



HAVELI
MIAN ABDUL KARIM SETHI
PESHAWAR



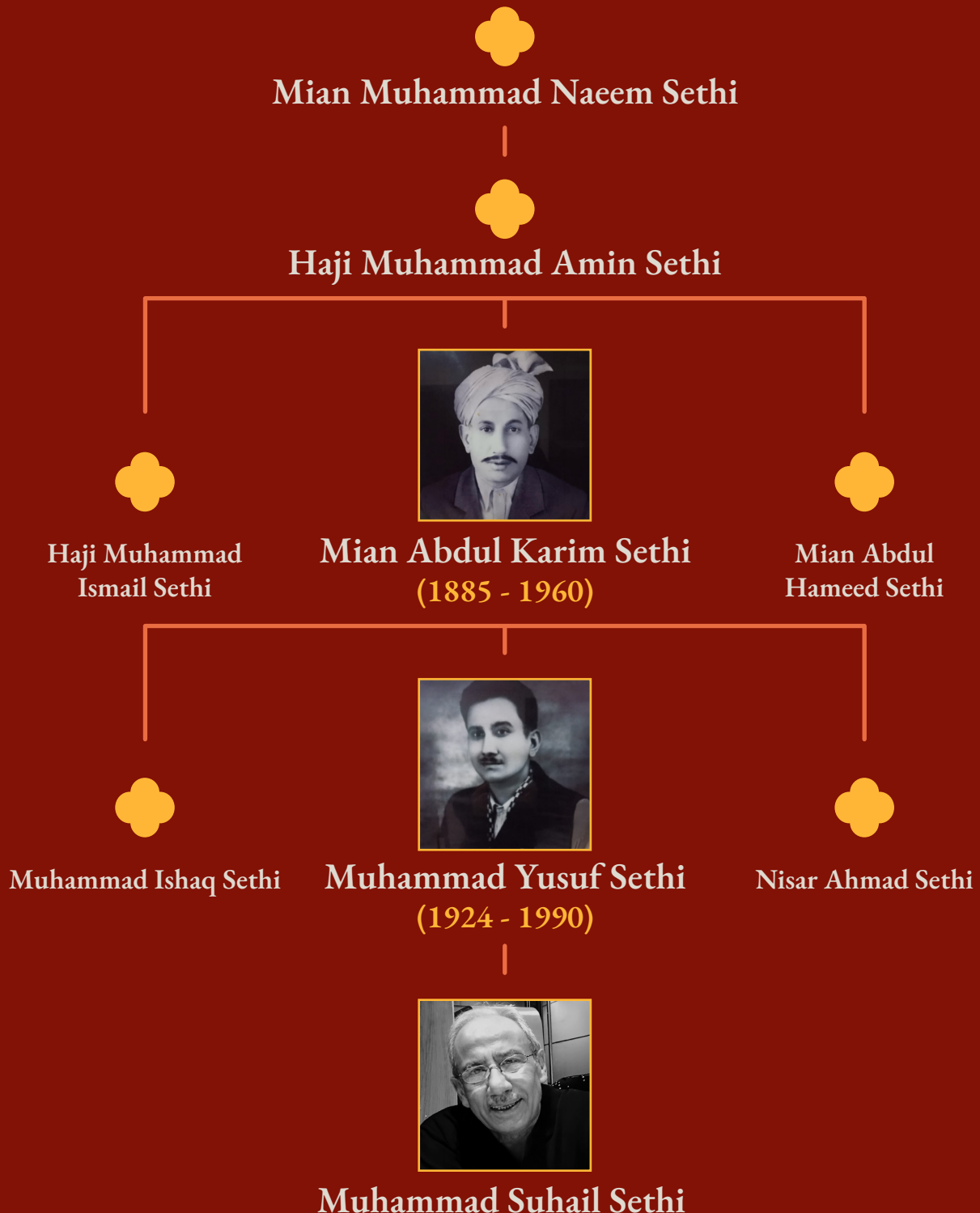
The House THAT BUILT A TRADING LEGACY

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Welcome TO THE HAVELI

Standing at the entrance of Mohallah Sethian, this haveli has witnessed more than two centuries of history. It was built by Mian Muhammad Naeem Sethi between 1804 and 1811, making it the 'first' Sethi residence in Mohallah Sethian.

