Centering the Chārbāgh The Mughal Garden as Design Module for the Jaipur City Plan
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Figure 1  Charles Correa, Architect. Jawahar Kala Kendra, Jaipur, Rajasthan, floor plan with astrological designations, 1986–92 (Charles Correa)
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In 1992 the city of Jaipur celebrated the opening of the Jawahar Kala Kendra (JKK), an arts center sponsored by the Government of Rajasthan’s Department of Art and Culture. An integral component of the state’s campaign to revive and preserve the traditional arts of Rajasthan, the JKK stands on nine-and-a-half acres fronting the Jawaharlal Nehru Marg, approximately 5 kilometers southeast of the old city of Jaipur. Commissioned to create a flexible space housing art galleries, theaters, and research archives, architect Charles Correa chose to elevate the project out of the realm of the practical and into the world of the symbolic by organizing the JKK around a system of mythic referents. Correa mined two historical sources—the Vedic texts related to building design known as the vāstu śilpa śāstra and the city plans drawn at the time of Jaipur’s founding in 1728—to create an organizational system that operated as an ancient model of the universe as well as a concrete representation of the city’s historic yet modern roots. The JKK’s floor plan invokes the navagraha mandala, a nine-square diagram based on the commonly identified Hindu-Vedic planets. Correa assigned a planetary symbol and its attributes to each sector of the complex, beginning with the Mangal (Mars) Mahal at the entrance block (Figure 1). Visually, the symbolic organizational scheme is apparent most readily in plan view. However, the module is expressed vertically through an adherence to the mandala divisions in the positions of partition walls and programmatically through the distribution of functions in accordance with their cosmological characteristics.

Correa could have retrieved other organizational models from the deep literature of the vāstu śilpa śāstra but chose the navagraha mandala, relying on the long-held assumption that the mandala was the source of the form of the old city of Jaipur. Founded in 1728 by the Maharajadhiraja Sawai Jai Singh II, Jaipur is often celebrated for its rectilinear city plan and regularity of built form (Figure 2). The Austrian Jesuit Father Joseph Tieffenthaler visited the city soon after its completion, and noted: “This city certainly, at the same time that it is new, is also the most beautiful among all the ancient cities in India; because in those, all is ancient, the streets are uneven and narrow. This one, on the contrary, has the brilliance of modern, regular streets, wide and long. The main street, which leads to the Sanganer gate and to the south, is also the widest, so that six or seven carriages can easily—without touching and without turning—roll forward.”

Today, Jaipur’s major corridor runs from the Suraj Pol (Sun Gate) in the east to the Chand Pol (Moon Gate) in the west. As suggested by Tieffenthaler, broad bazaars leading to the gates of the city’s southern wall cross this east-west boulevard.
only the creative work of Indian architects such as Charles Correa, but the majority of scholarly analyses of the city. The relationship between Vedic texts and Jaipur's plan was first put forward by E. B. Havell in *Indian Architecture* (1913), in which the author commented on the resemblance between Jaipur and an idealized village plan (the *prastara*) drawn from the *Manasara*, a *śilpa śāstra* codified in the Gupta period (Figure 3). The similarities between the *prastara* and Jaipur as described by Havell were superficial and few, and depended primarily on his observation that “the city leans upon its neighbouring hill, defended by the Nahagarh Fort, its main streets running approximately from east to west and north to south, following the directions laid out in the *Silpa-sāstras*.”

His brief description of Jaipur, which opened with the assertion that “this Indian city is one of those which has not grown up irregularly by gradual accretion: it was laid out on a scientific plan according the traditions of Hindu-Vedic design texts.

The fusion of modern city form with ancient mythic source dominates the literature of Jaipur, as the supposition of the *mandala* as the formal determinant has inspired not at regular intervals and right angles. Scholars have attributed the city’s noticeable uniformity to Sawai Jai Singh’s reliance on a *mandala*—the *navagraha* or perhaps the *vastu puruṣa* (cosmic man) *mandala*—while drawing up the city plan. Jaipur’s plan, its uniform scale, and predictable division of space seemed to evoke the rectilinear grid plans created by the practical application of *mandalas* to the design of north Indian temple complexes during the seventh to eleventh centuries. Correa captured this regularity and its alleged source at the JKK. While not an exact replica of the grid underpinning Jaipur, the arts center gives visual form to the affinity the architect perceived between the city’s sectors and the *navagraha mandala*, both of which were supposed to derive from ancient Hindu-Vedic design texts.

![Figure 2 City plan, Jaipur (author)](image-url)
city builders and the direction of their canonical books called the Silpa-sāstras seems to have settled the matter for other scholars. Before too many years had passed, historians were repeating Havell’s statement as fact rather than hypothesis; by the midcentury mark, it was accepted as definitive truth with no call for corroborating evidence. More recently, architectural historians have replaced the prastāra with the maṇḍala as giver of form, the logic being that the regularity of the prastāra and other ideal villages described in the vāstu silpa sāstras must have resulted from a subdivision of space in conjunction with a maṇḍala.

One could argue that the assumption of Jaipur’s Vedic origins has had an invigorating effect on the literature of the city’s history, as it has provided the intellectual framework for an exploration of Hindu-Vedic history in the city. Theories of cosmology, town planning, and Hindu kingship, based on the origin of Jaipur’s plan, are frequent topics of architectural analyses. At the same time, however, the assumption of an underlying maṇḍala has had a stultifying effect, trapping us in a self-referential loop: because architectural historians style Sawai Jai Singh a Hindu king, the city is read as a response to his Hindu-Vedic worldview; because the form of the city reflects Hindu-Vedic design principles, Sawai Jai Singh is understood first and foremost as a Hindu king. The self-perpetuating relationship between city and king requires little in the way of archival evidence, as the existence of one-half of the pair is used to prove the existence of the second. I would like to set aside that circular relationship to reconsider the relevancy of Sawai Jai Singh’s Hindu-Vedic worldview for the origin of Jaipur’s form. Using construction records, maps, and court ballads written in the first half of the eighteenth century, along with archaeological traces present in the city’s historic core, I argue for an interpretation of urban space that takes into account Sawai Jai Singh’s cultural and intellectual heterogeneity.

While Sawai Jai Singh’s devotion to the deities associated with his family dynasty is incontrovertible, it is less clear that his religion was the driving force behind every decision he made as governor and king. Interpretations of his architectural patronage need account not just for the construction of obviously Hindu monuments like the Govinda Devji temple in the City Palace complex, but for buildings that speak to an identity situated well outside the bounds of Hindu-Vedic ritual. Scholars’ silence on this matter, particularly in regard to Sawai Jai Singh’s use of Islamic architecture, may be attributed in part to gaps in the archival record. As Catherine Asher points out, although Muslims comprise at least one-fifth of Jaipur’s total population today, there are no records detailing the city’s eighteenth-century residents by religion. We know, however, that the city’s founding population was reflective of the diversity of Sawai Jai Singh’s court, which included advisors drawn from a variety of religious and intellectual backgrounds.

