the statue are marble friezes and panels by Frank Salisbury depicting scenes from her reign – from the timorous, white-robed young girl on the morning of her accession to the triumphant Imperial climax of the Diamond Jubilee. The central panels are inscribed with the great Imperial attributes – Dominion, Power, Loyalty and Freedom. Yet ironically it was the fundamental conflict between the concepts of Dominion and Freedom, expressed in the continuing tension between the high Imperial mission and the English liberal tradition, that led to the end of the Raj. Empires tend to have the weaknesses of their strengths and all it needed was for the subjects of the Empire to appeal to the innate sense of freedom for which the Empire stood, and the whole edifice came tumbling down.

Pax Britannica: bronze statuary outside the Victoria Memorial.

CHAPTER 9

NEW DELHI : THE ROME OF HINDOSTAN

Davies. Splendours of the Raj.

> An empire can nurse no finer ideal than the cohesion of its dominions in cities erected in one style of architecture recognised throughout the world as the expression of its own imperial ideals. The encouragement of such an empire-pervading style throughout colonies, dependencies, and protectorates will tend to annihilate distance and conduce to an imperial liberty, equality and fraternity.

In 1912, when this resounding Imperial polemic appeared in *The Builder*, attempts to impose an artificial unity of any sort whether political, economic or architectural were doomed to failure. The Empire was united only in its diversity. It never assumed an identifiable pattern for it was constantly changing like a global kaleidoscope. The elusive search for architectural unity was important as a way of expressing national vigour, virility, and Imperial resolve; if the British faltered others would seize pre-eminence. *The Builder* continued: 'When Great Britain is incapable of setting an example of architectural achievement to her dependencies other nations more virile will slowly but surely take advantage of her relapse – step into the breach, undermine her prestige, and bring about an imperial disaffection more effectual in its consequences than the ravages of internal feuds.' It remains the supreme irony that when at New Delhi Britain did make an architectural statement which symbolised to the world her Imperial mission and artistic genius, it was all to no avail.

The combative climate of international rivalry that characterised the New Imperialism of the 1880s is clearly discernible in the patriotic prolixity of *The Builder*. It also added impetus to the martial impulse, present from the earliest days of the old East India Company. Military power was not just a tool for commercial ends, but an instrument in the burgeoning struggle for global supremacy. In India this was the Great Game, the often illusory secret struggle with Russia at one remove away across the frozen wastes of the Hindu Kush and the barren deserts of Afghanistan. The focus for this confrontation was the North-West Frontier and the Tribal Territory on the Afghan border.

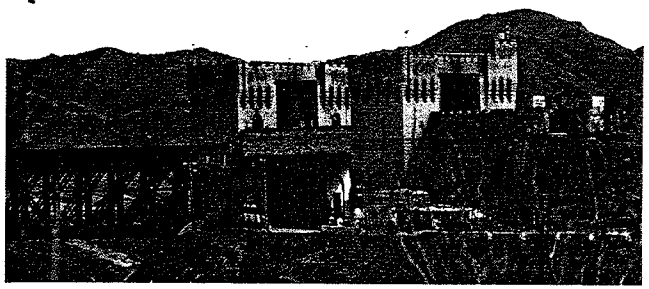
Here the architecture reflected the chronic insecurity of the whole region. At Lahore, the great crossroads of the Punjab, situated on the main railway line from Upper India to the Frontier, the railway station, like that in Delhi, was designed as a fortress by the local engineer, William Brunton, with colossal crenellated corner towers, and cavernous trainsheds which could be sealed in an emergency, crowned by a romantic bevy of bartizans and turrets. Further towards the

Frontier the landscape changes to an undulating, unyielding wasteland of sand, rock and scrub. The mud villages and houses are designed to repel attack with loopholed walls, corner towers, crenellated parapets and steel shutters to the windows. They still carry guns here, but the old jezails were traded in long ago for Kalashnikovs and M 13s. Perhaps the Great Game was not so illusory after all, for the Russians have played it as a waiting game and won the first round. The Victorians thought it real enough: after years of deliberation as to the respective merits of tunnel or bridge, when they came to drive the railway up to Peshawar and the Frontier itself, they straddled the mighty Indus gorge at Attock with a spectacular double-decker bridge guarded by iron gates and battlemented towers. This astonishing feat of Imperial engineering was designed by Sir Francis O'Callaghan and Mr Johnson. The ironwork with girders twenty-six feet deep was sent out by Westwood Baillie & Co. Opened in 1883, and later remodelled in 1926, it soars across the river in a series of six spans carried on five vast stone piers. Almost 1,700 feet long the upper deck carries the railway across the chasm 100 feet beneath, whilst the lower deck accommodates the road traffic, which is swept across the river in full view of Akbar's imposing fort on the opposite bank, and past a chillingly apt Frontier war memorial – a huge inverted stone bullet standing on an isolated ridge beside the railway line. The railway remains the main strategic route to the Frontier and when, in 1971, I tried to photograph it from inside the Khyber Mail, a passenger pressed his gun to my head, convinced that my enthusiasm exceeded the merely historical.

