CHAPTER 2

INDIAN AND EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Every age conceived the architecture according to its needs. At every stage it responded to the prevailing attitudes. Whatever they were, as each age presented architecture that was the characteristic of its people, their faiths and ideals, their stage of civilization projecting their beliefs and at the same time accommodating various external influences, the stupas, temples, palaces, forts, mosques, minars and the mausoleums which were built in great numbers in different epochs of ancient and medieval history of India served the purpose of those times. Yet period of emperors like Shahjahan and Akbar etc. witnessed magnificence in art and architecture made contributions to Indian architecture.

The advent of the British and the French and eventually the supremacy of the British over the French led to the establishment of many cantonment cities and barrack architecture by the British to enable them to keep a control over princely states. Unlike its predecessors, the British architecture was need oriented. It was no longer ornamental and its place was taken by simplicity but in shear size and height it inspired awe.¹

Thus, the political stability of the British period encouraged a building boom.\(^2\)

After the glorious Mughal Architecture, India saw the development of the Indo-European Architectural heritage, which was the amalgamation of the styles of the European countries, like Portugal (Portuguese), Holland (Dutch), France (French) and finally culminating in the colonial occupation by the British. The European constructed, forts, churches, town hall, clock towers, market complexes, and gateway etc. The Architecture of the Imperial Portuguese marked by Churches and Cathedral reflecting the post-Renaissance European architecture. There are examples of old mansions, remains of fortifications and defences, dating mainly from 18\(^{th}\) century A.D. The Portuguese architecture was very much influenced by contemporary developments in Europe at that time. The Churches of Goa are also the fusion of Renaissance Principles and aesthetics to suit local colonial tastes, monetary resources and raw materials.\(^3\)

The buildings built by the British were not as elegant and grand as that of the Mughals, but were civic and utilitarian buildings and commemorating structures. Indo-European Architecture in India during

---

British period closely followed the developments in their home country but also sought inspiration from existing architecture in India for great legitimacy.\textsuperscript{4}

Though, the evolution and development of British Indo-European Architecture in India can be studied from the cities of Calcutta (now Kolkata), Madras (now Chennai), Bombay (Mumbai) and New Delhi etc. The contributions made by the British led to the creation of a composite architectural style imbibing European, Indian and Mughal elements and was also called the colonial architecture. One of the most significant legacies of British rule in India is the colonial Architecture from the two centuries anteceding the struggle for independence. These imposing buildings including Palaces, mansions, clubhouses, and government official buildings, represented a hybrid of western and eastern sensibilities as their architect sought to plant the flag of British dominance in a foreign culture.\textsuperscript{5}

If we see the new princely cities like Jaipur, Bikaner and Mysore, they are also influenced by Indo-European architecture. The towns were

\textsuperscript{4} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{5} Ibid.
patterned along British example has Clock towers, railway stations, public official buildings, assembly halls and public hospitals etc.\textsuperscript{6}

In colonial India a number of new, so-called colonial Metropolitan cities were established. Western technology and new ideas were applied to these new cities or towns with the spread of British political power and technological development, westernized concept of modernization evolved.

In 1833 Calcutta became the capital of British India, remaining so until 1912, when New Delhi was made the capital because of its more central location.\textsuperscript{7} Former capital of India and present capital of the state of West Bengal. It is the largest city and leading port in India, located in the southern part of the state, in eastern India at 22\degree34'N latitude and 88\degree24'E long. The city is on the Hooghly River. One of the major tributaries of the Ganges, about 80 miles North of Bay of Bengal, Calcutta is built on a low, flat, swampy delta, a few feet above sea level.\textsuperscript{8}

The English merchant Job Charnock founded Calcutta on insalubrious mud flats beside the river Hooghly in 1690.\textsuperscript{9} Calcutta has a place of its own in the history of India. The political capital of India for

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid. p. 319.
more than one century and the seat of the Bengal renaissance, Calcutta had a grandeur and character which gave it the status for a time, of being the second city of the British Empire after London. The buildings and precincts of the era were not only notable for their thoughts, institutions and events but also for their architectural heritage. In its heyday it was called the city of palaces, and it still retains a fine heritage of 18th and 19th century buildings, often in a bad state of repair.

