

PRELIMINARY REPORT

RESCUE DOCUMENTATION OF THE SEHWAN FORT'S RESTORATION OF THE MAIN SOUTHERN ENTRANCE



**Center for Documentation and Conservation of the
Heritage of Sindh
Endowment Fund Trust for Preservation of the
Heritage of Sindh**

PRELIMINARY REPORT

Rescue Documentation of the Sehwan Fort's Restoration of the Main Southern Entrance at Gate-1

Situated within the city of Sehwan on the west bank of river Indus, in Taluka Sehwan, District Jamshoro, is the ruined mud Fort of Sehwan also known as the Alexander's Fort. Encircling a multi-period archaeological site with a chronological sequence tracing the history of **Sehwan** from the 4th century BC to the end of Mughal era in the early 18th century AD. The mound nearly 18 meters high from the surrounding area and about 1.27 km in circuit is confined within a ruined mud core fortification wall with exposed red bricks skirting visible at places. Presently most of the defense architectural features have been lost with the passage of time, combined with environmental and human hazards in the form of rains, rain runoff, wind erosion, extreme temperatures and encroachments, which has threatened the very survival of the already ruined fortification walls, bastions and entrance gate houses of the fort. The mound is filled with rich cultural material of various periods comprising of potsherds, brickbats, stone, copper, iron pieces, bones, charcoal, ash and coins etc.

Since its abandonment by the Mughals after Kalhora-Mughal battle in 1701 AD, Sehwan Fort has received no attention towards its maintenance and repair needs. The whole site is in a ruinous condition. The French Archaeological Mission headed by Dr. Monique Kervran conducted excavations at various places within the fort between 1996 to 2002 though no complete report has been published however a preliminary report of the excavations and an article on the ceramics that were unearthed during excavations have been reported.

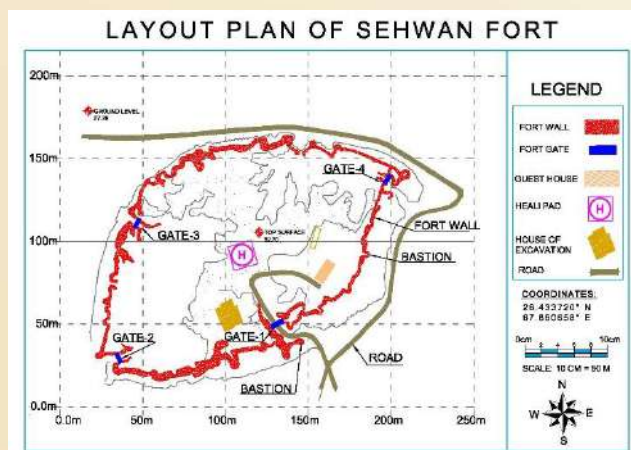
Taking into consideration the potential of this protected heritage site Endowment Fund Trust decided to reconstruct the vanished/non-surviving portions of historic exposed red brick including defense architectural features of the main entrance to the fort including its Tenaille (angular defense work) and flanking fortification and bastions (about 363 feet in length on the north east and 434 feet on the south west).

On the directives of EFT complete survey and documentation was carried out by CDC and regional office along with condition report and proposed plans of the main entrance gate of Sehwan Fort in the year 2021. Thereafter the restoration work started in October 2021 by Endowment Fund Trust simultaneously the Rescue documentation of the antiquities exposed while restoration of the south-eastern and south-western retaining walls, bastion and gate was carried out by CDC field Archaeologist Lajpat Rai. The rescue documentation was carried out in two phases 1st phase started from 22nd October 2021 to 9th January, 2022 and the 2nd phase

started from 13th May to 17th June 2022. The cultural material exposed and unearthed during this rescue operation was recorded scientifically which comprised of Ceramics of various periods, complete and broken pots, terracotta objects, stone, glass, Iron and copper objects etc. At present the team of CDC-EFT is working on the section and plot drawings of the structural evidences uncovered below the retaining walls and the road, comparing the ceramics with the pottery from earlier excavations of Dr. Monique besides cleaning, classifying, tagging and taking measurements of the cultural material and photographic details. Pottery conservation work is complete and brief of the report is highlighted for incorporating in the five years report.

Rescue Documentation of Sehwan Fort

The team of CDC headed by Lajpat Rai Menghwar undertook the rescue work at the Fort on Gate-1, to recover the antiquities prior to the laying the foundation of the walls. The complete site was surveyed and pegged with 200ft of buffer zone marked, Datum point fixed and exposed cultural material collected from the surface.

