

Subject: History of Architecture– III

Topic: Colonial Architecture

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Indo-saracenic architecture represents a synthesis of muslim designs and indian materials developed by british architects in india during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It combined diverse architectural elements of hindu and mughal with gothic arches, domes, spires, tracery, minarets and stained glass, in a wonderful, almost playful manner.

Indo-saracenic architecture found its way into public buildings of all sorts such as railway stations, banks and insurance buildings, educational institutions, clubs and museums .

chepauk palace in chennai designed by paul benfield is said to be the first indo-saracenic building in india, incorporating elements and motifs of hindu and islamic precedents. outstanding examples are spread across the country - , napier museum at thiruvananthapuram, the post office, prince of wales museum, university hall and library, gateway of india in mumbai, lakshmi vilas palace at baroda, the central railway station , law courts, victoria public hall, museum and university senate house in chennai,

Principal Characteristics

- Onion (Bulbous) Domes
- Overhanging Eaves
- Pointed Arches, Cusped Arches, or Scalloped Arches
- Vaulted Roofs
- Domed Kiosks
- Many Miniature Domes, or Domed Chhatris
- Towers or Minarets
- Harem Windows
- Open Pavilions
- Pierced Open Arcading

CHARACTERISTICS OF INDO-SARACENIC ARCHITECTURE

- Indo-saracenic architecture is often called a "stylistic hybrid" architecture.
- It combines traditional indian architectural elements, like arches and onion domes, with traditional british architecture.
- The mixture of indian elements with the neo-classical and gothic styles known as an indo-saracenic building.

The cost involved in the construction of buildings of this style was high, including all their inherent customization, ornament and decoration, the artisans' ingenious skills (stone and wood carving, as well as inlaid work) and usual accessibility to requisite raw materials, hence the style was executed only on buildings of a grand scale

ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION

The indo-saracenic architecture employed several styles of architecture on one particular building.

- Brackets, cornices, domes, chhatris and various surface ornamentations were applied. in certain cases hindu iconography was also used.
- Decorative parapets which incorporated lotus motifs and also the cusped arch could be seen. the facades were given a greater spatial variety and depth.
- Mixing and matching several styles, gave the architects more opportunities to be creative , they felt no compulsion to stick to a style of architecture and created designs.

ROBERT FELLOWES CHISHOLM **MADRAS UNIVERSITY SENATE HOUSE**



Madras 1870s – “...some of the arches are of ogee form...while others are voluptuous horseshow...as those of Moorish Spain” ~ H R Tillotson

- **EFFECT ON PLANNING**

- The colonial influence, resulted in a synthesis and confluence of style , which gave new dimensions to the planning of the buildings.
- The size of the rooms substantially increased. The indian proportions of the rooms were much smaller than their european .
- Concepts of dining rooms, ballrooms, tennis courts and other such activities are a colonial influence.
- The palaces were no longer restricted to the fortified palaces; they had become english country houses with an indian veneer.
- The buildings show spatial separation, such as gates, barriers, a symmetrical axis of approach and height and size as expressions of power.
- Even the interior of the buildings were based on european designs and upholstery.
- The planning takes into account the climate of the place and concessions have been made in the design to suit it.
- The walls have been made thick. Almost all the buildings have a veranda.

The British arrival in 1615 overthrew the Mughal empire. Britain reigned India for over three hundred years and their legacy still remains through building and infrastructure that populate their former colonies.

The major cities colonized during this period were Madras, Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi, Karachi, Nagpur, Bhopal and Hyderabad.

Garden houses were originally used as weekend houses for recreational use by the upper class British. The garden house became ideal a full-time dwelling, deserting the fort in the 19th Century.

The Victoria Memorial in Calcutta, is the most effective symbolism of British Empire, built as a monument in tribute to Queen Victoria's reign.

The plan of the building consists of one large central part covered with a larger dome.

Colonnades separate the two chambers. Each corner holds a smaller dome and is floored with marble plinth.

The memorial stands on 26 hectares of garden surrounded by reflective pools.

WILLIAM EMERSON **VICTORIA MEMORIAL**



Calcutta 1921 (Inaugurated)

Urban Design and Architecture/Approach to Planning,

- Introduction of new institutions (railway stations, law courts, colleges, hospitals, post offices, etc.)-
- Emergence of a new urbanity ,modernizing forces, industrial and structural functionalism,
- New sense of urban design, overlaying of the new on the old, attitude to planning, Extension of cities and development of suburbs, hill stations, cantonments.
- new urbanity in princely states the cities of colonial origin: Bombay, Calcutta, Madras- expression of culmination .
- New Delhi, the imperial city- impact of modernist urban design ideology .

Building Methods, initial role of military engineers, followed by the setting up of Public Works Department (1862)-introduction of new building practices affecting rural as well as urban scales, -superimposition, modification and replacement of existing building practices, introduction of new materials and building techniques, their impact on architectural form.

