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Evaluation of the reconstruction of Jabal Saraj royal palace in Parwan Afghanistan

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Abstract

Palaces are buildings that are used for royal and presidential offices around the world. In Afghanistan, these palaces have also been built for the offices of several kingships in the country's history. Unfortunately, after four decades of civil war in the country, besides the destruction of other infrastructures, the palaces were also destroyed. The vast majority of them lost their functioning and need fundamental restoration. In 2018, the government of Afghanistan started the reconstruction of these palaces. One of these palaces is Jabal Saraj Palace, whose restoration started in 2018 and was completed in 2020. This research has been done on the Jabal Saraj Royal Palace, and it was found that this Palace was built in the central part of a 7.6-hectare (38 Jeribs) area in the Jabal Saraj district of Parwan province. The Palace was built on two floors with thirty small rooms inside of it. Besides these thirty rooms, the Palace also has six big and four medium-sized lounges (meeting rooms). The Palace has about ten castles (guard rooms) and several entrance and exit gates. The architectural style of this Palace has been taken from ancient Ghorian and Temorian styles. The balconies and stairs railings have been constructed from wood. Ceilings and floors have been covered by designed woods, showing the following ancient architectural style. Inside and outside walls have been built with bricks.

Keywords: Jabal Saraj royal palace, palace reconstruction, palace restoration, Afghanistan palaces

Introductions

A palace is often understood to be the stately residence or administrative center of a monarch, queen, or other head of state (Nobilit Y Titles, 2021) ^[5]. Palace, the home of the king, and occasionally a place of worship or the seat of government. The word comes from the Palatine Hill in Rome, where the palaces of the Roman emperors were constructed (Britannica, 2023) ^[3]. The architectural style plays a crucial role in the identification of building types. It is clear that every type of building has its own view and format that differentiates the types of buildings from each other. For instance, residential buildings have flat roofs with large windows. Commercial buildings almost have the same appearance, with wider and longer rooms. Palaces have their own architectural style that is considered during their design. Palaces are buildings that are used for royal and presidential offices around the world. The Royal Palace has a long history spanning several centuries. Between 1978 and 1980, extensive excavations conducted in the nearby area uncovered remnants of extremely old timber structures that could be traced back to the end of the 10th century (The Royal Palaces, 2019) ^[8]. Being among the world's oldest palaces, the Alhambra has been utilized by several cultures and has been a fascinating place to visit (Art in Context, 2023). These historic castles were initially constructed as fortifications to defend the local populace from advancing armies (Oldest, 2023) ^[6]. Several Kings of Naples once called the Royal Palace of Caserta home. It is the best example of Baroque art and the grandest Palace in the world (REGGIA DE CASERTA, 2020) ^[7]. The oldest Palace in the United Kingdom is the royal home known as Windsor Castle is located in Windsor, in the English county of Berkshire. It represents nearly a thousand years of architectural history and is closely linked to the English and subsequent British royal families (Wikipedia, 2018). One of Luxury Antonovich Design Company's areas of competence and specialization is creating architectural designs for royal palaces (Architizer, 2022) ^[1].

The architectural design phase is the most enjoyable aspect of designing a house. It's similar to your adolescent years when the possibilities are endless and everything is conceivable (Young Platinum Group, 2020) ^[15]. Large urban structures constructed as the aristocracy's

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private residences are also referred to by this title in some parts of Europe. These days, a lot of old palaces are converted into hotels, offices, museums, or parliaments (Castles, 2014) [4].

The first constructed royal Palace in Afghanistan was the Tajbeg Palace (Wikipedia, 2019) [11]. There are several palaces in Afghanistan, like the Arg Palace or the Presidential Palace of Afghanistan; the Arg Palace was built after the destruction of Bala Hesar Kabul in 1880. Bagh-e-Bala Palace was the former royal Palace of Amir Abdul Rahman Khan and was built in 1893. Bala Hissar Palace was built in the fifth century. Chihil Sutun Palace was built in 1888 in Kabul, Afghanistan. The Citadel of Ghazni was built in the 13th century in Ghazni, Afghanistan. Darul Aman Palace was built in 1927 in Kabul, Afghanistan. Farah Citadel was built at (522-486) BC in Farah province. Herat Citadel was built in 330 BC in Herat, Afghanistan. Bost Palace at Helmand Afghanistan. Paghman Hill Castle Palace is in Kabul, Afghanistan. Sultan Palace was built in 1112 in Ghazni, Afghanistan. As part of Amir Amanullah Khan's efforts to modernize Afghanistan, work on the Darul Aman Palace started in the early 1920s (Wikipedia, 2019) [11]. Jabal Saraj Palace in Parwan, Afghanistan (Wikipedia, 2023) [13]. Among the many things restorers do is work in the field of building reconstruction. It describes an endeavor to bring back a building's original look after it has been severely damaged, destroyed, or rebuilt in the past (Roll Conservators, 2015). Rebuilding or restoration can be used to achieve the reconstruction.