The Khyber Pass is part of the very myth of Empire, and rightly so, for it is one of the most evocative and spectacular places on earth. The twisting road climbs over 3,500 feet through a series of defiles, valleys and reverse curves guarded every hundred yards or so by a crouching soldier of the Khyber Rifles. At the entrance to the pass stands Fort Jamrud, a mud-brick fort built in 1823, looking like something straight out of *Beau Geste*. Nearby lies a memorial plaque inscribed with lines from Kipling's 'Arithmetic on the Frontier':

> The flying bullet down the Pass,
> That whistles clear: 'All flesh is grass'

together with a fulsome tribute to the mutual respect which existed between the British and Pathans. Every knoll and outcrop of the pass is fortified with blockhouses, bunkers, wire and watchtowers and, sprawling across the foreground at Landi Kotal lies a colossal fort. But most haunting of all are the stone plaques set straight into the barren hillsides carrying the insignia of the British regiments who lived, fought and died here. It is fitting that the railway, that hallmark of British dominion, reached this most hallowed spot. Between 1920 and 1925 a railway was built through the Pass twenty-six and a half miles long, a seemingly impossible undertaking, which cost over £2 million sterling, but it enabled the British cohorts to be brought up speedily from Peshawar in times of emergency through thirty-four tunnels aggregating over three miles in length and across ninety-two bridges.



Attock: fortified portals to the great double-decker bridge over the Indus gorge.

This was the high point of Imperial engineering in every sense of the word; British power and prestige lapping the very borders of the Indian sub-continent yet at the very moment when the tide was turning at the centre.

If the mood could be expansive and martial, it could also be domestic, even homely, in contrast to the display of strength on the Frontier or the grandiloquent expressions of civic and Imperial pride which arose in the great cities. The work of the two Consulting Architects to the Government of India, James Ransome (1865–1944) and John Begg (1866–1937) between 1902 and 1921 was varied enough to accommodate most expressions of the Imperial mood. Both held clear views about style. Ransome affirmed: 'It is . . . by no means easy, to a designer of Indian buildings, to steer an even course between a natural and healthy predilection for style and the necessity for the employment of that which is not strictly in keeping with that style.' He went on to highlight the fundamental problem facing all architects in India:

> The chief difficulty with which I have had to contend . . . has been that of expressing a sufficient sense of solidity in verandahs, admitting the maximum amount of light at so low a level as to preclude the sun's rays from striking the main walls of the building, and pierced at ceiling level with shaded clerestories for purpose of ventilation and for the admission of sufficient light to compensate for the loss entailed by the restricted height of the lower openings.

He pleaded against the dictates of purity and in favour of ingenuity when using the principal available styles, concluding that even though native styles were rich in useful suggestions, 'the peculiarities of their construction and their extravagant ornament and elaborate features render their faithful interpretation inexpedient.'

A competent architect as well as an advocate of bastardisation, Ransome's designs are intelligent and sophisticated essays. It was he, more than any other practitioner, who came closest to using an Arts and Crafts style in India, reflecting the domestic, nostalgic mood which pervaded the hill stations. At Simla he produced an elegant little

building on the Mall for use as a library and offices in local Kalka stone with half-timbered gables, red brick chimneys and rough grey slates, in the subdued style of Norman Shaw, and without the ornamental bargeboards which were Simla's hallmark. Later the open rear verandahs were glazed, detracting from the original concept. His second design for the Kennedy House Secretariat, also in Simla, was developed from an earlier French Renaissance concept, and most closely resembles a large Edwardian block of flats with a rhythm of canted bays rising to a frieze of *sgraffito* work beneath wide projecting eaves. The roof has a central tower crowned by an open belvedere for use by the Meteorological Department. Both wings are approached by enormous sweeping stone staircases. The buildings for the Imperial Cadet Corps at Dehra Dun are just as homely. Intended to resemble half-timbered two-storey English cottages, the upper windows act as clerestories to large single internal spaces. The roof lighting is adeptly handled with the windows recessed in projecting dormers which are carried on timber posts. Similar Arts and Crafts influences pervade Government House in Chittagong, which has battered side entrances and a projecting half-timbered porch, the Secretariat at Nagpur, and the Burma Chief Court at Rangoon. The latter two major civic buildings both enjoy alternating stone banding, shallow cupolas and gables with long tapering finials. However, Ransome was versatile and turned out competent designs in a variety of styles for the PWD Secretariat in Lahore, Renaissance conceptions for the Agricultural College, Pusa, and pure classicism of an Ionic order for buildings in Wellesley Place, Calcutta, orchestrating two parallel blocks of official residences and stables into a grand civic composition. He was well-versed in architectural history too for his designs for the Ludhiana Clock Tower were suggested by the Campanile of the Palazzo Scaglieri in Verona.

Ransome's successor John Begg was born at Bo'ness, Scotland and educated at Edinburgh Academy and the Royal Academy Schools. He was articled to Hippolyte Blanc and later worked with Alfred Waterhouse, R. W. Edis, and Young and Hall, the hospital specialists, before going to South Africa in 1898. In 1901 he was appointed Consulting Architect to the Government of Bombay where his principal work was the huge domed Indo-Saracenic General Post Office. Seven years later he succeeded Ransome in the post he was to hold for twelve years. Like Ransome, he was proficient in a variety of styles and he too felt his way towards the evolution of an Anglo-Indian style suited to the conditions of the country. Perhaps his finest work is the Lady Hardinge Medical College and Hospital for women in Delhi (1915–1916), where he hit upon an original treatment and style. Its accentuated horizontality and severity of line and form reflected the work of his great rival, Lutyens. Begg had enormous energy and made significant progress towards a greater harmony between design and function. He acted as consultant to the Indian railway, designed housing and barracks for the new cantonment at Delhi and evolved a standardised design for the Post and Telegraph Departments. The Nagpur and Agra Post Offices and Simla and Rangoon Telegraph Offices are good examples. It was Begg too who complemented Ransome's

elegant little Municipal Library and offices at Simla with a group of charming half-timbered and cream plaster structures with overhanging upper storeys and eaves. He produced over twenty churches including the delightful cantonment church at Maymyo outside Mandalay, Burma. His new wing at Craigdhu, Simla was regarded simply as 'the best thing in residential hotel construction for the hills that we have yet seen', complete with quaint and cosy suites of rooms with big brown beams, white plaster, wood block floors and brick fireplaces. However Begg was most at ease when designing in the monumental classical style. The Robertson Arts College, Jubbulpore, and Benares High Court are both well executed, but the Agricultural College at Poona is most inventive with a first-floor arcaded verandah of alternating paired and single columns terminated by vast domed aedicular pavilions to each end bay. Begg also developed Ransome's earlier designs for the Council House Secretariat, Calcutta into a finely proportioned brick and stucco edifice which provided some of the most comfortable government offices in India.