Sawai Jai Singh intentionally created opportunities for cultural and linguistic cross-pollination when he founded Jaipur’s Brahmāpurī (scholars’ village) on the outskirts of the city. While nominally a place to house Brahmin ministers, Sawai Jai Singh made multiple attempts to settle non-Brahmin advisors in the area as well. A host of Islamic astronomers worked at Sawai Jai Singh’s observatories, and even within that category, there existed a multiplicity of origins, in that some were of direct Persian descent while others hailed from closer locales. The practice of drawing advisors from a variety of intellectual pools meant that no one voice spoke for a religious convention or scientific practice. And as the provenances of the mathematics and astronomy manuscripts produced and collected at the court demonstrate, the religious identification of court ministers did not determine the boundaries of their intellectual pursuits. Jagannātha Samrācī, one of the court’s high-ranking advisors (pandits), may have been marked individually and bureaucratically as a Hindu, but his daily work was directed toward the production of a supposedly Islamic astronomical observatory. The same is true of Nayanāsukha, who worked with Muḥammad Abīda to translate Islamic works on astronomy into Sanskrit. During the last half of his reign, Sawai Jai Singh worked closely with Brahmin and Muslim ministers, maintained mostly good political relations with the Mughal court, and welcomed individuals of many faiths and from various nation-states to live and work in his kingdom. While he gave generous financial
support to his family temple, he also distributed alms to the Catholic priests residing in Jaipur. He was not hide-bound in any sense of the word; indeed, Bavarian Jesuits complained of his intellectual curiosity, claiming his interest in the world and its religions made him a less-than-ideal target for conversion. Even within the scope of Hinduism, Sawai Jai Singh worked to synthesize the codes of different sects, fusing Vedic and Vaishnavite traditions through court ritual.

All the same, current interpretive approaches tend to collapse the intellectual and religious diversity at the Jaipur court into a single form of indigenous knowledge, erasing the intentional mixing of personnel and traditions. The continued privileging of a Hindu-Vedic worldview has had a significant effect on our understanding of Jaipur’s history, as the intellectual and religious diversity at the Jaipur court was the most important element in the development of the rectilinear boulevards, bazaars, and walls that characterize Jaipur today.

Building Jaipur

Sawai Jai Singh allegedly made the decision to move his court from its location in Amer in the Aravalli Hills to the southern alluvial plains of his kingdom soon after the conclusion of his final battle against the Jats in November 1722 (Käti VS 1779). On his return to Amer, he recognized that although the fortified palace had served his family well as a stronghold, it was too small to accommodate a court with ambitions of territorial expansion. Despite the fact that Amer was his ancestral home and he had expended both creative energy and financial resources on additions to the palace, like the monumental Ganesh Pol and the Jaleb Chowk, he decided to forego further expansion at Amer and invest in a new capital. As eighteenth-century accounts and construction records from Jaipur’s Imarat Khana (building department) make clear, an intense period of building followed the foundation ceremony of the new city on 29 November 1727 (Pauḍa Vadi 1, VS 1784). It is difficult to imagine now, but over the course of just a few years, in the place of single-story kaccā village dwellings rose extensive pakka blocks and boulevards, lined with shops, havelis and temples constructed of stone. Wells (bhūli) were sunk at major crossroads (chuppad), canals were dug, entire lakes were displaced by dam-building projects, and roads were laid not just within the city proper, but outside the walls as well, with improvement projects extending to Galaji and Ghumi Ghat in the east, along the Man Sagar embankment and to Amer in the north, and into all of the surrounding mountains to connect a line of newly established fortresses (Sudarśangarh [Nahargarh], Jaigarh, Amagarh, Hathroi, and Shankargarh [Moti Dungri]).

The extent of the development suggests that Sawai Jai Singh planned for a certain permeability of the city walls, and though Jaipur was designed as a fortified city, equally important during its early years were the gates that provided access to and from the major trading roads circumscribing the town. This controlled openness was in part a function of the court’s need to sustain a functioning political center at Amer while the new capital was under construction. During the first years of Jaipur’s construction much of the administrative work of running the state continued at the old palace. Indeed, construction of Jaipur’s Jaleb Chowk, the gated courtyard that housed administrative offices, karkhana, and guards (jalebdār), did not begin until 1729/30 (VS 1786) and work on the new residential palace, the Chandra Mahal, or Mahal Satakhana (seven-storied palace) began only in 1733/34 (VS 1790). While construction continued apace inside the city walls, Sawai Jai Singh continued to cultivate the communications corridor between Jaipur and Amer by distributing a number of courtiers and merchants in garden houses along the interurban strip along the Man Sagar between Kanak Vrindavan and the Dhruv Pol of Jaipur. This stretch of road pierced the fortified walls surrounding Amer and opened a previously bounded area to merchants, politicians, and pilgrims alike. A vital component of the new urban development project, the Man Sagar embankment, along with the lingering participation of Amer in the political life of the state, created a complicated urban geography that stretched beyond Jaipur’s formal bounds. The territory of the new capital included a noticeably shifting space, inside and outside the rubble-and-plaster walls of the new city.

The historical record is silent as to the reasons governing Sawai Jai Singh’s selection of the site for the enclosed portion of Jaipur, but it is likely that he based his decision on several factors. As Shikha Jain indicates, aside from the narrow stretch of land fronting the Man Sagar, there was little scope for expansion in the hilly terrain of the Aravallis. The new city was laid out outside Amer’s ancient defensive walls, on the plains in the southern bounds of the state (sarabhanda). In moving his court out of the mountains, not only did Sawai...
Jai Singh gain more elbow room, he was able to relocate his financial center closer to the popular pilgrimage route running between Agra and Ajmer while remaining connected to the Sanganer trading road. As many as six villages fell within the designated area and it is possible that the presence of a local population, poised to be exploited as labor for and consumers of the city’s commercial products, made the sarabada a particularly attractive choice. Then, too, although Jaipur’s founding was followed quickly by the construction of a ring of fortresses for defensive purposes, the relative openness of the city could be read as a gesture of independence made in the direction of the imperial government in Delhi. It is equally possible that Sawai Jai Singh selected the new town site simply because of his familiarity with the area. When resident in Amer, he retreated to the sarabada in pursuit of leisure activities; the wilds at the southern edge of the kingdom comprised his favorite hunting grounds. None of these reasons is mutually exclusive, and taken together, they combine for a compelling explanation for the relocation of the kingdom’s capital.

Having selected a site, Sawai Jai Singh needed an organizational scheme. That he might have consulted Vedic texts at this stage of development is not such a far-fetched idea. As a child, he was educated in a manner typical of Rajput princes, with a curriculum based on the formal study of Sanskrit texts. These would have included the vāstu śilpa śāstras, the greater body of literature that encompassed the fields of architecture and design as well as painting and iconography. An inventory taken of the Pothi Khana (Book Department) near the end of Sawai Jai Singh’s life indicates that the court library held at least 3,191 books, the majority of which were dedicated to the Puranas, the Mahabharata (including the Bhagavad Gita and the Vishnu Sahasranama), and the Valmiki Ramayana. A minimum of 139 treatises in the collection addressed the Veda Śāstras, suggesting that had Sawai Jai Singh so desired, he could have located a Vedic inspiration for the city plan. However, the Imarat Khana records detailing the construction of Jaipur make no mention of the vāstu śilpa śāstras as guides for the city’s design, nor do the multiple court ballads extolling the virtues of the new city and its founder describe any such governing devices, symbolic or literal.