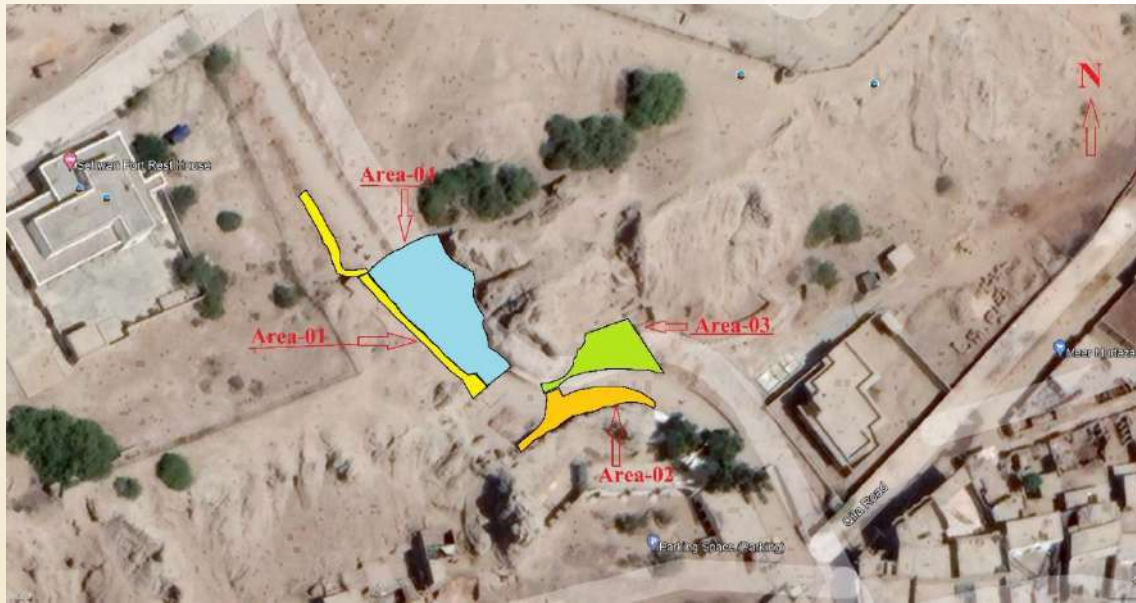


Layout of Sehwan Fort



Aerial view of the site with buffer zone

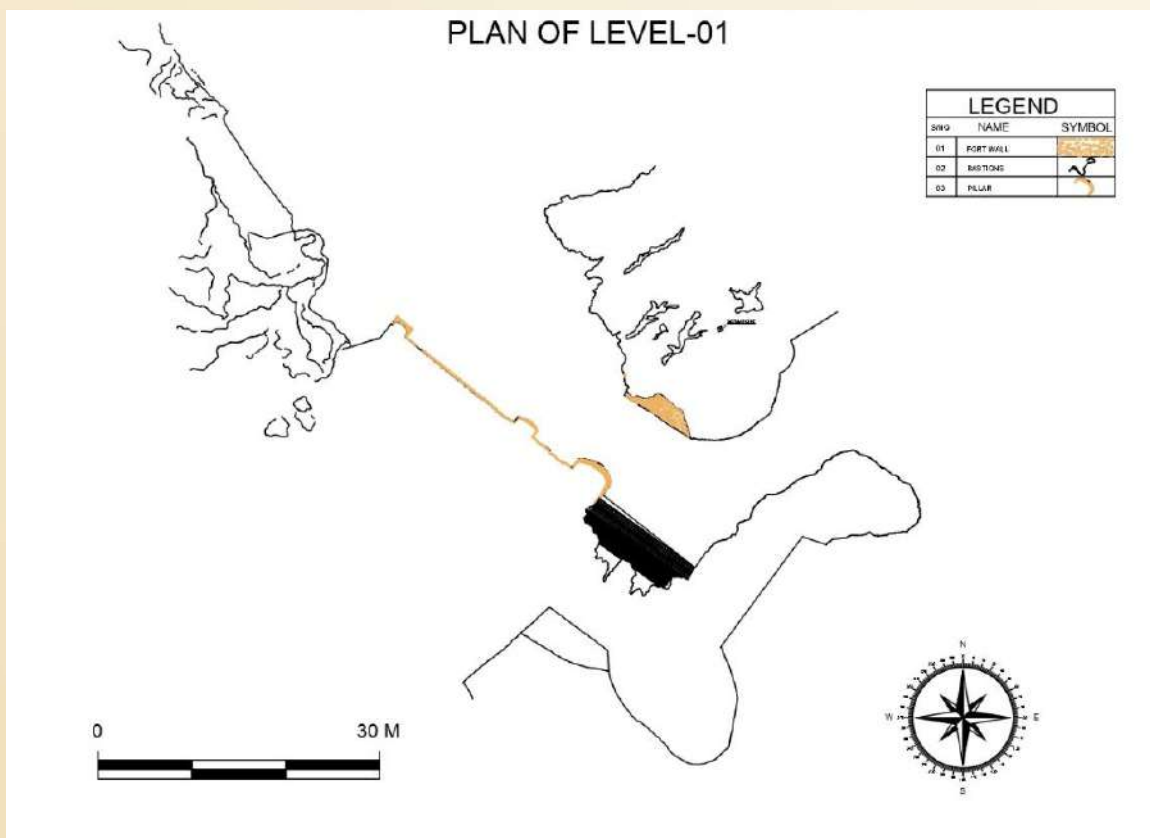
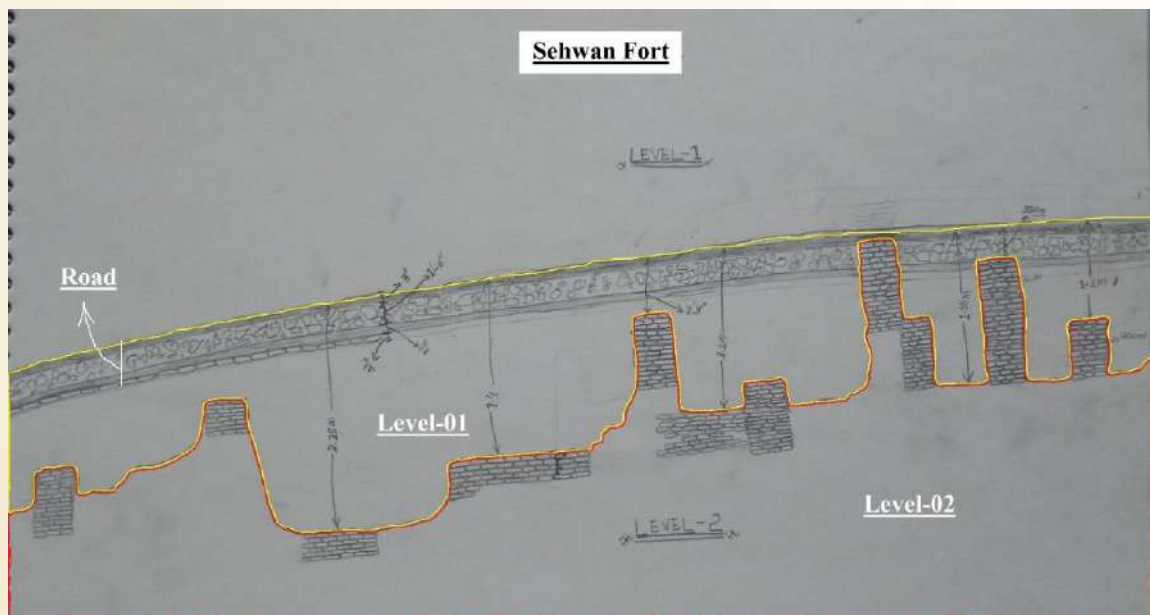
The documentation of the fort was carried out in four areas (Area 1, 2, 3 and 4), in the first phase Area 1, Area 2 and Area 3 were documented as were being exposed during the restoration of the retaining wall and bastion. The Area-1 South-western wall measuring 60 meters in length and about 3 meters in width was divided into 7 blocks (Block A, B, C, D, E, F & G) and was exposed up the depth of 2 meters in which two levels were recorded (Level 1 upper and Level-2 lower); level 1 was recorded at various depths when brick walls of the earlier period were exposed.