Some important historical buildings as the Town Hall, the Mint, and the Writers Building set the mood for the imperial capital city. Belvedere House (the present National Library) was also constructed in 1912. The monument, Victoria Memorial was planned as a symbol of British imperial power during the 1900s. Its foundation stone was laid in 1906, and it was finally completed in 1921.¹⁰

In Calcutta, many fine Palladian style houses, with their columned verandahs, flat balustrade roofs and large gardens are founded. Bungalow housing design had also a number of specific elements, such as the verandahs, the chajja, compound and one-storied houses, all of which evolved in the Bengal climate. The bungalow design became a model for British colonial housing not only in India, but other British colonial

---

countries as well. Such architectural design columned verandahs, flat balustrade roofs and large gardens etc.

When the British left India besides the legacy of language, social customs, the modes of administrative functioning and more enduringly, their buildings scattered across twenty-four latitudes and widely varied terrain. A lot of construction in British India was the work of amateurs and military engineers their work reflects a curious adaptation of local materials and weather to a longing for home being expressed in the implantation of European styles in tropical lands. It is the city of Bombay, which shows the greatest incorporation of a multitude of divergent styles popular in the Victorian era.

Perhaps the most fitting monuments both in name and splendor, the very symbol of the British in Victorian Bombay is a building that was opened in 1887, in time to celebrate Queen Victoria Terminus (VT). Today it is better known as Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus. It is the finest Victorian Gothic building in India and a mixture of polychromatic stone, decorative ironwork, marble and tile.

In another building, Indo-Sarcenic styles are also shown on Gateway of India. It is a symbolic national landmark, the Marble Arch of
India, was designed by George Wittet to commemorate the visit of George V and Queen Mary in 1911, on route to the Delhi Durbar.¹¹

Architecturally it is Indo-Saracenic in style, modeled on 16th century Gujarati work and constructed in honey-coloured basalt, with side chambers and halls to accommodate civic receptions.

Here, in Bombay, a great phalanx facing the Maidan lie the Secretariat, University Library and Convocation Hall, the law courts, public works office and telegraph office – a truly imperial vision, monolithic, awe inspiring and supremely self-confident.

After the Revolt of 1857, Calcutta became the important metropolitan city, while Madras became less important. When Sir Bartle Frere becomes the Governor (Bombay) under his enlightened and energetic direction the city was transformed into the Gateway of India. The old town walls are swept away. A new city began to take shape in the latest fashionable Gothic style. Frere was determined to give the city a series of public buildings worthy of its wealth, power and potential. He stipulated that the designs should be of the highest architectural calibre, with conscious thought given to aesthetic impact.¹²

¹² Philip Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 86.
The great neo-classical town hall, built by Colonel Thomas D. Cowper between 1820 and 1835 was of course already there, together with the venerable St. Thomas's Cathedral. Frere nurtured this image of imperial power. As a result Britain's finest heritage of High Victorian Gothic buildings now lies in Bombay.\(^{13}\)

Today, owing to land reclamation, they no longer face out across the sea, but they coalesce to form a splendid romantic skyline. Although St. Paul's Cathedral, Calcutta, was the first major Church in India to break the mould of Gibbs derivatives, it was designed in a whimsical English perpendicular Gothic style. The first Church in India to be designed in accordance with the new principles of 'correct' Gothic architecture, laid down by Pugin and the Ecclesiological Society, was the Afghan Memorial Church of St. John the Evangelist at Colaba in Bombay, Commenced in 1847. Its tall spire was a local landmark and its revolutionary principles infected the city with an enthusiasm for Gothic architecture, which continued for over fifty years.\(^{14}\)

The architectural prototypes for the great public buildings of Bombay were the Victorian Gothic buildings then in the course of construction in London. The designs were already available to the local military engineers of the public works department in the pages of

\(^{13}\) Ibid. p. 86.
\(^{14}\) Ibid. p. 86.
professional journals like the Builder, George Gilbert Scott who designed the university buildings in the city from his office in London, provided a clear source of inspiration for many. His competitive design for the foreign office with its central tower, symmetrical façade and Venetian inspiration, was highly influential. His design for the Rathus in Hamburg, modeled on the great medieval cloth Hall at Ypres, provided a direct source for the law courts at Calcutta, the most important Gothic building in city of classical palaces.