In the face of these archival absences, assertions made about the inherent Hinduism of Jaipur’s plan have been based on a series of unsigned maps documenting the development and construction of the city. Few scholars have speculated on the authorship of the maps, but many have posited relative, if not concrete, dates for them. Stylistically, most conform to the plans and elevations made during architectural renovations at Amer in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, a coincidence that gives us a general time frame for their creation. In addition, historians appear to have reached a tacit agreement that maps should be read progressively, that is, the map with the least amount of detail is assumed to have been completed at the earliest date. It follows from this supposition that the two maps consisting of slightly elaborated line drawings should be read as so-called planning documents, of an early stage, showing the relationship of the proposed city to the nearby mountains and lakes (Figures 4, 5). The annotated map enumerating the shops (kañḷas) in each of the bazaars shows a city with four sectors (Figure 6). Because of the explicit notes and the number of sectors, the map is considered a second stage progress report detailing completed construction. A fourth unannotated map highlights seven square sectors with golden bazaars and red walls; even the smallest bastions of Sudarsāngarh to the northwest of the city are shown in some detail (Figure 7). Because this map includes an additional three wards, plus two

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Figure 4 Planning document for Jaipur, ca. 1728, showing Jai Niwas Bagh and Tāl Katora tank (with drafting square at lower right of Jai Niwas Bagh. (Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, Jaipur / Sten Åke Nilsson). See JSAH online for zoomable image in color and a key to the document
irregularly shaped precincts to the north, it is generally accepted that it was drawn during a third stage, perhaps near the end of Sawai Jai Singh’s life and reign in 1743. A fifth map, dated by Susan Gole to the end of the eighteenth century, shows the city at a stage of completion, fully occupied by havelis and shops, temples and wells (Figure 8).42

The dating of all but the last of these maps is speculative and based as much on the graphic development of the drawings as any corroborating evidence. As such, one should hesitate to read them as a progression. There are many reasons to show more or less detail in a bird’s-eye view or plan. For example, it is possible to read the first stage planning document (see Figure 4) as a construction proposal for a canal (depicted by a thin blue-gray line winding from the upper right to the lower left of the folio) connecting the Man Sagar to municipal wells, rather than a definitive statement on the configuration of Jaipur’s walls, bazaars, and streets. Similarly, the single annotation on the second planning document (Figure 5) pertains not to the city, but to the disposition of the Jal Mahal, the water palace refurbished by Sawai Jai Singh between 1728–31 (VS 1785–88).43 In this case, the lack of detail drawn inside Jaipur’s walls could have as much to do with the focus of the map on the Jal Mahal as with the city’s state of completion. While the extensive annotations penned on the second stage so-called progress report suggest that it can be read just as that, a record of completed construction, the lack of clarifying details on the fourth map, the undated progress report, means historians rarely include it in their analyses (see Figures 6, 7). Graphically, it conforms to the other progress report. The bazaars are empty, but the city walls are fully developed, outlining seven square and two irregular sectors. Together, the Gole map and this second progress report reflect most accurately the city’s final form, a three-over-four grid of slightly irregular quadrilaterals capped with irregular sectors to the north (see Figure 8). Given the lack of discursive annotations, however, it is not clear if we should read this additional map as a proposal or progress report.

These spatial and graphic ambiguities unsettle any inference that the city planners referred to a mandala, particularly given that none of the maps mention the navagraha mandala or any other concept drawn from the vastu silpa shastra. My analysis of the maps relies not on the assumption of graphic progression or the hidden presence of a Hindu-Vedic model, but instead the continuity of form. Mapmakers included certain features in every map of the city, no matter how tentatively drawn, no matter the intended focus. For example, the central block of the city, which was (is still) dedicated to the pleasure garden called Jai Niwas Bagh and its companion water source, the Tal Katora tank, appears in every drawing. Jai Niwas Bagh repeats as variously colored squares joined to form a single rectangle with corners marked by towers (burj). A sharp line, terminating in flanking burj, bisects and extends beyond the perimeter of the rectangle. The north end of the garden comprises an invariably square Tal Katora, around which spreads the Jai Sagar (Lake).44 Three of the maps include a smaller rectangle at the center of the garden, representing either the Maharaja’s hunting pavilion or a central water feature (see Figures 4–6). The repetition of Jai Niwas Bagh and Tal Katora in every map suggests two things: that the garden, towers, and tank existed early in the development of the city and that they were considered significant enough to be included in every map.45 This makes clear that Jai Niwas Bagh was an important part of the new city, at least in the eyes of its patron.

Jai Niwas Bagh was the one structure specifically named by Sawai Jai Singh as essential to include within the walls of

Figure 5 Planning document for Jaipur, ca. 1728, showing the location of the Jal Mahal north of the city (Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, Jaipur / Sten Åke Nilsson). See JSAH online for zoomable image in color and a key to the document.
Figure 6 Annotated progress report for Jaipur, ca. 1730, showing trees in the parterres of Jai Niwas Bagh (Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, Jaipur / Sten Åke Nilsson)

Figure 7 Unannotated progress report for Jaipur, showing city streets as built (Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, Jaipur / Sten Åke Nilsson)
Figure 8 Jaipur, late eighteenth century (Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, Jaipur / Susan Gole). See JSAH online for zoomable image in color and extended explanation of the document.
his new capital. In 1739, the court poet, Giridhārī, described the garden at length in his Bhajanabāra, a ballad on non-vegetarian dietetics. Calling the garden “a perpetual home of the gods (Jai Niwas),” he praised it as a site of joy and comfort: Sawai laid the foundation of Jaipur, the description of which follows: (couplet)
He laid out many streets, and thus enhanced the glory of the spirit.
He said to Vidyādhar that the city should be founded here. (182)
“Jainiwas should come within this city, this is my wish.
There should be many crossroads with shops on them.
The backyards of the houses should meet together.” (183)
Description of Jainiwas: (couplet)
There were Mukatmahal, Rajamahal, Badalmahal, three-doored verandahs, bath rooms, and kitchens in that place. (184)
Very big canals were running [in the garden].
There were many reservoirs of water and tanks and the water falling from the fountains spread like sheets. (185)
(Lyric)
Look! New trees, new leaves are here,
new branches, new fruits and flowers;
New fragrances and perfumes scent the air.
New bees are humming and birds are singing new tunes.
There are new peacocks, parrots, cajtakas and cakoras.46
A new cuckoo is cooing and crying new notes.
Sawai Jaisāh Mahārājāni Mukatamani has a perpetual Spring in Jainiwas Garden. (186)47

Giridhārī described something more elaborate than a simple hunting lodge or small-scale seasonal retreat. He offered instead a glimpse of the pleasures of sweetness and surprise, enjoyed within a fully developed pleasure garden. Water and respite from the heat could be found in tanks and flowing fountains. A cacophony of natural sounds—the call of cuckoos, the screech of peacocks, the buzz of bees—and a bouquet of fragrances from flowers and fruit enveloped every visitor.48 Deciduous trees cast cooling shadows that changed with the breeze and passage of time. The garden boasted not only multiple pavilions (mahal) and treed terraces, but a variety of other living and service spaces, including baths, kitchens, and tanks, all supplied by an extensive water supply system, sourced originally from the Jai Sagar and later via a canal extending southeast from the Man Sagar.49

