HISTORICAL FABULATION: A FRAMEWORK TO RETHINK THE ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE OUTSIDE ISLAMIC WORLD

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Abstract  
The current study offers a critical interpretation of the more transient traces of Islam in Australia, and their representation in the equally scanty tangible evidences. The scope of recent surveys in this field is increasingly inclusive. However, very few studies focus on the architecture of Muslim communities in regions where Islam is not the predominant faith, especially in the southern hemisphere. The historical Adelaide Mosque, and many others, is excluded from the historical record despite the instrumental role it played in the life of Muslim settlers. This absence raises questions about gaps, or histories untold, as well as myths received, in histories of 'Islamic' architecture that raise questions about the truth-value of the past. There is a need to examine hybridized forms and shared architectural narratives to counter the myopic but persistent representation—or fabulation—of supposedly authentic, largely Arab-centric, forms of 'Islamic' architecture. This paper argues, then, that new theoretical frameworks are required to interpret this architectural hybrid that is, we argue, typical rather than exceptional.

Keywords: Islamic architecture; Adelaide mosque; hybrid architecture; resilience; assimilation.

INTRODUCTION  
This paper would address the little known and inadequately documented facet of history of Islamic Diaspora in Australia. This was the instrumental role played by the Muslim camel drivers, popularly known as ‘cameleers’, in the settlement history of modern Australia. The first group of Muslim cameleers arrived in Australia in 1860. In the decades that followed the number was increasing as many more camel drivers were brought in on a regular basis, and by the beginning of the 20th century there were around 4000 cameleers or Muslims in Australia.

Although some of them saved their money, and returned to their homelands after the contract, many remained behind and gradually settled down from their nomadic life by mingling and intermarriage with the locals. The latter formed the first Muslim ummah (community) in Australia, who struggled to establish their identity by constructing religious structure for prayers. However, currently only a handful of buildings and tombstones located sparsely in the vast outback are among the few surviving traces of the ‘Muslim’ presence in colonial Australia. For many Australians as well as Muslims, these are the only remains of a blurred and almost illusive phenomenon in the settlement history of Australia. These architectural remains might be scant but they are the only evidences so far in tracing the Islamic traces in the history of Australian civilization.
The little works done so far in this particular area mostly focused on the socio-cultural, and anthropological aspects of the problem. Very little or almost no work have been done yet addressing the architectural aspects. Albeit these small mosques scattered around outback Australia with their diversified and hybridized architectural forms are the only tangible evidence of the material culture as well as their resilience and assimilation in different parts of Australia.

HISTORICAL QUESTIONS

While the traces of most of the early mosques in Australia was almost non existent due to their temporary nature of construction, the Adelaide mosque with its bluestone masonry is still surviving as witness of the bygone era of the Muslim cameleers in Australia. In terms of planning and architectural language this early twentieth century structure marked its striking difference in the townscape of colonial Adelaide with its hybrid features. According to the official Heritage guide to the City of Adelaide, it is “one of the few relics of Afghan immigration to South Australia and embodies in built form Afghan and Mohammedan culture which is otherwise not significantly represented.” (City of Adelaide Heritage Study Item No. 159, Adelaide Mosque file, Heritage South Australia, 1984) However, a little work has been done to understand this atypical building in terms of its architecture. As architecture these mosques represent a particular time and material culture of the people who belong to these. It reflects their value system, their social status, resilience and assimilation and most importantly their imaginary parallel of a homely space in a foreign and apparently hostile land. This paper is intended to reveal the complete architectural narrative of the history of these building in to answer two historical questions. Firstly,

if we assume Architecture is a representation of the material culture as of a particular group of people then how can we reconstruct or refill the lacunae regarding the particular cultural history Muslim cameleer with the scanty amount traces of building that it left? And also how these urban mosques with its hybrid architectural characteristics could represent the Islamic culture in colonial Australia and the spatial concepts of the first generation Muslims in an alienated landscape?

The current study offers a critical interpretation of the more transient traces of Islam in Australia, and their representation in the equally scanty tangible evidences. From the particular points of view of Architectural history, it would attempt to discern different historical layers that overlapped and infused together to shape the architecture of these mosques. However from the perspective of settlement history the mosque should be studied under Islamic Diaspora; how did the Muslim migrants and their spatial concepts had been realized in a non Muslim environment? It needs to be recorded as part of the resilience and compromise of the early Muslims and their continuous effort of assimilation.