Madras was the first important settlement of the East India Company (E.I.C.). It was founded in 1639 from the nearby factory at Armagaum by Francis Day on territory ceded by the Raja of Chandragiri. In 1644 a small fort was erected from which the city grew steadily and until the emergence of Calcutta, it remained the nerve-centre of English influence in the East. Madras, nowadays the capital of Madras state, is the third largest city of India. The chief seaport on the eastern coast of India, it is located at the mouth of the Coum River, on the southeastern, or, Coromandel coast at 13°4'N latitude and 80°17'E longitude, about 835 miles southwest of Calcutta. It covers an area of about 49 sq miles, extending nearby 10 miles along the open coast and 5 miles inland. Built on a sandy plain, with few sections rising more than 20 ft above sea level,
the city is exposed to the heavy surf along the shore and has no natural harbour, though a modern artificial harbour, protected by breakwaters, was completed in 1909. The city is bisected by Coum River, to the north of which facing the harbour, lies the thickly populated business centre of the city, formerly known as black town and re-named George Town in 1906 after the visit of the Prince of Wales. To the west of Cochrane Canal, the western boundary of George Town, lie people’s park and a spreading residential and suburban area. Immediately south of the Coum River is another crowded quarter, which merges farther south with the ancient Portuguese settlement of St. Thome, founded in 1504.  

The fashionable residential quarter is situated south and inland at Adyar and Teynampet. Fort St. George, the University building, and the Marina Promenade are along the shore facing the Bay of Bengal. Other buildings of interests in Madras are Chepauk Palace, once the property of the Nawabs of the Carnatic, the Government museum, High Court buildings, the Cathedral of St. Thome, said to stand over the earthly remains of St. Thomas, martyred in A.D. 68, St. Marys Church, the first English Church in India and St. George’s Cathedral, dating from 1815. Fort St. George, situated on the sea front north of island, was built in 1640 and contains a Church, barracks, arsenal, and government offices.

The principal educational institutions are Madras University, founded in 1857, the Presidency College, Medical, Engineering, Law and Veternity Colleges and a number of missionary institutions.\(^{17}\)

The first British settlements were trading posts established at *Nizam patam* (Pedalapali) and *Masulipatam* in 1611. After the founding of Fort St. George in 1640s, the British extended their rule, creating Madras presidency in 1653. The French made several attempts during the eighteenth century to extend the area of their Indian holdings, but by 1801. British territory included the entire area except the small French settlements of *Mahe*, *Karikal*, and Pondicherry. In 1937, Madras was made an autonomous province. It joined the Indian Dominion in 1947 and by the 1950, Constitution it became Madras state in Indian Republic.\(^{18}\)

The European settlement remained inside the fort, with Black town outside the walls, although with greater security. In the 18\(^{\text{th}}\) century Europeans bought estates-outside the walls and built beautiful garden houses, many of which still survive.\(^{19}\)

\(^{17}\) Ibid. pp. 669-670.
\(^{18}\) Ibid. p. 670.
\(^{19}\) Philip Davies, *op.cit.*, pp. 542-543.
Madras has a fine legacy of colonial architecture, ranging from the elegant classical houses of the 18th century nabobs to the spectacular Indo-Sarcenic buildings of the late 19th century.\(^\text{20}\)

Examples of Indo-Sarcenic building in Madras like the Madras Law courts, built between 1888 and 1892 were one of the high points of Indo-Sarcenic architecture in India – a Romantic confection of multi-coloured Mughal domes, Buddhist shapes, canopied balconies and arcaded verandahs crowned by a bulbous domed minaret which forms a light house.

The Madras clubhouse, a famous club in the city has also the colonial legacy of Madras is apparent in the vicinity of the Madras port. The Presidency College was built in 1840, the Royapuram station dates from 1856, the central stadium dates from 1873, and the south railway headquarters was built in 1922. Many of the colonial era buildings are designed in the Indo-Sarcenic style. The Madras high court (the largest judicial building in the world after the courts of London), the government museum, the senate house of the Madras University and the college of Engineering, are some of the examples of Indo-Sarcenic style of architecture.

\(^\text{20}\) Ibid. pp. 543-544.
Other buildings of architectural significance are the Ripon Building housing the Chennai (Madras) corporation, the war Memorial, the Presidency College, etc. Most of the colonial style buildings are concentrated in the area around the Chennai port and Fort St. George, the remaining parts of the city consists of primarily modern architecture in concrete, glass and steel.\(^\text{21}\)

However, the 18\(^{\text{th}}\) century is bereft of impressive buildings by the British architecture. The British contribution to architecture, commenced only after the Revolt of 1857 in India. It was mostly limited to country houses, bungalows and churches etc., which are even now spread all over the country presenting mixture of a typical style evolved by British militancy engineers and architects and Greeko-Roman and Scottish- baronil styles. Some of them however, deserve to be commended for their beautiful designs\(^\text{22}\) and its architectural features.

