The Known But The Unknown: Turner Road, Lahore

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Abstract

The name of a place is a particular label of a geographical entity. From a literary perception names of places are a creation and outcome of society’s socio cultural history and its progress. Similarly this paper focuses on one such road, Turner Road that has been named after a renowned Justice of that time at the then called Chief Court of the Punjab (now Lahore High Court) in the Colonial period. Exasperating research has been carried out to investigate the name of that judge and analysis of Turner road and its detailed physical features has been done. The research methodology employed here is qualitative focusing on the contextual and formal analysis, based on intrinsic and extrinsic information. The significance of this road because of the buildings inhabited it, has been probed along with extensive photography and interviews with lawyers and other persona of importance to enhance the importance of this busy road. Although a small road, it is occupied with some of the most prominent buildings increasing its prominence but not much is found in official record relating to this road with specific details that were required. Results have been formulated on all the available data based on interviews and books concluding that this road has innate characteristics related to lawyer’s chambers and is still famous as wakīlon wāli saṛak and displays a beautiful merging of eastern and western architectural traditions along with bringing contemporary and old parallel on one road.

Keywords: Turner Road, Lawyer’s chambers, Physical features, Indo-Saracenic Style. Arch.
Introduction

The efficient system of roads has always been the requirement of effective and well organized working of a city or any place either big or small. Roads are the main connecting link between places and in a broader sense between cities and towns and even countries. The planning and organization of a proficient road system provides basis for proficient working of towns and cities. All roads are either named or numbered according to their particular characteristics or in commemoration of some person or event. Thus their socio cultural implication is usually reflected in their names. The focus of this paper is also on one such road, The Turner Road. These names are not recurrently changed rather they are the source of preserving historical and traditional information for ages with cultural undercurrents of that particular age or time. Thus the main objective is to document the current history of this road and to preserve all information gathered in a sequence providing opportunity to other researchers to probe into more analytical viewpoint regarding the significance of historical entities.

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Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The research for the history of Turner Road was an extensive one as there was hardly any material available in libraries, archives, Communication and Works Department, Town Hall, Punjab Public Library. Some books do mention it while referring Lahore High Court directions as in Nazir Ahmad Chaudry’s, Lahore: Glimpses of a Glorious Heritage. Then the author came to know by an unknown advocate, resident of Turner Road, that it was named after an advocate of Colonial era named some Turner. Author contacted lawyers in this respect and from one clue leading to another came to know that it was named after Alweyne Turner who remained on various posts of Lahore High Court Bar Association along with many other details which would not have been possible if the above mentioned people would not be there to facilitate the author with their support. Mr. Anwar Kamal even provided his sale deed when his father bought this land in 1978 which was an important document for the author along with a very important book by Rustam Sohrabji Sidhwa, The Lahore High Court and its Principal Bar, 1866-1988. This book provided a comprehensive history of High Court along with lists of Presidents LHCBA. With the help of all this data collected by the author she has tried her best to document the historical, physical and social character of this road that is known by all but in actuality an unknown entity without any substantial evidence of its origination. Author has followed a theoretical framework following the historical evidences and relating them according to the sociopolitical situations prevailed during that time influencing the building architecture on this road and how this road has been playing its part as one of the busiest hub of activities related to courts and law chambers.

History

Effective system of roads and their significance is evident since prehistory. Long before human development and discovery of wheel the earliest example of road exist in the form of unplanned paths formed by constant walk of human and animals on the same tracks in search of food and water. System of roads in South Asia
at Moenjodaro and Harappa shows excellent example of human progression around 3000 BC which helped in trade also. Egyptians were among the first ones who invented the paved roads around 2200 BC. Examples of the earliest highways of the world were made in Persia during Achaemenid period connecting one area with another. Traces of broad roads have been found in various Greek cities. Romans were the first to develop strong and durable roads providing fundamental techniques that are even used today. While in China also roads were developed since prehistory around 30000BC. Thus from the 4rth millennium BC vehicles on wheel were in use from Indus to the coast of Mediterranean very much depending on system of roads. This proves their importance regarding social, economic and cultural factors of the society. All these historical records show the evolution and improvement of roads throughout the world. The planning of cities and development of long trade routes all are based on these early expansions harnessing more and more new ways in regard of material and orientation.

