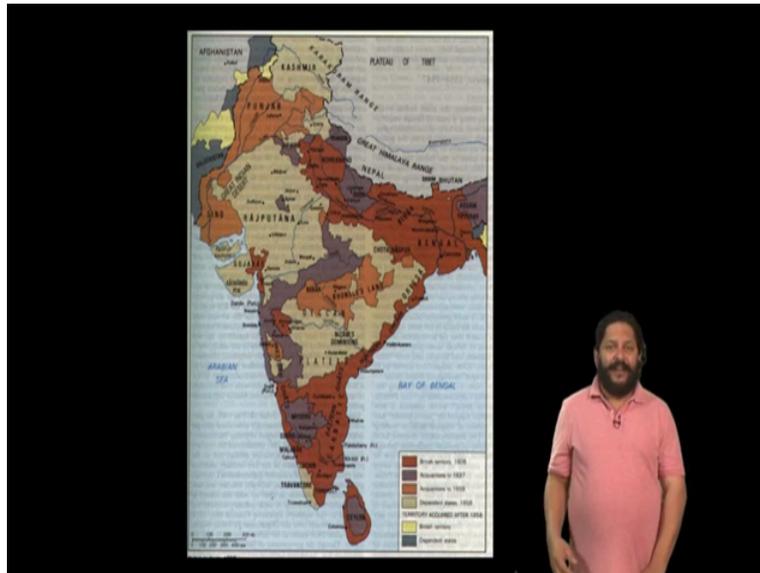


Introduction to History of Architecture in India
Dr. Pushkar Sohoni
Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Pune
Princely States of India

Today we will talk of the architecture of the princely states of India these were political formation that began in the 18th century with the downfall of the Mughal empire as the Mughal empire fragmented, weakened and lost a number of its provinces governors that the Mughals had appointed declared independence in addition a number of small independent states also became more assertive and started building grand buildings while feuding with each other.

(Refer Slide Time: 00:52)



Through the 18th, 19th and even the early 20th century the whole Indian subcontinent was a complete patchwork of territories held by these small princely states variously titled rajas, maharajas, nawabs and nizams these princely states were eventually absorbed into a patchwork of territorial holdings that the British acquired.

While the British had their presidencies in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta all three of whom have changed names since, the rest of the country almost a third of it was under the control of these princely states in an effort to outdo each other initially they built in the style of the Mughals building grand palaces using a mogul architectural vocabulary.

But once they sign treaties of subsidiary alliance with the British their new masters were the British and in many ways they started absorbing British architecture and needless to say British architects we will look at some of these palaces today and look at how their architecture changed through time many of these palaces were built in the 18th century but over the course of the next hundred and fifty to two hundred years there were additions accretions and modifications and thus what you have is a palimpsest in any one palace of at least 150 years.

(Refer Slide Time: 02:30)



Let us look at the palace of the maharaja of Patiala, built in the beginning in the 1780s it was added to by every successive king the whole complex known as kila mubarak is in the middle of

the bustling city it has at least ten courtyards which control the flow of traffic and people throughout.

What you see is an aerial shot of this palace displaying the complexity within because it is in the heart of the city today one enters it through a maze of narrow streets it has all the usual trappings of a Mughal palace a big gateway even, a gallery on top for musicians and guard chambers flanking the big entrance the entrance is large because the king if he ever moved in and out publicly would do so on the back of an elephant.

(Refer Slide Time: 03:37)



There are large parts of it which now front the commercial streets around and you can only get the pristine grandeur of this palace if you concentrate on the upper stories the lower stories are all shops, large parts of the palace betray English and European influences.

(Refer Slide Time: 04:00)



Once you enter through the main gate there is a massive courtyard which would be about the limit to which the public and that too only the privileged public would be allowed nobody else would be allowed further in that was so because this was the big maidan the assembly point for the whole palace in front of it is a building called durbar hall where the king would sit in

audience look at the roofline of the palace which is borrowing forms completely from a Mughal idiom, you have the bangla roofs and the chatris that punctuate the skyline completely.