Few studies focus on the architecture of Muslim communities in regions where Islam is not the predominant faith, especially in the southern hemisphere. The hybridized form of the Adelaide Mosque, which was recently measured and documented by the principle author and which will be examined in this paper, is an important counterpoint to historical confabulations which champion selective, supposedly authentic, largely Arab-centric—possibly mythologised—forms of 'Islamic' architecture or privilege the dynastic marvels of imperial patrons. This paper argues, then, that a new theoretical framework is required to interpret architectural hybrids like the Adelaide Mosque.

ARCHITECTURE OF THE HYBRIDITY AND SYMBIOSIS

The Hybrid Community

The cameleers were tribesmen from Afghanistan and the northwest frontier province and they belonged to four main ethnic groups: Pashtun, Baluchi, Sindhi and Punjabi. Each group had cultural and linguistic differences and while Islam was introduced into the region between the 7th and 10th centuries, providing a common bond for the cameleers in Australia, their “faith blended with local custom such as the Pashtun code of honour, the Pashtunwali ” (Jones 2007). The number of Muslims were increasing gradually as in the wake of the camel men came the Indian hawkers and merchants. Arriving from Karachi, Peshawar, Baluchistan, the Punjab and Bengal,
hawkers travelled across the Australian countryside, offering their merchandise for sale to remote settlers. They were supplied by wholesale merchants, who opened small shops in the towns and cities. With the progress of time these people, coming from different part of British India formed the first Muslim community in Australia. Although they belonged to different socio-cultural and linguistic group, in the context of Eurocentric Australian society they were generally known as ‘Cameleers’ or Afghan.

Hence, the origins of the cameleers were plural and in Australia their language and customs were increasingly hybrid through cohabitation with each other as well as intermarriage by the cameleers with Indigenous women and European women who had been marginalised from Anglo-Australian society for a variety of reasons (Ganter, 2008). In this context, it is unsurprising that this also led to hybridised architectural forms.

The Issues of Hybridity and Symbiosis

However, the discourse of hybrid architecture, or indeed the hybridity of Muslim communities, is a recent phenomenon in studies of ‘Islamic’ architecture. In the opening essay to Intervention Architecture (2007) featuring the winners of the 10th cycle of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture (AKAA), Homi K. Bhabha identifies an “ethic of global relatedness that reflects the ideals of a pluralist umma at the heart of Muslim societies which is repeatedly celebrated by the cycle of awards.” (Bhaba, 2007).

Farshid Moussavi further argued as, “Through their cosmopolitan societies Cairo, Leeds, Istanbul and Kuala Lumpur are being drawn ever closer together. Hybrid identities and cultures are emerging through the ‘intersection and combination’ of identities with other identities (Ulrich Beck), which then determines social integration. Cosmopolitanism is generated through hybridity and the transformation that arises from new and unexpected combinations of cultures and ideas. Unlike Universalist ideas that enforce one vision of reality, cosmopolitanism is avowedly pluralist.” (Mousavi, 2007).

This stance is presented in contradistinction to the historiography of ‘Islamic’ architecture: “As opposed to starting from an imagined whole (as is the case with stylistic approaches), the whole is grown out of the hybridisation of the parts, akin to the way hybrid identities evolve in individuals. Hybridisation transforms fixed architectural categories and unleashes possibilities for architectural experimentation.” (Mousavi, 2007).

However, the focus of these essays by Bhabha and Moussavi is on contemporary buildings and landscapes located within the traditional geographical band of the Islamic world: Egypt, Lebanon, Yemen, Burkina Faso, Bangladesh, and Malaysia etc. This perception of hybridity advocated by Moussavi, corresponds to a positive and celebratory discursive shift that is also identified by anthropologists Kapchan and Strong: “Viktor Turner noted that ‘what was once considered ‘contaminated,’ ‘promiscuous,’ ‘impure’ [was] becoming the focus of postmodern analytical attention.” (Kapchan and Strong 1999) Such derogatory apppellations of hybridity can be identified in representations of Islamic architecture from Isfahan to Delhi.