With the growing popularity of Beaux Arts classicism in England great Imperial thoroughfares were planned at the heart of London. Kingsway was opened in 1912. In the West End Regent Street and Piccadilly were reconstructed on suitably Imperial lines. Whole streets in the City of London were recast in a magnificent display of Imperial self-confidence. Even Buckingham Palace received a new façade from Aston Webb to complement the Victoria Memorial and its circumjacent *rond-point* of Imperial statuary. In India this was reflected in a move towards a new interest in Renaissance and Baroque styles and a revival of the quest for a synthesis between classicism and indigenous forms.

Frank Lishman was consulting architect to the United Provinces and his High Court at Allahabad (1916) is one of the most distinctive expressions of the new enthusiasm for Baroque architecture and civic classicism under Indian skies. The superintending engineer was F. O. Oertel, an enthusiastic exponent of a revival of Indian arts and crafts. 'What we want for India is not a Greek and Roman Renaissance, but a renaissance of Indian art and architecture', he cried, but in the High Court Building he presided over the erection of a structure which comprised a very effective synthesis between East and West. Conceived in the Grand Manner, it is a monumental Baroque statement with a pedimented domed centrepiece. Wings and covered ways link this with separate blocks of chambers dispersed around a central courtyard. It appears to be a conventional piece of European design, but the arcaded wings are treated with pierced stone balustrades, screens and engrailed arches set between austere stone columns, imparting a wonderfully cool and mannered appearance to the ensemble. Still, this is a British building and a Court of Law at that, so the cartouche to the central pediment carries a crisply executed royal cipher, a perpetual reminder of the 'Pax Britannica'.

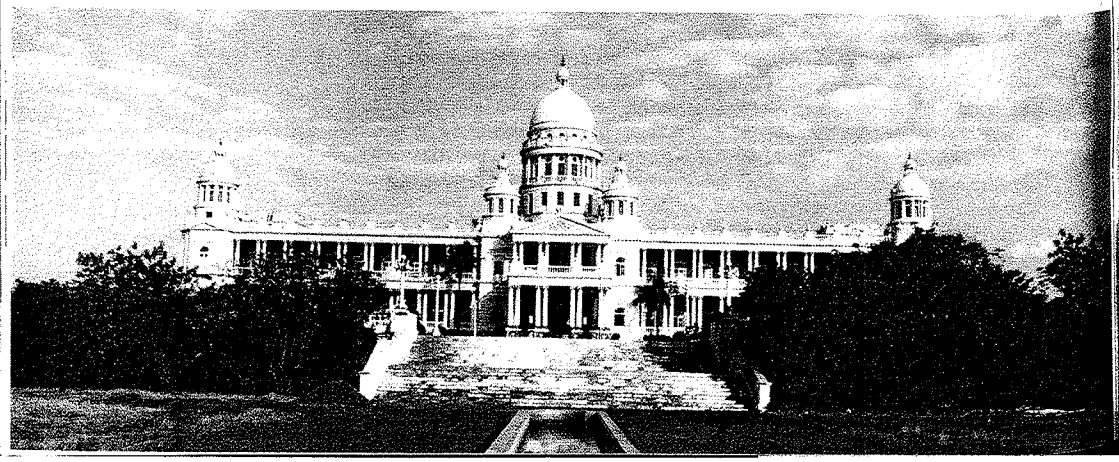
In other hands the same theme of grand civic classicism assumed a more self-important pomposity which tended to accentuate the alien nature of the British rather than to stress the close affinity between the rulers and the ruled. Henry V. Lanchester (1863–1953) was one of the

most enthusiastic and inventive advocates of Baroque civic classicism in England, with buildings such as Cardiff City Hall and Law Courts (1897–1906) and Central Hall, Westminster (1905–1911) to his credit. However Lanchester was the planner and engineer and his partner Edwin Rickards, the draughtsman, was the real creative force. Lanchester was involved in India only after Rickards's death in 1920, and his buildings for all their assumed confidence are disappointing and lack the creative spark which Rickards might have imparted. The Council Chamber in Lucknow (1928) resembles Central Hall Westminster in its conception. Lanchester was assisted by Rodeck, and they went on to design the nearby Post and Telegraph Office with its lofty square central tower in 1931–2, but Lanchester's real *tour de force* was the Umaid Bhawan Palace at Jodhpur erected between 1929 and 1944.

The Indian princes had a penchant for European styles and in 1923 the Maharajah of Jodhpur planned a colossal new palace as a famine relief exercise to provide employment for his starving population. Lanchester was chosen as architect and he created a huge domed building which bears the firm imprint of his English civic training. It is a vast monolithic pile, essentially classical in its form and configuration, but with a traditionally Indian layout of centrally placed reception rooms, with staff quarters in one wing and zenana in the other. Hindu details and devices were used because Jodhpur had little Muslim or Saracenic tradition.

