

History of Architecture and Culture – 5

Lecture 32

Indo-Saracenic Architecture

- The British government made lot of effort to display their strength but to keep the traditional image of India at the same time well rooted in the minds of people, through an architectural style termed through an Indo-saracenic, sometimes referred to as Moorish or Hindoo style
- This represents the synthesis of Muslim designs and Indian materials developed by British architects in India during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
- It is difficult to understand but let me break it down pieces here, you take materials at available in India are right. Stones, Marble, Sand Stones, Lime stones and all granite regular materials are available in India take Hindu temple architecture. Muslim architecture, Moorish architecture forms arches, domes. Minarets and other forms of architecture and invade British architecture to understand all this things and then work on it so that pass an Indo-saracenic architecture in a nutshell.

So what are the elements that Indo-saracenic heir

- Architectural elements of Hindu and Mughal with gothic cusped arches, domes, spires, tracery, minarets, stained glass they were all there
- Indo-Saracenic architecture found its way into public buildings of all sorts they were into railway stations, into banks and insurance buildings, educational buildings, clubs, museums, all sorts of public buildings such as offices, post office buildings they were there everywhere. So what was the first building that designed as a Indo-saracenic building
- Chepauk Palace in Madras was designed by an architect Paul Benfield is considered to be the first Indo-saracenic building in India

The “Stylistic Hybrid” architecture by Michell. The Gateway of India is located on the waterfront in South Bombay, the Gateway is a mere of basalt stone which is 26 meters tall and if you see the buildings of Bombay and the Victoria memorial Calcutta they were all signed the Indo-saracenic style, so the mix elements of neo-classical architecture they take examples from arches, brackets, minarets, proportioning systems and the teak the freeze elements they take the corner elements from British architecture, traceries and they mix all these elements and they form Indo-saracenic architecture.

Landmarks

- The gateway is built from yellow basalt stone and reinforce concrete.
- While Indo-saracenic in architectural style elements are desired from Muslim architectural styles 16th century Gujarat for the Gateway of India.
- The central dome is 15 meters in diameter and 26 meters above ground at its highest point.

Here we can take a look at some of the landmark buildings. This is Amba vilas palace in Mysore on the left hand side and on the right hand side this is the Victoria Hall in Madras.

- The original Mysore palace was of wooden construction was burnt down by a disastrous fire in 1897
- The Maharani, then Regent, decided to build a new palace on the model and on the same foundations as of the old one
- So Henry Irwin at that point of time had recently retired as the consulting architect of the government of Madras and he received the contract and his plans were approved by the ruling people of Mysore
- His plan was constructed the architectural style of the palace is commonly describes as Indo-saracenic because it blends together forms of Hindu, Muslim, Rajput and gothic styles of architecture and all the traditional architecture elements that he is studied in school
- This is the three-storied stone structure and one to one three storied stone structure, it has marble domes and the tower that is five stories tall and it is 145 ft. tall total. The entire palace surrounded by gardens and all sides.
- If we take look at the Central Railway station in Madras on the GPO Bombay. If we clearly see Indo-saracenic styles here although the central railway station is more gothic revival in Indo-saracenic. It still has lot of elements like the semi-circle arches because gothic has pointed arches and this has semi-circular arches and the proportioning systems were everything all revived so that culminates the particular buildings to gothic slash Indo-saracenic architecture and GPO office General Post office Bombay also had Indo-saracenic architecture it blends in elements like Islamic, Hindu and the proportioning system of architecture so that is again in Indo-saracenic architecture

Lutyen's Delhi

- So now it's time for to look at Delhi. The layout of Old Delhi reflects the older requirements of defense, with a few transverse streets leading from one major gate to another gate because they didn't want tell it to be rundown by an army.