Roads are developed according to the need and requirement of that period and interrelated to the buildings they inhabit. From prehistory it has been noted that this region has a long history of established road system as seen in Indus cities. Effective road system was already present in Sub continent as the Grand Trunk Road. British government further developed system of roads and set up rail tracks during the Colonial era due to the growing need of transportation of all kinds of good from Europe to India and then the carriage of that material to various cities and to far of areas. Like some other systems the establishment of Organized Judicial system started during the British rule in India. This lead to the proper formation of Chief Court of the Punjab which was set up at Lahore in 1866 in a rectangular building in present day Civil Secretariat and courts and offices were set up in these buildings previously accommodated by the offices of Judicial and financial commissioners. Road in the north of Secretariat and parallel to lower Mall still named as Court Street is reminiscent of the old Chief Court building. With the passage of time the growing need of a large and separate Chief Court building made the authorities select a proper site and foundations of Chief Court Lahore were
laid down in 1882-83 on the Upper Mall near General Post Office as recorded in the Gazetteer 1883-84 (Chaudry, 176)

September 1887 was the year when Chief Court was moved from Civil Secretariat to its new location on the Mall road where it stands today and in the same year in November it was affirmed open. It was designed by Mr. Brossington who was a well-known and accomplished architect and was supervised by ex-engineer J. E. Hilton and completed in 1889 and the total cost on it was approximately rupees, 21,837/- Later on various subsequent extensions were made in the years respectively 1890, 1893, 1895, 1902 and 1905 adding more court rooms, chambers, record rooms, carriage sheds, quarters, suitor’s sheds and refreshment rooms for the facilitation of public and High Court officials and staff. In the year 1916 under the Indian act 1915, the conversion of Chief Court into Lahore High Court was approved yet it was actualized in the year 1918. (Figure 1).

(Figure 1) Lahore High Court map with Turner Road at its back side towards south.  http://www.lhc.gov.pk/court_map accessed on 21.11.2018

The creation of this building of Chief Court led to the construction of several other buildings and development of roads in its vicinity according to the requirement and related to the court activities. Towards the south side at the back of Lahore High Court is a small road but very significant in its character and contributions and is named as the Turner road. Turner road is one of the important roads of Lahore that is situated between Mozang road and Fane road. These three roads developed as the roads of lawyer’s bars and chambers at that time namely Turner road, Mozang road and
Fane road on three sides of the High Court while front was at the Mall road (figure 2). Turner road is also called wakīlon wāli sarak. 4

These three roads make an interesting triangle and all these roads are mostly occupied by lawyer’s chambers. The road that is the focus of this thesis is Turner road which is the smallest among these three roads but of no less significance despite its small size. It was named Turner road after Mr. Alweyne Turner who was the president Lahore High Court Bar Association in the year 1907-8. He was Barrister at Law and also served as Government Advocate Punjab from 1905 to 1909. 5 He served as Secretary of the Bar Association in the year 1893, then from 1894 to 1899 he remained treasurer and finally he was selected LHCBA’s president in 1907-08. This proves his active role in judicial circle and is a good enough reason to commence that he must be important enough that this road was named after him. 6 (Figure 2).

(Figure 2) Close up view of Lahore Environ Map, Source: Lahore Topophilia of Space and Place.
Buildings on Turner Road

The total length of Turner road is approximately 462 m long and it is roughly 5.18 m or 17 feet wide. Extensive research on its bio data has been carried out but not much is found regarding this road. It is a small road but comprised of some of the iconic buildings of Lahore. On the entire right side half road covers High Court’s back side while the other half occupies the office of the Accountant General of Punjab and on the left side is a series of Lawyer’s Chambers.

Turner road is now a one way road to control the heavy flow of traffic due to the nature of offices and lawyer’s chambers here and entrance is now only allowed from the eastern end that is towards the Fane road. On the right corner of the entrance is the Mosque gate of the High Court and on right side is the back wall of the High court while on the left side are shops in the beginning and a series of varied sized buildings of lawyer’s chambers.

The architectural style of Colonial period is called Indo-Saracenic style which is well illustrated in the High Court architecture. It is the merging of Muslim and Hindu elements with Gothic style. By the fusion of Arabic, Saracenric, Mughal and Rajput constituents crowned by a Gothic element into a modern and representative national architecture demonstrated the skilled manipulation done in a perfect way by those who planned it and then those who executed it. Although these architectural monuments give a spectacular effect yet they carry a unique hybrid character also. Local motifs have been erratically used with the fusion of Arabian, Islamic or even Byzantine elements molded in a hybrid remarkable architecture.