The classical tradition was a potent force. Far to the south in Mysore, the Lalitha Mahal Palace of the Maharajah of Mysore was nothing less than a bold attempt to transpose St Paul's Cathedral to a South Indian setting. It was designed by E. W. Fritchley in 1930 in the manner of an Edwardian hotel. Its domed two-storey pedimented centrepiece is openly derived from St Paul's but with additional attenuated wings carrying long colonnades of paired Corinthian columns culminating in secondary domed pavilions. Rising like some evanescent dream palace from the heat haze of the South Indian plain, it is an extraordinary edifice, which has been converted into a hotel for well-heeled Western visitors, eager to sample the delights of a Maharajah's palace. It is an ideal use, for the interiors remain unspoiled with a magnificent suite of principal rooms, complete with stained glass lanterns, ornate plasterwork and finely-chased metalwork.

Lalitha Mahal Palace, Mysore, designed by E. W. Fritchley in 1930, is a loose essay on St Paul's Cathedral. The palace is now a hotel.



However, the political and architectural future lay not in the Native States or in the self-indulgent whims of the ancient princely families of Hindustan. Neither did it lie in the exploitation of the new styles of the 20th century. Art Nouveau styles by their very origin and nature were too avant-garde to be identified with the Imperial ideal and they found little fulfilment in India, although Sir George Frampton's statue of Queen Victoria outside the Memorial Hall, Calcutta, does have a marked Art Nouveau influence with panels of intertwined vine trees on the plinth and some delightfully spiky bronze work. Similarly the style popularised by the Paris Exposition of 1926, Art Deco, found little official favour, although it did prove influential amongst certain wealthy sectors of the native population who were keen to identify with the latest in Western art and culture. Where it occurs it is often wonderfully inventive. The Maharajah of Morvi built a large Art Deco palace with all the sumptuous fittings and finishings of a Hollywood cinema. Most towns in India have a sprinkling of Art Deco houses of the period, the flat roofs, banded fenestration and concrete construction proving remarkably well-suited to the climate.

It is a curious fact of history that empires in decline often undergo a resurgence of cultural vigour before the end, and the British Empire, like those of Spain, Rome or Austria-Hungary, was no exception. The genesis of an Anglo-Indian architectural renaissance lay in the momentous decision to move the capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi. This idea had been current for fifty or sixty years, but cost, inertia and strategic considerations had prevailed against it. By 1910 perceptions were changing. The decision to move the capital formed part of a wider political expedient to defuse the mounting tension and violence in Upper India and Bengal. In 1905 Lord Curzon had partitioned Bengal in the interests of administrative convenience. It was a monumental mistake for the division accentuated communal strife provoking sustained resistance and violence from Bengali nationalists. By 1910 the unrest was so serious that even the new King-Emperor George V was alarmed for the stability of Upper India. When the opportunity arose for a major demonstration of Imperial unity at the Coronation Durbar of 1911, it was seen as a real chance to renew the bonds of Anglo-Indian unity at the very moment when they were in greatest danger of being torn asunder. The Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, a man of common qualities possessed to a rare degree, hid an astute brain behind a mask of shyness and austerity. With some of his closest advisers and with the sanction of George V, a secret plan was prepared of consummate political dexterity to mitigate Curzon's *faux pas* of 1905. The intention was to unite Bihar and Orissa into a new Lieutenant-Governorship with a Legislative Council and a new capital at Patna, to reinstate a Chief Commissioner in Assam, to create a unified Bengal as a Presidency and, most important of all, to create a wholly new Imperial capital at Delhi directly administered by the Government of India. When the decision was announced at the Delhi Durbar on 12th December 1911 the assembly was astonished and there was a spontaneous outburst of joy from the Delhi crowd that moved the King to tears.

The transfer of the capital made profound sense for more than just political reasons. For a start it was much closer to Simla, the summer capital, and the climate was infinitely more salubrious than that of Calcutta. It was a major route centre for road and rail and lay close to the Punjab and United Provinces, but most importantly, Delhi was a symbol with deep-rooted historical associations. It had been the Imperial capital for centuries and was the centre of the Moghul Court. It was to here that the mutineers streamed in 1857, to the symbolic rallying point of Bahadur Shah, the last of the Moghul Emperors. By identifying with Delhi the British were placing themselves in a direct historical continuum for traditionally the whole of India looked to the city as the focus of suzerain power in the sub-continent. Lord Crewe, Secretary of State for India considered 'the ancient walls of Delhi enshrine an Imperial tradition comparable with that of Constantinople, or with that of Rome itself.' In spite of the vociferous offensive launched by vested Calcutta interests, and the virulent opposition of Lord Curzon who envisaged his great Victoria Memorial Hall, then in the course of erection in Calcutta, as the spiritual sanctum of an Imperial capital, the move went ahead.

Before embarking on the story of New Delhi proper we can make a telling comparison with the new capital of the United Provinces of Bihar and Orissa at Patna, another part of Hardinge's emollient plan for India. Admittedly one is a provincial and the other a national capital but even so, the originality of Lutyens's creation is shown up at once.

Patna was laid out by the consulting architect, Joseph Fearis Munnings. In spite of its eclipse by New Delhi, it is an interesting piece of Edwardian classicism: Government House, a subdued Italianate block with projecting eaves and arcaded bridge links to separate wings, is set at the end of a long vista, King George V Avenue, which forms the principal axis of the town. This axis forms a visual link between the Secretariat block and Government House, which are separated by a serpentine lake. The capital was complete by 1918 and the buildings share a common muted form of classicism.