Architectural Styles, politico-cultural meaning through built environment- purposeful stylistic changes in architecture,

from neoclassical to Indo-Sarcenic and Art Deco to modern- influence of arts and crafts movement- important architects and their contributions- the emergence of architectural profession, debates on arch.

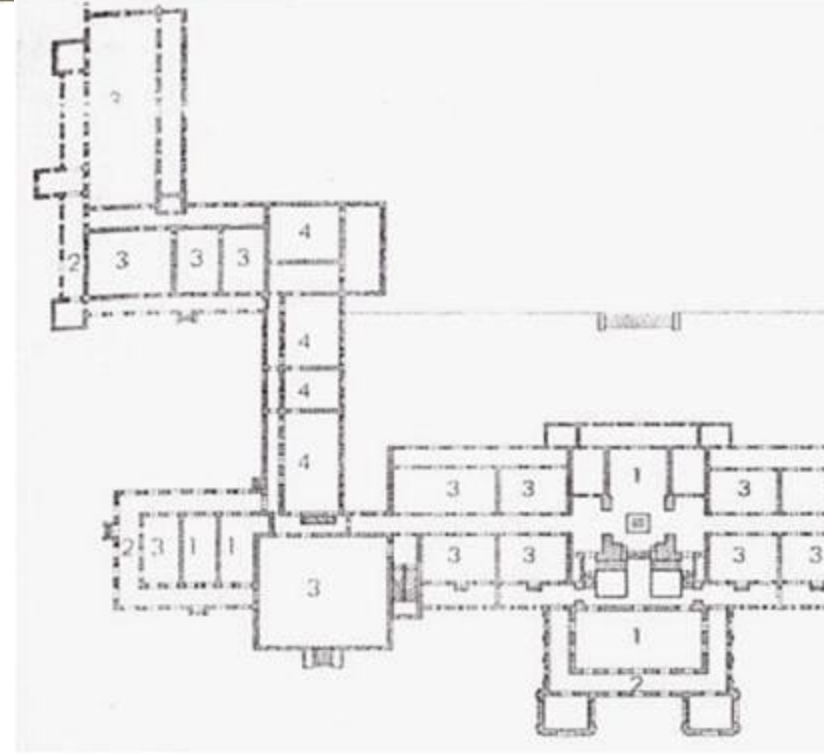
Society and Impact on Life-style, new behavioral patterns, popular preferences, emulation and retention of sociocultural nuances- colonial life-style of the high society, modification of old typology to suite new sought after life style-development of new building types (clubs, gymkhana, hotels, parks and gardens, etc.)

Changes in Dwelling Type, development of the bungalow typology, the most remarkable departure with its visible

impact to date and the resultant suburban expression- evolvement of the type from a simple dwelling to an elaborate mansion- reflection of sociocultural patterns, regional expression all over the country.

The presidency college was completed in 1870 and is known to have produced some of the finest indians, notable among them being The first governor general sri c. rajagopalachari and noble prize winner c. v. raman and dr.s.chandrashekar. its design was a result of an open competition. one of the first buildings by robert chisholm,

- The college is a collage of rusticated grey granite stone facing, exposed brick, and a variety of finishes such as pink sand stone and black gneiss columns and arches.
- The college's italian style, though unique, is extremely foreign in composition and detail .
- its most attractive features is a central hall with a majestic staircase flanked by class rooms on either side of wide central corridor.
- The staircase at the ends are expressed as low rectangular towers topped by a hip roof, with plaster articulation on the exterior .

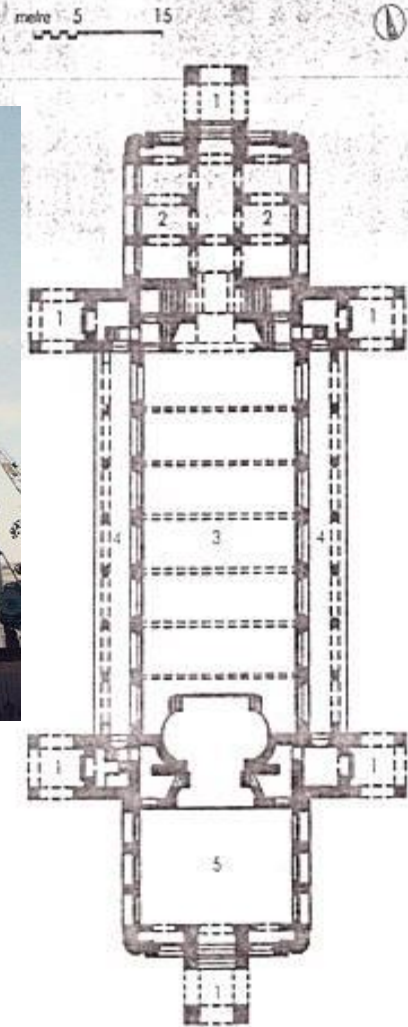


VICTORIA PUBLIC HALL

The Victoria Public Hall, often also known as the town hall, was built in 1887 to honour Queen Victoria on her golden jubilee.