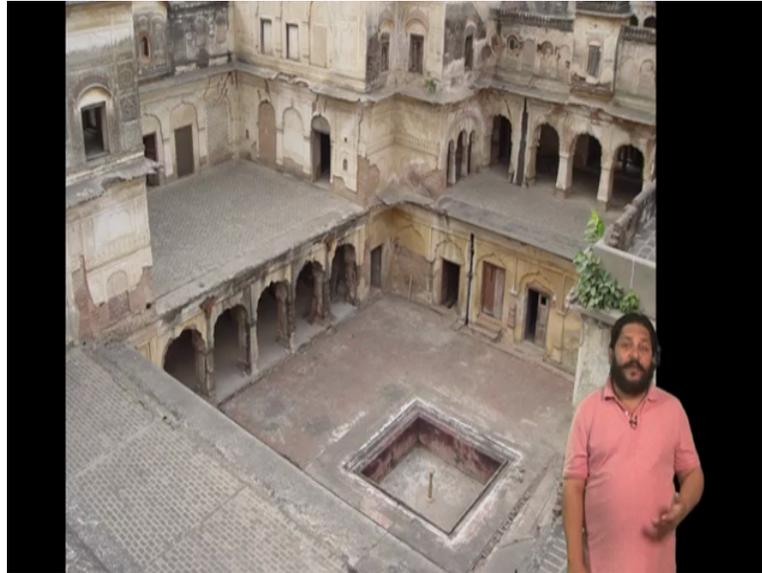
(Refer Slide Time: 04:44)

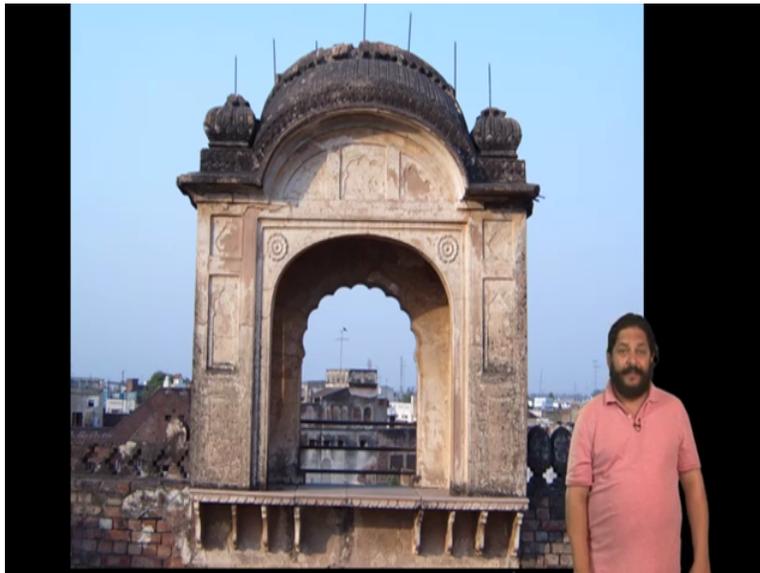
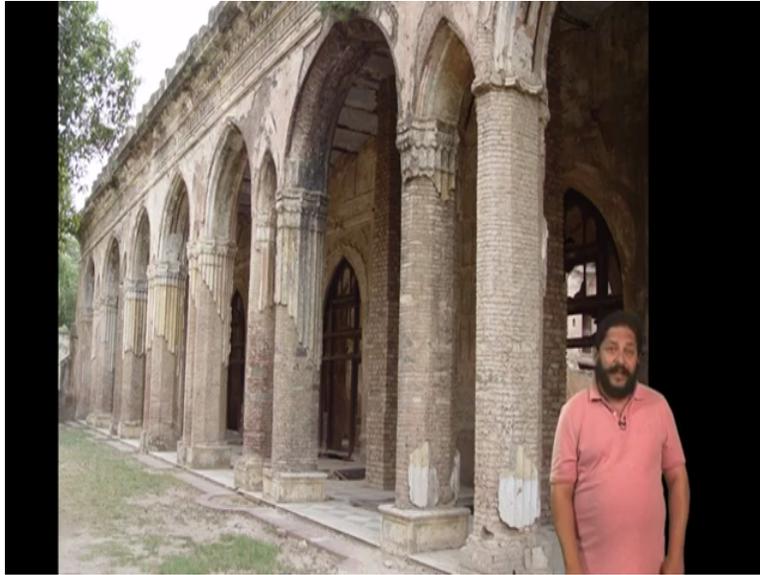


Durbar hall is a curiously European structure which has ornament that is Indian but the whole scale, the proportions and even some of the details such as the gable roofs are completely European but beyond this big public square inside what is known as the kila andhrun or the inner palace are rooms that surround a series of courtyards, these courtyards appear in a bewildering set of scales and sizes, they are also laid out differently because they serve completely different

purposes, this courtyard for example was very obviously a pleasure garden again deriving its plan from the Mughal char bagh of a quadripartite garden with some kind of focus in the middle.

