally framed reinforced concrete and steel building. Granite was used to finish the grand staircases in the guest room block, whereas white marble was used for the flooring in the dining and conference room block. Both red sandstone and black Kadappa stone have been utilised in the landscaping, with the former being used to highlight the solid plinth.

The area was distinguished by two large mounds that were connected by a narrow passageway. Given the state of the site, it was decided to build two distinct blocks on each mound, with the depression in the middle serving as the grand entrance to the courtyard, which is where the guest house is intended to be built.

From within this courtyard, one can reach either of the two adjacent blocks via an impressive staircase. The entry level itself serves as the connection point for these blocks. The passage that connects the two blocks goes through the main entrance, which is double-height on the upper level. In the centre of the building containing the guest rooms is an impressive circular viewing tower that provides a view of the majestic landscape formed by the Yamuna River's ravines.

6. References

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