The Rajput Chārbāgh
The garden celebrated in Giridhārī’s ballad conformed to the idea of the Mughal chārbāgh, a quadrilateral garden with cross-axial canals centered on a water feature or pleasure pavilion. The chārbāgh, like other Timurid aesthetic forms, came to India after Babur’s triumph in Panipat in 1526.50 By the sixteenth century, the chārbāgh had “gained a powerful and persuasive meaning as an earthly reflection of the paradise to come,” as reflected in the passages describing paradise in the Qur’an, and in this symbolic sense it was deployed in Mughal tomb gardens such as Humayun’s Tomb in Delhi and the Taj Mahal in Agra.51 However, as D. Fairchild Ruggles points out in her discussion of the evolution and adaptation of the garden form in India, “the adoption of Islamic art forms and techniques was not paralleled by a concomitant political acceptance . . . nor did it reflect the adoption of other Islamic social practices or its religion.”52 In other words, despite the absorption of a form considered Islamic, there was no requirement on the part of the patron to embrace the religious symbolism along with the aesthetics. Neither Sawai Jai Singh nor his predecessors showed much concern with the possible religious connotations of the chārbāgh, even when they first adopted the garden in the sixteenth century. If Sawai Jai Singh was actively manipulating the Islamic connotations of the chārbāgh in the eighteenth century (there is no written evidence of this), it is more likely that he focused on the political rather than spiritual meaning of the gardens, as his rule was characterized by his enmeshment in the Mughal ministry. To be certain, his level of participation in imperial politics never approached that of his great-great-grandfather, Mirza Raja Jai Singh I, but in the first fifteen years of Muhammad Shah’s tenure on the throne, he was amenable to imperial suggestion, at least in terms of providing military support during Mughal campaigns against the Marathas.53 Almost to the end of his reign, he worked to improve his standing in the Mughal court, mostly as a means of improving the financial and political strength of his hereditary state of Amer.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, any distinction made between Islamic and Hindu building practices in India would have been perceived as artificial. Co-mingled building traditions shaped the experience and behavior of both Rajput and Mughal. At Amer, at Fatehpur-Sikri, at any number of provincial and imperial palaces in northern India, stone screens (jali) deflected the direct gaze from the zenana while the jharokha window invited subjects to gaze upon the head of state. Red sandstone and milky white marble, materials deployed extensively at Mughal tombs, found their symbolic uses in the provincial palaces of Rajasthan. At Amer, space itself spoke to a blending of design approaches. The convoluted passageways and multiple levels modeled the accretive style of Rajput defensive architecture only to open
onto expansive gardens and courtyards evocative of the Persian garden. Most of these airy spaces were chārbāghs built by Jai Singh I in the middle of the seventeenth century, beginning with the addition of the formal Aram Bagh to the palace. Rectangular in shape, this elaborate garden is wedged into a sunken bed between the Sukh Niwas and the Jai Mandir (Figure 9). Inside the Sukh Niwas, water drops down a steep chādar to a chevroned canal. At the garden edge of the pavilion’s platform, a second chādar directs the water into the marble channels surrounding the garden’s main water feature, a star-shaped tank. Water from the Jai Mandir reaches the garden more discreetly, flowing from a shallow square tank into a hidden canal and over a three-tiered wall of niches (chīnī khāna) designed to hold fragrant blooms or candles. The octagonal platform at the center of the garden is reached via elevated stone walkways (khiyāns) laid across garden beds at right angles. The tightly contained Aram Bagh echoes both the decorative lines of the Mohan Bari Bagh standing below the palace at the edge of Maotha Lake and the symmetry of the Dilaram Bagh just a few hundred meters north at the head of the lake (Figures 10, 11). In the masonry platforms of the Mohan Bari Bagh, Sawai Singh could see a variegated carpet of greenery and blooms, with planting beds sharply divided by short stone walls. The garden is easily viewed through the lakefront windows of the palace and indeed was meant to be admired from a distance rather than experienced on foot. The Dilaram Bagh, resembling multi-level Mughal gardens such as Jahangir’s Shalimar Bagh in Kashmir (1619–20) and Fidai Khan’s Yadavindra Gardens at Pinjore (late seventeenth century), portrayed the garden as a spot of retreat and contemplation. The garden is divided by marble-surfaced channels that introduce the sound and show of moving water. The shallow square tanks occupying the center of each tier are circumscribed by khiyāns that encourage meditative strolling. A series of covered pavilions offers respite from the heat and a limited privacy for socially and politically intimate conversations.

Sawai Jai Singh mastered the combination of styles displayed in the Aram, Mohan Bari, and Dilaram Baghs and deployed them throughout his kingdom in different sizes and to different purposes. The chārbāgh made an appearance in the Kanak Vrindavan valley between Amer and the Man Sagar, where it served as a transitional space between the
Figure 10  Mohan Bari Bagh, Lake Maotha, Amer, 2009 (author’s photo)

Figure 11  Dilaram Bagh, Amer, 2009 (author’s photo)
mundane trading route nearby and the divinity of the Govinda Devji shrine. Southeast of Jaipur on the Ghumi Ghat road stood an elongated chārbāgh built in honor of one of his leading ministers, Vidyadhar. In close proximity to the Vidyadhar Bagh was the Sisodia Rani ka Bagh, a quadripartite garden and palace built for the pleasure of his second wife. The existence of these gardens, taken together with the development of Jai Nivas Bagh, suggests that Sawai Jai Singh had some facility for exploiting the cross-axial disposition of the Mughal chārbāgh. Though the vegetation of Jai Nivas Bagh has changed dramatically over the past three centuries, we can see the axially arranged squares, subdivided into smaller quadrilaterals, that originally defined the garden. Canals, many of which remain dry regardless of season, bisect pathways oriented to the cardinal directions (Figure 12). Shallow stone slopes (chādar) are meant to direct water over chāni khāna. The waterways are occasionally bridged by plain stone slabs, so visitors can wander back and forth over flowing water. The blossoming bushes and trees described by Giridhāri have been supplanted in large part by expanses of green lawn. Throughout the garden, stone walks are elevated above the grassy parterres. Smaller pathways subdivide the once-flowed plots, branching off from the main walkway at right angles. Tāl Katora still stands at the northern terminus of the garden, but since the tank stands dry most of the year, it serves as a cricket pitch more often than a reservoir (Figure 13). The shooting box at the northern end of Jai Nivas Bagh was enlarged to form the būradāri of today’s Badal Mahal, a concrete and stone summer pavilion overlooking Tāl Katora. The pavilion that once stood at the center of the garden allegedly became the base of the Govinda Devji temple. This monumental structure, together with several flanking buildings, effectively cuts the garden in half, forcing today’s visitor to skirt the edges of the temple to reach one section of the garden from the other. Though the entire garden is open to the public, the southern square, closest to the Chandra Mahal, houses the quasi-private Montessori Palace School. Access to the Chandra Mahal from the southern quarter is controlled by a wrought iron gate that permits visual access to the royal residence while separating it from public space (Figure 14). Despite these superficial changes in design and shifts in function, however, the lines of Jai Nivas Bagh, emphasized by boundary walls, canals, and walkways, still adhere closely to the chārbāgh type.

