

French Island sinking in Old Anarkali

The Nation
9-8-00

By Raza Kharal

LAHORE—The French monuments in Kuri Bagh are on the verge of disappearing at the hands of the ravages of time, encroachments and apathy of the authorities concerned. Once called the French Island, this area surrounded by the British and local architecture now has been left with three to four buildings reflecting the French architecture. Only one building constructed by the French themselves in the early part of the 19th century exists.

The area, in the Old Anarkali, beginning from Nabha Road and extending to the shrine of Mauj Darya, was in fact a part of Anarkali Garden. The French were the first to construct residences here which reflected the architecture of their buildings back home in France. Very little of such residences has survived in the last two centuries but what little is left is a testimony to the beautiful French Architecture.

Qasre Fatima (its earlier name could not be confirmed), Maharaja Quarters, The tomb of Marie Charlotte and General Allard are on the verge of disappearing. There is need to conserve the French monuments in the city. What remains of the French Island will not survive the 21st century if concrete steps for the conservation of the monuments are not taken immediately.

According to a survey conducted by *The Nation* and Institute of Heritage Education, the history of the buildings dates back to times of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh, when Lahore became the capital of a powerful kingdom in the early 19th century. The challenge to the Sikh throne due to the increasing influence of British led the Maharaja to adopt defensive measures.

He invited European military experts from the adversaries of Great Britain. The influence of these Generals and their families can be traced back even after a period of

almost two centuries in the physical and cultural heritage of Lahore reflected through the monuments of French Island.

General Ventura, one of the

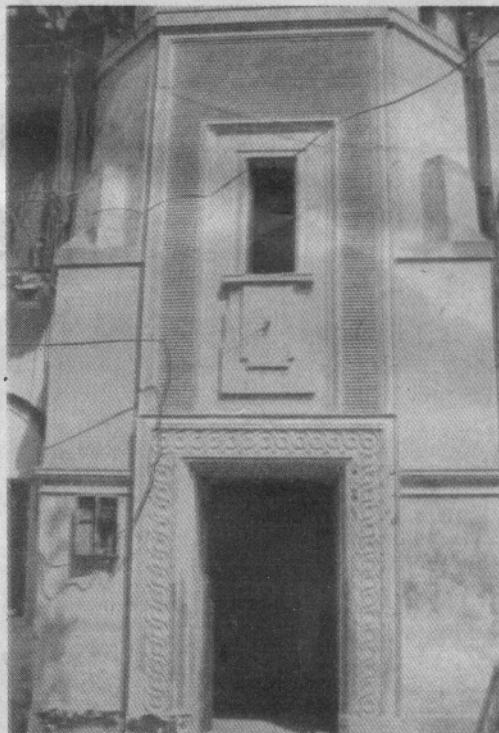
companions of Napoleon and an Italian by birth, reached India in search of livelihood and patronage. He was engaged by Maharaja Ranjeet Singh in 1822 to train the

Sikh Army on European tactics. He was given the contract as a soldier, infantry and served as a commander and as a military campaigns. Ranjeet Singh. He served for more than 10 years. Maharaja paid him large amounts. Ventura lived in a converted residential building, locally known as Tomb of Marie Charlotte, but soon he purchased a piece of land and built a garden and house of his choice.

It was situated in the Anarkali area in the shrine of Mauj Darya. It came Tax offices, Maharaja's and Gardee Tomb. Soon after construction of Ventura's French style house does not exist. French colleague General Allard also built a house in the garden Marie Charlotte. She was the daughter of General Allard in 1827. She was buried in the corner of this garden. It came to be known as 'garden' and in other parts of Kuri Bagh. General Allard is buried here in 1827. The structure exists today surrounded by other buildings and legal encroachments.

There was an epitaph on the Tomb of Allard and Marie Charlotte "When I die let my body be buried in Lahore and my resting place be in the Anarkali. Actual area was about 48 marlas and 136 hath. The area has been completely covered by the structure of the tomb now. The tomb was a part of the Department of Archaeology, Lahore.

