VISION, MOVEMENT AND LANDSCAPE EXPERIENCE IN PRINCELY TOWN AMBER, INDIA

BY
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THESIS
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Abstract

Cultural landscapes are a part of a nation’s heritage and are narratives of the by-gone era. These landscapes exhibit our culture and history and it is equally important to conserve them, along with built monuments, to truly protect and represent them as sites of the past. This study focuses upon one such important cultural landscape of historic Amber fort and town, located in Jaipur district, India. Amber Fort Complex along with six other hill forts in the state of Rajasthan was recently added to the tentative list of World Heritage Sites. It was India’s World Heritage Site nomination in the cultural category in 2012.

Amber Fort and the surrounding cultural landscape evolved from the 11th to 17th century and represent elements of both Hindu and Islamic architecture. The site contains three forts, lakes, gardens and Amber town with its old temples and living heritage, all located in Aravalli hill range and its valleys. It is an important tourist destination and this site alone contributes to almost one-third of the city’s total revenue from tourism. As in many other historic sites in India, the focus of conservation efforts in Amber is on historic monuments rather than on cultural landscapes and intangible heritage. My premise is that expanding the scope from the building to the landscape scale will be respectful of the historic integrity of the site. This will distribute the heavy concentration of visitors on a few choice monuments over the larger cultural landscape resulting in a wider and more authentic experience, and provide an opportunity for experiencing the culture.

Through a series of site readings and mappings of the present day layered landscape, the design intelligence of the past has been interpreted and an integrated conservation plan for Amber has been developed. Heritage walks through the hill forts, lakes, palace gardens and historic town of Amber are proposed for movement with unfolding views of the cultural landscape. This will enable the visitor to have an immersive experience and the opportunity to create a coherent image of the past, reliving its history. Landscape conservation will contribute to increasing domestic and international tourism to Amber town and serve as a model for conserving other hill forts in Rajasthan.
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1. **Introduction**

This thesis examines the cultural landscape of a medieval princely town, Amber, located in the northwestern part of India. Today a part of Jaipur district, Amber is an important tourist destination and contributes to almost one-third of Jaipur’s city’s total revenue from tourism. Recently, in a serial nomination as ‘Hill Forts of Rajasthan’, Amber Fort Complex along with six other hill forts in the state of Rajasthan was added to the tentative list of World Heritage Sites 2010. It was India’s World Heritage Site (in the cultural category) nomination in 2012.

The state of Rajasthan (or the old Rajputana region) boasts of having the second maximum number of forts, after the state of Maharashtra, in India. These forts are the evidences of Rajput art and love of fortification and represent their chivalry and valor. Rajputs were Hindu rulers who had excellent knowledge of ancient building methods, which was reflected in their architecture and landscape design. Rajputs rulers observed the early Hindu principles of fort building, described in the medieval treatises *Shilpa Shastras*, to create a defensive architecture utilizing natural features of the site. Most of the forts we see today in Rajasthan were built after the 11th century. These forts were not only used for defense purposes but also “displayed the pride and honor, wealth and prosperity, grandeur and gaiety of the Maharajas.”(Khangarot and Nathawat 1990, 3).

Amber fort and the surrounding cultural landscape evolved from 11th to 17th century, and the architecture represents elements of both Hindu and Islamic architecture, due to political alliances of the Rajput rulers with the Mughals during the medieval era. As in many other historic sites in India, the focus of conservation efforts in Amber is on historic monuments, rather than on cultural landscapes and intangible heritage. This thesis builds on the premise that expanding the tourism scope from building to the landscape scale will be respectful of the historic integrity of the site. Its cultural landscape is constituted of forts, palaces, lakes, gardens and Amber town with its old temples and liv-
Figure 1.1: Golden Triangle India

Figure 1.2: Amber and Jaipur
Figure 1.3: Nominated Hill Forts of Rajasthan
ing heritage, all located in valley of Kalikho hills, formed by Aravalli hill range. This will distribute the heavy concentration of visitors on a few choice monuments over the larger area, resulting in a wider and more authentic experience, and providing an opportunity to experience the culture.

The present day cultural landscape has many of the historic layers yet intact although some new development has occurred. View sheds and routes constituted the historic landscape structure that made up the skeletal frame for fort-palaces, temples, and housing. The conservation program proposed in this thesis is based on various site mappings and readings of the present day layered landscape; interpretive study of the landscape and architectural history through archival texts, paintings, photographs and gazetteers; documenting intangible heritage through participation observation and ethnographic interviews.

This thesis proposes a series of heritage trails through the hill forts, lakes, palace gardens and historic town of Amber for movement with unfolding views of the cultural landscape as a part of conservation program. This will enable the visitor to have an immersive experience and the opportunity to create a coherent image of the past, reliving its history. Landscape conservation will contribute to increasing domestic and international tourism of Amber and serve as a model for conserving other hill forts in Rajasthan as well as other large site where architecture and landscape both require an integrated approach.

**Background**

Located eleven kilometers north of present Jaipur city, the town of Amber is a rich conglomeration of royal palaces, robust forts, princely havelis and residences, gardens, temples, lakes and other ancient buildings. The history of Amber dates back to 10th century, when Mina tribesmen founded it. The Kachhawa Rajputs eventually took over Am-
Figure 1.4: View of the fort at Amber in Rajasthan; watercolor by William Simpson, c.1860

Figure 1.5: View of Amber Fort, across Maatha lake, Amber, Jaipur, c.1858; by artist W. Purser

Source: British Library Online Gallery
http://www.bl.uk/search/og/search?q=amber&x=-738&y=-70&Go=Submit&output=xml_no_dtd&filter=0&proxystylesheet=public_onlignegallery&client=public_onlignegallery&site=public_onlignegallery
ber in 1037 AD and made it their capital. Amber remained the capital of the Kachhawa dynasty for about seven centuries, until Maharaja Jai Singh II designed a new capital in the plains, Jaipur in 1727 AD. The shifting of capital from Amber to Jaipur, led to the abandonment of the palace complex at Amber and many of formerly important sites, but Amber town was not fully abandoned.

According to a Tod (1914), Amber derives its name from “Ambikeshwar”, a title of Shiva, whose symbol, the lingam, existed in the middle of a tank in midst of the town of Amber. Jain inscriptions of the 16th and 17th centuries mention the name of the goddess Ambavati, from which the town derived it name. Another source says that Minas, the founder of this site named Amber after Amba, the universal mother. The early history of the town is not clearly known but the earliest found inscription in the Sun temple dates back to 954 A.D. (Gupta 1962, 387-388)

The Amber palace complex is a magnificent example of Rajput architecture, located in a valley surrounded by hills of Aravallis. Much of the present day complex was built by Raja Man Singh in 1600 AD with additions by Raja Jai Singh I and Sawai Jai Singh II till the first quarter of 18th century. The site for the palace complex was strategically chosen for security purposes. At the base of the complex, lies Maotha Lake, fed by surrounding catchment area, providing beautiful view from the palace complex. This lake acted as a natural defense for palace, as well provided water to the palace and also served as a recreation place for the princes. Maotha Lake is also adorned with royal gardens, Dilaram bagh and Ram bagh on its edges, a stepped garden, Kesar Kyari (Mohan Bari) in the middle and Pariyon ka Bagh to the south.

Like many traditional medieval towns of India, Amber grew in an organic pattern, with winding streets, courtyard houses, temples and stepped wells. There was a sense of radial organization in the town, with palace serving as the focal point and town roads radiating from it. Due to the shift in capital to Jaipur, parts of Amber town were deserted.
and many historic buildings are in ruins today.