Jai Nivas Bagh as Module

Compared to contemporaneous gardens like Sisodia Rani ka Bagh or Vidyadhar Bagh on the Ghumi Ghat road, Jai Nivas Bagh represented a greater investment in time and materials. A map in the Kapaḍwara of the Maharaja Man Singh II Museum, tentatively dated to the second quarter of the eighteenth century, indicates that Jai Nivas Bagh was meant to be 305 by 258 gaz (approximately 750 by 600 feet). The garden was not a negligible project in terms of horticulture or engineering. Even had it not played a significant role in the leisure of the court, it made good fiscal sense to build the city around the garden rather than spend more money and effort on demolition. Considering the position of Jai Nivas Bagh and Sawai Jai Singh’s stated attachment to the space, it would not be a surprise to discover the garden affected the planning of Jaipur. Looking
Figure 13 Tal Katora, Jaipur, looking south to Badal Mahal, 2007 (author’s photo)

Figure 14 Central canal, Jai Niwas Bagh, Jaipur, looking south to Chandra Mahal, 2007 (author’s photo)
again to early maps of the city, we can see that the plan indeed responded to the garden’s elongated, rectilinear form. For example, the planning document that depicts the route of the Man Sagar canal (see Figure 4) also demonstrates that the layout of the city bazaars relied on the pre-existing garden. The bazaars run parallel to the garden walls, visually and spatially echoing their length and direction, but more significantly, they maintain a spacing determined by the breadth of the garden’s tank. Lightly sketched at the southeast corner of the garden is a square the size of Tal Katora. This device helped the draftsman maintain a proportional relationship between the garden, the tank, and the bazaars; the distance between the garden walls and the streets equals the width of Tal Katora. The city sectors, only two of which are drawn completely, also conform to the garden’s rectangularity. The second planning document (see Figure 5) showing the location of the Jal Mahal also suggests that the placement of the bazaars was determined by the garden’s geometry. The streets are offset from the walls of Jai Niwas Bagh at a distance equal to the breadth of the Tal Katora with its engineered embankment. The main cross-roads (chaupad) of the bazaars occur just south of Jai Sagar on either side of the garden. The chaupad are aligned with the east–west center line of the combined length of Jai Niwas Bagh and Tal Katora (the center line is marked by two small red dots representing flanking buses), indicating that it was the garden’s center line that determined the placement of the major east-west boulevard of the city.62

As the progress report shows, these spatial relationships were codified early in the construction process (see Figure 6). In this version of the plan, little has changed since the completion of the planning documents, other than the addition of kota to the bazaars. The city wall has moved south and an additional sector, equal in length to the distance between the center line of the garden and the first east-west bazaar, has been added to the map. The center line of Jai Niwas Bagh and Tal Katora marks the northern terminus of the bazaars running parallel to the garden. The oft-ignored second progress report, in which the rectangular sectors of the earliest maps have been polished into squares, relies on a similar module (see Figure 7). Four sectors, the length and width of which are equal to the combined length of Jai Niwas Bagh and Tal Katora, run across the southern section of the city. A row of three squares comprises the middle section of the city, with Jai Niwas Bagh extending south into the center sector. A single irregular sector caps the city to the northeast. Just below the southeast wall of Jai Sagar is an orphan street (today’s Motikatla Bazaar). This remnant of the early city plans reminds us that the east-west bazaars were keyed to the center line of the garden and tank.

The overall affect of incremental development based on the charbagh module, while superficially similar to the concentric patterns associated with mandala, is closer to the form of a bilateral body, headed by Jai Niwas Bagh and Tal Katora. The pressure of development in the valley had always come from the north, down from Amer along the Man Sagar corridor, but the intermediary position of Jai Sagar and Santosh Sagar ensured that growth could not continue south organically. Instead, Sawai Jai Singh’s new capital made a small leap over water to center on the extant Jai Niwas Bagh, so that the core of the city expanded along the length of garden. Subsequent sectors were added below the southern reaches of the garden, producing a very bottom-heavy city plan. Even though we have been coached over the years to read the city plan as if it was made up of nine equal squares, it is clear that Jaipur grew more linearly in its early years. And as we can tell from the words of Joseph Tieffenthaler, it was experienced as a linear city as well: in his description of the young town, he noted that its main corridor ran north to south, or from the Dhruv Pol to the Shiv Pol.63 This top-to-bottom disposition seems to mimic the organizational strategy of the Mughal charbagh on a larger scale, but in the place of a tomb or a water feature, Jai Niwas Bagh stands at its head. Rather than flowered parterres, buzzing with bees, we have blocks of havelis and katlas. Canals, fountains, and elevated walks are supplanted by the straight lines of streets, bazaars, and chaupad. This linear disposition of components undermines a comparison to a concentric mandala pattern and makes Jaipur unique among the garden cities of northern India.64

Conclusion
Taken together, maps, ballads, and landscape depict Jaipur as a city in transition, responsive to the location and geometry of Jai Niwas Bagh and Tal Katora as it grew. Given the centrality of these landscape features in early depictions of Jaipur as well as the number of cross-axial quadrangular gardens established under Sawat Jai Singh’s auspices, one wonders why we have not proposed the charbagh as a possible module for the city plan before now. The garden’s rectilinearity offers an immediate model for the regularity of urban form, while the mandala exists only in the abstract. How do we account for the persistence of the idea of a Hindu-Vedic origin for the city plan? It is possible that the strength of our attachment to the idea of Jaipur as a Hindu city can be attributed to the influence of E. B. Havell and other like-minded historians. It is fair to say that a major organizing construct of Havell’s Indian Architecture was the belief that Indian building traditions were persistent, undifferentiated, and
unchanging through time. Although many have dismissed the prastāra as the specific model for the city plan, the assumption that Sawai Jai Singh must have found Vedic texts relevant to eighteenth-century city planning remains in place. As Jyoti Hosagrahar has pointed out, although the last two (and now three) decades have witnessed a diversification of interests in South Asian architecture, at least in terms of types of buildings and time periods studied, British imperial historiography, with an emphasis on religious divisions, antiquity, and formal characteristics, continues to dominate the field of architectural history. Consequently, that the spatial disposition of Jaipur more closely resembles a plan produced from a garden module seems to fall outside the realm of historical possibility. The charbagh, after all, could not be the proper domain of a Hindu king.

This article opened with a description of the Jawahar Kala Kendra, a three-dimensional affirmation of Jaipur as a historically Hindu-Vedic space. I introduced the JKK as an example of the effects these lingering assumptions can have on today's built environment and on the experiences of the local population. The JKK as theorized and as built demonstrates that the default position in Jaipur is always Hindu, regardless of the fact that neither Rajasthan nor India is a spiritual monolith. To be clear, Correa articulated a wish to express “the plurality that is inherent in India” in his design, but the arts center collapses all of Rajasthan’s identities into an architecture replete with Hindu-Vedic symbolism. An additional layer of irony colors the walls of the JKK when we consider the demographics of Jaipur in the twenty-first century. The majority of the residents of the old city, the historic core on which the JKK’s plan is based, are Muslims—poor, under-educated laborers with little access to political power. On the anecdotal level, Jaipur has long been celebrated as a city free of communal tensions. In reality, the city has suffered along with the rest of the nation in the post-Ayodhya years of violence, and at present, the impoverishment suffered by the Muslim population is viewed as an encouragement by extremists looking to capitalize on communal strife in the region. In the context of the current political situation in India, it is probably not surprising that Jaipur’s history has been forced to choose sides. It is either Hindu or it is Muslim; it cannot be both. Obviously, asking a single arts center to resolve the tensions between these two sides (and to consider that even the Hindu-Muslim binary brackets additional identity groups from the discussion) is asking too much. We can, however, read the JKK as a cautionary tale on the dangers of giving physical form to the elision of diversity.

I propose that the first step to resolving some of these conflicts is not to grapple with the built environment in the present tense, but to reconsider the way we have understood and used the past instead. If we interpret the evidence—maps, ballads, construction records—against the walls of the JKK, we see only a city defined by Hindu-Vedic practices. If, on the other hand, we hold those same documents up against Jai Niwas Bagh, we can see the points at which that legend falls apart. An important element in an urban landscape that was born of and belonged to both Rajput and Mughal milieus, Jai Niwas Bagh provides an insistent counter-narrative, reminding us that Sawai Jai Singh cultivated a variety of intellectual, religious, and aesthetic approaches at his court and in the new city of Jaipur.