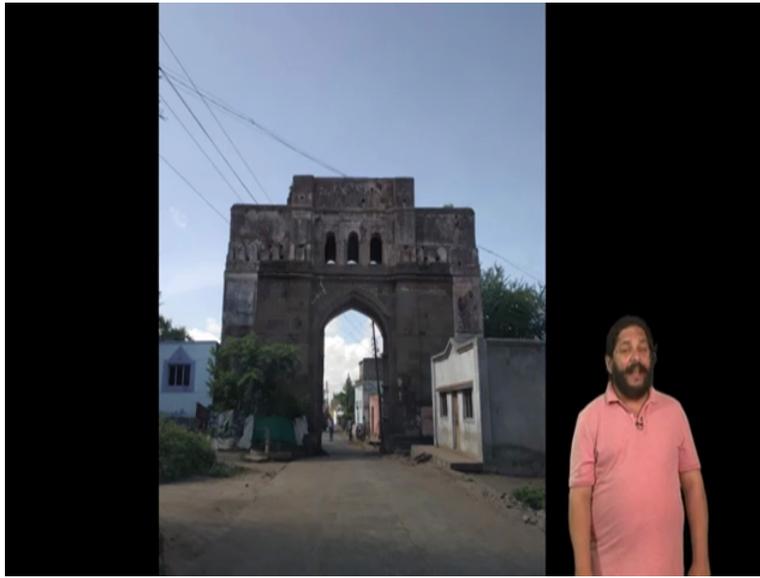
(Refer Slide Time: 05:41)





Other courtyards might have solitary fountains, terraces all around these one can surmise were used for residential quarters within the palace grounds you also have buildings that have to be built in the nineteenth century and they are incredibly European style not just because of the classical columns that they use but also because in places you have gothic arches fluted columns with capitals marble fireplaces and the likes this building was built as a museum, the roofline as we mentioned before completely borrows on Mughal forms and for most people it is the skyline it is the roofline that defines the building because that is all you could see at a distance.

(Refer Slide Time: 06:36)





Now we look at another palace which is really used in the 19th century built being built in the late 18th this is at a place called Chandwad close to Nasik this palace was built by the this palace was built by the Holkars when they control large parts of central India, even the village itself which has the palace has an enormous gatehouse in Portal, the actual palace just like the palace at Patiala is set in the middle of a congested semi urban fabric one enters through great stone walls passing enormous doors that are clad with spikes to prevent elephants from charging once inside similar to Patiala you have a big courtyard and this would be the extent to which most of the public would be allowed beyond that you see an imposing facade.

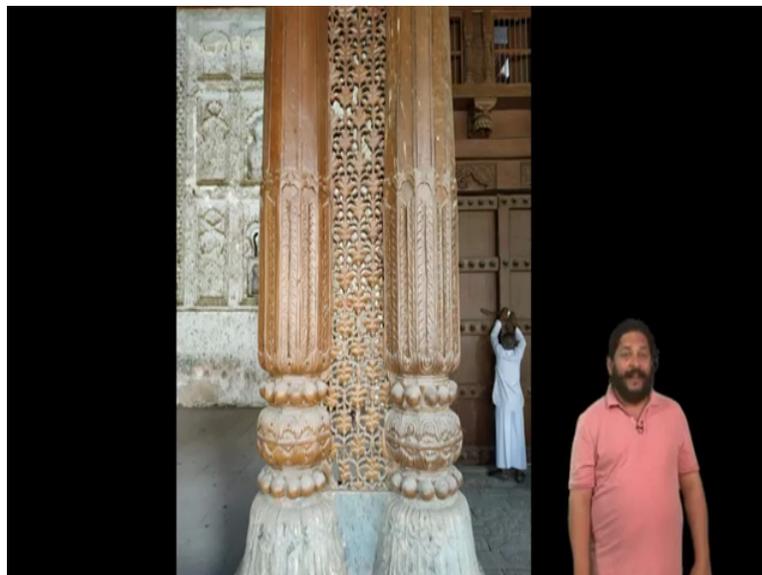
(Refer Slide Time: 07:40)