**Site Study**

Amber Fort is an important tourist destination today, and this site alone contributes to almost one-third of the city’s total revenue from tourism. The hill forts of Amber along with seven other forts in the state of Rajasthan have been added in the tentative list of World Heritage Sites in 2012. The site is currently under developmental pressures, tourism being one of the important ones. Thus, Amber requires immediate attention and planning to prevent the loss of its heritage and history due to social changes, new development and tourism. The focus of this study is the historic town of Amber, bounded by the fort wall of the town. Historic town area of Amber is spread over an area of almost 1 square mile (2.5 square km), the total spread of present day Amber town is 2.5 square mile (6.5 square km).

The main objective of this study is to document and interpret the different features of the cultural landscapes of Amber, both natural and built. The goal is to develop a conservation proposal, based on interpretive studies, for the site, which would serve as a model for many other historic sites with living heritage.

Analytical field studies were done in December 2011 and 2012. October through March is considered peak tourist season for Amber, as the weather is favorable during these months in the region, otherwise being a hot, dry and tough climatic region. December through January being the peak months, a large influx of local and international tourists arrives at the site. The pressure on one monument, Amber palace, was clearly visible, with other historic sites in the town being completely neglected. Site mapping was done to identify the exact number of important historic buildings and landscape structures of the region and a listing with the current conditions of these structures was created.

A set of interviews was conducted with government officials currently in charge of Am-
ber conservation and protection to learn about the measures that have been taken to preserve the site. The questionnaires and interviews [Appendix] with local stakeholders and tourists were conducted to understand their perception of the place. Major issues derived from the ten interviews are:

a) Tourist Interview

- Most of the interviewed tourists, expressed their concern regarding lack of interpretation in the area.
- Lack of eating places near Amber fort.
- Tourists were only aware of the Amber palace complex and Jaigarh fort as structures to visit in Amber and were completely unaware of the town structures.
- Lack of designated heritage trails.
- Traffic and congestion at the approach.

b) Stakeholder Interview

- Stakeholders are concerned about the economic condition of the town of Amber as tourists don’t spend a lot of time in Amber.
- A few tourist guides do take the visitors to Jagat Shiromani temple and Sagar lake in the town, but most of tourists restrict their visit to Amber palace.
- Stakeholders feel that local culture, cuisine, and handicrafts can be fostered if tourists start spending more time in the Amber town.
2. History of Amber

The state of Amber was inhabited and ruled partly by the Minas and partly by the Bad-
gujar Rajputs until the 11th century A.D. The Kachhawas (also spelt/pronounced as
Kachchawahas) conquered this region, known as Dhoondhar (or Dhundhar)¹ in ancient
times, in the early 11th century and were the rulers of the region until the disintegration of
Princely States in India. Kachhawas trace their descent from Kush, son of Lord Rama,
claiming to belong to the solar dynasty.

The first Kachhawa king of Dhundhar, Dulha Rai, was supposed to have migrated from
the Central India, city of Narwar near Gwalior. In 967 A.D., he made Dausa, a small
town near Amber, the first capital of Kachhawas in Dhundhar and constantly kept grow-
ing his territory through military expeditions or political alliances. Kakil Dev (or his son
Maidul Rao)² conquered Amber from the Minas in 1037 A.D., owing to its great strate-
gic value. He laid the foundation of the fortified walls of Amber, established Kakilgarh
fort and built Ambikeshwar Mahadev Temple at Amber (Hooja and Hooja 2005). Amber
became the third capital of the Kachhawas, when Rajdev³ shifted the capital from Khoh
to Amber, and remained the capital of Kachhawas for almost seven centuries. He and
his successors stated expanding the town of Amber by building palaces and temples of
Vishnu and Shiva.

Amber reached its apogee in the medieval period. “[I]t was with the Beharimal that the
greatness of Amber began.” (Gupta 1962, 27) The rule of Bharmal (or Beharimal) (1548-
1574) marks the beginning of the new era of Amber, with the alliance (political and
matrimonial) with Mughal king Akbar in 1562 AD, the then ruling dynasty in India. Before

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¹ According to J.P. Stratton, a stream called Dhundhu river flowed southwards in the Amber valley
is ascribed to a cave at Galtia. The word Dhundhar is supposed to have been derived from this stream.
² Different historians credit the conquest of Amber to different people. According to Sharma (1969)
and Bhatnagar (1974), Kakil Deo (son of Dulha Rai) conquered Amber, while Tod (1914) credits it to
Kakil's son, Maidul Rao.
³ Fourth ruler in succession after Kakil Dev.
this alliance, the Dhundhar kingdom was exposed to frequent attacks from the neighboring ruling power. This alliance, therefore, brought stability to the state, which as Sharma (1969, 43-44) mentions “was responsible for the high prestige of the princely house of the Kachhawas was enjoyed in the Mughal court, … and the continuous peace and prosperity which about two million subjects of Amber enjoyed for about 2 centuries…”

The period from late 16th century to early 18th century in the reign of Man Singh and Raja Jai Singh I & Jai Singh II is considered to be the golden period of Amber. Man Singh I (1589-1614) strengthened the political alliance with Mughals and was a part of sixty-seven important Mughal military campaigns and battles (Hooja and Hooja 2005). He held highest offices in the Mughal court during Akbar’s reign and was considered as one of the nine jewels (nav-ratna) of Akbar’s court. The period of Man Singh’s rule marks the beginning of Golden era of Kachhawa dynasty. Owing to his associations with the Mughal court, Man Singh encouraged literature, poetry and scholarship in Amber with significant contribution to art and architecture made during his times. Influence of the Mughal artwork was evident in the murals done on the walls of his palace in Amber, exhibiting a blend of Mughal floral motifs with traditional Hindu motifs of scenes from Lord Krishna’s life (Hooja and Hooja 2005). A prolific builder, Man Singh, made a significant contribution to the architecture of Amber, by building a major portion of the Amber palace, establishing Shila Devi Temple in Amber palace, and building Jagat Shiromani Temple in the Amber town. Man Singh also adapted Bengali architectural features in his constructions in Amber fort.4

Mirza Raja Jai Singh I (1622-1677), grandson of Man Singh I, continued the political alliance with Mughals and made great contributions to the financial and cultural wealth of the Kachhawa kingdom. Construction revived in his era and additions to the palace of Amber, Diwan-e-am, Ganeshpol, Sukhmandir, Suhagmandir, Sheesh Mahal, Hamam

4 The idol of goddess Shila Devi, patron deity of Amber ruling family, was brought to Amber from Bengal during the course of Man Singh’s Bengal campaigns. (Hooja and Hooja 2005)
Figure 2.1: Timeline of Amber

1615 AD Dhankotar kingdom: founded.
Dithila Raja, first Kachchhawa king, founded Dhankotar kingdom in 1615 AD and made Dauka his capital. Kachchhawas (Rajputs trace their descent to the solar dynasty of Kashi and Dithila Raja is believed to have migrated from Gujrat or Nanar branch of Kachchhawas Rajputs.

1637 AD Amber - New Capital: Kala Singh, son of Dithila Raja, captured Amber from Mirak, in 1637 AD, and made it the new capital of Dhankotar kingdom. He built Ambabhar (Ambabhar) Mahadev temple in the town corner and it is from this temple that Amber gets its name.

MEDIEVAL PERIOD

Aliance with Mughals: Raja Iyaz Singh was the first of the Kachchhawa dynasty to ally with Mughals. The alliance was instrumental in the expansion of the Mughal Empire.

Golden Period of Kachchhawa dynasty

Raja Mansingh I (1587 - 1614 AD): Raja Mansingh I strengthened the political alliance with Mughals and became one of the most powerful rulers of the Kachchhawa dynasty. He was a patron of arts and culture, and his reign was marked by significant contributions to architecture and literature. He built several forts and palaces during his time.

Mirza Raja Jaisingh I (1621 - 1667 AD): Mirza Raja Jaisingh I continued the political alliance with Mughals and made significant contributions to literature and art. He was a patron of arts and culture, and his reign was marked by the construction of several forts and palaces.