Infact, when the British established their settlements at various places like, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras etc. they had to build European style houses for the convenience of their officers and staffs. As the numbers of residents increased, they began the construction of more durable structures such as strong fortresses and imposing churches. The

\(^{21}\) http://www.boloji.com
\(^{22}\) P.N. Chopra and P. Chopra, \textit{op.cit.}, p. ix.
church in their initial stages resembled the English village churches the English officers also built private houses, which were quite distinctive.\textsuperscript{23}

While, it was only after the rise of the British Empire that they're developed a type of Victorian architecture. The Victorian style however was imitative rather than original. The chief characteristic of the Victorian style building was its brickwork supported by iron angles and domed roofs. Thus, English style of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century buildings in India did not compare itself favourably with the grandeur and magnificence of the past architecture.\textsuperscript{24} We can see the prominent Victorian style buildings e.g., the churches at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras etc.

It was in the last decade of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century that Bombay witnessed a phase of experimentation in architecture. Considering the eastern location of India, the British architects were attempting to incorporate Indian ideals with European architecture. This synthesis of forms such as the horse shoe-shaped arches from Moorish Spain, Islamic domes and Victorian towers came to be known as the Indo-Sarcenic style of architecture.

In Delhi, the buildings of English style or imperial style started early when some English officials, traders, English mercenaries and

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid. p. ix.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid. p. x.
Christian converts started taking up residence in the city and build their own houses. Before the mutiny of 1857, many of these buildings came up near the ridge and between Kashmiri Gate and Daryaganj. The prominent buildings were, Residency, Flag staff tower, St. James Church, Fraser House, later known as Hindu Rao Bara, Metcalf House and other individual houses built by the English and foreigners other than English people. The cantonment also existed near the Ridge where English maintained forces for enforcing law and order and collection of revenue on behalf of Mughal Emperor in Delhi.25

While Metcalf House building in Delhi by Sir Thomas Metcalf, Resident in Mughal Court in Delhi showed Indian influences, which feature artificial European style such as Gothic, adapted to Indian condition. Metcalf built extensively in Delhi particularly around the dome at Mehrauli. These buildings were constructed with local stone or stone carved out of Qutub area (old Delhi). It shows mixture of European and Indian styles. The main room is surrounded by verandahs as protection from the summer sun. In the servant quarters the familiar courtyard was provided with surrounded rooms.26

---

Another example of the house built by Metcalf in about 1835 also shows Indian influence. The British houses in the Suburbs of Delhi are large bungalows with spacious compounds. Gothic style is quite apparent which has been very well adapted to Indian conditions. To protect from the scorching summer heat, rooms were surrounded by verandahs. In Bombay too, houses were coming up at the same time. Keeping in view the climate, they had long and low verandahs and thatched roofs, whereas in Calcutta "mansions were erected in imitation of the houses of the rich in England with a classical façade, small useless balconies, quite large windows, which had to be shuttered against the Sun." Gothic was the style adopted for ecclesiastical buildings with certain notable exceptions such as St. James Church and Kashmiri Gate built by Col. Skinner in the classical style\textsuperscript{27} in Delhi which is situated in civil lines.

As Calcutta and Madras no longer remained merely trading centers and the British Empire was expanding and efforts were made to build massive buildings befitting imperial cities. The civilizing influence of Greece and Roman is very much apparent in the buildings, which were constructed in Calcutta and Madras.\textsuperscript{28}

However in the hill stations, the British had a free hand to build exact replica of their houses and public buildings as in their native

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{27} Ibid. p. x.
  \item \textsuperscript{28} Ibid. p. x.
\end{itemize}
England. The climate was suitable and the material, too, was quite similar and, therefore, the houses and the buildings with pitched roofs to save from rains and snow were constructed with great elegance. However, at places, flat roofs and verandahs were also added in conformity with Indian traditions.  

While, after 1857, the British started consolidating their governance in India, they held three Delhi Durbars that were organized to show off the might of British power. The third Delhi Durbar was held on 12 December 1911 when George V the King of England and Queen Mary were present and lord Hardinge, the Viceroy of India officially announced the transfer of capital from Calcutta to Delhi. The king and Queen laid the foundation of New Delhi three days later on 15 December at Kings way camp. The secretariat (old) building came in existence in 1912 near the ridge an area called civil lines. This is now better known as old secretariat as the government of India offices was located here, afterwards this building used to house. The Delhi State Administrative buildings for planning and execution of works of the new city of New Delhi also came up near the ridge.  