Looking back the gatehouse itself is very different from what you find in this period if one looks at the gatehouse from the palace itself one sees the picturesque landscape that this palace had set in, before entering the palace proper one must appreciate the woodwork and the stucco plaster work that ornament this palace in its entirety,

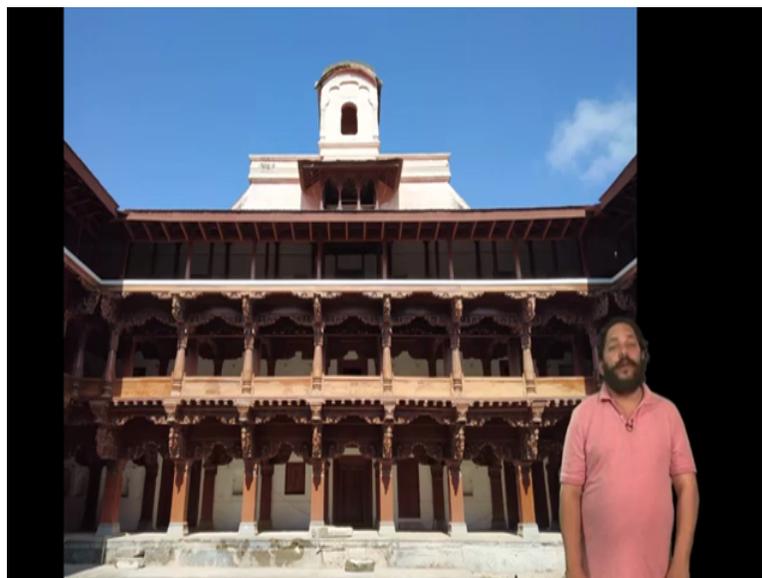
(Refer Slide Time: 08:08)





The front facade of the palace would be the place where people would be stopped, screened and most likely only members of the royal household would be allowed to pass, a lot of the designs that you see in the wood are also replicated in the plaster on the wall behind, inside one enters the large courtyard which is grand in scale but not really for the public, this would be the kind of semipublic courtyard where only people who had real business were allowed.

(Refer Slide Time: 08:47)



The palace is three stories tall with enormous amounts of timber framing and decorative woodwork the first courtyard is incredibly ornate and has fine examples of the kind of woodwork one would expect in a palace. The third story has undergone serious restoration and therefore does not have the same kind of style as the bottom two stories.

(Refer Slide Time: 09:18)





The ornamental woodwork which you see in the first courtyard is not quite replicated in the second one so as we leave the first courtyard and go through a set of rooms we see that the rooms are actually painted, large parts of it are in disrepair and the Maharashtra state department of archaeology and museums is carrying out an extensive program for conserving this palace.

(Refer Slide Time: 09:48)



The second courtyard is of a much more intimate scale and of a domestic nature what has to be appreciated though is simple devices like railings and screens also create beautiful patterns so not all ornament has to be seen on the walls a lot of it also is the interplay of nature and built form.

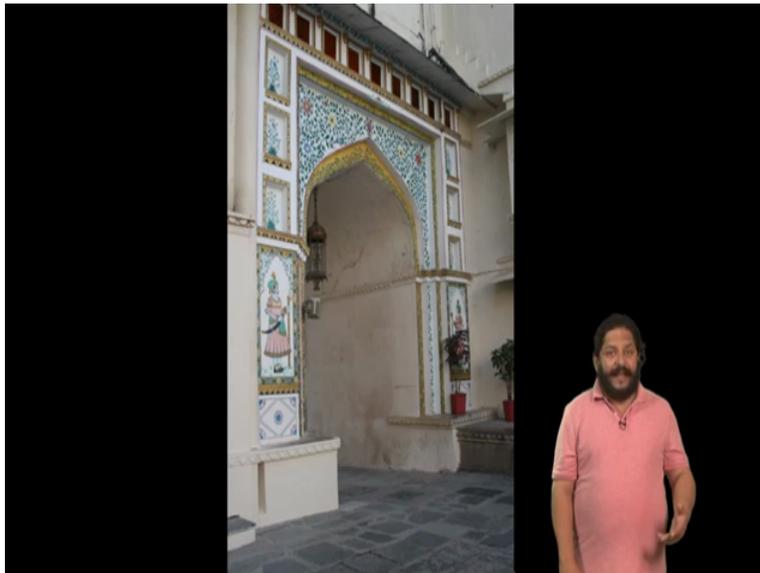
(Refer Slide Time: 10:12)



The rooms themselves are long galleries which might have housed staff, servants and soldiers on the outside beyond the second courtyard is another courtyard within the enclosure which has an enormous well but it is here that you can look back and appreciate the fancy brickwork.