MEDIEVAL PERIOD (Rule of Jai Singh II)

Sawai Jai Singh II (1690 - 1743 AD): Shifted capital from Amber to Jaipur.
Jai Singh II was the most illustrious ruler of the Kachchhawa dynasty and was a man of science and a great builder. He was a patron of astronomy, art, and architecture. During his reign, the first major city of Amber was created, not a city but a palace. He built several forts and palaces during his time.

Subsidiary Alliance with British: 1818

The British government in 1818. No major construction took place during this period, and most of the scholarly writing on Amber dates back to this time.

AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Amber Palace Conservation Initiative 2005
A major conservation initiative was taken to restore Amber palace in 2005. Though the restoration of most of the buildings was successfully implemented, the initiative was criticized due to controversial renovations and hampers with the site heritage.

Amber Fort added to the Tentative List of UNESCO World Heritage Sites 2010
Amber Fort was added to the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage site. This move was welcomed by many, as it marked the beginning of the restoration of Amber Fort.

Amber Town added in World Monument Watch List 2004
Amber Town was included in the 2005 World Monuments Watch list, which called attention to the alarming and increasing decay of its historic buildings.
and gardens were done during his times. The architecture and the landscape developed during Mirza Jai Singh’s times were strongly influenced by the Islamic art and architecture of the Mughals. Jai Singh adopted the Char Bagh plan in the design of palace gardens, as a symbol of his political alliance with the Mughal rulers. The mural and painting tradition also flourished in his era with Islamic influences evident in the intricately painted murals of ‘Bhojan Shala’ of Amber.

Sawai Jai Singh II (1700-1743) ascended the throne of Amber at an early age of 12 years in 1700 AD. The medieval period under the rule of Jai Singh II was the era of advancements in science, art and architecture. Jai Singh II was a progressive man, fascinated by art, architecture, town planning, astronomy, and mathematics. By the order of Sawai Jai Singh II, the first map of Amber (presently in the collection of National Museum, New Delhi) was prepared in 1711 by artists Govini and Ghasi. This map shows important buildings, houses of kings, nobles and officials, gardens and water reservoirs. The art of making cartography in those times was highly decorative, not accurate and showing elevations on the plans just like paintings (Singh 1993). In 1727 AD, Sawai Jai Singh II shifted the capital of Kachhawas to Jaipur, 11km south of Amber in the plains and the historic town was practically abandoned.

During the British rule, no major construction work was done in Amber. As Kachhawas were in a subsidiary alliance with the British, this era marks the beginning of tourism in Amber and many European travellers visited this area. After independence, Dhundhar kingdom was merged with the state of Rajasthan and Amber became a part of Jaipur district. For a long time Amber faced neglect and finally in 2005, the first conservation initiative was taken to restore Amber palace. This conservation effort was criticized due to controversial renovations and tampering with the heritage. The restoration work was aimed specifically at Amber fort, and the town yet again was left out in its deteriorating

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5 Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb bestowed Jai Singh II with the title “Sawai” meaning ‘one and a quarter’ above others in intellect.
condition. In 2008 Amber town was added to the World Monument watch list, calling attention to the deteriorating historic buildings in the town.

In 2010, as part of serial nomination, Amber fort, along with six other hill forts of Rajasthan was added to the tentative list of world heritage sites, leaving Amber town out of the nomination. ‘Hill Forts of Rajasthan’ was India’ 2012 nomination for as the World Heritage Site in the cultural category but was ‘referred’ by the World Heritage committee.⁶

⁶ UNESCO World Heritage Center (2012) defines ‘referred’ properties as—“The Advisory Bodies decide to recommend that a nomination should be referred back to the State Party when additional information that is needed from the State Party is minor and supplementary to the original nomination, can be provided in a short period of time and does not need to be assessed through a new mission to the property. A referred nomination may be re-submitted in any of the three years following its first assessment.”
3. Tourism in Amber

Tourism in Amber began during the British era. Many European travellers visited Amber from mid 19th century to early 20th century. They made paintings, wrote travelogues, and took the earliest photographs of Amber. Figure [3.1] shows a few early paintings and photographs of Amber by William Simpson, Eugene Clutterbuck Impey, Colin Murray, G.W. Lawrie, Joseph David Beglar. Indian photographer Deen Dayal also added to the collection of these historic photographs.

Amber palace and the surrounding landscape of the town fascinated many European travellers, who in their travelogues expressed the exquisiteness of the site. Louis Rousselet (Rousselet and Buckle 1882) described the landscapes of Amber in his travelogue:

The chain of Kalikho Mountains here forms a semicircle, the two extremities of which are reunited by the ramparts of Jeypore; and the valley thus enclosed, being sheltered on all sides from the encroaching sand, forms a pleasing contrast to the parched-up country which surrounds it…the valley has no outlet, being surrounded on all sides by mountains… A month is scarcely sufficient to explore all the remarkable features of the valley and the neighbourhood.

Bishop Heber (1783-1826) (Laird 1971) describes the town of Amber:

…a small ruinous town, overgrown with trees, and intermingled with towers and temples, and over it…a noble old fortified palace connected by a long line of wall with tower, with a very large castle on the highest part of the hill. The town, which almost entirely consisted of temples and had few inhabitants… I have seen many royal palaces, containing a larger and more stately rooms- many, the architecture of which was in a purer taste, and some of which have covered a greater extent of ground but for varied and picturesque effect, for wild beauty of situation, for the number and romantic singularity of the apartments, and the strangeness of finding such a building, in such a place and country, I am able to compare nothing to Amber.

Magnificent palace architecture and landscape of Amber attracts a large number of local as well as international tourists today as well. Tourism has grown ever since the British times and today Amber Palace is one of the most visited sites in the state of Rajasthan. According to the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Rajasthan government,
Figure 3.1: Tourism in Amber- Mid19th Century to Early 20th Century
Source: British Library Online Gallery
http://www.bl.uk/search/og/search?q=amber&Go.x=-738&Go.y=-70&Go=Submit&output=xml_no_dtd&filter=0&proxystylesheet=public_onlinemuseum&client=public_onlinemuseum&site=public_onlinemuseum
Figure 3.2: 21st Century tourism in Amber

Figure 3.3: Tourism in Rajasthan state (1970-2010)

Figure 3.4: Tourists at Amber Fort (2011-2012) (Total=1495885)
around 5000 tourists visit Amber palace per day during the peak season with a total of around 1.5 million tourists, in a year (Bakshi 2008). It is an important tourist destination today and this site alone contributes to almost one-third of the city’s total revenue from tourism.

Conservation efforts and addition of new infrastructure (sound and light show, audio tours) are restricted only to Amber palace, and the concentration of tourists is only on few monumental sites. The site is currently under lot of developmental pressures, tourism being one of the important ones. Thus, Amber requires immediate attention and planning, to prevent the loss of its heritage and history due to social changes, new development and burgeoning tourism.
4. Historic Structures and Heritage

Like many other medieval Indian towns, Amber grew as a town with palace on the hill and town on the foothills. Amber is one of the most magnificent examples of Rajput architecture and building knowledge, which is evident in the historic structures of Amber. The political alliances of Kachhawas with Mughals impacted the architecture of the region as well and strong influence of Islamic architecture is seen in the architecture and landscape of Amber.

