



## DERAWAR FORT

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Graduated from National College of Arts, Lahore. At the moment, working as principal architect under the flag of M/s Chauhan & Associates, and, by and large, specialist in joy full humane architecture, interiors/3D, industries, landscapes and conservations.

Besides this, he is also known as a puppeteer, a painter and a sculptor of human mood.

As a thinker and practicing architect, he is serving in numerous architecture schools and universities and developing an appropriate energy efficient building designs for urban Multan.

At present, he is consciously making a concrete effort to develop an appropriate National Architecture Style and the Proficient role of an Architect towards an extrovert society with respect to National Scenario.

He has a lot of articles, publications and a book on Architecture "Sights in the Sands of Cholistan" by Oxford press on his credit.

Honored with numerous awards, and also received a meritorious award by PCATP for promotion of architectural profession.

The desert of Cholistan is studded with numerous archaeological and architectural monuments that entice us to know more about the rulers of this land of Hakra civilization. These forts have artistic and human message, which is understandable only through the study of its history, archeology and architecture.

The forts like Derawar, Marot, Mauj Ghar, Jam Ghar, Mir Gharr and many more along 300 miles (483 Km) long course of the dry bed of the abandoned river Hakra remind us the past glory and geographical formation of the area in the history of the entire region.

Most of them are in deteriorated condition due to ignorance at all levels. This study however focuses only on the architectural aspect of forts of desert.

The Forts of Cholistan are such symbols of our cultural identity, which are believed to be the part of pre-Islamic and medieval period, are gradually beginning to fade and crumble under the ominous weight of time.

The splendors of Cholistan of Pakistan lie climatically in an arid zone of southwestern Punjab with 27.42 and 30.25 N latitude and 69.31 and 74.1 E longitude.

Geographically alluvium of Cholistan is divided as "Lesser Cholistan" and "Greater Cholistan" respectively.

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Period: Medieval  
 Fortification area: 672 feet including bastions  
 Bastions: Forty bastions  
 Founder: Reportedly Dewa Rawal (Bhati ruler)





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Muhammad Azam,  
in Jawahar-i-Abbasia writes:-

“Burj Kakoha keh Makanay Ast  
Rafi Dar-o-Diwar Qila Derawar  
Basiyar KhusHawa Ast.”

“What a place Kakoha bastion is!  
Surpassing the lofty walls of  
Derawar fort which bears  
an open atmosphere.”

Derawar fort is standing majestically and strategically since the medieval period like a warrior ship in the deep and beyond sand sea of the greater Cholistan along the bed of deserted river Hakra. It is located 35 miles away from Ahmadpur East (former Bahawalpur Nizamat). Reportedly its founder was Dera Sidh, who was also known as Dera Rawal and sometimes simply Rawal. He belonged to the Bhati dynasty of 850 A.D. of the Jaisalmer state. The fort was named after its founder but later on came to be called as Derawar in 1834 A.D.

Tarikh-e-Murad claims with reference to its history that this grandiose edifice is said to be erected on the ruins of an ancient fort belonging to pre-Islamic era by Bhati rajahs. It was firstly captured by the first Nawab of Bahawalpur, Sadiq Muhammad Khan I in 1733 A.D. with the support of Nawab of Multan after a fierce fight from Rawal Rai Singh.

Rawal Rai Singh made it again part of its state in 1747A.D. form Muhammad Bahawal Khan Abbasi I. After twelve years, he offered handed over it to the third Nawab Muhammad Mubarak Khan Abbasi-I in 1759 A.D. on the condition of paying half of the income of tolls collected at Derawar to him. Later on, Sadiq Muhammad Khan declared it as state capital and its capital status ended with the establishment of Bahawalpur City on the north bank of river Sutlej.

Fort is square in plan measuring 672 feet across with a massive wooden main gate with attach check post having wind catchers in a bastion on the southern side, approached by a curved ramp with vast panoramic view.

Forty bastions of fort are intact, reportedly it is to be said that half of them were made of sun-dried bricks and rest of them were made of burnt bricks having numerous geometric designs and linear brick bands. The bricks vary in sizes from one bastion to another indicating time to time frequent repairs and additions.

The fortification rises to an imposing height over ninety feet from outside the ditch, which surrounded the fort originally except at southeast to make it unapproachable from enemies. In the southeast side adjacent to fortification, there is mega water pond spread over up to eastern portion of Derawar mosque, which is used to fulfill the water requirement of the vicinity.

The surface level inside the fort is more than sixty feet higher than the natural soil level outside the fort. As we enter from main wooden gate, there is another steel bar huge gate mounted with a windy barrel roof passage.

The highest bastion known as Kakoha, named after its architect, is located on the left side of the main entrance. There were some establishments in this bastion like Dar-ul-Insha (secretariat) and Darul Tasnifat-o-Talifat (department of literary activities) etc., for that a large number of Ulema (scholars), writers, calligraphers, paper makers and book binders were appointed.

Moreover, a number of buildings intended to house the Nawab's army, retiring quarters, ammunition area, a jail and a small single chamber mosque are still stand deserted along the eastern wall. The southeastern wing bastion supports an impressive fresco work on inner spaces and delicate wood carving on the doors and windows; where as rest three wing bastions have ramps connected to each other by winding pathways all around.

There is also a deserted modern day residential bungalow unit in which a corridor with a number of skylights bisects the aligned rooms. Each room has a fireplace and attached bathrooms. There is another corridor, which separates the guesthouse from residential units. A number of tunnels having mechanical operated train system are worth observing in the center of fort provides an escaping way to somewhere outside the fort. In the series of forts in Cholistan, Derawar fort has no rival in visual beauty.