On the eastern edge is the High Court’s back building’s wall which is huge and imposing in red bricks with a feeling of strength and exquisiteness. At intervals are series of arched recesses in two levels. The lower ones are circular some having windows with grills and some are blind. This back wall of High court’s courtyard with its solid and compact brick walls is made with lime mortar. The building with all its molding, cornices and projections of specially molded bricks have a characteristic feature with beautiful
merging of Indo-Saracenic style. The blind recesses have multi foil arches filled with terracotta trellis work painted with mustard yellow color giving a pleasant contrast and a break in the monotonous brick color. Above are Gothic style arched recesses with multi foil arches again in mustard yellow color producing a harmonious effect and balance. In the farther extreme the lower arches have beautiful perforated windows on spandrels with geometrical patterns in same yellow color. Above on the parapet are blind merlons or battlements run around the entire wall and parapet of the buildings of the High Court. Below these merlons are projected moldings in varied bands with fine brick work. Below the bands is a series of small arched recesses in cut brick work typical of the Colonial era style. This merging of east and west is well illustrated on this road on the whole. As just opposite this High Courts back wall are the chambers of lawyers in the contemporary style with few exceptions (figure 3 and 4).
(Figure 3 and 4) Right side entrance of Turner road with High Court wall with arched recesses and terracotta trellis work.

The first building after the shops is four story construction of new style in grey color and has Syed Reza Naqvi chambers on the upper floor along with Ch. Mohammad Ishtiaq’s chamber on the lower floor. This was basically a big house owned by Syed Ikhlaq Hussain who donated it to Agha Hassan Abidi but the chambers were occupied by different lawyers who refused to vacate it. So Agha Hassan could never get its possession. Its front was on Fane road and it numbered 10 Fane road but now that side is closed and its front is on Turner road with the same number. Next is the pink color three story new style building with chambers of Syed Mohammad Jaffery and Ch. Mohammad Nasir A. Sindhu. It is huge in size in it front elevation with glass windows and grilled balconies. The numbers of these buildings are not in sequence as first one is numbered 10-A and second is addressed as 3-Turner road. Next to this pink building is a narrow lane with multistory chambers in it all attached to one another. Some owners have given chambers on rent and some are owned by the law firms.

Opposite these chambers run the back side wall of High Court with its variegated buildings only partially visible from behind it. The pillar of the mosque is seen next behind the wall with its Indo-
Sarasenic style showing ascending levels of square bases tapering in width as going up and the upper most level is octagonal topped with a metallic finial. It has some resemblance with the church tower in shape and character. Difference lies in the apex in finial in High Court tower and cross in Gothic church (figure 5 and 6). Thus the Indo-Saracenic style is best displayed here showing both styles together but in harmony but at the same time they both are losing their identity giving a new conception.

(Figure 5) Gothic style church tower.          (Figure 6) Lahore High Court Mosque Tower
Source:depositphotos.com ,      Photograph by author,      Accessed on 26.11.2018

The next building on the left side is Nehang Law Associates. It is a two story old building in contrast to the edifices on either side that are contemporary. Above one of the door ways is a multi-foil arch that replicates the multi foils but their style is more Islamic in shape and character rather than Gothic. At the cornice is projected eave board supported on brackets of solid form and volute edges. It is numbered as 5- Turner Road (figure 7).
While on the right side of the road behind the wall of the High Court are the court rooms with traditional arcaded verandahs in two stories. Each Gothic style arch has a railing in the form of terracotta trellis work. Above are the same moldings on the cornice with cut brick work and blind merlons above as these features runs on the entire parapet and cornice of the old structure. The outer wall from the mosque courtyard changes its height and a lesser height wall continues from there onwards. This wall seems to be a later constriction because of its plainness in red bricks. For security purpose there is extended railing and iron sheets and above is barb wires. The surface of wall is covered with advertisement banners of lawyers and their firms. All these flex, banners are producing somewhat congested effect (figure 8 and 9).
The next chamber is of Mohammad Iqbal Naeem which is a five story modern building. With balconies and railing on every floor. Below is a big fruit juice shop. Next to this is another very narrow lane with entrances to tall chambers and the very next building is another four story law chambers naming Jinnah Tower, with front elevation in mustard brown tiles.