- So the whole pattern was little confusing and it was mixture of narrow and winding streets, alleys and lanes leading to residences and commercial areas because they didn't want the people invading army into have free rein on the Delhi so they should be trapped inside the somewhere so that was the defense requirement of Old Delhi
- When George V used the occasion of his second visit to India, great coronation Durbar was to be followed and the announce the shifting of capital from Calcutta to Delhi. Why did they shifted the capital from Calcutta to Delhi? Delhi was to replace the seat of British government in 1912 because of strategic and political significance. If you take to look at the map of India, Calcutta is to the fire east and whereas the Indian empire typically consisted from Pakistan, Kashmir tills the southern type of India. So the Delhi was the center part of India, Delhi was almost central even though its north central but Delhi was almost to the central command of India and historically Delhi has been the seat of India for a very very long period of centuries the Indian rulers were all seated in Delhi. So that is why Delhi was huge political at the same time symbolic significance for the people. So for Indians anybody who's in Delhi is a ruler that is why Delhi had to become the capital in 1912
- To shift in to an existing city, however, was out of the question it was the capital of British India and the new power demanded new kind of architecture
- Planning for the new capital had begun even before the actual shift had taken place and it address the question of urban planning and an appropriate architectural style.
- Edward Lutyens was appointed the chief architecture of Delhi and together with his friend Herbert Baker they took the task of creating the architecture that is fitting for the British raj in Delhi. So once they want to create new city the planning inspiration came from lot of cities, the imperial models such as Paris the Baron Haussmann plan and Champs-Elysees the Christopher
- Wren's unbuilt plan for London as well as L'Enfant's plan for Washington DC
- Ideas came pouring from all over the place, all over the world. Contemporary British experiments in urbanism that was happening there; the circus at bath was taken for Connaught place, Hampstead Garden city for the residential suburbs of New Delhi. So the inspiration came pouring from all kinds of City and that is why Lutyens Delhi became mixture of all the inspirations that Lutyens it had so far
- The design intended to be a symbolic power of British Supremacy.
- So this was the framework that dictated a variety of choices and future choices that was made and line with this, so they had to be synthesis and influences from all Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim architectures.

- 2800 acres of land was carved outside the old city, away from the hustle and bustle of chandni chowk areas and the ramparts of the red fort. So the huge chunk of land was carved out for purely
- With a completely free hand to draw as he pleased. Lutyens sketched out the flowing lines of New Delhi. So he designs the Viceroy's house and now the Rashtrapati Bhavan which is the house of the president, he designed the parliament house which was then the legislative assembly, he designed the magnificent drive or Raj Path we call it now from the president house to the India Gate, the canopy beyond the gate for the statue of king George which is right now empty
- RAJPATH – Rajpath was the central avenue of this part of Delhi connects Rashtrapati Bhavan on one side on its west end to India Gate on its east. This is the main road where the republic day parade happens in Delhi every year and this road was one of the principle street landmarks in Delhi was designed as one of the principle landmarks of city
- Lutyens also invented his own new order of classical columns because he had Doric, Ionic, Corinthian and Tuscan columns and he created the new order of Delhi order. Delhi order consisted of the classical Greek proportions for the same time it consisted of Indian elements in it
- The new city contains both the parliament buildings and government offices a lot of which have been designed by Herbert Baker and they were distinctively built of the local red sandstone which is available and the local red sand stone again was symbolic decision because traditional Mughal buildings, Forts, palaces were all built in red sandstone. So red sandstone was again political symbolism which was used. At the same time it was available in Delhi in a large amount
- Offices of the British Resident, the North and the South Blocks, flanking both sides of the Rashtrapati Bhavan, the melted into the buildings that housed the local administration
- Deeply set overlooking the large greeneries that were around dotted with small paddles of streams and fountains and planted with saplings of trees that gave shade and water conserving jamun tree, the gracious India Gate lawns were regal so beautiful in their splendor.
- It took close to twenty years to construct these buildings and the 112 bungalows that were designed it was built beyond the president house with pillars and porticos that provided shades during the scorching summer months
- Truly Delhi was the most beautiful city plan by the British, lot of elements that New Delhi had were borrowed from indigenous sources
- The city was finally completed in 1931
- So there were lot of things that happened in Lutyens Delhi. It was openly scornful of the experiments that were happening by developing the AngloIndian style that had preceded at him, such as the ones at Bombay, Calcutta, Madras
- So Indian architecture according to him was nothing better than random spurts of inspiration but had nothing much of as style as to emulate to be inspired from any indigenous features in the design. So they took responsibility of the plan
- So he completely rested with Lutyens so they had huge dispute with Baker over the exact location for the Viceroy's house.