Jabal Saraj is a small town in the Parwan province of Afghanistan. In 1907, Amir Habibullah Khan founded a palace called Jabal Saraj Palace (Wikipedia, 2017) [9]. The Palace has been founded in about 38 Jerib area. A green area of planted flower trees surrounded the Palace. The Palace is following Ghorian and Timorian style. Originally, the inside and outside walls had been constructed from bricks that represented the ancient style of architecture; therefore, the reconstruction team tried to save the original style of architecture. The reconstruction of Jabal Saraj Royal Palace was started in 2018 and completed in 2020.

Study Area

Parwan is located in the northern part of the capital, Kabul. The province has ten districts: Ghorband, Shinwari, Shaikh Ali, Surkh Parsa, Bagram, Jabal Saraj, Salang, Kohe Safi, Said Khail, and Charikar. Parwan province has about 2 million people and is located about 1500 m above sea level. Parwan province has an area of about 5974 km², and its capital is Charikar City, located about 60km north of Kabul. Most people in Parwan province are busy with their agricultural work (Wikipedia, 2023) [13].

This research was done in Jabal Saraj district in Parwan province, and the town is located in the path of the Kabul Mazar-e-Sharif highway near Salang Pass, about 65 km away from Kabul city. Jabal Saraj Royal Palace was built by Amir Habibullah Khan in 1907 in the Parwan province of Afghanistan.

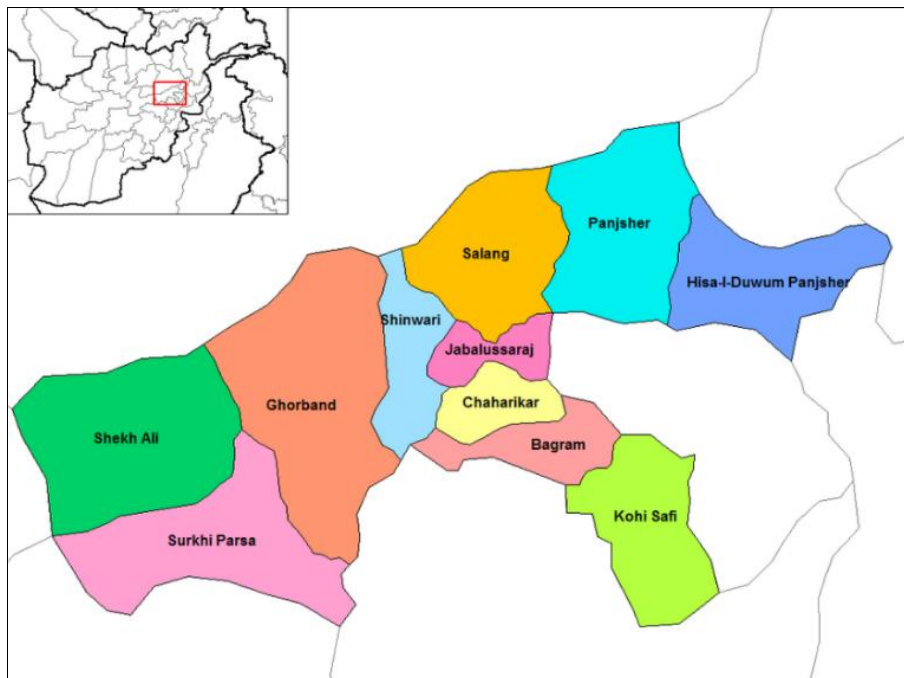


Fig 1: Location of the Jabal Saraj District on the map, source: (Wikipedia, 2023) [13]

Methodology

This research has been divided into two parts: an internet-based literature review and the field research, including site visits, question with authority, etc. At first, plenty of research articles, books, and conference proceedings were

studied. Then, the author traveled to Jabal Saraj district, had a site visit, and collected a lot of site data. Then, the results and discussion were produced through site data. Research methodology has been illustrated in the following flow chart.