(Refer Slide Time: 10:33)







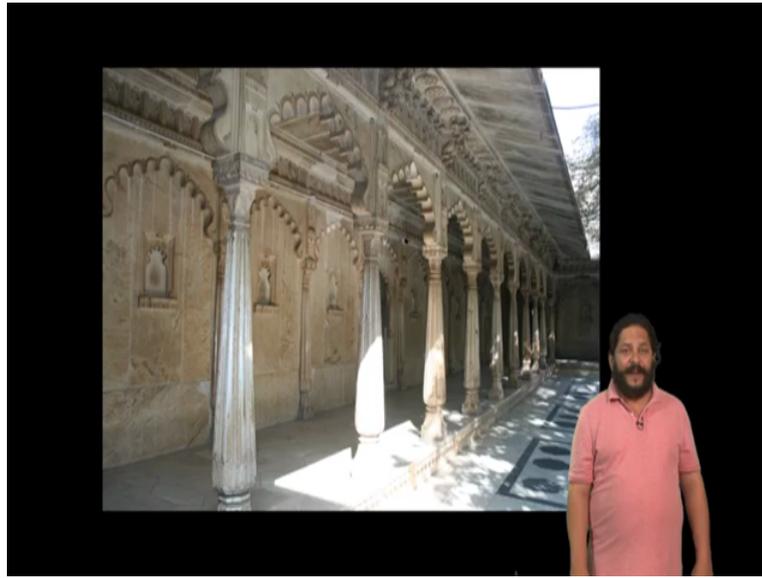
We shall now move back north to Rajasthan and take a quick look at the Palace of Udaipur again very typical of the Rajput palaces emulating all models of Rajput Mughal architecture, the gateway to the palace itself which is outside through which one enters and sees the palace you enter through a series of portals where visitors would have been controlled they diminish in size you have all kinds of ornamental beautiful details.

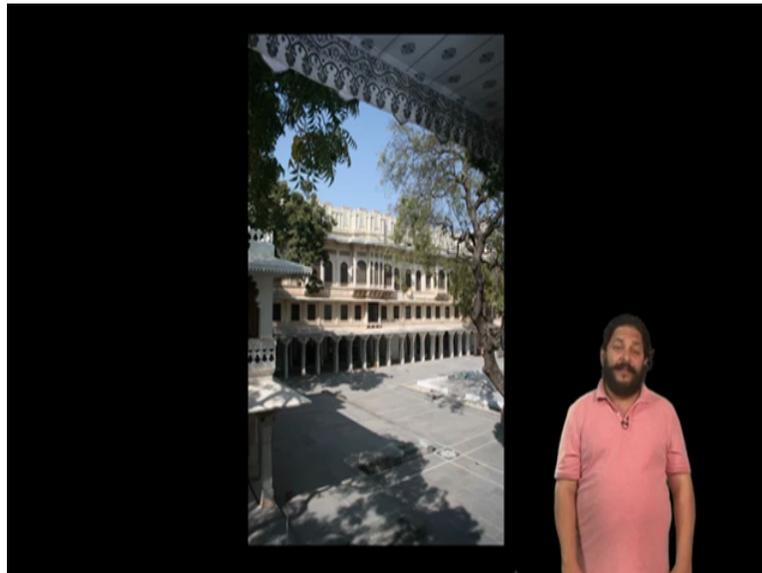
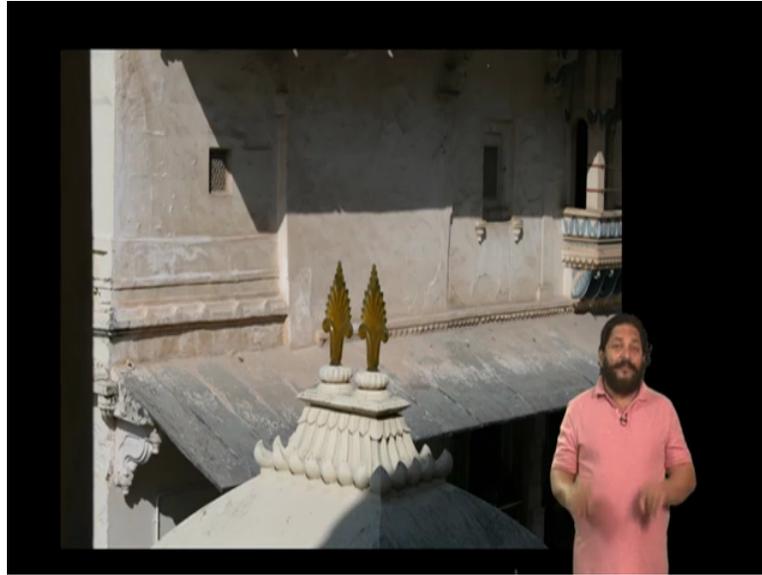
(Refer Slide Time: 11:11)