The most important structures are Amber palace complex and Jaigarh fort, which today, are the most visited places in Amber. Man Singh I started the building of present Amber palace in 1592, uniting it with the portions of old palace of early rulers of Amber (seen in the rear side). He also constructed Shila Devi Temple inside the palace complex, devoted to Shila Mata, incarnation of goddess Kali. The temple houses deity of Kali brought by Man Singh I during his expeditions in 1604 from Bengal and is known for its intricate white marble carvings. During the 17th century, Man Singh I’s successor, Jai Singh I made significant additions to the palace by adding Diwan-e-am, Ganeshpol, Sukhmandir, Suhagmandir, Sheesh Mahal, and Hamam.(Bahura and Singh 2009, Dundlod 1970, Martinelli, Michell, and Nath 2004, Gupta 1962, Jain 2005, Michell and Martinelli 1994, Tillotson 1987) The construction of Dilaram Bagh and Ram Bagh garden along the Maotha Lake and Mohanbari (Kesar Kyari) garden in the middle of Maotha lake was done by Dalaram and Mohan respectively, under the rule of Jai Singh I(Bahura and Singh 2009, Ruggles 2008). Jai Singh II, the last ruler of Amber, also did a few additions to the palace complex and added fourth courtyard and palace gate. He also did major additions to the Jaigarh Fort7, and strengthened the military base for Amber, before moving the capital of Kachhawas to Jaipur.

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7 The original year of construction of Jaigarh fort is not known. Some scholars (Khangarot and Nathawat 1990) claim that it was one of the early forts of Amber, with its foundation laid during Kakil Dev’s era.
Figure 4.1: Historic Structures in Amber
History of Amber, is not just confined to these two royal complexes, but is evident in structures of town as well. In fact, the town is remnant of the early period of Kachhawas with structures dating back to 10th century. Amber town can be aptly called as “town of temples” with more than 100 temples located within the town boundaries. Situated on the west of Amber, on a hill slope, is Sun temple, the oldest surviving temple of Amber, with an inscription dated 954 A.D. (Hasan 2012). Ambikeshwar Mahadev temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva, was constructed by Kakil Dev soon after the establishment of Kachhawa rule in Amber in the 11th century. One of the most magnificent structures in the town is Jagat Shiromani temple, dedicated to Radha-Krishna, built by Kankavati, the wife of Man Singh I in 1608 AD. The temple is best known for its intricate marble carvings and beautiful marble torana flanked by elephants. Narsingha temple, located in the Prachin Mahal (old palace) of Amber, dedicated to Narsingh, an incarnation of Vishnu, was built in the 17th century by mother of Jai Singh I. The Bihari Ji Ka Mandir Temple, built during the reign of Jai Singh I (1611–1667), is brilliant example of 17th century temple architecture in the region. Amber town also contains around 20 Jain temples, known for intricate carvings and beautifully decorated wall paintings. Sanghi Jutharam temple and Chandaprabhu Swetambar temple are important Jain temples built during the 17th century (Bahura and Singh 2009, Gupta and Khangarot 1994, Hooja and Hooja 2005).

Besides temples, old palaces of Kachhawas, havelis, step wells, gardens and a mosque built by Raja Bharmal for Mughal King Akbar in 1569 AD Akbari mosque are other important structures in the town. The old rampart (fort wall) of Amber built by Kachhwa rulers from 11th- 18th century is an important structure in the landscape of Amber.

Mapping of all the historic structures, buildings, gardens and landscape was done and a listing with the description of these sites [Figure 4.2] was created to guide the design of movement of the visitors in the town.

8 According to popular belief, the idol of Lord Krishna in the Jagat Shiromani temple originally belonged to Mira Bai and was brought from Chittorgarh.
Figure 4.2: List of Historic Structures in Amber

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Protected by</th>
<th>Built in</th>
<th>Built By/ Association</th>
<th>Building Type</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Amber Palace</td>
<td>Government of Rajasthan</td>
<td>1592 AD</td>
<td>Jai Singh I with additions by Mirza Raja Jai Singh</td>
<td>Palace</td>
<td>Tourist Site</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>It is a magnificent example of Rajput architecture of the medieval period (Mughal influence on Hindu architecture), built in red sandstone and white marble.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jaigarh Fort</td>
<td>Government of Rajasthan</td>
<td>15th-18th century AD</td>
<td>Sawai Jai Singh II did major additions to the fort.</td>
<td>Fort, palace and garden</td>
<td>Tourist Site</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>It is one of the few military structures of medieval India preserved almost intact, containing palaces, a granary, a well-planned cannon foundry, several temples, a tall tower and giant mounted cannon - the Jai Ban (Jai-avan) which is the largest cannon on wheels in the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Prachin Mahal</td>
<td>Government of Rajasthan</td>
<td>12th-13th century AD</td>
<td>Rajdeva</td>
<td>Old Palace</td>
<td>Sign of Deterioration</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Old Palace of Amber, all family rites of Kachchawas was performed here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Narsingha Temple</td>
<td>State Archeology</td>
<td>17th century AD</td>
<td>Completed in 1702 AD</td>
<td>Others-Haveli</td>
<td>In use-worship</td>
<td>Fair, signs of deterioration, negligence</td>
<td>It is considered as the first home of the Kachchhva rulers. This temple is placed in a small room of the palace. There is a white Toran on which thirty (33) deities has been depicted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Shri Jagat Shiromani Temple</td>
<td>ASI</td>
<td>1509 AD-1608 AD</td>
<td>Rani Kanakawati (wife of Man Singh I) (1589-1614)</td>
<td>Religious-Temple</td>
<td>In Use-Worship</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Built in the memory of their son Jagat Singh, this temple is best specimen of early decade of 17th century.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sawatjai Temple</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>17th century</td>
<td></td>
<td>Religious-Jain Temple</td>
<td>In use-worship</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>It consists of beautiful black colored stone idol of Bhagvan Neminath, 20th Jain Tirthankar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sun Temple</td>
<td>Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)</td>
<td>954 A.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Religious-Temple</td>
<td>In use-worship</td>
<td>Sign of deterioration</td>
<td>The sanctum is panchratha in plan with coveded ceiling and an open pradakshinapath.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kalyanji Temple</td>
<td>Government of Rajasthan</td>
<td>15th century</td>
<td></td>
<td>Religious-Temple</td>
<td>In use-Worship, residence</td>
<td>Fair, signs of deterioration</td>
<td>Nagara Style Architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Panna Meena Ka Kund</td>
<td>Government of Rajasthan</td>
<td>18th century</td>
<td>Built by Panna Myan</td>
<td>Step-well Tourist place</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>The Panna Meena Ka Kund is 18th century water collection built by Panna Myan Muni of the emnarchs of Sawai Jai Singh II’s serginto.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Bihari Ji ka Mandir</td>
<td></td>
<td>1611-1667 AD</td>
<td>built during the reign of Mirza Raja Jai Singh I</td>
<td>Religious-Temple</td>
<td>In use-worship</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>The Shikharba over the Garbha Griva (Sanctum) is about 15 meter high and has all typical parts like kalasha, amalaka, chitrta yash, urushringa, etc. of Hindu temple terminology.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Jaipur Virasat foundation conducts a heritage walk in the town of Amber and has identified major important heritage structures in Amber [accessed 04/04/2013]. Available from [http://www.jaipurvirasatfoundation.org/](http://www.jaipurvirasatfoundation.org/).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Protected By</th>
<th>Built in</th>
<th>Built By/Association</th>
<th>Building Type</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Charanwari Palkiwan ki Haveli</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>16th century</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Residence (Haveli)</td>
<td>Museum</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Restored 16th century haveli, beautiful Rajput architecture, jalis, courtyards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Kheri Gate</td>
<td>Government of Rajasthan</td>
<td>16th century</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Gateway</td>
<td>In use: Gateway</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>‘Kheri Gate’ was built in the inner fort wall of Amber. The gates constructed from stone and lime mortar, with an outer coating of plaster, and yellow color lime wash.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Sagar Lake</td>
<td>Government of Rajasthan</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Additions by Sawai Jai Singh II</td>
<td>Lake</td>
<td>Tourist site</td>
<td>Good/sometimes dry</td>
<td>The main source of water for Amber Palace, Jaiagarh Fort and the town. Located in the natural water catchments areas, these a series of two large lakes utilize the topography for the catchment of water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Badrinath Temple</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>12th century</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Religious-Temple</td>
<td>In use:worship</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Present day temple is mostly new construction. Idols in the temple dates back to 12th century.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Sanghi Shri Tejpal Mandir</td>
<td>Government of Rajasthan</td>
<td>1657 AD</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Religious-Temple</td>
<td>In use:worship</td>
<td>Fair, signs of deterioration</td>
<td>It is a temple with three identical nagara style Shikhar surrounded by a prakara bhit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Jana Manjari</td>
<td>ASI</td>
<td>1569 A.D.</td>
<td>Raja Bharman</td>
<td>Religious-Mosque</td>
<td>In use:worship</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Pyramidal four high minars to four corner. Five arched screens &amp; deep mihrab on western wall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Laxmi Narayan Temple</td>
<td>ASI</td>
<td>16th century</td>
<td>A.D.</td>
<td>Religious-Temple</td>
<td>In use:Worship</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>It is a temple with three identical nagara style Shikhar surrounded by a prakara bhit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Kos Minar</td>
<td>Government of Rajasthan</td>
<td>16th century</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Mile Stone structure</td>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>Mile stone structure constructed during Akbar’s visit to Ajmer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Ram Bagh</td>
<td>Government of Rajasthan</td>
<td>17th century</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Garden</td>
<td>Tourist site</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Garden with Moghal style charbagh pattern, chattries and water channels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Dilaram bagh</td>
<td>Government of Rajasthan</td>
<td>17th century</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Garden</td>
<td>Tourist site</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>This garden has different water courses, a central pool and flower beds made in classical moghal style called the Charbagh pattern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Moota lake (Joosi Sagar)</td>
<td>Government of Rajasthan</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Water Structure</td>
<td>Tourist site</td>
<td>Good/ sometimes dry</td>
<td>Water Structure at Amber Fort, main source of water for the palace, water drawn using Persian wheel system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Mohan Bari (Ceasar Kyar)</td>
<td>Government of Rajasthan</td>
<td>17th century</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Garden</td>
<td>Tourist site (Not open for public)</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Located in the center of Moota lake, consisted of flower bed full of safron, designed for viewing from the palace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Pariyon ka Bagh (Shyam Bagh)</td>
<td>Government of Rajasthan</td>
<td>1589-1614 AD</td>
<td>Built by Sawai Jai Singh III</td>
<td>Garden</td>
<td>Picnic Spot</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>The garden has several varieties of fruits and flowering shrubs, step wells.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Rampart of old Amber town</td>
<td>Government of Rajasthan</td>
<td>11th – 18th century</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Fort wall</td>
<td>Fair, signs of deterioration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. **Landscape Intelligence**