However, this paper presents the argument that architectural hybridisation is not limited to post-colonial cities or, as Moussavi argues, to the post-national condition. It is a phenomenon that goes hand-in-hand with the mobility that has long characterised the emergence and diffusion of Islam, the submission to Islam by peoples of different cultural backgrounds, and the mobility of Muslims whether for the purpose of the Hajj, the fulfilment of knowledge (العرف), missionary imperatives, ambassadorial exchange, or travel for the sake of curiosity.

It is necessary, then, to reflect on a definition of hybridity and its antecedent symbiosis, and to draw parallels between architecture as a material expression of culture and language as an intangible expression of culture.

Putting aside well rehearsed nineteenth century definitions of hybrid architecture that echo Turner’s identification of ‘contaminated,’ ‘promiscuous’ or ‘impure’ unions, this paper interprets the hybrid as a heterogeneous union akin to the creativity or experimentation of a new word compounded from elements from different languages. Importantly, the union may be plural.
Applying this interpretation of hybridity to architecture, Bermudez and Hermanson (1996) identify the human body as a hybrid based on symbiotic relationships that defy any clear-cut dualist differentiation. They argue that architecture oscillates, “between a call to express our time and a call to creatively resist it. Rather than taking a side, we suggest considering the ‘hybrid’ and ‘symbiotic’ as mutually compatible, yet paradoxical states that offer architecture further choice and evolution.” (Bermudes and Hermanson, 1996). Symbiosis, then, defined as “a mutually beneficial relationship between people, things or groups” precedes hybridity (Casell, 1997). According to Kurokawa (1996), symbiosis implies a relationship of mutual need between different parties in which there still could be competition, opposition, and struggle as long as there are common elements and values that keep the interaction going. He adds that “the concept of symbiosis is basically a dynamic pluralism. It does not seek to reconcile binomial opposites through dialectics…” (Kurokawa, 1994). A plural and polyvalent process emerges whereby hybridity and symbiosis can be perceived as the generators of creative and dynamic historical processes which shape diverse morphological outcomes.

ARCHITECTURE OF ADELAIDE MOSQUE

Beginning

The transformation of the architecture of Adelaide mosque is the tangible evidence of the Muslims in Adelaide and their gradual assimilation with the Australian Society. The historical narrative of the mosque, its transformation, alteration and extension is directly related with the status of the Muslims in the society.

“O People who Believe! When the call for prayer is given on (Friday) the day of congregation, rush towards the remembrance of Allah and stop buying and selling; this is better for you if you understand. And when the prayer ends, spread out in the land and seek Allah’s munificence, and profusely remember Allah, in the hope of attaining success” (Qur’an 62:9., 62:10).

These verses from the Holy Qur’an aptly describe the life a Muslim should live and how it is integrated with religious pursuit. The majority of early cameleers were practicing Muslims. Although living in an alienated environment, they never forgot the customs and religious traditions of their homelands. However, the camaraderie and the sense ummah (community) that Islam bestows upon Muslims was absent in their early years in outback Australia. There were no mosques to provide a sense of belonging. Daily prayers were performed in the desert or empty bushland. With the increasing number of early Australian Muslims the need to build their own mosques was felt overwhelmingly. The mud and tin-roofed mosques in remote areas like Marree (Hergott Spring) and Coolgardie were early instances of creating a place that concretised the sense of ummah for this small and isolated group along with the formation of the Ghantowns. These mosques not only provided space for prayers, they were places for gathering and celebrating particular religious events together that strengthened the ummah. For example, the highlights of the year were the celebrations for Eid ul-Fitr, marking the end of Ramadan (the month of fasting), and Eid ul-Adha, 90 days later. According to Islam, fasting should not be undertaken while travelling, so the men would cease working and join together during Ramadan. At the end of the 30 days, during which no food, water or tobacco could pass their lips from sunrise to sunset, the men would enjoy the Eid-ul-Fitr celebration. On festival days there was no loneliness, just plenty of food, laughter, smiles and stories as they lounged around, feasting and enjoying each other's company” (National Archive of Australia).