It comes under the jurisdiction of Shalimar Garden.



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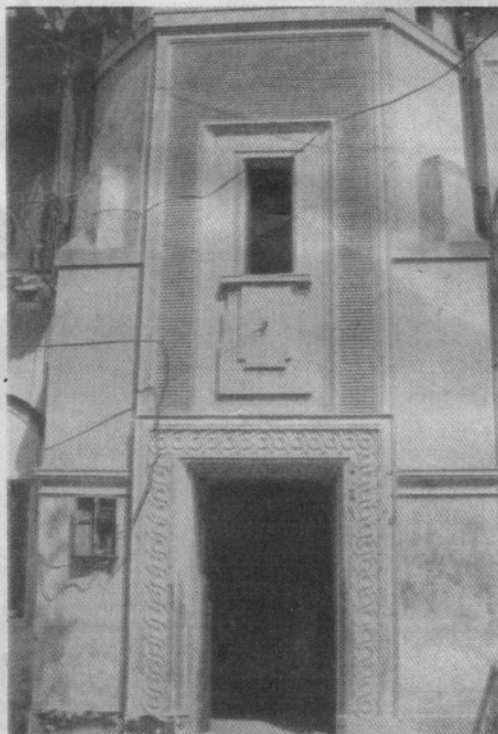
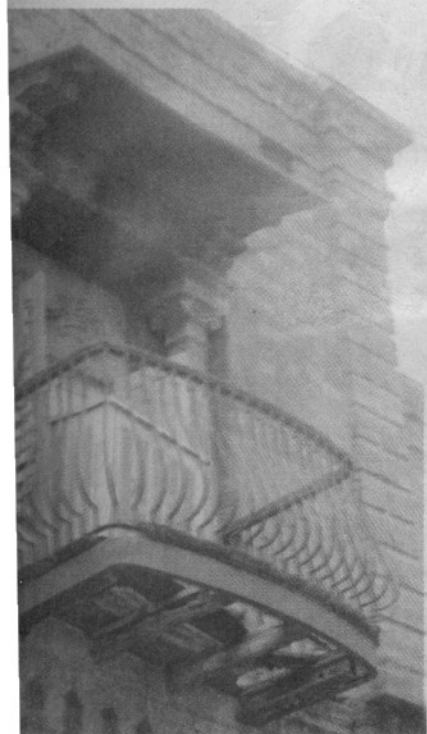
companions of Napoleon and an
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search of livelihood and patronage.
He was engaged by Maharaja
Ranjeet Singh in 1822 to train the

Sikh Army on European lines. He
was given the control of Sikh in-
fantry and served as an instructor,
commander and adviser during
military campaigns of Maharaja
Ranjeet Singh. He remained in
service for more than twenty years.
Maharaja paid him handsome
amounts. Ventura lived at a con-
verted residential building origi-
nally known as Tomb of Anarkali
but soon he purchased a large
piece of land and built his own
garden and house according to his
choice.

It was situated in the present Old
Anarkali area in the vicinity of the
shrine of Mauj Darya Bukhari, In-
come Tax offices, Munshi Cham-
bers and Gardee Trust Building
.Soon after construction of
Ventura's French style house (the
house does not exist now), his
French colleague General
Allard also built a bungalow in
the garden Marie Charlotte, the
daughter of General Allard died
in 1827. She was buried in the
corner of this garden, which
came to be known as 'daughter
garden' and in other words Kuri
Bagh. General Allard was also
buried here in 1839. The tomb
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rounded by other buildings and il-
legal encroachments.

There was an epitaph on the
Tomb of Allard and Marie Char-
lotte "When I die let my grave be
in Lahore and my remains be in
the Anarkali. Actual area of the
tomb was about 48 kanals, 16
marlas and 136 *hath* (hands). The
area has been compressed and only
the structure of the tomb is visible
now. The tomb was adopted by the
Department of Archaeology Paki-
stan.

It comes under the Administra-
tion of Shalimar Gardens.



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