Early in 1912 a tripartite Town Planning Committee was formed with a limited brief to assess the task of laying out the new Imperial city, the eighth which Delhi had seen in its long and ancient history. The City Engineer of Liverpool, John Brodie, was nominated by the Local Government Board and Captain George Swinton, Chairman of the London County Council was appointed to head the Committee, but for the post of architectural adviser, the most frantic lobbying took place. S. D. Adshead was in serious contention until rejected as too academic, and amongst those advanced by interested parties were the cream of the British architectural profession – Leonard Stokes, Reginald Blomfield and Sir Robert Lorimer – as well as those with Indian experience – George Wittet and John Begg. With characteristic modesty Professor Patrick Geddes suggested himself, and interestingly, Raymond Unwin, the percipient and enlightened planner of Hampstead Garden Suburb, was favoured by none other than Lord Crewe. Eventually the decision narrowed to a choice between Edwin Lutyens, nominated by the RIBA, and Henry Lanchester. Hardinge chose Lutyens with Lanchester

employed as a temporary consultant. The composition of the Committee put quite a few architectural noses out of joint, not least that of John Begg who, as Consulting Architect to the Government of India, remained ignored and unconsulted.

The Committee set to work energetically and examined all the possible sites for the new city. The arguments against the northern site, where the foundation stones had been laid by King George and Queen Mary at the Durbar of 1911, were strong, but the decision whether to choose the northern site on the historic Ridge or a more open site to the south vacillated alarmingly, long after detailed planning had com-

New Delhi from the air showing the complex geometric plan dominated by the huge central axis which leads past the Secretariats and on to the great climax at Viceroy's House. The circular Council Chamber may be seen to the left of the Secretariats.

menced on the latter. Apparently the southern site for Government House was settled by the Viceroy himself.

> The moment I saw the selected site I realised its objections. It would be hot; it had no views; and it had no room for expansion ... [We] then mounted and galloped over the plain to a hill some distance away. From the top of the hill there was a magnificent view embracing Old Delhi and all the principal monuments situated outside the town, with the river Jumna winding its way like a silver streak in the foreground at a little distance. I said at once ... 'This is the site for Government House'.

The geometrical plan form of the new city was the product of the complex discussions of the Committee and Lanchester with the Viceroy and his advisers, but the concept of a huge central axis remained a constant throughout. The basic ideas of axial symmetry and kinetics, whereby a fresh series of views and aspects revealed themselves as one moved through the city, were fundamental to the whole conception of ceremonial function, but the Committee's reports also revealed an awareness of the complexity of city planning. Extensive thought was given to the problems of communications, recreation, water supply, drainage and housing for all classes, as well as to the finer points of three-dimensional civic design. The actual plan itself changed even in the process of construction, but Lutyens confessed that Hardinge's dictum that one principal avenue should lead to the Purana Qila and another to the Jumma Masjid, major focal points of the old city, was 'the father of the equilateral and hexagonal plan'.

Lutyens was well-versed in the grand traditions of town planning on a city scale and in the precepts and ideals of the Garden City movement. Before departing for India he had been consulting architect to the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust with specific responsibility for the design of the Central Square and the general layout of the estate. The concept of a central place with radiating vistas, *rond-points*, *pattes-d'oie* and accentuated axes, the idea of capturing the horizon and grouping individual buildings into a corporate whole were printed firmly in his mind, so that when he arrived in Delhi the challenge of designing an entire community was not intimidating; nor was the prospect of working closely with the Viceroy of India for he had just left an equally imperious client in Henrietta Barnett. In Hampstead Garden Suburb Lutyens had been designing within a framework which reflected the specific social ideals of its creator; in Delhi the new city would reflect the concept of Imperial supremacy, but in a subtle English way. The plan of New Delhi reflects other influences too: L'Enfant's plan of Washington, Haussmann's plan of Paris and the contemporaneous erection of a new Federal capital at Canberra in Australia, where the Australian Government had appointed an American as supervisory architect, Walter Burley Griffin. More significantly it reflects the rigid social hierarchy of the British Raj.

In New Delhi the social structure of Edwardian India was petrified for future generations to see. The socio-spatial layout of the city

reflected the cultural values and relationships of a colonial society which had changed little for sixty or seventy years. The relative status and privileges attached to each rank were guarded jealously and set out in official publications such as the *Warrant of Precedence*. For instance, in the forty-fourth grade of the Warrant the Civilian Superintendent of Clothing Factories ranked a cut above the Deputy Director-General Indian Medical Services, but beneath the Director-General of Public Information, and all three were inferior to the Financial Adviser, Post and Telegraphs. This tortuous and arcane official hierarchy was underscored by social deference and the general presumption that the 'heaven-born' civil servant, and indeed any government official, was superior to a military officer of the same rank. Wives assumed the rank of their husbands, unless they held a post in their own right, which was rare. It was against this deferential social hierarchy that the physical and spatial forms of the city emerged. The disposition of the residences was the work of the Secretary of the Imperial Delhi Committee, Geoffrey de Montmorency, and the engineer Thomas Ward. Within the hexagonal grid pattern five areas were allocated according to race, occupational rank and social status – one, for gazetted officers (fat whites), another for European clerks, a third for indigenous clerks and lower ranking officials, a fourth for Indian princes and nobility and finally a discrete area for non-persons of the lowest ranks. Land plots were allotted according to status. Ruling princes received between four and eight acres, gazetted officers between two and three-and-a-half acres, and Members of the Legislature, one-quarter acre. The relationship between size and status was reflected in price, a bungalow for gazetted officers fetching between 40,000 and 44,000 rupees compared with Class I Married European Clerks' Quarters at 8,600 rupees. So rigid and inflexible was this hierarchy that it is possible to assess the relative social status of each individual road. King George's Avenue, for example, held those in ranks 42 to 43, Deputy Secretaries and Brigadiers; Hastings Road held Major-Generals and above in social ranks 8 to 26. Thus a clear pattern of social and racial segregation was established and as Anthony King has noted: 'Symbolically, the Anglo-Indians caught between two strongly hierarchical cultures and looked down upon by both were located outside the walls of the indigenous city and on the perimeter of the imperial capital.'