Notes
1. Research undertaken at the Rajasthan State Archives in Bikaner for this project was completed with the support of a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad award and a Social Sciences Research Council-International Dissertation Research Fellowship. Thanks are due to Charles Correa, Susan Gole, Catherine Johnson-Roehr, Dipii Khera, Julia Kowalski, Sten Åke Nilsson, D. Fairchild Ruggles, Claire Snell-Rood, and Crystal Watson. I am also grateful to Swati Chattopadhyay and an anonymous reviewer for their helpful comments.
2. Charles Correa, “Jawahar Kala Kendra, Jaipur = Museum at Jaipur,” Spazio e società 15, no. 60 (1992), 115. It should be noted that Hindu and Vedic are not synonymous, though the terms are often used interchangeably in discussions of Jaipur’s history. Vedic knowledge is only one among many branches of historical philosophy that might inform a Hindu worldview; inspiration might also be drawn from the Puranas or the Upanishads, or any combination of the three. Nor is the concept Hindu univalent. For instance, a Hindu may self-identify as a Shaivite, Vaishnavite, Shakta, Smarta, and so on.
5. Jaipur’s “spine” is rotated almost 15 degrees from true north, meaning that its north-south and east-west boulevards run only approximately in agreement with the cardinal directions.

6. Although Correa depended on the navagraha mandala for the design of the JKK, his theories of spatial organization also draw on the vastra purva mandala, which he describes as “a perfect square, subdivided into identical squares, creating a series which starts from 1 and goes on to 4, 9, 16, 25 ... right up to 1,024 ... the mandala is not a plan; it represents an energy field.” Charles Correa, “Il pubblico, il privato e il sacro,” Spazio e società 15, no. 60 (1992), 103. For contrasting theories on the use of the vastra purva mandala in Indian architecture, see Sonit Bafna, “On the Idea of the Mandala as a Governing Device in Indian Architectural Tradition,” JSAH 59, no. 1 (2000), 26–49; Vibhuti Chakrabarti, Indian Architectural Theory: Contemporary Uses of Vastu Vidya (London: Curzon Press, 1998), 63–99; and Madhu Khanna, “Spazio, tempo e natura nell’architettura indiana = Space, time and nature in Indian architecture,” Spazio e società 15, no. 60 (1991), 80–93.


8. The architect Balkrishna V. Doshi also promulgated the idea that Sawai Jai Singh based the plan for the city on a nine-square maṇḍala. In 1985, the Jaipur Development Authority charged Doshi with the production of a Master Plan for the 386-acre city of Vidyadhar Nagar, to be built northwest of the old city. Doshi’s site plan grew out of his understanding of the nine-square maṇḍala as an indigenous method of spatial organization. See William J. R. Curtis, Balkrishna Doshi: An Architecture for India (New York: Rizzoli, 1988), 144–53.


10. Ibid., 217.

11. Ibid.

12. Binode Behari Dutt, Town Planning in Ancient India, reprint ed. (Delhi: New Asian Publishers, 1977), 118–19; Dwijendra Nath Shukla, VartaSastra (Lucknow: Vastu-Vanmaya-Prakasana-Sala, 1958), 1: 271. Shukla’s correlation of Jaipur with the prastara undoubtedly borrowed some of its authority from Stella Kramrisch’s The Hindu Temple (1946). Kramrisch argued not only that the vastra purva mandala was the “plan of all architectural form of the Hindu,” but that the maṇḍala was legible in the formal qualities of the building.

13. See Tārāpada Bhattacharyya, The Canons of Indian Art: Or; a Study on Vastucalya, 3d ed. (Calcutta: Firma KLM Private Ltd, 1986), vii. Nilsson indicates that the prastara is applicable to the planning of Jaipur, but “the mandala pattern and the layout of Jaipur are far from being identical.” Nilsson, “Jaipur: In the Sign of the Leo,” 11–12. Joan Erdman, whose work on Jaipur was inspired in part by that of D. N. Shukla, rejects the prastara, but proposes that Jaipur’s “wide avenues, right angled crossings, and differential density in its neighborhoods suggest an acquaintance with such texts [as the vastra śastras].” Joan L. Erdman, “Jaipur City Planning in 18th-century India,” in Brahmsonic Traditions in Indian Arts, ed. Anna Libera Dallapiccola (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 1989), 22. Ohji Toshiaki vacillates on the issue of the prastara, but invokes the “concenetric configuration” of the maṇḍala in his interpretation of Jaipur, like all Hindu cities, as a scale model of the cosmos. Ohji Toshiaki, “The ‘Ideal’ Hindu City of Ancient India as Described in the Arthasastra and the Urban Planning of Jaipur,” East Asian Cultural Studies 29 (1990), 60. Vibhuti Sachdev suggests that city planners relied on a conceptual maṇḍala based on the vastra purva maṇḍala during the design stage. Sachdev, Building Jaipur: The Making of an Indian City, 39–43.


16. Ibid., 137.


18. The lives of most of the najūm working at Sawai Jai Singh’s observatories were not documented, as far as we know. The partial exception to this statement relates to the author-scribe of the Zīj-i Muhammad Shirāh, Abu-l-Khayr Khayr Allah Khān. Of Persian descent, he was the son of Lutf-Allah “Muhandi” Lakhūrī and nephew of Nādir al-Shāh ʿUṣūd Aḥmad-i mū‘ār-i, architect of the Taj Mahal. It appears Dayānāt Khān, the najūm most frequently named in court records, was locally based in Shahjahanabad. Khan’s name first appears in the Dastār-i Khamsān, the chronicle of monetary awards and gifts-in-kind given to individuals by the court of Amer and Jaipur, in 1718 (Bḥādqūv Sūdī 1 V S. 1775). Other scribes, such as Muḥammad Abī, are known to us only through their signatures and writing styles.


22. Ibid., 14.


25. There is some small debate over the precise date for the ground-breaking ceremony. Baktarama Saha’s Buddhī-vilāsa gives the date as
Pauđa Vadi 1, VS 1784 (28 November 1727), but the according to the Bhoginiārtha, a narrative poem written at Sawai Jai Singh's court, the ceremony was conducted on Pauđa Śūdi 1, VS 1784 (13 December 1727). See Bakhatarama Saha, Buddhi-vilāsa, ed. Padma Dhar Pathak (Jodhpur: Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute, 1964), 8–9; P. K. Godle, "Two Contemporary Tributes to Minister Vidyādhar, the Bengāli Architect of Jaipur at the Court of Sevāl Jaising of Amber (A.D. 1699–1743)," Indological Studies Dr. C. Kunhan Raja Presentation Volume (1946), 289, 291; Ashim K. Roy, History of the Jaipur City (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 1978), 44, 236.

26. The construction of Jaipur is well documented in numerous archival sources held in the Rajasthan State Archives (hereafter RSA) in Bikaner, Rajasthan. Tucked away in various collections of Imarat Khana records, which tracked construction for the entire city from 6 September 1728 (Bhādva Śūdi 3 VS 1785), we find expenditure lists for materials used during the construction of walls, buildings, tanks, and roads, as well as the pay scales and the identities of significant laborers and revenue officers (tehsildars). The Aśraṭā Ḍharmarat (building department annual summaries), Jamā Karh Ḍharmarat (building department expenditure / income records), Roznāma Ḍharmarat (building department daily records), and Toṣī Śyāḥa Ḍharmarat (building department accounts) are good sources of statistics related to construction methods and materials, but they also can be mined for information on labor practices, caste divisions, political hierarchies, and bureaucratic relationships. Also useful is the Daśitā Kaumārina (registry of gifts of protocol), in which we can read memoranda describing a variety of gifts given as payment in kind to high-ranking pandits and favored subjects of the court.