Opposite on the right side at the High Court wall are octagonal shaped police guard rooms at intervals. These are compact structures built on a higher level in the middle of the wall and behind it the old wall is visible behind the outer wall. There are trees also within the court enclosure and some coming out of the wall with a pleasant effect (figure 10 and 11).
The next structure attached to the Jinnah Tower is Law chambers of Rana Ijaz which is a multi-story building with front elevation in glass. Next building attached is the chambers of Mohammad Ramzan Chaudry and Tayyaba Ramzan. It is a three story chamber with glass windows and extended shade above and both these are numbered 7-Turner Road. On the right side is the corner of court building which was the Gouldbury’s chamber in olden day as referred in Nazir Ahmad’s book as was adjacent to Turner road.

The next small old single story chamber come in contrast to the buildings around it. This is Ijaz Hussain Batalwi’s chamber. This chamber is significant because Ijaz Hussain Batalwi was the lawyer of the complainant Ahmad Reza Qasuri against Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto who was alleged of murder. The building is quite dreary in its outlook. It is numbered as 4-Turner Road (figure 12).
The next chamber is a red brick two story chamber of M.B.Zaman and Qamar ul Zaman. Its address is 5- Turner Road and adjacent to it is the new building of three story chamber of Qazi and Qazi.

Next is the compact modern building, a single story red brick building named Qazi and Qazi chambers. The adjacent building is an older one, Abdul Sami Law Chambers, with two stories with round arched windows, numbered 8-Turner Road. Next to it is the six floor tall building, The Qānūn Manzil, with its glass elevation and impressive design. Its address is 7-Turner Road. Opposite to this is a small gate of High Court that is not in daily use these days. Another four story new style grey brown building is the chambers of Qadeer Ahmad Siddique and Naseer Ahmad Siddiqui.

On the right side is the High Court’s new style building that is constructed in later years. It is made in red bricks but of light shade and long twin round pillars of yellow color are running down from top. On left side is a wide lane with law chambers on either sides and shops of photo copier, computer composing and drafting on ground floor and above is glass front five chamber of Akram Khan Awan.

Then is a single story old residence like building with three closed nonworking shops and a locked gate of white color. Above roof has railing and traces of some old structure. Just next to this house is Irtaza Photo copy and composing shop. These shops are
frequently opened for the facilitation of people coming to High Court and for the lawyers too. The next in line is Ilyas Law Chambers which is a four story new style building with glass windows.

Next is the widest chamber of Turner Road, Mr. Anwar Kamal law associates. He is a senior lawyer and ex-president High Court Bar Association. In an interview with Mr. Anwar Kamal the history of this building was revealed. He even provided the author with the sale deed made by his father in 1978. In place of this current building and some adjacent ones was a huge old mansion of six canals belonging to some Hindu before partition and owned by Agha G. A. Gul, owner of Ever New Studios. He sold the building after dividing the plot into smaller plots of ten marlās and two and three marlās. There were three ten marlā plots and the rest were smaller plots. Before selling this building it was given on rent and Mr. Anwar Kamal’s father Mr. Zaheer Ahmad Kamal had his chambers in them and this whole area was called ‘Lawyer’s Park’. Being already the tenants of this building Mr. Zaheer was given choice to choose his plot of choice. His father bought three plots and each was three marlās so a total of nine marlās were bought. These were basically out houses of the mansion with servant quarters. The mansion had its front on Mozang road and its address was S-60-R-1-Mozang road. These plots owned by Zaheer Ahmad Kamal faced the Turner road and it is located almost in the center of the road. Agha G.A.Gul demolished the whole mansion and divided it into plot for sale. The current building was constructed in its place in 1978. This chamber has the widest front among the entire Turner road buildings though not very deep. The present building with its imposing front façade is unique in execution. The front façade of the ground floor is covered with antique brick tile work while the entire front of the rest of the stories is in the form of extended balconies all covered with a network of fluted white thin shafts of rectangular shape. It is numbered 1-Turner Road (figure 13 and 14).
There is another lane after Anwar Kamal Chambers which has law chambers as in the rest of the road and among them is the Law chamber of Ahsan Bhoon, former president LHCBA is also on this road. Then is the grand front façade of Khosa Law Chambers. He is a famous lawyer and former Governor of Punjab. It is a three story chamber and the upper story is reminiscent of Greek Parthenon style entablature. This building thus is unique in its design and execution (figure 15 and 16).
Next multi story chambers are of Jawad Anwar along with other law chambers. Then is Sialkot Law Chambers. In the middle of the road is the gate of High Court’s southern entrance forms the carriage gateway to the entire quadrangle.\(^{13}\)