The passionate pursuit of system and symmetry in the new city represented a final attempt by the British to impose order on the chaos of Indian society. Based on a complex combination of radial axes and polygons, it not only overcame visual monotony, but provided suitable civic foci for the great institutions of state. The Garden City layout with vast ceremonial avenues and open spaces may have been based on the prevailing antipathy for urban values, but Lutyens's use of monumental classicism as a basis for a unified architectural style more than reconciled both town and country in one glorious composition. The magnitude of the task and its symbolic importance affected most observers. To Lord Curzon it symbolised the moral supremacy of the British Empire, 'Our work is righteous and ... it shall endure'; to the architectural critic Robert Byron, New Delhi was 'The Rome of

Hindostan'; above all it represented the apotheosis of the Imperial ideal itself.

Vested with such metaphysical, political and social meaning, the question of style achieved paramount importance. What would encapsulate the Imperial ideal but still represent the concept of Britain in India? Advice poured in from all quarters. Stanley Adshead, a disappointed aspirant for Lutyens's job, thought 'New Delhi should be Greek, not Hellenic Greek, but Hellenistic Greek – The Greek of the Alexandrian period, with its rich ornament borrowed more than 2,000 years ago from India herself.' John Begg, desperate to participate, advocated a competition for the principal buildings. The Viceroy insisted that 'the architecture . . . should harmonise externally with the monuments of Old Delhi and with the traditions of Indian art', and the aged Sir Swinton Jacob was brought in to advise on appropriate Indian materials and detailing, much to Lutyens's chagrin, who derided his buildings as a mish-mash of historical motifs. Lutyens had little time for Indian architecture in general. He was disparaging and dismissive of those fervent advocates of Indo-Saracenic architecture, who assailed him on all sides. Few were reticent in advancing their views, but the official decision expressed by the Viceroy was a compromise solution: 'Western architecture with an Oriental motif'. A petition signed by eminent public figures including Thomas Hardy and George Bernard Shaw pressed for the use of the Indian master builder and an Indian style. The battle of the styles raged for months. The influential E. B. Havell enquired, 'How will New Delhi be built? Will it be the starting point of a real Anglo-Indian architecture, or only the opportunity of a lifetime for the modern Western stylist?' Lutyens's old friend, Herbert Baker, whom he invited to join him in the great venture, held clear views, which impressed the authorities and won him the appointment as Lutyens's collaborator and partner. 'First and foremost it is the spirit of British sovereignty which must be imprisoned in its stone and bronze . . . To realise this ideal the architecture of the Roman Empire, as embodying "the more elemental and universal forms", should be used as the basis of the style, while Eastern "features" must be woven into the fabric as a concession to Indian sentiment.'

The city which arose under the transcendent influence of Lutyens and Baker represents the culmination of over two hundred years of persistent endeavour to achieve a true architectural synthesis of Eastern and Western styles. In Lutyens's magisterial Viceroy's House the architectural experiments which began in the 18th century to create an Anglo-Indian architecture in its own right reach a triumphant culmination. A building of supreme serenity, it stands on the highest point, Raisina Hill, sharing a platform with the twin Secretariat buildings designed by Baker, a concession which Lutyens later bitterly regretted, and one which seemed to compromise symbolically the supreme authority of the Viceroy. To others it merely confirmed their suspicions that India was run by the vast unchecked bureaucracy contained within them. New Delhi combines 20th-century architecture and town planning on a 17th-century scale, a pure expression of political power. Every single building and vista reflects the hierarchy

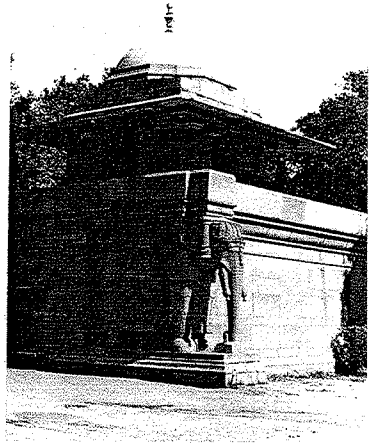
Viceroy's House, New Delhi: one of the great masterpieces of 20th-century architecture and the culmination of an architectural quest to find a unique Anglo-Indian Imperial style. The Jaipur column and Great Screen may be seen in the foreground.

of the society which built it and at its centre stands the focus of the entire city, Viceroy's House, the supreme fount of political, cultural and social patronage. The pattern of avenues and waterways of the city converges inexorably on a romantic mass of domes and towers. Robert Byron wrote:

> The beauty of this building transcends the merely panoramic. The coloured and theatrical facade of Islam has been annexed to a more intellectual, three-dimensional tradition of solid form and exact proportion – the tradition of Europe. The result has been to create one of the great palaces of the world, and the only one erected within the last hundred years. Its architecture combines the grandeur of Bernini and the subtlety of Palladio with the colour, shade, and water of Mohammedan Asia.

Twenty years after his arrival in India George Swinton, head of the original Committee, stood before Viceroy's House and remarked, 'It is very rarely that one sees a great building, indeed anything, which is so thoroughly satisfactory that all criticism ceases . . . The Viceroy's House would seem to express the perfect architecture which takes its stand on proportions alone.'

