

# Mughal Architecture

For M.A Sem – 2

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The Mughal period witnessed large scale architectural activities that represented the peak of Islamic art in India. It was also a period where there was a great exchange of ideas and styles that led to the creation of a style that was very different from the Sultanate period and that had many features of local or regional styles. The Mughal Emperor Akbar initiated the grand projects that symbolize this period. Among the early structures of this period are the two mosques built by Babur at Sambhal and Panipat in 1526. Babur is also credited with the laying out of gardens at Dholpur and at Ram Bagh and Zahra Bagh at Agra. He introduced Mughal gardens in India. These Gardens were square and their speciality was running water.

# Sambhal and Panipat Mosques



Sambhal Mosque



Panipat Mosque

Two mosques one at Agra and the other at Hissar belong to the reign of the second Mughal emperor Humayun. Humayun built a city at Delhi called Dinpanah. The grandness of Mughal architecture began with the construction of Humayun's tomb and its design by Mirak Mirza Ghiyas from Persia. He brought with him Persian craftsmen to work on the tomb. This tomb is the earliest specimen of a garden enclosure and is raised on an arcaded sandstone platform. The tomb is octagonal and crowned by a high dome. The dome is a double dome, which is built in two layers one which provides the ceiling to the interior of the building and the other, which provides the outer layer that crowns, the building.



# Humayun's Tomb in Delhi



Sikandar Lodhi's Tomb was the first garden-tomb built in India but it was the Humayun's Tomb which gave new vision to art. Some of the major plan features were

- ◉ The tomb stands on a raised vast platform in the centre of a square garden.
- ◉ Garden is divided into 4 parts by Charbagh (causeways), in the centre of which run shallow water-channels.
- ◉ For the first time, red sandstone was used along with white (the white is used cleverly to emphasize, surround & underline doors and windows, strengthening the design).
- ◉ On similar lines, square, red, sandstone; the double storeyed structure of the mausoleum rises over a high square terrace; raised over a series of cells; etc. were also introduced.

**During the reign of Akbar** many indigenous styles were encouraged leading to the common use of sandstone, the use of arches (mainly in a decorative form) and the decoration that comprised mainly of boldly carved or inlaid patterns complemented by brightly colored patterns on the interiors. Among the important monumental projects undertaken was the building of Agra fort, within the fort were many structures that were built in the Gujarat and Bengal styles, which were subsequently demolished by Shah Jahan who remodelled the fort and its interiors. The Janangir Mahal conceived as a robust building in red sandstone, is a fusion of Hindu and Islamic building designs. The combination of beam and bracket form the principal structural system, the same styles are seen in the palace fortresses of Lahore and Allahabad. Mughal architecture under Akbar entered a new phase with the construction of Fatehpur Sikri. This city-palace was built entirely of red sandstone between 1571–1585.



# Agra Fort in Agra





# Fatehpur Sikri (City of Victory)



Aerial Shot of Fatehpur Sikri

The buildings could be studied under two categories, religious and secular. Among the religious buildings are, the Jami Masjid, the Buland Darwaza and the tombs of Shaikh Salim Chishti. The secular structures are the palaces, administrative buildings and other structures. The Jama Masjid uses a typical plan of a mosque with a central courtyard, arcades on three sides and a domed skyline. In its courtyard lies the tomb of Salim Chishti. Among the palaces are buildings known as the Jodha Bai palace, the Panch Mahal (the size of this five storey structure that diminishes as one goes higher), the *Diwan-i-Khas* (is in the form of a rectangle and is two stories from outside) and the *Diwan-i-Am*. Among the other buildings here are the Hathi Pol and the Karkhana buildings. The important buildings of the reigns of Jahangir include the Tomb of Akbar at Sikandara, and the tomb of Itmad ud Daula. Jahangir laid the famous Shalimar Bagh garden in Srinagar (Kashmir). In his time Red sandstone was replaced by Marble (of Makarna).

The tomb at Sikandara is designed as a tomb enclosure enclosed by a garden, the tomb itself is three stories high the first being an arcaded platform making the basement the middle portion is in three tiers of red sandstone while the highest one is made of white marble which is open on top with a screen surrounding it. The tomb of Itmad ud Daula built in 1622–28 marks a change in architectural style from the Akbari period. This enclosed tomb with a dome roof is enclosed with a beautiful marble tracery. Jahangir is also known to have laid the famous Mughal gardens in Kashmir. **Among the important monuments of the reign of Shah Jahan** are the Lal Qila (in Delhi), the Moti Masjid (at Agra), the Jami Masjid in Delhi and the Taj Mahal. The Lal Qila is designed as a rectangle along the banks of the river Yamuna. There are two gates, the Delhi and Lahore gates. There is a moat that runs all along the fort except on the riverside.



# Tomb of Akbar and Itmad-ud-Daula



Tomb of Akbar



Tomb of Itmad-ud-Daula



# Lal Qila of Delhi and Moti Masjid of Agra



Lal Qila at Delhi



Moti Masjid at Agra

The important buildings inside the fort are the Diwan-i-Am, Diwan-i-Khas and the Rang Mahal. The Moti Masjid in Agra was an experiment with an alternative scheme of an open prayer hall that had also dispensed with the minarets and replaced them with *chhatris* on the four corners of the prayer hall. The Jammi Masjid is a larger version of the Jammi Masjid in Fatehpur Sikri. It is built on a large platform; within the mosque there are colonnades on three sides with the sanctuary along the fourth. There are three marble domes rising above the sanctuary. **The Taj Mahal represents the grandest project of Shahjahan.** The construction of the Taj began in 1632 and was completed by 1643. The plan of the complex is rectangle with a high enclosure wall and a lofty gateway in the middle. The main building of the Taj stands on a high marble platform at the northern end of the enclosure.

There is a huge dome that covers the top of this structure, with an inverted lotus finial. The decorative features of the building consist mainly of calligraphy and inlay work in the exterior and pietra dura in the interior. The Moti Masjid at Lal Qila in Delhi, the Badshahi Masjid in Lahore and the mausoleum built for his wife Rabia ud Dauran at Aurangabad are the main examples of Mughal architecture under Aurangzeb. The mausoleum at Aurangabad was modeled on the Taj Mahal. Of architectural monuments after Aurangzeb the tomb of Safdar Jang in Delhi is representative of the continuation of the tradition of the Mughals by the regional governors.

# References

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Thank You

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