Colonial architecture in the early cities of Madras, Bombay and Calcutta were elegant and modest structures, capturing a nostalgic 

---

29. Ibid. p. x.  
fragrance of Britain. The site selected for the new imperial capital was a hill called *Raisina* that rose at some distance away from the river and directly west of the *Purana Qila* (old fort). The shift of capital of British India from Calcutta to Delhi in 1911 necessitated the building of the imperial city of New Delhi. The design of this city and its principal buildings was entrusted to Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker, both architects were well versed in the neo-classical tradition flowing from the European Renaissance. Their designs were expected to symbolize the grandeur and power of the British Empire as evident at the beginning of this century.31

The entire new capital was designed on a complex geometric grid with squares and circles radiating from the central axis of Kings way (Rajpath). The chief architects were Sir Edwin Lutyens and Sir Herbert Baker. Their concept of an Imperial building for the Viceroy's official building-cum-residence (now President house) the processional kings way and the stately colonnade and buildings of the north and south blocks (Govt. Administrative buildings) were all conceived in a composite style with features of Indian architecture mixed with Imperial traditions from Greeko-Roman and European culture. Along with these stately monuments came the laying of roads and residential bungalows, public

---

utility services, example commercial centres – Connaught Place and Churches/Chapels etc.

The Baker’s plans for Delhi incorporated such features as spacious colonnades, open verandahs, overhanging eaves or, cornices, and small high windows openings. These structural devices increased the circulation of air while reducing the amount of sunlight within buildings and brought the outdoors close at hand. Apart from the classically inspired colonnade, all these features were standard elements of indigenous architecture. The chajja or, wide projecting shade-giving stone cornice, and jalis or pierced stone lattice screen to admit air but not sunshine, are central features of Mughal architecture. In his Delhi buildings are to the extreme climate and enhance their Indic appearance. Perhaps the only Indian element adopted purely for its effect was the chattri, or freestanding pavilion with a wide chajja, which mounts the roofline of the secretariat buildings. These little structures did have an aesthetic purpose to serve that of breaking the long horizontal lines of the flat roofs – but they contribute a great deal to “Indianizing” these imposing administrative blocks.32

If we compare the buildings of Lutyens and Baker like Viceroy house and Secretariat we found Bakers Secretariats by contrast show a more direct grafting of Indian motifs on to the classical surfaces. In large part, this reflects Baker’s political concerns that the Secretariat buildings, so visible on their high pediments, and so much more open to the comings and goings of Indians, should be seen to be distinctly Indian.33

Thus, the buildings of New Delhi, then, were meant to connect Britain’s rule with Indias own Imperial Past, and at the same time to evoke a sense of pride in the unique accomplishments of the British Raj. The architectural symbolism of New Delhi has meaning primarily for the British themselves. While the British chose a classical style for their new capital (New Delhi) in some measure, simply because that was the medium through which European apprehended empire.

In the meantime, many other buildings such as Public Utility buildings were constructed in the light of the artistic traditions of the country keeping in view the purpose they were intended to serve. No doubt these buildings are quite impressive with the arches, brackets, columns and ornamented doors and windows but they do not project the real heritage of the country. They lack the artistic features of the age-old Indian traditions.

33. Ibid. p. 397.
However, it must be said, to quote Gavin Stamp, that “New Delhi is one of the greatest things the British have ever done and it seems little short of a miracle that an architect of towering genius was able to realise almost all of his conception”. “To Robert Byron writing in country life in 1931, Lutyens accomplished a fusion of east and west and created a novel work of art.” He took the best of both traditions, and made them a double magnificence to Jan Morris “it was hardly architecture at all really.”  

Of course, it is true that “the pre-dominant imprint, in all walks of life especially in the development of New Delhi areas has been that of the British. They made Delhi the capital of their Indian empire in 1911 and gave birth to the city of New Delhi. Lutyens Delhi as New Delhi is called, is a blend of European and Indian architectural designs.”  

Within the building of New Delhi came to an end the most magnificent era of British architecture. Many official, residential and places of utility services such as hospitals, institutions, police stations, circuit houses, and post offices etc. were built during the succeeding years on a new colonial pattern. But they lacked architectural elegance and were more or less replicas of the building constructed earlier.  

34. P.N. Chopra and P. Chopra, op.cit., p. xi.  