Failing to obtain government support to secure land for the mosque, Muslims in Adelaide took the initiative to build their own mosque in 1890. Haji Mullah Mehrban the Afghan leader was the driving force behind the mosque. (SA Registar, 1890) Another Afghan leader Abdul Wade purchased the land at 20 Little Gilbert Street from a European settler and built on the land with the financial support of the Afghan community in Adelaide. Abdul Wade was the rightful owner of the mosque building from 1890-1920. The form of the mosque demonstrates the pluralistic and
hybrid nature of the early Muslim community and their aspiration to assimilate with the broader Australian community. In its early stage the mosque was basically a humble stone and brick structure situated on a small back street in the southwest quarter of downtown Adelaide. In terms of architecture it is a simple rectangular building (approximately 12m x 7.5m) with unadorned bluestone masonry under a simple hip-gabled roof, a typical feature of Adelaide architecture. The street facing mihrab and the arched windows and the doorways were the only distinguishing features, while the building itself is similar in scale and construction to adjacent residential buildings of the same period. At the same time these are the most conscious attempt to create an imaginary parallel of typical mosque back home. The main prayer hall was entered through a verandah. A small walled garden was located on the East with a rectangular tank for ablution. If we compare this little prayer space of the early Muslims, the intention of claiming a place- a foothold- in this alienated land is quite evident.

As the Indian subcontinent (including present day Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh) has a strong legacy of mosque building under the Pre-Mughal Muslim and Mughal rule, the Afghan cameleers would have had preconceived ideas about the appropriate form of a mosque. These ideas could not be realized fully with limited funds, inexpert labor or unfamiliar resources. However, there is an attempt to keep the basic morphology of the mosque unchanged. The sequence of space that can be commonly observed in a typical South Asian mosque, the transition from external to internal space is successful. A place for ablution was provided as well as a means to mitigate the extremes of heat, which was also a very common feature of mosques in their homeland. Hence, the description of the mosque by Sayed Jalal Shah (1915) “…with a basin in the yard for ablutions and a garden with fig trees and vineyard” seems to be exaggerated to some extent, but it renders the aspirations of the users of the mosques and how they wanted it to emulate mosques on the subcontinent. Their ambition and aspirations were also reflected when Jalal Shah further reported “£500 was currently being raised to build a madrasa (school) for the instruction of the children of the growing Muslim community” (Stevens, 2002).

Creating Sense of ‘Place’

For the next decades Adelaide mosque became the ‘place’ for gathering and bonding for the apparently loose community of the Muslims working throughout the central and eastern interior of Australia. Visits of the cameleers to this urban mosque were generally infrequent because of distance and their wandering nature of work; usually as a place of rest and retreat from their routine expeditions, particularly during the holy month of Ramadan. However, it gradually became the social hub for the cameleers during their interval between the journeys as well as for the Muslim settlers in the city.

With progress of time some of the Muslims gradually settled and became a part of the Australian society by adopting different other profession, although was not given the status of a lawful citizen. As a symbolic expression of their (Muslim) struggle to assimilate with the Australian society, there was always an attempt to upgrade the architecture of the mosque. In 1891 the mosque was painted and in 1903-5 four minarets were added at the four corners of the mosque at the cost of £ 250, quite some compare to the meager income of a cameleers at that time. These chimneys like minarets were approximately 20m tall masonry towers, a remembrance the distinctive profile of a North Indian, Afghan or even Turkish precedents. Interestingly, the minarets that give the mosque its distinct identity in the Adelaide townscape do not segregate it from the surrounding; rather it works as an interface by creating a dialogue between the city and mosque. Once we examine the process of construction of the mosque, the intention and the aspirations of the builders, it became clear that the intention behind the erection of the minarets were not to segregate the little Muslim community and their physical existence in the city fabric, but to become deeply rooted into the locale and to create their own identity.