Five generations of the family have lived here, and the building has evolved with them.



GROUND FLOOR

Built between 1804 and 1811 during the Durrani era, this haveli served as both a family residence and a business headquarters. From the rooms around you, the Sethi family managed a trading network that connected Peshawar, Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif, Bukhara, Tashkent, Termez, Calcutta, Shanghai and London. What you are standing in is not simply an old house—it was once the nerve centre of an international merchant enterprise.

After the upheavals caused by the Russian Revolution, parts of the haveli were renovated between 1920 and 1924 when Mian Abdul Karim Sethi returned from Mazar-e-Sharif. Whereas the elder brother Mian Muhammad Ismail Sethi remained at Mazar-e-Sharif to administer the business activities.

WHAT MAKES THIS HAVELI UNIQUE?

Over

200 years old

Built during the

Durrani era

Served as

office and residence

Connected to a trading network spanning

South Asia, East Asia, and Central Asia

YOU ARE STANDING IN A MERCHANT'S HEADQUARTERS

Most visitors see an old house. Two hundred years ago, people saw something very different.

The entrance facing Bazar Kalan was the public face of the family business. Merchants, agents and visitors entered through this doorway to discuss trade, settle accounts and exchange information from across the region.

Beyond this public zone lay the family's private living quarters.

The Haveli's Dual Role

- ◆ The Bazaar Side served as the Business and Trade Section.
- ◆ The Inner Quarters were dedicated to the Family.

WHY WAS THIS LOCATION CHOSEN?

The family moved from Chamkani into the heart of Peshawar during the Durrani period.

This location placed them close to the city's commercial, administrative and cultural centre. Nearby stood **Gor Khatri**, one of South Asia's oldest continuously occupied urban sites, while the surrounding bazaars formed the economic heart of the old city.

For merchants, proximity meant opportunity. Goods, travellers, information and ideas all converged here.

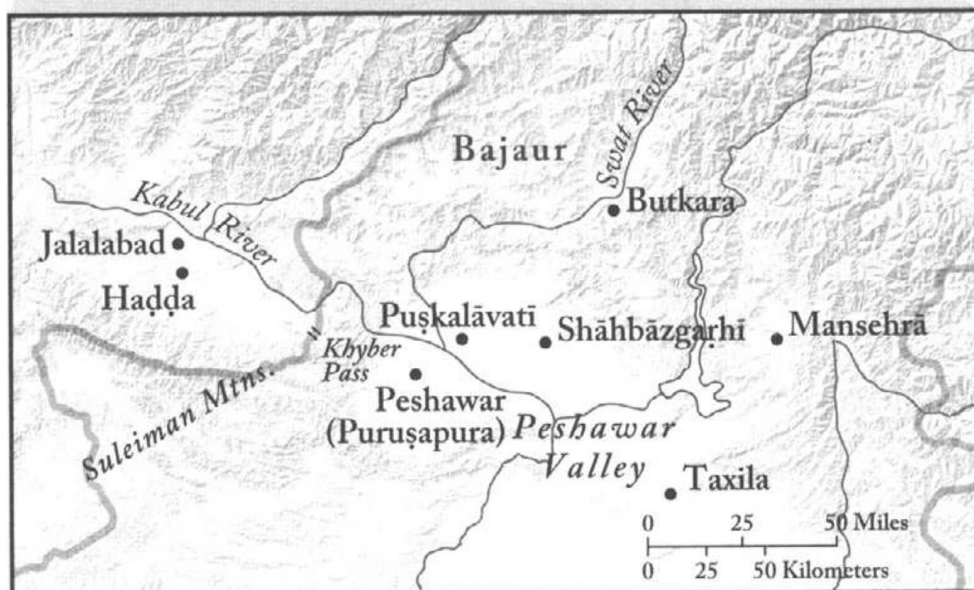
Research Note

Architectural historian Professor Samra Khan, in her research on the Sethi merchants' havelis for the University of Westminster, documents the haveli's age, architectural significance and later renovations.



GOR KHATRI

PESHAWAR: GATEWAY BETWEEN WORLDS



In the nineteenth century, Peshawar occupied one of the most strategic positions in Asia.