And from right on top you have magnificent views of the city of Udaipur because this palace is built on the highest ground inside again courtyards do define all these palaces this really is the essence of domestic Indian architecture.

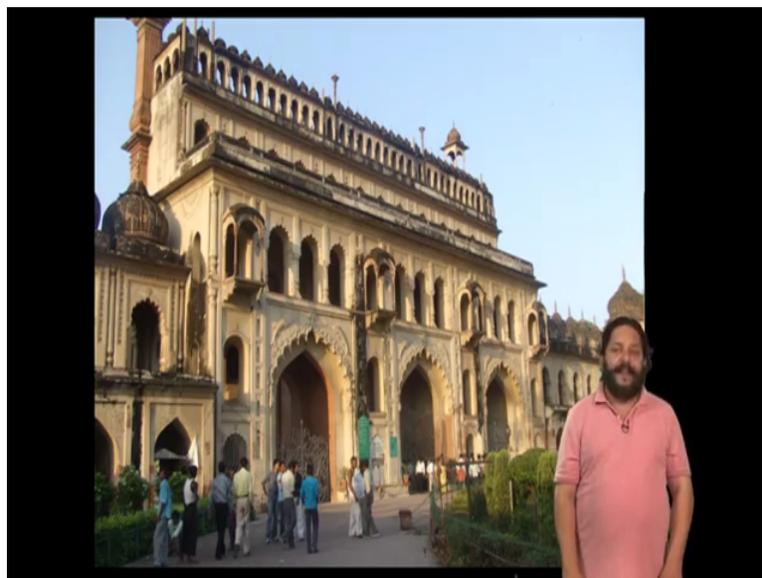
(Refer Slide Time: 11:29)





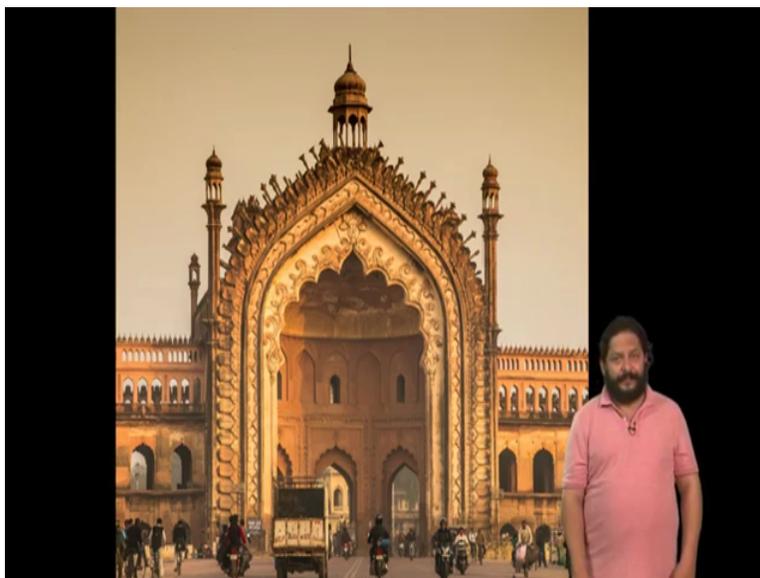
The courtyards are very often flanked by long galleries where people can sit and live out parts of their day and again the top has a Mughal architectural vocabulary, a number of these palaces in the 18th and particularly 19th century used to import large amounts of materials from Europe or other places in the world so for example timber from Burma, tiles from Italy, glass from Belgium were the kind of stock tropes in the palace of Udaipur even the finials are made out of Belgian glass, again the palace was added to over time and there are all kinds of extensions that show different kinds of architectural changes.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:22)