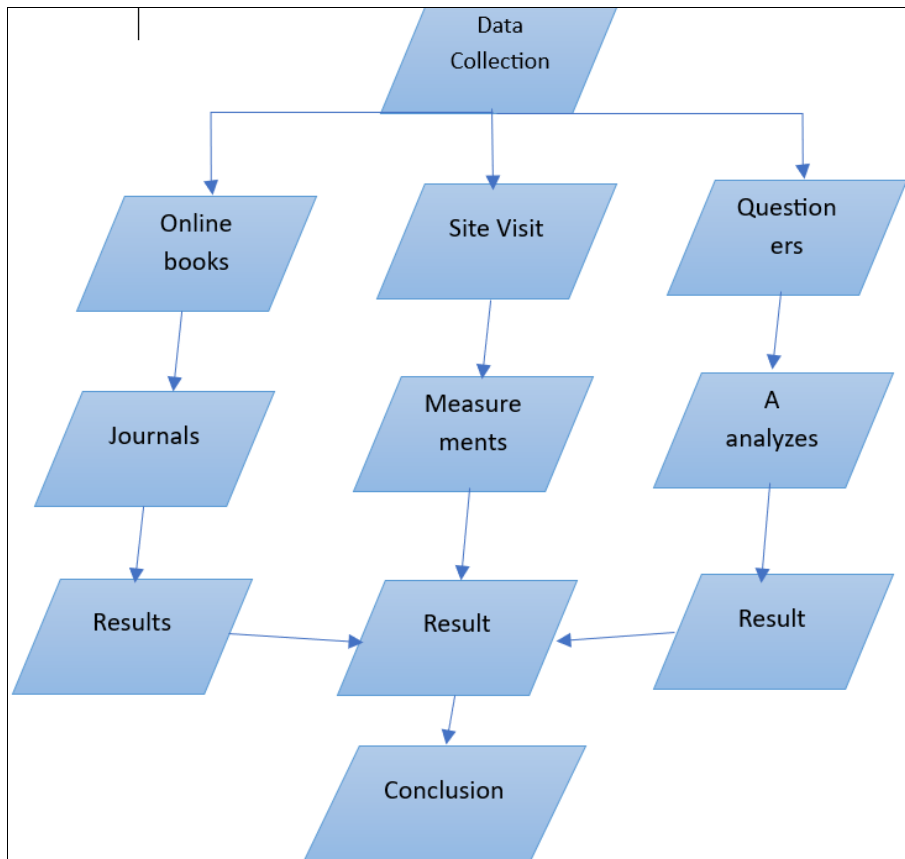


Fig 2: Research Methodology

Results and Discussions

The Palace was built for the first time in 1907 by Amir Habibullah Khan. Its architectural design follows Ghorian and Temorian styles. The majority of the walls have been

constructed by bricks. In order to save its originality, the engineers have tried to use local materials like wood etc. The floors, ceilings, stairs, and balconies have been covered by beautiful wooden boards.



Fig 3: The Palace before reconstruction, Source: Authors



Fig 4: Front view of the before during reconstruction, Source: Authors



Fig 5: Sidewalk view of the Jabal Saraj Royal Palace, Source: Authors

In order to preserve the original architectural style of the Palace, the sidewalks have been built with local stones instead of modern concrete.



Fig 6: The pictures of the Jabal Saraj Royal Palace before and after reconstruction, Source: Authors

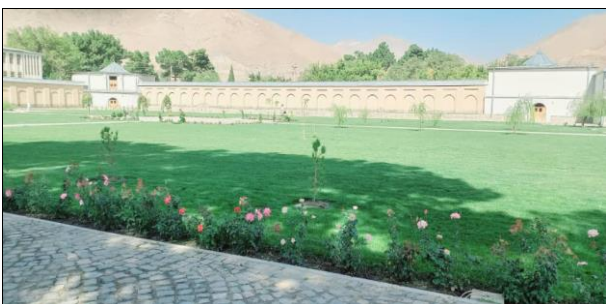


Fig 7: Castles (guard towers) of the Palace, Source: Authors

The castles have been constructed 110m away from each other so they can make verbal contact during any security incidents.



Fig 8: Doors view of the Jabal Saraj Royal Palace, Source: Authors

In the past, all the doors were constructed from wooden materials; therefore, in order to restore their prime view, the doors have been designed from local wood. This action involved the local carpenters and formers in the reconstruction procedure of the Palace. The contribution of the local people had positive impact in the success of the project.



Fig 9: The night view of the royal Palace, Source: Authors

One of the plus points of the Palace is that this Palace imports its power from nearby hydropower stations and has 24-hour electricity. The local hydropower name is the Jabal Saraj Power hydropower station, which has a 2.5 Miga watt capacity. This hydropower was constructed at the same time as the Palace. From a climate change point of view, this is another plus point of this Palace, which does not use fossil fuels for power generation.



Fig 10: Balcony view of the Palace, Source: Authors

The columns, doors, and ceiling of the balconies of the Palace have been covered with quality wooden boards. Local black and white mosaics have covered the balcony floor.



Fig 11: Inside view of the Palace, Source: Authors

The architectural style of the Palace is beautiful, and the Palace has been designed in a way that can never be forgotten easily, and that is priceless from the tourist's point of view.

The building itself has an area of 5 jerib, but the whole campus area is about 38 jerib. The Palace had been destroyed about ninety percent, but now it has been reconstructed completely as its original one, showing the professionalism of the engineers there.

Conclusion

Jabal Saraj Royal Palace was reconstructed on its proper view, and its originality has been restored once again. The Palace is located about 65 kilometers away from the capital city of Kabul. Kabul City has a population of about six million people, and during vacation and holiday days, they go to Parwan province and other surrounding provinces to have fun. After the reconstruction of this Palace, lots of people came from Kabul to have fun and go sightseeing. Also, lots of international tourists come to the country and want to see gorgeous places. Since its reconstruction, international tourists have come to the Palace and had fun there. On the other hand, the Parwan municipality has made tickets for nationals and visitors. When visitors come to the Palace, it is mandatory to purchase a ticket prior to going inside. This action increased the income of the local government as well. Finally, the reconstruction of the Palace and other palaces can positively impact national and international attractions and increase national income.

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