Till 1915, donations were continuing from the cameleers to renovate the mosque with nice landscaped garden, vineyard and fountains. According to visiting Sayed Jalal Shah the mosque
cost the camelmen around £ 3000, and another £500 was raised to build up the Madrasa (Stevens, 2002):

Gradually Adelaide mosques had changed it roles to the Muslim community, it is no longer only, “a meeting place for the cameleers, a place to exchange religious, economic and political views, to discuss contracts and to be with Muslim compatriots, safe for a time from prevailing spiritual and racial intolerance” (Stevens, 2002). It was also a locus for their aspirations about the future of the community. It became a special refuge for the visiting cameleers, who no longer had to endure the degradation and inconvenience of being colored. The erection of the high boundary wall like fortification around the mosque might be an effort of adding a sense of security and safety. It was a place that provided them with hope to be settled as a member of the society. Many of the old cameleers left the Ghantowns toward the end of their lives and take retreat to the cottage nearby the mosque to pass rest of their life peacefully; a symbolic retreat near to their symbol of the homeland. This might be one of the reasons it was possible for them to gather all the money required for construction renovation from their meager incomes. Therefore, undoubtedly the Adelaide Mosque, regardless of its size and shape, was able to work as a multivalent space and institution for the contemporaneous Muslim society.

Assimilation

The camel era ended with the advent of improved roads and trucks and most of the cameleers were forced to go back to their own country. A few of those who remained in Australia mostly clung to the margins of white society living humble, impecunious lives in the Ghantowns or near the mosque( National Archive of Australia) . The mosque was almost left abandoned or sparsely used for long time, till another bout of Muslim migrants started to come in Australia 1950 onwards. With the increasing number of Muslim population in Adelaide the mosque needed another major renovation in 1978, which resulted with the integration of the verandah and the main chamber to a larger prayer hall and the addition of a mezzanine for women over the verandah. The Afghans or the cameleers were no longer surviving; however the mosque and its nearby neighborhood became the center of the new Muslim migrants. Most of the users today are students, who came to study from different countries of the Muslim world and the migrants coming to Australia as skilled workers. Little Gilbert Street and the surrounding neighborhood are again studded with dwellings of Muslim residents, who prefer to stay near the mosque and form a community. This might be evident with the establishment of the neighboring Halal shop, Sunday school for the Muslim children and the increasing number of worshipper during the daily prayers. The mosque neighborhood that is also known as ‘Little Beirut’ (Stark, 1984) to some of the locals because of its Muslim concentration resembles the past, while the marginal community of Muslims were clinging around this mosque to claim their own ‘place’ and sense of belongingness. The similar camaraderie and brotherhood once tied the heterogeneous ethnic groups of British India together can be observed in the everyday activities of the mosque today. The Islamic Society of South Australia currently looks after the mosque. The Muslims are no longer marginalized in the Australian society and the Mosque has the official recognition as the place of worship. This huge impetus resulted into another major renovation again that includes the large courtyards to be covered with modern steel vaults to cater the large number of worshippers during Friday prayers as well as space for gathering and feast during Ramadan and Eid festivals.
Figure 1: The First Australian Mosque in Marree (Source: State Library of South Australia B15341).

Figure 2: Reconstructed Image of the first phase of Adelaid Mosque (Source: Authors).
Figure 3: The elderlies of the Muslim community gathers in front of the ablution tank and fountain after the prayer. Image constructed of the first phase of Adelaide Mosque. (Source: State Library of South Australia B 7286).

Figure 4: A 1930 image of the mosque showing the verandah and the four minarets. (Source: Australian National Archive, Canberra).
Figure 5: Transformation of Adelaide Mosque through time (Source: Authors).

Figure 6: Adelaide mosque in current state with blue stone masonry, mihrab, arched windows and four minarets (Source: Authors).
RETHINKING ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

The Concept of Morphology and Rhetoric

To take the analogy with language further, the writing of Jacques Berque has enduring resonance to interpret the architecture of Muslim communities (Berque, 1978). Berque argued that the Islamic built environment could be understood using a linguistic model of morphology and rhetoric. Like language, the rhetoric might be in common and shared between cultures, regions and contexts, but the morphology that combines the rhetoric in a system, should be constant for a particular architectural vocabulary. This morphology is the system of the invariables (thawābit) and the variables (mutahawilat) are the rhetoric. As long as the invariables remain with the original system, the identity exists. Islamic architecture must have a morphology that goes beyond its history, geography, culture and all other boundaries. However, unlike other building traditions this morphology is not materialised in architecture. Rather what makes architecture ‘Islamic’ are the invisible aspects of buildings, which may or may not completely translate themselves onto the physical plane of the built environment (Bianca, 2000). The inherent morphology of Islamic architecture is always the same, due to the permanence of the fundamental philosophy and the values. What changes are the ways and means with which people materialise such philosophy and values to their own circumstances.