The landscape of Amber is a narration of the power, knowledge, defense technology, and water conservation systems of the Kachhawa Rajput rulers. The features of cultural landscape of Amber, forts, palaces, temples, gardens, step wells and bastions in the were designed to serve the purpose of security, power, devotion, pleasure and utility. Analysis of the site topography, hydrology and visual structure, opens this hidden landscape intelligence, often unseen and neglected by the site visitors.

**Topography**

Amber is an excellent example of Rajput military architecture, where topography or the natural terrain was utilized to create defensive architecture. From the location of palaces on steep hill ridges to the design of fortification walls and gates, landscape intelligence derived from *Giri Durg* design principles in the Shilpa Shastras, is reflected in the structure of Amber.10

The ancient science of building found the studies of *Shilpa Shastras*, describe six major categories of forts: *Giri Durg* (Hill Fort), *Dev Durg* (God’s Fort), *Vana Durg* (Forest Fort), *Jal Durg* (Water fort), *Maru Durg* (Desert Fort) and *Mishra Durg* (Mixed Fort). *Giri Durg* is considered as the best among all kinds of fort as it provided utmost security to the princely settlement. *Giri Durg* can be further categorized into three major types based on their location: *Pranther Giri Durg* (built on plain land of the hill summit), *Giri Parshva Durg* (built on hill slopes) and *Guha Durg* (built in the valley) (Khangarot and Nathawat 1990).

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10 Gale Fulton uses the word ‘landscape intelligence’ in the context of contemporary landscape design, which he describes on his website as “Landscape Intelligence is based upon the notion that it is the synthetic capacity of landscape architects to range across great extremes of scale and complexity using design and design thinking – from detailed form giving to strategic planning – which distinguishes landscape architects from others among the spatial design disciplines.”([http://www.landscapeintelligence.com](http://www.landscapeintelligence.com)). I use this term as ‘landscape intelligence of the past’ to describe the knowledge of landscape planning and design thinking during Kacchawa rule.
Figure 5.1: Amber Topography
Figure 5.2: Hydrology and water bodies of Amber
The building of Amber and Jaigarh as ‘Garh’ palaces complies with the ancient building knowledge for Giri Durg. Located on a plain land of the hill summit, these two forts of Amber, are on plateau ranges, making for difficult access thereby increasing the defensibility. Giri Durg principles require a fort to have wide ditches around it for protection from enemy attack. At Amber, Maotha Lake serves the dual purpose of acting as a protective ditch as well as a reservoir for storing water for the serving in palace (Khangarot and Nathawat 1990). Another important design feature was to include large areas within the fortified walls, to enable them to serve as retreats during wars. Amber palace, however, was not enclosed by immediate fortifications, but Jaigarh fort (located 115 m above in elevation) served as the retreat location for Amber instead. Amber palace, town and the Jaigarh fort were further enclosed by fortifications along the hills and the valley (Tillotson 1987). The town of Amber grew on the foothills of the palace in the Amber valley, in a secured bowl-like site. The fortified wall was also built responding to the site topography, creating outlook points for a strong defensive network.

Hydrology

The water management system developed by the Kachhawas in Amber was unique and well planned to collect sufficient water for the palaces, fort and the town. Political alliances with the Mughal court made Kachhawa rulers acquainted with the water systems developed by Muslim rulers. The Kachhawa rulers thus used a combination of knowledge gained from ancient Hindu texts Shilpa Shastras and from the Mughals to develop an elaborate water system for Amber.

At the foot of the Amber Palace, Maotha Lake was an artificial lake created by damming the old stream flowing along the valley. It was flanked by royal gardens, a concept borrowed from Mughal riverfront gardens at Agra and Lahore (Ruggles 2008). Maotha Lake served the water needs of the Amber palace; rainwater from the surrounding hills was collected through channels in the lake. It was then lifted up to the Amber palace in
Figure 5.3: Water collection and distribution system at Jaigarh Fort
a three-stage process. First the water was transported through clay pipes and stored to allow desilting and aeration of the harvested rainwater. Water was then lifted into upper tanks using pulleys, and finally lifted with the help of Persian wheel fitted with a number of earthenware buckets. Underground tanks at Amber fort stored this water for use in the palace residences and gardens.

Jaigarh Fort: Jaigarh fort was designed to serve as a retreat fort for Amber palace and to sustain a large army of people during the war, hence the water system at the Jaigarh fort was scientifically planned to store water for thousands of people for years. Through a network of aqueducts and drains, laid inside and outside the fort, the rainwater was channeled to the tanks inside the fort. Khangarot and Nathawat (1990, 61) describe this efficient aqueduct (canal) system as:

> The bed of these canals is designed in such a way that it is on a gradient and also at the same time has an undulating course. This allows the sand to settle in the ‘low’ of the canals. This also helps the water to flow swiftly in the canals. There are many small tanks on the path of the canals which allow the small stones and other waste material to settle down in these tanks.