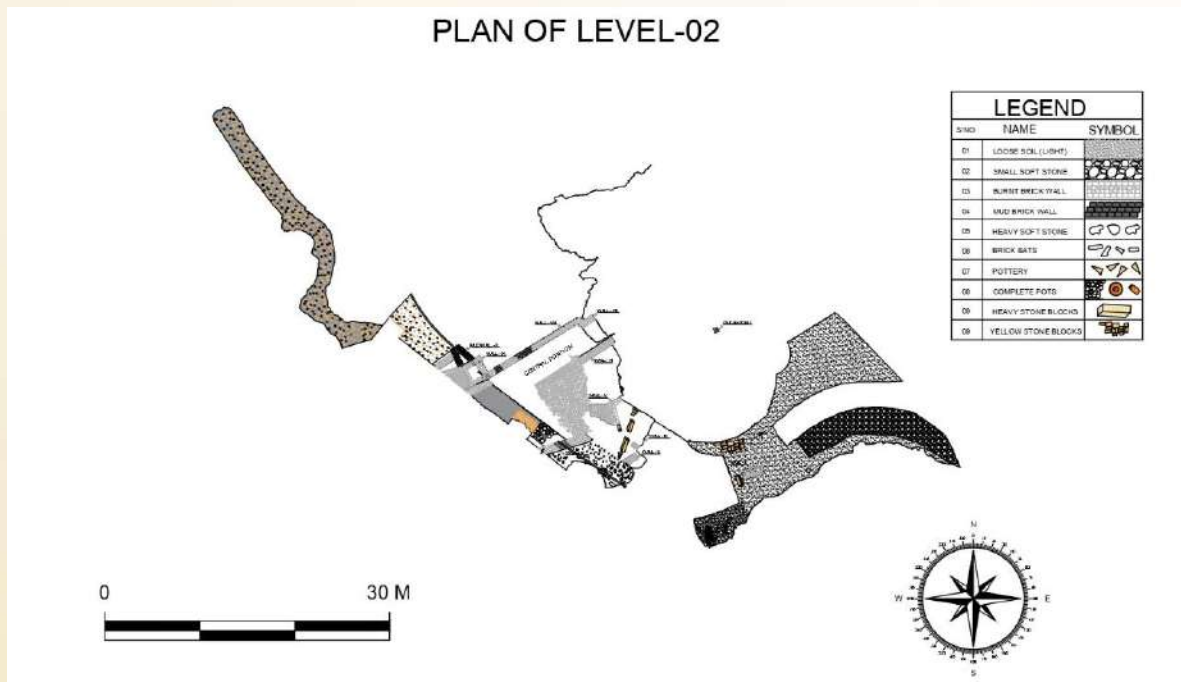


Aerial view of the site showing four Areas 1,2,3 & 4



Aerial view of the site showing datum point and blocks A to G of Area-01





Plan of Rescue Documentation Area of Sehwan Fort (Level-02)

In the above Area-A, block-A apart from the different ceramic traditions of various periods which were found mixed and dumped together, no other feature was observed, however in Block-B of Area A; a very interesting feature was recorded, where a huge collection of some complete and many damaged pots was recorded, conserved and remaining left in situ.



Dumped pots in Area-01 (Block-B)

The other blocks also furnished evidence of walls of earlier period at varying depths and same ceramic traditions.

The Area-02 (Southern wall with bastion) measuring 22 meters in length and about 2 meters in width was exposed up to the depth of 1.5 meters and same two levels were recorded. This area also revealed similar cultural material and mud walls. The digging areas provided dumped and mixed cultural material comprising of plain, painted, glazed, molded, stamped and incised

pottery, terracotta objects, stone, plastic, iron pieces, glass pieces and copper miniature coins. Besides heavy stone blocks, brick bats and some complete bricks were recovered from this area.

Area-3 the southeastern wall measuring 18 meters in length and about 5 meters in width was exposed up to the depth of 2 meters. Here also mixed and dumped cultural material was exposed comprising of plain, painted in red & black, glazed, incised, stamped and molded pottery, terracotta objects, stone, iron and copper.



View of Area-03

The Area-04 was the central part of the entrance gate below the road measuring 24 meters in length and about 10.5 meters in width which was exposed up to the depth of 2.5 meters and two levels were recorded (Level-01 & 02). This area also furnished the similar evidences of the cultural material revealed in other areas.



Close-up of the Area-04 showing stone blocks in the excavated part

Cultural material

A huge repertoire of cultural material was recovered during the Restoration work at Sehwan fort which was collected, cleaned, tagged, conserved (few items) and stored. The cultural material comprised of ceramics, stone objects, terracotta, glass pieces, iron objects, miniature coins and copper objects. The ceramics are being compared with the ceramics of the earlier excavation at Sehwan Fort.

Selected items of the cultural material are presented in this brief preliminary report. The detailed report will be submitted soon for publication.

Selected items of cultural material from the Rescue Documentation of Sehwan Fort



Plain & painted black on red ware pottery



Painted & stamped pottery with mica from Sehwan Fort



Painted, moulded & stamped pottery from Sehwan Fort



Painted, stamped & incised pottery with mica from Sehwan Fort



Glazed potsherds from Sehwan Fort



Restored pot from Sehwan Fort



Yellow stamped & glazed pottery from Sehwan Fort



Lids, oil lamps, painted pottery, stone & terracotta ball & T.C bead from Sehwan Fort



Stone, glass, iron objects & copper miniature coins from Sehwan Fort



Broken terracotta figurines from Sehwan Fort



Terracotta objects from Sehwan Fort



Terracotta objects & animal figurine from Sehwan Fort



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