Based on the linguistic model offered by Berque, Islamic architecture can be divided into two major paradigms. The first replaced the morphology with the rhetoric as the main determinant and confined Islamic architecture within the elemental domain of forms and styles based on dynasty, local tradition and building typology. These presuppositions about Islamic influence, artefacts and cultures are baffled in a situation where supposedly ‘Islamic’ elements have no precedents in the other parts of the Islamic world. Hybridized forms and shared architectural narratives that arose during the Islamic period in a particular region and which are unique to the material culture of that place sometime remain elusive due to the myopic but popular perspective of ‘correct’ forms of an ‘Islamic Identity’. These stereotypical conceptions of Islamic architecture obscured historical processes of hybridization and its diverse morphological outcomes and hence failed to appreciate the value of buildings like the Adelaide Mosque. This paper is intrigued by this very problem and hence focus more on the historical process of hybridization and transformation while studying the architecture of Adelaide mosque.

Stylistic categorization has not only failed to identify the architecture of Islam through time and space, but sometimes attributes a pseudo-Islamic notion. As it is not possible to prescribe a common form for mosques around the world, it is not possible to identify particular styles or forms as ‘Islamic’. Examination of the built environment of Muslim communities must put aside formal concerns to concentrate on prescriptive codes of conduct as outlined in and interpreted from the Qur’an, Hadith and previous juridical decisions. The nature of Islamic Architecture should be determined by the morphological elements of architecture that facilitate these codes of conduct within the multiple regional and historical contexts of the Islamic world. It necessitates a close observation of the process by which diverse peoples across the world integrate cultural-historical contexts, regional styles, functional needs, and environmental possibilities within that system (Rashid and Rahim 2011).

Once this linguistic model is accepted, then focus should be placed on identifying the system and its working principles. There is no doubt that for Muslims this system should be based on unity (Tawhid), the Quran and Sunnah, as well as Shariah. As there were no direct guidelines in Islamic religious texts regarding architecture, the interpretation remains subjective and discursive. However, presumably the system should be pragmatic and conceivable enough so that it could be applied in any context at any time, as Islam is all encompassing and always contemporary for all the ages.
The Case of Adelaide Mosque

The apparently non-descript structure, other than its four chimney-like minarets was excluded from the main stream study of 'Islamic' Architecture. However, as we discussed earlier it is time to re-examine this architecture under the new framework. Architecture played an instrumental role in recording the facets of Islamic Diaspora through time and spaces. The emergence of Islam in a particular place and its subsequent impact on the social, political and cultural life of the people generally determined the character of Islamic architecture of that place. Two things worked together to do so. On the one hand, there was the conscious attempt of creating a particular place with religious and symbolic meaning, which is reflected at the most explicit level. On the other hand, at the most primary level exists the realm of the vernacular mode that centered on the world view of a particular culture, its values and attitudes towards space. Thus while the theme of the religious consciousness shapes the 'visible' superstructure; the underlying idea of the vernacular defines the 'true' nature of the space. Hence the production of architecture throughout the Muslim world is diverse and enriched with different varieties in terms of forms, articulation as well as morphology.

As architecture the mosque represents a particular time and material culture of the people who belong to it. It reflects their value system, their social status, resilience and assimilation and most importantly their imaginary parallel of space a homely space in a foreign and apparently hostile land(Scriver , 2004). It is not the mosque as object that we must value, rather it was the means through which it was realized that should be assessed and its impact on the contemporaneous Muslim society in Australia as an institution needs to be examined.

The hybridized forms and shared architectural narratives that arose through the resilience and assimilation of the minority Afghan group are absent in the majority of studies of Islamic architecture. In the Quran and Hadith a mosque has been described as an institution for Muslims, it is not identified as a sacred or sanctified space for ritual worship. By examining the Prophet's mosques in Madinah, it is evident that a mosque can be a social, political and religious centre. It served as a place for political discussions, communal celebrations, a guest house and even a place to hold prisoners of war. As Islam is a holistic religion and it encompasses every aspect of a Muslim's life, the mosque should cater for all the activities the Muslims perform as social units. Hence it provides the sense of identity of Muslim community. It is a place for congregation as well as a centre for information, education, or to resolve settlement disputes.