Viceroy's House is a masterpiece: like all great works of architecture the house has a total unity and does not rely on one decorated façade for effect. It was conceived as a three-dimensional composition and it exhales the inspiration of its creator right down to the witty and playful treatment of its finest details. The house is larger than Versailles and it



Viceroy's House: pavilion with full-size caparisoned elephant ornament.

dominates the entire city. It straddles Raisina Hill, so that the north and south façades rise from the surrounding plain, whereas the east and west fronts stand on an elevated platform, the top twenty feet of the hill having been blasted away with explosives. The difference in level is an essential component of the overall functional configuration of the building, providing a highly ingenious system of access for state occasions. Guests drive into the South Court, on through arches at the base of the main east front and then turn right under the house itself through two long arched carriageways, seventy-four yards long, to arrive outside the main cloakroom area and guest staircase, thereby eliminating at a stroke the usual undignified pandemonium when two thousand guests and cars arrive at a single entrance.

Externally the principal building is dominated by a monumental dome, which rises majestically over the entire composition. In time it came to be regarded as an architectural metaphor for the British Empire itself, as Imperial in spirit as the solar topee which it vaguely resembles, but the dome is unique for it unites the traditions of East and West in a wholly original form. The copper hemisphere rises from a white stone drum incised in the manner of the Buddhist railings at Sanchi, whilst beneath the drum stand sentinel four octagonal corner turrets linked by a gallery set in deep shade, a reminder of the perpetual vigilance which was the cornerstone of Imperial security. Beneath the dome the monumental colonnades of the principal east front almost form a continuous band. In the centre is a gigantic dodecastyle portico, thirty feet high, with irregular intercolumniation, slightly accentuated in front of the doors, which stand deep in shade. The columns are five times the height of the entablature, the correct proportion for the Corinthian order, except that Lutyens eschewed the architectural canons in favour of a wholly original Delhi order based on fusion of acanthus leaves and four pendant Indian bells. Legend asserted that as long as the bells were silent, so long would the dynasty reign, so the Delhi order recurs throughout the house, as if their very presence would stem the tide of history.

Beneath the dome and over the colonnade the house is given cohesion and unity by the use of a Moghul device, the *chujja*, a crisply finished blade of stone which projects eight feet from the face of the building and throws a band of deep shadow around the entire perimeter. Lutyens understood the essential qualities of traditional native architecture and the crucial importance of the interplay of light and shade. The loggias which run right round the external faces of the building mask the actual window and door openings and provide a common repetitive theme. Thus there is not a window or opening out of place, nothing which does not contribute to the balance of solid to void or to the proportion of the whole. This imposition of a strict conceptual discipline on the outside achieves a transcendental harmonious simplicity, 'architecture in excelsis'. The importance of silhouette has been grasped and integrated into the design, for in the shimmering haze of the city, to have relied on intricacy of detail for external effect would have been fatal. The distinctive brooding profile of the dome imbued with all its Imperial associations is complemented by the use of other

Indian devices – the *chujja* wrapping round the whole exterior, little *chattris*, which punctuate the skyline of the attic, and plain circular stone basins set on instepped plinths at the outer and inner ends of the wings and flanking the east portico, in which cascades of water flow from the upper to lower saucers. Most important of all Lutyens acknowledged the vital role of colour and texture under the violent Indian sun, so he used the same red sandstone that the Moghuls had used at Fatehpur Sikri interspersed with cream stone from Dholpur, Bharatpur and Agra, in brilliant horizontal bands of colour accentuating the horizontal emphasis of the whole edifice. In a country where space seems boundless and the horizon everlasting the setting of the house needed to be in proportion to the space around it, so the entire forecourt area is annexed to the design and becomes an integral part of the building enhancing the ceremonial and processional function. This is achieved by an ornate iron entrance screen 224 yards long broken by stone aedicules and piers carrying elephants and wreathed urns, behind which stretches an immense courtyard of crushed red sandstone. At the centre of this courtyard and on the crossing point of the principal axes stands the Jaipur Column, a thin needle of red sandstone carrying a white egg and bronze lotus, from the calyx of which arises the six-pointed glass star of India.

Symmetry, discipline, silhouette, colour and harmony are all elements which one might expect to find in a palace of this scale and magnitude, but the real genius lies in the interior, for this is not merely a piece of gorgeous façadism in which Eastern and Western motifs and forms are commingled, it is a complete marriage of Eastern and Western lifestyles. 'The fusion between East and West is only incidentally one of architectural motives,' wrote Robert Byron. 'It is a fusion also of tastes, comforts, and conceptions of beauty, in different climates . . . Lutyens has combined the gorgeous facade, coloured and dramatic, of Asia, with the solid habit, cubic and intellectual, of European building. Taking the best of East and West, bests which are complementary, he has made of them a double magnificence.' The interior is brilliantly suited to its purpose as a Viceregal palace. The real achievement of the architect lies in the superbly functional layout of the interior which has been intellectually conceived as a totality, a totality which is expressed externally in the cohesion and unity of the façades, each of which has a different function – the east, for state occasions; the south, for domestic affairs and tradesmen; the north, for officials on administrative matters; and the west for recreation and leisure.