27. Aḥṣaṭṭī Ḍharmarat Sawai Jaipur, RSA, Bikaner (hereafter AI), bundle 2, Śūdi 3 VS 1786 to Bhādva Śūdi 2 VS 1787, fol. 63; bundle 3, Bhādva Śūdi 3 VS 1787 to Bhādva Śūdi 2 VS 1788, fol. 96.

28. AI, bundle 1, Bhādva Śūdi 3 VS 1785 to Bhādva Śūdi 2 VS 1786, fol. 19; Bhādva Śūdi 3 VS 1786 to Bhādva Śūdi 2 VS 1787, fol. 56; Bhādva Śūdi 3 VS 1787 to Bhādva Śūdi 2 VS 1788, fols. 66–71, 81. Because the city was constructed on a bed of quick-draining alluvial soil, one of the first building initiatives called for canals to bring water from the Jhotwār and Darbhāvati Rivers. See description nos. 116, 119, 153, 214, 312 in Gopal Narayan Bahura and Chandramani Singh, Catalogue of Historical Documents in Kapad Dwara, Jaipur, vol. 2, Maps and Plans (Amber: Jaigarh Public Charitable Trust, 1990), 29, 30, 39, 49, 81–82, 111–12, 139. See also Sarkar, A History of Jaipur c. 1503–1938, 206.

29. Multiple dam projects affected the size and location of the Man Sagar, Jai Sagar, Tāl Katora, and Sarswati Kund at Gaḷṭaji. For Man Sagar see AI, bundle 2, Bhādva Śūdi 3 VS 1785 to Bhādva Śūdi 2 VS 1786, fols. 62–66; Roznāma Ḍharmarat Sawai Jaipur, RSA, Bikaner (hereafter RI), bundle 2, Āṣoj Śūdi 14 & 15 VS 1790; Kāṭī Śūdi 11 VS 1790. For Jai Sagar & Tāl Katora see RI, bundle 2, Jeṭh Śūdi 10 VS 1790; Baisākh Śūdi 13 VS 1790; Jeṭh Śūdi 8 VS 1790; Bhādva Śūdi 3 VS 1790; Kāṭī Śūdi 11 VS 1790; RI, bundle 3, Āṣoj Śūdi 15 VS 1791; Phalguna Śūdi 14 & 15 VS 1791; Toṣī Śyāḥa Ḍharmarat Sawai Jaipur, RSA, Bikaner, bundle 9, Bhādva Śūdi 2 VS 1792; Bhādva Śūdi 3 VS 1793; Bhādva Śūdi 7 VS 1793; Bhādva Śūdi 11 VS 1793. For Sarswati Kund see RI, bundle 2, Baisākh Śūdi 14 VS 1790; Bhādva Śūdi 8 VS 1790; Bhādva Śūdi 11 VS 1790. See also description nos. 29, 86, 117, 201, 222 in Bahura and Singh, Catalogue of Historical Documents, 20, 26, 30, 39–40, 55, 71, 81, 110, 113; Roy, History of the Jaipur City, 142.

30. AI, bundle 2, Bhādva Śūdi 3 VS 1786 to Bhādva Śūdi 2 VS 1787, fols. 64–68; Bhādva Śūdi 3 VS 1787 to Bhādva Śūdi 2 VS 1788, fols. 80–89; RI, bundle 2, Jeṭh Śūdi 4 VS 1790; Bhādva Śūdi 11 VS 1790; Jeṭh Śūdi 7 VS 1790; Maṅgala Śūdi 6 VS 1790, fols. 4–5; RI, bundle 3, Phalguna Śūdi 11 VS 1791; Phalguna Śūdi 14 & 15 VS 1791.

31. For the Jaleb Chowk, see AI, Bhādva Śūdi 3 VS 1786 to Bhādva Śūdi 2 VS 1787, fol. 31; Bhādva Śūdi 3 VS 1787 to Bhādva Śūdi 2 VS 1788, fols. 27–29. For the Chandra Mahal, see RI, bundle 3, Aṣaj Śūdi 4 VS 1791, fols. 2–3v; Aṣaj Śūdi 15 VS 1791 fol. 4; Kāṭi Śūdi 15 VS 1791, fol. 3v; Phalguna Śūdi 12 VS 1791, fol. 2v; Phalguna Śūdi 14 VS 1791, fol. 4v.

32. The court began investing funds in the Man Sagar embankment and the Jai Mahal in 1728/29 (VS 1785). AI, Bhādva Śūdi 3 VS 1785 to Bhādva Śūdi 2 VS 1786, fols. 21, 41, 62–66; Bhādva Śūdi 3 VS 1786 to Bhādva Śūdi 2 VS 1787, fols. 52–53; Bhādva Śūdi 3 VS 1787 to Bhādva Śūdi 2 VS 1788, fols. 91, 93, 102; RI, bundle 2, Baisākh Vadi 14 VS 1790, fol. 5r; Jeṭh Vadi 8 VS 1790, fol. 6r; Aṣaj Śūdi 14 & 15 VS 1790, fol. 6v. See also descriptions nos. 198, 216, and 225, Bahura and Singh, Catalogue of Historical Documents, 39–40, 112–13.


35. Roy lists the villages (Naḥagar, Tālkatora, Santosh Sagar, Moti Katha, Gaḷṭaji, and Kishan Pol) but it is not clear from his summary if the city displaced, incorporated, or created them. Jaipur was not broad enough to embrace both Naḥagar and Gaḷṭaji—they stood in opposite directions, outside the city walls—but certainly Tālkatora, immediately north of Jai Niwas Garden, fell inside the walled development area. The inclusion of the village of Kishan Pol in the list creates more confusion than clarity, as this appellation refers to the Kāṣan Pol (Krishna gate), one of the city’s new gates. It is not clear how the village could predate the construction of the eponymous gate. See Roy, History of the Jaipur City, 45.

36. The first twenty years of Sawai Jai Singh’s reign had been characterized by political instability and financial insecurity across the region, but particularly within the state of Amer. Only after Muhammad Shah’s accession was Sawai Jai Singh able to turn his full attention toward the economic and political rehabilitation of his severely attenuated kingdom. That he could do this was in large part due to his efforts to strengthen the central government through the provision of troops and the manipulation of political discourse. In hindsight, however, we can see that his support for Muhammad Shah was in many ways self-serving. A relatively stable northern region would afford him the opportunity to recover lost territory and to claim the right to establish his own commercial center on the Dhundar plain. Perhaps his confidence in this matter can be judged by the fact that he founded Jaipur without explicit imperial approval. Although he had undoubtedly discussed the project with Muhammad Shah while at court, formal recognition of the city as the state’s new capital did not come until 1733 (the fifteenth year of the Muhammad Shahi era). For a transcription of the warrant (pargāna), see Roy, History of the Jaipur City, 45.


39. Potthiāna Ramānā Sawai Jaipur, RSA, Bikaner, bundle 2, part 1, Bhāḍvā Śūḍī 3 VS 1798 to Āsoj Śūḍī 14 VS 1800, fols. 17, 55–58.


41. There were 162 katlā in bazaars of 18 bhīgha in area, with the exception of the bazaar extending north of Kishan Pol, which was only 16 bhīgha in length with 144 katlā. A bhīgha is a variable measure of land, ranging from one quarter to one third of an acre.