The Adelaide mosque might not be a unique piece of architecture in terms of exterior appearance. However, it is unique in the way it blends subtly with the urban fabric of Adelaide. The building was constructed using the local blue stone masonry, in a load bearing system, as the main building materials. The four minarets were constructed using bricks. The construction technique was simple using the technology available at that time. The sequence of spaces within the building are arranged as a response to the traditional use of those in their (Afghan) homeland. Rather than mimicking their own images of a mosque, the Afghan builders relied solely on the local builder for the interpretation of a mosque in the setting of colonial Adelaide. Unlike other urban mosques in Australia (for example, the Perth Mosque or the Auburn Mosque in Sydney) the images of homeland, the aspirations of the user, the fabric and the scale of the neighbourhood and the available technology were hybridized together to create the first urban mosque in Australia.

Interestingly, the minarets that give the mosque its distinct identity in the Adelaide townscape, are not separate from the surrounding and does not make it an atypical piece of architecture; rather it works as an interface by creating a dialogue between the city and mosque. Once we examine the process of construction of the mosque, the intention and the aspirations of the builders, it became clear that the intention behind the erection of the minarets were not to segregate the little Muslim community and their physical existence in the city fabric, but to become deeply rooted in the locale.
CONCLUSION
This paper aimed to examine the Adelaide Mosque with emphasis on the innate quality of organizing space and forms (morphology) and using them to connect the microcosm of architecture to the macrocosm of the world rather than focusing on elements, motifs or decorations (rhetoric) that may or may not exemplify typical representations—fabulations—of ‘Islamic’ architecture. It focused on how religious beliefs, social and economic structures, political motives, and aesthetic sensibility were articulated in the Adelaide Mosque. The paper is not concerned with the beauty of the mosque, although beauty and utility are never separated in the Islamic perspective. Hence the focus was to discern the process through which this architecture was shaped and materialized.

In the case of the Adelaide Mosque the respect for the needs of the users is evident. The structure fulfills the purpose and aspirations of Muslims in the local and regional context to ensure both relevance and authenticity. It is a true example of hybrid or symbiotic architecture that encompasses Islamic values as well as local and regional particularities.

Three major concepts are materialised in the Adelaide Mosque. Firstly, it is the concept of the mosque as a religious and social centre and, thus, a locus of identity for the Afghan community. In Islam, the notion of worship is a universal one encompassing Muslims’ every action (Qur'an, 51:56). The Islamic world view never separates the life-spiritual and life-mundane. It does not confine itself to the development of the spiritual and the moral life of man in a limited sense. Instead it permeates the entire gamut of life. Hence the attempt of mosque building is not only an attempt to create space for spiritual pursuit. The idea of mosque is to create and institution that’s tie up all the memebers of Muslim brotherhood regardless of race, color or social status. From this perspective, Adelaide Mosque is a classic example of creating centre for all the Muslims, who were considered as minority in an alienated land. It not only provides a safe and secure place for worship but a sense of belonging for all the as a social and political unit.

Secondly, it embraced the available technology and local architectural practice. The camlelers had little or no skill in building construction especially the blue stone masonry that is typical to Adelaide. Hence there is the possibility that the Afghan patrons of the mosque hired some local mason to build it on their behalf. It is quite evident whilst the distinctive profile of the minarets is suggestive of possible non Australian root, its craftsmanship with customized bull nosed brick suggests the probability that the towers being erected by local bricklayers experienced in the construction of free-standing industrial chimneys, of which many were being built in and around Adelaide at the time.

Finally there was the underlying imagery from homeland that was reflected in the articulation of space and the erection of the minarets. Especially in the attempt of creating the semi circular mihrab, Spending their meagre saving for the minarets and the graden and pool informant as mentioned by Syed Jalal Shah.

Nevertheless, most importantly this building elucidates the process of continuous resilience and assimilation between these three. In summary it could be said that the architecture of the Adelaide Mosque is the result of the process of hybridization where the quranic tenet of communal prayer, the local architectural language, and imported values are fused together in a purposeful creation that served the needs of a hybrid community.

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