There are five main tanks inside the fort with four covered from the top. The largest tank is 158’ long and 138’ wide with a total capacity of 6 million gallons of water and covered from top to prevent water contamination and loss from evaporation. Water from the first few rains is channelized into the large open tank, located on the South East side of the fort, allowing the contaminated water to settle, to be used for animals. Only the clean water is channeled to the main covered tanks in the fort for human use (Khangarot and Nathawat 1990).

Sagar Lake also served as an important source of water supply for the Jaigarh fort. This two level lake, divided by a dam structure, is located at a lower elevation point in the valley and collects rainwater from the surrounding hills. A series of aqueducts along the Sagar Lake channelize the water from the hills to this lake. Water from this lake
Figure 5.4: Step wells of Amber
was lifted manually and with the aid of elephants up to the Jaigarh fort and stored in the
tanks. A unique manual lift system at Jaigarh is described by Khangarot and Nathawat
(1990, 63) as:

> Water from ‘sagar’ was collected in small tanks by means of *pucca* channels. Steps were
constructed so that water could be lifted up to fill the tanks on higher level. The man on the
bottom step would fill a container with water and hand it to the person on the imme-
diately higher step, who in turn would pass it on to the person on the next higher step. In
this way water was carried right upto the tank at the bottom of the fort walls. Once this
tank was filled with water it could be further lifted up with the help of a pulley as is done
in the case of a well.

Water was distributed or supplied in the palaces and royal gardens though overhead
tanks as well as manual distribution in pots. Earthen pipes were laid underground to
provide water in the gardens and fountains through gravity from the overhead tanks.

Apart from Amber and Jaigarh fort, a unique system of water collection was found in the
town of Amber as well. Amber rulers and nobles constructed a number of step wells in
the town from the 12th to the 16th century. Step wells (*baoris*) are tanks in which the water
may be reached by descending a set of steps. The majority of step wells also served a
leisure purpose, along with providing water, because the base of the well provided relief
from daytime heat. Step wells also served as a place for social gatherings and religious
ceremonies. The galleries and chambers surrounding these wells were often carved
profusely with elaborate detail and became cool, quiet retreats for travellers during
the hot summer. Mainly two forms of *baoris* are seen in the town of Amber: one with a
square plan having well in the center and other with rectangular plan, having well along
one end. The depth of these *baoris* range from 30-100 ft below the ground level. There
are seven main *baoris* in the town, few of them have been restored and rest are facing
neglect and no longer serve their original purpose.

An overflow channel or *nala* passes through the town, channeling the excess rainwater
from the Sagar Lake and the town area to a farther reservoir Van Sagar Talab, outside
Figure 5.5: Panoramic Views of Amber
the fortification to the east. This *nala* was crucial for the water management of the town and prevented flooding by directing the flow of excess rainwater away from the urban center where in excess it could cause harm.

**Visual Structure**

The landscape of Amber has a picturesque quality owing to its undulating topography. The location of buildings at different levels in the landscape, enfolding fort walls along the Aravalli ranges and large water bodies reflecting the surrounding landscape all these contribute to the scenic quality of region. While following the historic movement patterns, one is able to discern these view sheds, which range from panoramas to specific framed views. When a visitor only sees one specific monument, such as Amber fort, the visitor fails to experience the spectacular sight of the hills and lakes that surrounds it.

Extensive panoramic views of the Amber landscape and valley are obtained from Jai-garh fort and Amber fort. Specific viewpoints were designed in the landscape and the buildings to experience beautiful views of the surroundings. From the viewpoints created along the historic trail route path (present NH-8), one gets to view the majestic profile of Amber fort and Jaigarh fort with their reflection in Maotha Lake. Even though the Amber palace was built over centuries, with the addition of courts and buildings by generations of Kachhawa rulers, it nonetheless has a unique sense of unity. The composition of the overall setting of the palace is mesmerizing. As Tillotson (1987, 105) states describes it “east front dominates the valley, and in conjunction with Jaigarh (further fortress retreat above the palace) and Tal Katora (the lake below it) it makes a composition as informal and powerful as the hillside itself.”

The palace’s royal inhabitants viewed the framed and screened views of the landscape through the palace windows (*jharokhas*), screens (*jalis*), outlook points (*chattris*) and terraces (Ruggles 2007). Royal gardens in the valley, Dilaram and Ram bagh, and the
Kesar Kyari (Mohan bari) garden in the middle of Maotha lake were designed for aesthetically pleasing framed views from the palace structure. Ruggles (2008, 133-134) state in her description of framed views to Mohan Bari garden at Amber:

Despite its construction in three stepped terraces, this lower garden is strikingly planar with a network of low stone borders that define the garden bed. These were surely intended to be read from above, from the perspective of the Jai Mandir’s belvedere. In other words, the Maunbari Garden was designed for a specific vantage point so that garden and belvedere, although separate structures, were united in a single visual field.
Figure 5.7: Picturesque Views of Amber
6. Movement

Tracing the present day and historic movement patterns in the site can help and decipher the hidden layers of the site. Some of these paths overlay each other, and the cause of the present day congestion on the site can be understood in terms of the modified usage of these paths.

Historic Movement

Site mapping of the historic movement pattern traced the movement of the royalty as well as the local people. Historic trade route passes right through the middle of the valley and historically connected the old ruling seat Delhi to the trading states of Gujarat and Maharashtra. The passing of trade route through Amber was strategic in the development of this site as the capital of Kachhawas. The Amber palace was accessed through two main paths; one along the Dilaram Bagh, a grand winding road accentuated by imposing gateways, primarily used by the royalty. Its monumental scale exhibited the power of the Kachhawa rulers and was designed to accommodate royal procession of elephants and the parade of Kachhawa army for war. The other path was through the town, connecting the palace from the west side. This urban scale path along the narrow streets of the town was flanked by magnificent temples and beautifully carved havelis of the noblemen. Historic town streets were also accentuated by gateways, which at some places marked the entry and exit to the town. Security being the utmost concern, several gateways formed barriers that had to be crossed to reach the main palace site. A secret escape route was also designed for the royals from Amber palace so they could flee from Amber palace to the secured areas inside Jaigarh fort. A tunnel inside the Amber palace connected to the exterior path along the hills to the Jaigarh Fort. All these historic paths are still intact and evident in the present day landscape of Amber, although the purpose and mode of travel has transformed.
**Tourist Movement**

The National highway (NH-8) that connects Delhi to Jaipur overlays the historic trade route that passed through Amber. NH-8 is the only vehicular way to reach the Amber valley and thus receives heavy traffic coming both from Jaipur to the south and Delhi to the north. Tourists come to Amber predominantly to visit the palace complex and the paths that they follow are actually the two main historic paths of access to the Amber palace. Royal processional paths and historic town streets are converted today into the routes for tourist movement, as an elephant ride path along Dilaram Bagh to the palace and as a vehicular path along the historic town streets of Amber. The elephant ride to the palace follows the ceremonial processional way of the royals and allows tourists to immerse in the royal landscape. In contrast, the vehicular route to the palace blocks the narrow town streets, resulting in an adverse impact of tourism on the life of the locals. Tourists taking the vehicular route to the palace in cars or jeep are unable to experience the urban scale of the town, despite passing through these streets. Historically designed for pedestrian movement, these narrow urban streets are no longer able to accommodate the present day pressures on the site, resulting in congestion. The local movement within the town is still mostly pedestrian or light vehicular, with the majority the heavy traffic due to the tourist cars and tour buses. The nodes of congestion, as shown [Figure 6.3] are the arrival points to the palace or the town and hence the pedestrian movement collides here with vehicular movement. The exit from the parking areas is also adding to the congestion in the area with vehicular parking being right at the arrival nodes. The visitor experience is thus hampered by this growing congestion in the valley and requires immediate attention in the form of an improved new master plan.
Figure 6.2: Tourist Path

Figure 6.3: Congestion
7. Trail Planning

Site management of Amber is proposed through a series of trails that passes through the valley, hill forts, lakes, palace gardens and historic town of Amber which allows movement with unfolding views of the cultural landscape. This will enable the visitor to have an immersive experience and the opportunity to create a coherent image of the past, reliving its history. Three trails -- archaeological, eco-cultural and extended eco-cultural -- are proposed for the visitor to experience the landscape, varying according to their interests and the time they are willing to spend. Along these trails a number of rest spots and viewpoints are proposed for an enhanced viewing of the site.