➤ The main functions of the building being stage performances, lectures and ballroom, in the Romanesque style and rectangular in the plan (46 x 26m)

➤ The special features include arcaded verandahs along the northern and southern sides supported on sleek Corinthian columns



➤ A tall square tower that rises at least three floors above the rest, covered by a pyramidal roof.

➤ The main construction material being red brick and painted with lime mortar, the intermediate floor is of Madras terrace while the roof is a large hip with Mangalore tiles

➤ The top floor is highly embellished with decorative and painted plasterwork on the interior and the gallery constructed entirely in wood.

➤ An intricately carved terracotta frieze resembling Islamic calligraphy adorns the top of the tower.

The Gateway of India is one of India's most unique landmarks situated in the city of Mumbai. The Gateway of India is a monument that marks India's chief ports and is a major tourist attraction for visitors who arrive in India for the first time.

- At one point of time, this monument represented the grandeur of the British Raj in India.
- The structural design of the Gateway of India is constituted of a large arch, with a height of 26m
- The monument is built in yellow basalt and indissoluble concrete.
- One can also find traces of Muslim architectural styles incorporated in the central dome of the monument is about 48 feet in diameter, with a total height of 83 feet.
- Designed with intricate latticework, the 4 turrets are the prominent features of the entire structure of the Gateway of India.
- There are steps constructed behind the arch of the Gateway that leads to the Arabian Sea
- The monument is structured in such a way that one can witness the large expanse of the 'blue blanket' right ahead, welcoming and sending off ships and visitors.



The **Madras High Court**

is a senior court in Chennai (Madras), India built in 1892.

The court buildings, believed to be the second largest judicial complex in the world, are near the beach in one of the city's major business districts.



The High Court building was damaged in September 1914, at the beginning of the First World War.

There are several matters of architectural interest in the High Court.

The painted ceilings and the stained glass doors are masterpieces in themselves.

The old lighthouse of the city is housed within the High Court campus, but is unfortunately poorly maintained

The boundaries of the High Court complex are marked by two roads, namely, Prakasam Road (formerly Broadway) and Rajaji Road

The complex houses the largest number of courts in Asia

The Cantonment and the Bungalow

The Cantonment was a British military settlement which was to spread out all over India wherever the British were present in sizable numbers.

Originally conceived as a military base for British troops, the cantonment also began to house civilians who were associated with servicing the military, and developed into a full-fledged mini-city of its own.

The second half of the 19th century saw this transformation complete. Bangalore cantonment consisted of public offices, churches, parks, shops and schools.

It was an entity distinct from the old city – traffic between the two had to stop at a toll-gate and pay entry tax.

The cantonment thus developed into a European town in India, whose main house type was the bungalow.

The bungalow's design evolved as a type over a hundred years. While the actual model for a bungalow remains controversial, it appears to have dual origins: the detached rural Bengal house sitting in its compound (from the word root *bangla* – from Bengal), and the British suburban villa. It was a fusion of these two types that led to a building form which would later become an enduring symbol .

The first bungalows inhabited by the East India Company agents were initially the same as the *kutchra* local ones, but gradually outstripped their origins to become an accurate reflection of the English community.

The typical residential bungalow for the wealthy, for example, was set back from the road by a walled compound.

The amount of land enclosed was a symbol of status. For a senior officer a ratio of 15:1, garden to built form, was appropriate, while for a beginning rank it could even be 1:1.

In this sense the British showed a system no less developed than the complex caste system which they ascribed to India.

The early bungalows had long, low classical lines and detailing. The Gothic revival in England brought about a corresponding change in bungalow design – spawning buildings with pitched roofs and richly carpentered details .

The Classical bungalow with its Doric, and later, in New Delhi for instance, Tuscan orders became a symbol not only of an European heritage but also of the military and political might of Britain. That the bungalow continues to evoke associations of wealth and power is evident from its continued relevance as a building type in India today



Victoria Memorial Hall

Architect Sir William Emerson laid down the actual plan of the memorial.

The design of the structure represents a fusion of British and Mughal architecture.

White Makrana marbles were used in the construction of Victoria Memorial Hall and the building was inaugurated in the year 1921.

The massive hall is 338 feet (103 m) by 228 feet (69 m) and rises to a height of 184 feet (56 m). British government money was not used in its construction at all.

The massive Victoria Memorial stands enclosed within 64 acres (260,000 m²) of blooming gardens.

It houses a museum containing a large collection of memorabilia relating to Queen Victoria and the British presence in India as well as other exhibits.

The Memorial also contains a Royal Gallery housing a number of portraits of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert and paintings illustrating their lives.

After India gained independence in the year 1947, certain additions were made to the Victoria Memorial.

These additions formed National Leader's Gallery, containing the portraits and relics relating to Indian independence