We will quickly look at Lucknow where not exactly a palace but the emam badas get built by the nawabs in the 1780s and a style that might be thought of as very late Mughal with European touches really gets invented here.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:44)





A number of European buildings also exist in Lucknow side by side with this late mannerist Mughal architecture gates like the Rumi gate which really are one of a kind are part of this new or very late post Mughal expression, these have been celebrated in paintings in prints as this one from the British library for a very long time.

(Refer Slide Time: 13:15)



And of course the big imam bada and mosque was meant ultimately as an exercise in social welfare because all the people employed on building this were employed to relieve from the big drought that had struck Lucknow.

(Refer Slide Time: 13:37)



Now last we will look at Hyderabad which has a number of palaces but the one we look at is called the chowmahalla palace which again like all these palaces was built over 200 years and what you see is some of the last traditions a clock tower over a gatehouse.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:01)







As you enter the palace you see a number of chatris and trees and then big courtyards in which you have pools of water with buildings on all four sides, now wonderfully restored, the chowmahalla palace also has the qilwa hall which is the grand durbar hall again if you look at the architecture of this there are elements that are European, there are elements that are very Mughal and there are elements that can only be described as Hyderabadi, a style that they invent for themselves.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:44)



The point of showing all these palaces and we cannot cover all of them because every princely state in India will build a palace, a trend that you see over time is that from a Mughal

architectural vocabulary they slowly start moving towards a European vocabulary and in some cases they will hire British architects to design for them buildings that are described as indo saracenic, a style that we shall see under the British and under the colonial administration in a later session.

Here you have on top left the palace at Chipauk in Madras now Chennai, on the top right you have the Mysore palace on the bottom left you have the Laxmi Vilas palace in Baroda and right here on the bottom right you have the Umaid Bhavan Palace in Jodhpur.

All these palaces are built between the very late 19th or the early 20th century almost all designed by British architects these designs try to fuse Victorian European planning with ornament and detail taken from all over India imagining that this is the way the new Mughals will build so thus to summarize the four important things we see in all palace buildings from the princely states are the use of courtyards, the profusion of Mughal ornament, details that are sometimes European and an aspiration to emulate the highest rulers of the land once the Mughals and later the British.

Thus we now see in the 18th century a very important transitional time when not only tastes change but the political formation of the country is changing rapidly the Mughals are notionally and nominally the emperors of India but a number of small principalities have decided increasingly to assert their independence one of the ways in which they achieve this is by creating for themselves a unique and identifiable architectural style yet the contingencies of climate labor available material and historical baggage which they all share leads to certain common forms as we mentioned courtyards are unavoidable so are certain cultural forms of projecting power like hosting a durbar.

Eventually the British will also have aspirations to do the same they will invent an architectural style that they think is suitable for India they think that in order to govern India they have to do as the last emperors of India have done they design for themselves durbars they embrace courtyard planning but they also bring with them elements of architecture from home but they learn to adapt these elements to suit the local climate.

Princely states fragmenting and creating regional identities is a process that we've seen earlier when the Delhi sultanate loses grip over most of the Indian subcontinent and you have the rise of

various smaller sultanates and kingdoms all across India that is when you have new ideas of what it means to be from a certain region and these sultanates will vary in their use of materials ornament and even sometimes design similarly the princely states will try and assert their independence architectural but as soon as you have a strong political power in the British all of them will emulate the British.

The British will invent for them a style that they think is appropriate and all the princely states will build for themselves new palaces or sometimes add to existing ones in a style made for them in that sense the political value of architecture and who controls the discourse can clearly be seen in the case of the princely states again in architecture there are no victors or losers it is after all just a movement of ideas just as the princely states follow the Mughals and then the British let us not forget that the British also learned a lot architecturally in India which they will take back home with them building garden follies and big palaces for their own king the royal pavilion and brighton which we will see later, thank you.