To regulate the traffic on the site and reduce congestion, all the parking along the Maotha lake and gardens is proposed to be relocated to a new parking area on the south of the Pariyon ka Bagh garden. The movement of all the tourist and private vehicles would be restricted to this new parking spot and all the visitors would be taken in battery-operated sightseeing buses from this parking spot to the arrival plaza. The new proposed parking space can be designed as a rest spot for tourists with amenities like rest rooms, cafeteria and seating areas. An arrival plaza with interpretation center and rest area is proposed as the trail head, where visitors can choose from the three trails and pick the mode of transportation for their chosen trail. In the town, bikes and horse carts will replace vehicles, which will be restricted. Bike parking and horse cart parking areas are proposed replacing the vehicular parking spots near the gardens. Walking and biking allows for an immersive experience of the surroundings and horse cart rides act an enactment of the past, allows for a ride into the history.
Figure 7.1: Heritage Trails
Archaeological Trail

The archaeological trail focuses on revealing the archaeological or the built heritage of the Amber town to the visitors. The magnificent palace architecture and beautiful palace gardens are the prime attractions for any visitor to Amber. The archaeological heritage of Amber is not just restricted to the palace complex but extends into the town in the form of beautiful temples, havelis, step wells, built by the past rulers and noblemen. This trail expands the visitor’s movement from the royal palace to the historic streets of the town. A visitor can imitate the ways of the royalty by taking an elephant ride or walking the winding path up to the Amber palace and then experiencing the life of the locals with a walk along the narrow town streets.

Two archaeological walking and horse cart ride trails are proposed for the visitors, based on their duration of stay in Amber. The shorter duration archaeological trail (3-5 hours) takes the visitor on foot or horse cart from the Amber palace to the town along the shortest path in the town and connecting back to the arrival plaza. This being the shortest trail allows visitor to experience the royalty as well as local life through a walk in the streets of the historic town of Amber. A visitor can see the palace architecture and gardens from afar and get a glimpse of magnificent temples and old havelis. Major attractions of this trail are the Amber palace complex, Jagat Shiromani temple, Laxmi Narayan temple, Sanghi Jutharam temple, Akbari mosque, Varahi temple and old havelis along the spine. The Rajasthan Kala Mandir serves as a major rest spot along the trail and offers visitor an opportunity to see and buy the local handicrafts, along with providing basic amenities like rest rooms, restaurant and shopping areas.

The extended archaeological trail extends further into the town connecting to the fort wall gateway to the north and to the Jaigarh fort through a golf cart path along the fort walls to the southwest. The trail then takes one along the narrow, winding streets of the historic urban landscape admiring the temple spires and intricately carved havelis in the
Figure 7.2: Archaeological Trail (3-5 hours)
Figure 7.2: Extended Archaeological Trail (5-7 hours)
town.

View sheds encountered on this walk/ ride up to the palace complex are framed and picturesque. Reclaimed viewpoints at the arrival plaza allow a visitor to have monumental views of the Amber palace set on the Aravalli hilltop in the milieu of Maotha Lake, surrounded by Aravalli hills. Through the palace windows (jharokhas), screens (jalis), outlook points (chattris) and terraces, framed and screened views of the landscape, can be observed. Inside the town the gaze is limited, but there are openings where the Aravalli ranges appears as a surrounding backdrop. The visual experience is the town is completely different from the palatial view sheds as one walks from a narrow winding street that suddenly expands into huge open public squares. Temple spires and three-four story high residences of the nobles (havelis) dominate the visitor’s eye in the town.

Figure 7.3: Proposed Archaeological Trail along the fort wall
Water Trail

The water Trail or the eco-cultural trail provides the visitor with an engaging and learning experience. This trail, running along the old rainwater channel or ‘nala’ proposed as a bio creek, is predominantly a bike trail. It enables visitor to understand the landscape intelligence of the Kachhawa rulers by seeing in succession the connective fabric of major water bodies, step wells, aqueducts, Persian wheel and other water-lifting structures. The water trail extends up to the Jaigarh fort through a golf cart path that runs along historic tunnel from Amber to Jaigarh fort. The visitors can thus bike along the creek in the town and can then take a golf cart to Jaigarh fort as a mode of transportation in this trail.

The scenic landscape of Amber boasts of two beautiful lakes - Maotha and Sagar in the town area and one large overflow reservoir, Van Sagar Talab, on the far east. Maotha and Sagar lake served the water needs of Amber fort and Jaigarh fort respectively and an elaborate water-lifting and collection system is found at both these forts. These two forts and lakes are thus prime attractions of this trail. In addition to these water bodies, there are many step wells and wells in the town that served the water needs of the town people and constitute the landscape heritage of the town.

The trail follows the path of the overflow channel, or nala, from the Sagar lake and Maotha lake towards Van Sagar talab in the east. This nala is today filled with trash and does not function properly which results in water overflow in the town during rains, creating unhygienic conditions and spreading diseases in the town. Restoring this overflow channel as a bio-creek with bike trail path, would not only improve the visitor movement in the site but improve the ecological conditions, bringing tourism as well as ecological and health benefits.

View sheds along this trail are diverse as well, ranging from picturesque views at Sagar and Maotha lake to panoramic views of the two lakes and the landscape from the Jai-
Figure 7.4: Water Trail

Figure 7.5: Proposed Water Trail
garh and Amber fort to focused downward view at the underground step wells or baoris. Visitors immerse themselves in the picturesque landscape of Amber valley and have an opportunity to understand the landscape intelligence behind the planning and design of this stunning landscape.

**Cultural Trail**

The cultural trail allow visitor to engage and experience the socio-cultural life and living heritage of Amber. The focus of the trail is to emphasize the rich traditions and customs of the town still evident in the form of temple rituals and processions, local festivals like *Teej*, *Gangaur*, *Holi*, *Diwali*, etc., sacred practices like tree worship, water worship and local arts, handicrafts and dance forms. Walking along the fort wall is an unusual cultural experience that a visitor experiences by replicating the historic movements of the royal army men along this defensive structure in the landscape.

The trail overlays the extended archaeological trail for the major part, with an addition of hiking path along the fort wall. Designed as a partly walking riding trail and partly hiking trail, it enables the visitor to experience view sheds ranging from narrow street views with temple spires to wide panoramic views of the valley while hiking along the fort wall. Rest spots along this trail, especially Ambikeshwar chowk in the town center and an amphitheater near Panna Meena baori offers opportunities for cultural engagement.
Figure 7.7: Cultural Trail
8. Site Design

Three major landscape nodes on the heritage trail should be redesigned: the arrival plaza, Ambikeshwar plaza and Sagar Lake area. The Arrival plaza serves as a gateway to the site, Ambikeshwar plaza acts as the town center and the Sagar Lake is area is one of the most picturesque yet unexplored areas of the Amber valley.

Arrival Plaza Design

The arrival area to the site, along the Maotha Lake, is presently congested. Entry to the site is not clearly marked and defined. Encroachments, unauthorized parking along the highway and unregulated traffic movements add to the overall congestion and traffic in the area. View sheds blocked with parking, missing sidewalks, noises of vehicular traffic, hamper the visitor experience, interrupting the serenity of this spectacular site. Missing signage and interpretation prevent the visitor from exploring the rich and beautiful cultural landscape, an important part of the heritage of Kachhawas.