Then next are Syed Muzahir Ali Akbar Law Chambers with many other law chambers, Qamar Law Associates. Then is Shabbir Hotel. After that is the tall but narrow chamber of Syed Mohammad Mehdi Naqvi on the top of which is a tāziā also. Then Mian Shahzad Chaabe’s Law Associates and the adjoined four story chamber of Abdul Rauf Bhatti and Anwar ul Haque Punnu.
Then is Bakhtawar House with different law chambers. The last building is Saleem Manzil which is in the corner and the chamber on Turner road side is of different lawyers like Qaiser Abbas Qaiser, Mohammad Faisal Malik.

The last building on right side is Accountant General’s office of Punjab. AG office has two gates on Turner road. It was previously in the shrine of Shāh Chīrāgh and then shifted to its present location.\textsuperscript{14} It has gates on three roads, one on Mozang road and one on Edward road (now Mauj Daryā Road). It is a huge multi story building with offices related to accounts and finance (fig 17). It stands in contrast to the traditional style of the High Court building with its contemporary architecture.

(Figure 18) Gates of A. G. office on Turner road. Source: Photograph by Author.

There are many shops of law books on Turner road. There are hotels and food stalls along with hawkers with fruits and dry fruits for the large number of people coming here for their cases and legal assistance and also for the lawyers. Turner road is too crowded with traffic during working hours and these are the aerial view of parked cars and motor bikes that makes the road congested along with the vendors and visitos there.

**Conclusion**

The icons of memorial must retain their uniqueness as they are the emissaries of their land and people and a source of preserved history with in them. Turner Road is one such icon that with stand the wind and dust of ages it passed through and bore all the changes that took place in the course of time. This road is named
after a colonial era lawyer named Alewyne Turner but not much has been found to know the reason why it was named like this so it is proved through the records the effective role of Alewyne Turner in judicial circle might be a strong motivation to name this road after him as he being one of the most active advocate and member of High Court Bar Association who served at various posts like Secretary, Treasurer for many years and then President. Thus he must be the most preferred and favorite person in his circle which made him the one to whom this road has been named.

This road has become the representation of the fusion of modern and traditional styles running side by side parallel to each other. High Court with its Indo-Saracenic and Greek synthesis in architectural elements represents contrast to the buildings that runs analogous to it. The aesthetics of both styles of architecture with their varied features presents the old and the new, the traditional and the contemporary, the past and the present thus they symbolize life in a highly metaphorical way. One cannot survive without strong root or knowing about one’s past and similarly living in past only cannot be the way to success in life thus the strong link of past and present cannot be ignored as they are related to each other and they move together corresponding with each other. Thus in the course of life everything is inter related, like past and present and humans are flexible enough to absorb them. Therefore it has to be preserved in its original form without these over loaded flexes and hoardings. Then the electricity wires are in such a chaotic condition that the view of the buildings is badly affected. In this paper each and every building, lane, hotel, book shop, chambers all have been analyzed and thoroughly examined and it has been concluded with the notion that such a road should be saved from the banners that are misaligned and jumbled up and from the overcrowding of people along with vehicles and despite the fact that this road is a one way road almost all the motor bikes comes in opposite direction and thus misusing it and causing problem in the smooth running of Turner road. Although very paradoxically this road’s name has been changed into Justice Jamil Ahmad Rizwi road but it is still known by its original name because of its popularly communal name. These roads or any monument does not change with the change in name and its aesthetic beauty lies in its
originality. It also reflects the narrow mindedness of thought perception of those responsible for such decisions. There should be more open mindedness and acceptance without prejudice for such historic names. This research paper describes each and every detail that seems insignificant but these details are basically a documentary record of the present to be preserved for the future.
Notes

2. *Index to the Proceedings of the Punjab Government in the Political Department.* (1907). Lahore: General Department.
References

4. Lawyer's road.
11. An interview with Anwar Kamal, Ex-President LHCBA by Sadia Qutub Hashmi, *Turner Road*, 27<sup>th</sup>, November 2018.
12. Sale deed of the purchase of plot on Turner Road by Mr.Zaheer Ahmad Khan from Agha G. A. Gul. Courtesy Mr. Anwar Kamal, Advocate and E-President Lahore High Court Bar Association.