42. Gole, Indian Maps and Plans: From the Earliest Times to the Advent of European Surveys, 195.

43. AI, bundle 2, Bhāḍvā Śūḍī 3 VS 1785 to Bhāḍvā Śūḍī 2 VS 1786, fols. 21, 62; Bhāḍvā Śūḍī 3 VS 1786 to Bhāḍvā Śūḍī 2 VS 1787, fol. 41; Bhāḍvā Śūḍī 3 VS 1787 to Bhāḍvā Śūḍī 2 VS 1788, fols. 91–93.

44. The compression of space in the Gole map makes it difficult to see Tāl Katora, but the alley of trees north of the truncated Jai Niwas Bagh represents the landscaped embankment of the tank. Jai Nagar, with its two circular pavilions, surrounds Tāl Katora on three sides. Feeding into Jai Nagar is a small body of water labeled “Santosh Nagar.”

45. Although the precise date for the construction of Jai Niwas Bagh is unknown, there is good reason to believe it predates the formal founding of Jaipur. The spring season (vaṇanta) of VS 1770 (1713) is mentioned in a description of the garden in the Sawai Jaisingh Carta (Career of Sawai Jai Singh), “Tā samae sattari ka saj /tāki vasanta phule taruja /Bāja bhājōn chai kau dhamā /Jainivāka bhājayu nūr nāmām”[447]. On the other hand, a list compiled by the staff of the City Palace in Jaipur in 1949 dates the garden to 1726. The construction expenses for Jai Niwas Bagh are not included in the earliest Imarat Khana records. In 1729, funding was allocated for the construction of a treasury store (bhajāna) within the garden, suggesting Jai Niwas Bagh was already well-established, if not finished completely, by that year. Gopal Narayan Bahura, ed., Sawai Jaisingha Carta (Jaipur: Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, 1974), 45; Roy, Building the Jaipur City, 228; AI, bundle 2, Bhāḍvā Śūḍī 3 VS 1786 to Bhāḍvā Śūḍī 2 VS 1787, fol. 34.

46. The cataka (a pied crested cuckoo) and cakora (a partridge) are mythical birds symbolizing the munificence of the natural world. The cataka, representing the monsoon, could drink only raindrops. The cakora, possibly representing the emotions of love, lived on the nectar of moonbeams.

47. Ath Sawai Jayapura bāṣaṛaṅakauvarvan (doḥā) Purākāre bahu harag kar jānmaṁhima bādhāyā. Vidyādhar saun boli kahi sahasr ek bāṣaya (182) Jainivās yā saharamadhi āye yace ṇihārī Chaupari kēr bāzi bahu ghati pichvāre jāri (183) Ath jainivāsvārvan (doḥā) Mukta mahal rājāne mahal bādī mahal sujāne Sidra auruhaṁ suṁbūra rasiṁ tāṇi (184) Bādi bādī nahi raha jhan haud tādāgara deshi Bhare phunhir nalin te kunda chāḍri pēṣi (185) (Kavitā) Dekhau naye taru naye pāni keñ keñ Yen ḫa ḫa naye phal phal naye hain


48. According to the Sawai Jaisingha Carta (The Career of Sawai Jai Singh), a fragment from canto XXI of Jaya Simha Prakāśa, Jai Niwas Bagh boasted blooming trees of all varieties, including apple, quince, date, almond, pistachio, pomegranate, starfruit, pear, and peach. Bahura, ed., Sawai Jaisingha Carta, 45–46.

49. AI, bundle 3, Bhāḍvā Śūḍī 3 VS 1787 to Bhāḍvā Śūḍī 2 VS 1788, fol. 70.

50. Although the term chāṅkāzī refers to a quadrupartite garden, the term was applied to other rectilinear gardens as well, particularly the multilevel rectangular plots popular in Kashmir and other hilly areas. D. Fairchild Ruggles, Islamic Gardens and Landscapes (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 40; Elba Koch, “The Mughal Waterfront Garden,” in Gardens in the Time of the Great Muslim Empires: Theory and Design, ed. Attilio Petruccioli (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997).

51. Ruggles, Islamic Gardens and Landscapes, 111–12.

52. Ibid., 131.

53. Evidence suggests that Sawai Jai Singh was less interested in imperial politics and more interested in regional stability and financial prosperity. His policy of conciliation with the Marathas is well documented, and while it is probable that the peace negotiations would have benefited the Mughals, it is more likely the goal was the stabilization of trading routes and commercial activity. Sawai Jai Singh eventually turned away from the central government to establish a coalition of his Rajput peers (the Hurra conference of 1734) in an effort to resolve continued discord with the Maratha confederacy. The Mughals ceded Malwa to the Marathas in 1737, and Sawai Jai Singh was relieved of the governorship of Malwa and Agra in August of that same year. From 1737 until the year of his death, Sawai Jai Singh lived mostly in Jaipur, traveling only infrequently to address a few lingering issues in his government of Agra and Malwa. See Bhatnagar, Life and Times of Sawai Jai Singh, 256; Pilania, Enlightened Government in Modern India, 6–7; Sarkar, A History of Jaipur c. 1530–1938, 130.

54. Ruggles, Islamic Gardens and Landscapes, 204.

55. Mohan Bari Bagh and Dilaram Bagh were built under the patronage of Jai Singh I as well. Jai Singh I’s political and military fortunes were dependent on his service to Shah Jahan, so it is possible that his extensive use of the chāṅkāzī was understood as a symbol of his loyalty to the emperor.

56. Ruggles, Islamic Gardens and Landscapes, 133–34.


58. Shikha Jain speculates that Vidyādhar Bagh’s Pīla Mahāl may have served Sawai Jai Singh as a summer palace. See Jain, “Jaipur Jigsaw,” 15–29; Pārīka, Jaipur That Was: Royal Court and Seraglio, 214–15.

59. Aṛāṇḍari is a pavilion or belvedere with a dome supported by columns. The term originally meant “twelve doors” or “twelve gates,” but is now applied to open pavilions regardless of the number of columns.
61. The gaj was a variable length of measure, so it is difficult to convert this precisely, but a good estimate would be 750 by 600 feet. Today, Jai Niwas Bagh is approximately 1,740 feet long (exclusive of the Tal Katora) and 450 feet wide, making it almost three and a half times the length of Amer's Dilaram Bagh (approximately 500 feet long). It also dwarfs the Sisodia Rani ka Bagh (approximately 660 feet long), the Vidyadhar Bagh (slightly shorter), and the Kanak Bagh (400 feet long). The map is unavailable for reproduction, but is described in brief in Bahura and Singh, Catalogue of Historical Documents, 45, and more fully in Juntunen, 56.
62. Popular legend claims the main street was aligned with an ancient Hindu sun temple (surya mandir) on the hill to the east of the city. However, the temple sits south of the city's center line.
63. Tieffenthaler, du Perron, and Rennell, Description Historique et Géographique de l'Inde, 315.
64. Arguably, the city most characterized by the chārbāgh and its associated architecture was Agra, but that city's overall plan was determined by the course of the Jumna River, not its multitude of cross-axial gardens. Because only two hundred years separates the founding dates of Fatehpur-Sikri and Jaipur, comparisons between the two cities may be tempting; however, the multiple, competing axes of the Fatehpur-Sikri have no clear counterpart in Jaipur. Perhaps the best analogue in terms of linearity was Shahjanabad, the sometimes political capital of Shah Jahan. While not shaped by the chārbāgh per se, the straight line of the Chandni Chowk, projecting from the Lal Qila and flanked on both sides by garden walls and havelis, was more reminiscent of Jaipur's spatial organization than ancient temple complexes shaped by a maṇḍala.