- Because in terms of architecture, the division of labor was more exact. Viceroy's house was assigned by Lutyens where secretariat buildings were designed by Baker
- Together, Lutyens and Baker, in the Viceroy's House, and what are today known as North and South Blocks, created one of the most monumental public spaces of the 20th century

So this particular design also was the origin of the dispute between Baker and Lutyens because there was a steep slope towards a rise in a hill if you go from the Viceroy's house to the India Gate. So well he was moving from the India Gate. The Viceroy's house will be obscured because of the slope that had created a steep slope. Lutyens did not want a steep slope because it would hide the Viceroy's house but Baker if you give a gentle slope it will unremind the consumption of the secretariats which had designed. So they had a huge fight and split after this. Finally what was intended as a rising building of things would now look at an unremaining thing because of the slope that was there in the Rajpath

So India Gate was conceived originally as a memorial to fall an Indian soldier during the service of the British army the gate was originally called the war memorial arch designed after its predecessors, the Porte St. Denis in Paris and the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. So it was designed on an exactly similar line. It was supposed to be called the War memorial arch and now it's called the India Gate. So if you take a look at this plan here we can see as the India Gate and this here over somewhere here the Viceroy's house. This are the two secretariat buildings now the north and the south blocks, this is the Rajpath, this is the parliament building or it was then called the legislative building and all these areas they had built bungalows and other offices and other buildings over here, this is the library so on the walls of India Gate and inscribed the names of 60,000 men who fell fighting for the British Empire. So this was the politically appropriate Monument and the archway also completed the king's way it actually supported to be the king's way or now it's called the Rajpath. So this is the way through which the king or the viceroy would come and get into the viceroy's house. So while he coming will be looking at legislative assembly will be looking at library, looking at secretariats then the viceroy's house would be the center of the seat. So this was the monumental central axis of New Delhi that Lutyens wanted to create.

The Legislative Building

1919 Montague Chelmsford's reform was brought in to place and it brought together certain legislative assembly and it also called for certain legislative responsibility on Indians. So which meant that they needed a legislative assembly building as the part of the new Delhi Complex. In the initial Baker's consumption parliament building was circular in plan with colonnades all around the place, the parliament house its final form was Baker's consumption its art circle of form in put an abruptly orthogonal planning scheme, if you check at the plan.

India Gate - Delhi

Everything about the plan was straight lines and diagonal lines. A triangles and hexagons and straight lines everywhere but this is an heart shaped circular building whereas everything else was orthogonal in plan and those particular scheme. In spite of the difficulty in actual sighting a circular building and urban plan. A Baker's creation is not without architectural mirror, he took an imposing exterior colonnade and an interior here pointed plan which had a central domed space right in the middle

The Princely Residential Buildings

- For the Indian Princess of princely state house which is supposed to be a palace a New Delhi was announced and that would indicate the prestige.
- So the princely houses in new Delhi had they were houses for Hyderabad, Baroda, Jaipur and among this they were more symbolic than representation of power,
- The biggest of this house were Hyderabad house for the Nizam of Hyderabad who perhaps possibly was richest man in the world at the particular point of time
- The princely residences were more clearly classical in origin than the imperial buildings, Hyderabad houses less ornate and yet more original as a typology
- The Baroda House Lutyens chose, with the full approval of his British-educated client not to indulge in any concessions towards Indian motifs and traditions. So they were all completely Anglo Saxons in terms of finishes and the butterfly plan is cut in to two right at the center

The Churches of Delhi

- Although Lutyens dream of a great cathedral was never realized the other churches came up around Delhi.
- One of these, the Garrison Church for Delhi Cantonment it was designed by Arthur Shoenberger that would be a forerunner for the modern architectural movement in India
- The Other church was the redemption by H.A.N. Medd which was directly next to the Viceroy's House. These two were very important choices were designed in Delhi that particular point of time. The grand church never really came up although Lutyens had planned about really great cathedral there was supposed to build in New Delhi.

The Viceroy's House

The Viceroy's House now called as the Rashtrapati Bhavan the president residence.

- It's a red stone building, topped by a copper dome on perched top of the Raisina Hill. So everybody can have a look at it
- Previously the home of British Viceroy's now the actual residence of the president of India
- It also houses the offices of various administrative departments in two sections of the complex called as "North Block" and "South Block" mentioned earlier.