An arrival plaza is designed to create an organized entry to the site and serve as a trailhead for three heritage trails. A new parking area designed south of the Pariyon ka Bagh would accommodate the existing parking spaces in plaza, reducing the vehicular pressure on the site. The arrival plaza is designed with a designated bus stop area for the proposed new battery-operated buses that transport tourists to and fro the parking area. The plaza is designed with an information center, cafeteria, restaurants and shopping areas for visitors. This arrival plaza would serve as a trailhead where tourists can get information about the trails and choose their mode of transportation- bike, horse cart or elephant ride for the trails they wish to take. View sheds are restored; traffic calming methods and greenery is introduced in the area. Sidewalks and bike paths are added along the Maotha lake and garden edge and signage is introduced in the area for better understanding of the site.
Ambikeshwar Plaza Design

Ambikeshwar Chowk is almost the town center of Amber having a huge open space enclosed by temples and havelis on sides. The overflow channel or nala runs near the chowk area. The plaza has an old well, which is no longer in use and facing neglect. Town people use this space for social gatherings and activities. According to the priest of Ambikeshwar temple, festivals are celebrated in the chowk by the locals but hardly any tourist visit this area. Panna Meena baori (step well) historically served as a cultural center for the town people. As a part of recent restoration and redesign of the step well and surrounding area, an amphitheater was constructed to the north of baori. Despite recent conservation efforts, the site is facing neglect with these practically abandoned historic and cultural spaces.

This site can serve as an important center for cultural activities for the visitors as well as for the local community, and redesigning this site as a cultural trail rest spot would allow visitor to engage in the social activities of the town and better experience the culture. Seating areas are designed and more shade is proposed in the area. Panna Meena baori and amphitheater can serve as performance areas where cultural events like folk art and dance can be performed on a fixed schedule for tourists. Interpretive signage is proposed for enhanced understanding of the historic structures in the site.

Sagar Site Design

Sagar lake area is one of the most picturesque areas of Amber valley with extensive views of the nature and surrounding landscape. This two-level lake, divided by a dam structure, serves as an important water source for the Jaigarh fort and so steps and paths along fort along leads one from Sagar to Jaigarh fort. Located at a lower elevation point in the valley, this lake essentially collects rainwater from the surrounding hills. A series of aqueducts are also found along the Sagar Lake, which was constructed to
Figure 8.2: Existing and Proposed Plan of Ambikeshwar Plaza
Figure 8.3: Existing and Proposed Plan of Sagar Site Design
channelize the water flow from the hills to this lake. Recently in a conservation initiative, an entry plaza was designed for the site and the northeastern portion of the lakefront was redesigned, but the old aqueducts and the dam structure were not restored. Presently, Sagar area is practically an abandoned site in the landscape of Amber with less than ten tourists visiting the site in a week. Though during monsoons, the site is frequented by many locals, who enjoy the view of water cascading in the valley.

Despite recent restoration, the site is facing neglect, as very few visitors are aware of this beautiful landscape hidden in the valley. The area is proposed to be redesigned for better accessibility and movement, by creating bike paths and sidewalks along the lake, adding causeway leading to the viewpoint area in the middle of the lake and restoring the old dam structure that divides the lake into two levels. Restrooms and a small café are proposed in the plaza that serves as an arrival area for this lake. Lake view outdoor café is also proposed in the restored terrace of the old dam structure. Interpretive and directional signage is proposed to allow visitors to understand the landscape intelligence of the past along with enhanced visual experience.

Figure 8.4: Proposed View of Sagar lake
9. World Heritage Status

Amber fort along with four other hill forts of Rajasthan was India’s nomination for World Heritage Site in the cultural category in the year 2012. However, the World Heritage Committee (2012) “referred” the nomination at its 36th session (Saint-Petersburg, 2012). This decision came following the ICOMOS evaluation report (ICOMOS 2012) which recommended the non-inscription of the Hill Forts of the Rajasthan, India on the World Heritage List. According to the ICOMOS Evaluation report, the forts of Rajasthan chosen for serial nomination do not justify as the ‘Hill Forts of Rajasthan’ nomination as the selection of serial sites was not appropriate. The major issues and concerns raised by the ICOMOS in this report were the inadequate management plan for sites:

ICOMOS considers that the management plans provided contain adequate policy guidelines but should be supplemented to contain more detailed action plans for implementation, including for tourism management.

With regard to Amber fort, ICOMOS specifically pointed out the neglect of the larger landscape’s role in the site history in the preparation of nomination dossier.

For Amber, Gagron and Kumbhalgarh Fort, ICOMOS considers that the strategic functions and evolutions of Rajput military architecture cannot be understood outside of the full context of their military defence structure. For Amber this context includes the outer fortification walls with Jaigarh Fort…ICOMOS considers that the Rajput military defense structure of Amber Palace can only be understood if it is seen together with its surrounding outer fortification walls and the protection provided by Jaigarh Fort on the peak above, to which it was connected by a hidden underground tunnel. ICOMOS would therefore consider it necessary to significantly enlarge the boundaries of this component part and accordingly enlarge the boundaries of the buffer zone to provide adequate protection to the structures in the enlarged boundaries….In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the boundaries and buffer zone of Ranthambore Fort are adequate, but would require further modification for Chittorgarh, Kumbhalgarh, Gagron and Amber Fort.

The 36th session of the World Heritage Committee was held in St Petersburg from 24 June to 6 July 2012. The World Heritage Committee comprises representatives from 21 States Parties and the 36th session committee comprised of: Algeria, Cambodia, Colombia, Estonia, Ethiopia, France, Germany, India, Iraq, Japan, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Qatar, Russian Federation, Senegal, Serbia, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand and United Arab Emirates.
ICOMOS recommends that Gagron and Amber Forts be protected at national level. ICOMOS further considers that the buffer zone protection needs to be augmented, and that the implementation of the legislation needs to be managed more effectively.

It is clear from these recommendations by ICOMOS that acknowledging the role of larger landscape is important in preserving the historic integrity of the site. The neglect of the cultural landscape in the earlier management plan resulted in creating an incomplete dossier, but this thesis has shown how that can be rectified.

The thesis can serve as a guide for understanding the site with respect to its larger surroundings and interpreting the hidden landscape intelligence. This can also serve as a model for how other large, historically important cultural complexes can be preserved in such a way as to integrate architecture with the experience appreciation of the larger landscape, that was likewise historically and culturally meaningful. Landscape conservation proposal will contribute to increasing domestic and international tourism in Amber and serve as a model for conserving other hill forts in Rajasthan.

This thesis will be submitted to State Archeology Department and Tourism Department of Rajasthan in the form of a project report to serve as a guide for future development.
References


British Library Online Gallery. Asia, Pacific and Africa Collection British library.


Design Research Centre no. 1-2:164-69.


Appendix

Tourists Survey
1. What do you know about Amber/ what do you expect to find in Amber?
2. What do you know about the Amber town and landscape?
3. Are you satisfied/unsatisfied with your visit? (scale 1 to 3)
4. What are the most liked features of the experience of seeing Amber?
5. What are the features/ things you did not like in Amber?
6. Which places are you planning to visit in Amber, beyond the palace?
7. What would have added to your experience, what would you have had liked to see?
8. How long you intend to stay?

Stakeholders Survey
9. What do you think of tourism in Amber town?
10. Is it beneficial or is having a negative impact on the town? Why so?
11. Where do you see tourists in Amber? Which places?
12. If you feel tourism should be increased, what is needed in terms of infrastructure?
13. What are the major attractions of the town, which could be opened up for tourists, festival, and events?
14. How do you think your life will improve because of increasing tourism in Amber?