- ◆ To the west lay Afghanistan.
- ◆ Beyond it stretched Central Asia and Tsarist Russia.
- ◆ To the east was British India.
- ◆ To the north, routes connected merchants with China.

This geography allowed the Sethi family to build a remarkable trading network.

Major Business Centres - - - - -



- | | |
|------------------|------------|
| ◆ Peshawar | ◆ Bukhara |
| ◆ Kabul | ◆ Tashkent |
| ◆ Mazar-e-Sharif | ◆ Termez |
| ◆ Andkhoy | |

Representatives Also Worked In - - - - -



- | | |
|------------|------------|
| ◆ Delhi | ◆ Shanghai |
| ◆ Calcutta | ◆ London |

Main Goods Traded - - - - -



- | | |
|----------|--------|
| ◆ Silk | ◆ Tea |
| ◆ Indigo | ◆ Furs |

A Family That Crossed Borders - - - - -



Travel was by land route through the historic Khyber Pass, continuing to Mazar-e-Sharif, which served as a major base for the family's operations.

From there, family members regularly visited offices across Central Asia while trusted representatives managed local branches.

Family Memory

“ When some of the family members returned by motor car through remote parts of Afghanistan in 1924, the sound of the horn frightened camel caravans unfamiliar with automobiles. The camels scattered, and even decades later the memory remained vivid. ”

TIMELINE

1804–1811 ■

Construction of the haveli by Mian Muhammad Naeem Sethi.

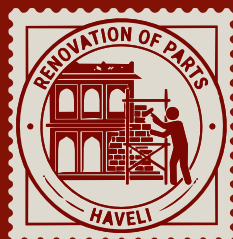


■ 19th Century

Expansion of trade across Afghanistan and Central Asia.

1917 ■

Russian Revolution disrupts regional trade.



■ 1920–1924

Renovation of parts of the haveli renovated by Mian Abdul Karim Sethi.

1928–1930 ■

Trade resumes under a new agreement with the New Soviet government of the USSR on barter system.



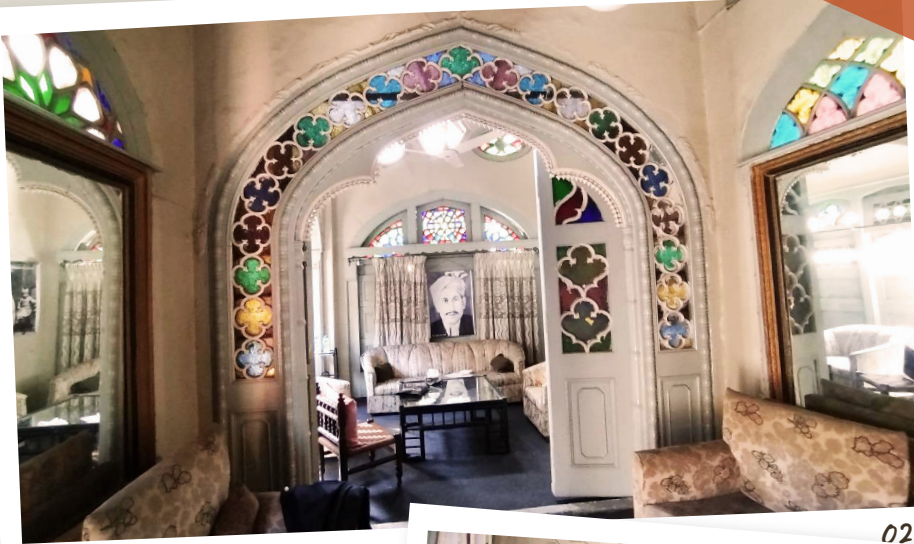
■ 1945

After Haji Muhammad Ismail Sethi passing in 1945, the last main office in Mazar-e-Sharif closes, and his wife, Bi Hajyani, returns.

BEFORE YOU CONTINUE...

As you move deeper into the haveli, leave behind the world of merchants and trade.

Beyond these public rooms lay the private spaces where generations of the Sethi family lived, celebrated festivals, welcomed relatives and created the memories that transformed a merchant's headquarters into a family home.



DRAWING ROOM

02



COURTYARD

03

NEXT STOP

Exhibition Guide 2: Life Within the Haveli

Discover how the family lived, ate, celebrated and adapted this remarkable house to the changing seasons.