Internally the principal floor is given over to a magnificent series of state apartments at the centre of which, beneath the great dome, lies the circular Durbar Hall. This is the innermost sanctum of the Indian Empire, a space of supreme majesty and serenity approached through thirteen-feet-high entrance doors, and it relies for its effect primarily on proportion and materials. Soaring to a height of almost eighty feet this immense circular pantheon is clearly derived from that in Rome, for inset into the walls are four huge apses whose vaulted roofs are enriched with coffered squares up into the main dome. Around the base of the dome are square windows carved into lyre-pattern screens like

Viceroy's House: Corridors of power. (Below) *an entrance to the Durbar Hall.*

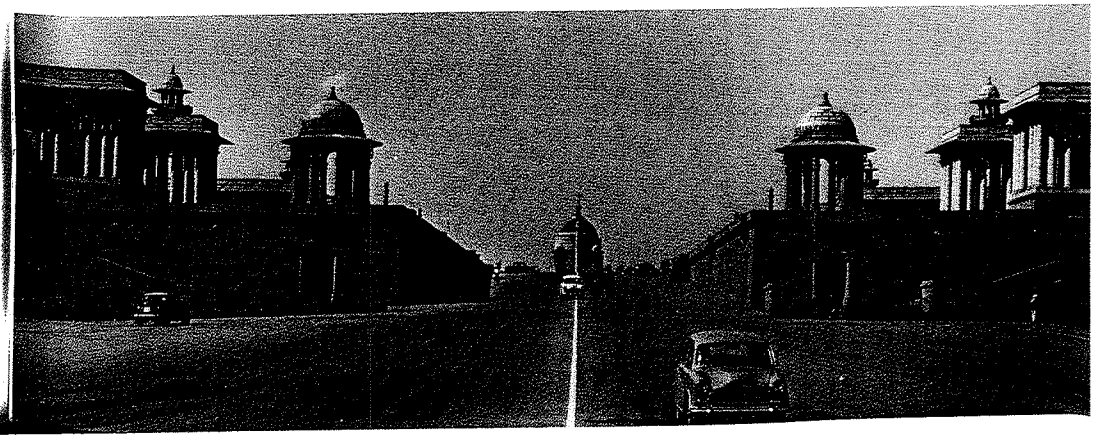
Indian *jaalis*, which give light to upper parts of the hall. Beneath this runs a continuous cornice and entablature carried right across the apses on pairs of marble columns. The eye of the dome is open to allow sunshine to flood the chamber, bathing the Viceregal thrones in a glow of divine approbation. A dazzling array of Indian marbles complete the effect – white from Makrana, green from Baroda, pink from Alwar, black from Bhaislana, grey from Marwar, and most splendid of all, yellow marble from Jaisalmer carried by camel across the burning deserts of Rajasthan.

Beyond the Durbar Hall lie the north and south drawing rooms and between them the large drawing room; and beyond these again lies the famous open staircase. This descends in two great sweeps beneath a coved plaster ceiling with a central field of blue, but look again, for the ceiling is not a ceiling, it is open to the azure sky. This is the sort of gleeful, but totally practical, joke which Lutyens loved to employ. Lutyens excelled at the adaptation of corridors and staircases to form vital spatial elements in the compositional whole. The feeling of spatial compression and release and his unerring sense of proportion create surprise, movement and a pervasive sense of ordered repose, drawing the visitor on through the house via a series of beautifully related cubic spaces. Nothing is repeated. Each room is treated differently, but with the same inventive architectural vocabulary intermingling the classical language of the West with the historical expressions of the Moghul and Asokan Empires. Indeed much of the floorspace is out-of-doors in the manner of a Moghul house with a series of small and large internal courtyards overlooked by shaded verandahs, allowing a cool flow of air to pass through the house to the innermost chambers. From the Moghuls too, he borrowed the idea of water which recurs throughout the house, cascading from the saucers on the parapets, jetting from the mouths of Imperial lions and motionless in the garden pools in the Viceregal garden – a symbol of purity of spirit and purpose.

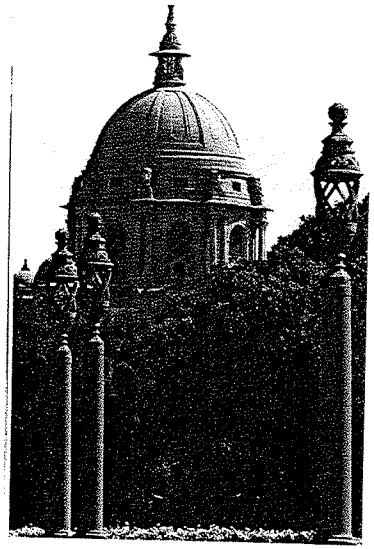
The ornament within the house is remarkably restrained, even austere. The great barrel-vaulted State Drawing Room is plainly treated with domestic fireplaces and an absence of painted decoration. Similarly the State Dining Room is sober with teak panelling enriched with the Star of India, another recurrent theme, beneath a deeply coffered coved ceiling. 'An individual and peculiarly English splendour pervades the rooms and corridors, a splendour, which far from continuing the immemorial traditions of Royal vulgarity, expresses, perhaps for the last time, the spirit of humanist aristocracy in the language of a dwelling', wrote one critic. This English ambience extends to the State Ballroom, which is enriched with Old English mirror glass. The State Library too is quintessentially English, yet unique in conception. Based on the form of Wren's St Stephen's, Walbrook, the central dome is carried on eight vaulted arches and the room is nearly as tall as it is wide. Yet it is in the Viceroy's own personal quarters that Lutyens's wit and playful sense of the ridiculous were given greatest vent. In the nursery the light fittings are designed as four hens and chicks with broken eggs spilling out yolk in the form of light bulbs. Elsewhere the door handles are brass Britannic lions.

The concept of Imperial order and hierarchy permeates not just the city, but also the Viceroy's House itself, and the two should coalesce into a single composition. The great east front faces the principal axis, King's Way, the architectural climax of the entire city approached along a vast triumphal route almost two miles long and embellished with Imperial monuments, but it is here at this critical point, that the masterpiece is flawed by a conceptual error. Lutyens had always intended the house to occupy the highest point on the site, and only reluctantly agreed to move it westward to allow the flanking Secretariats to stand on the same level. He envisaged the great processional route dividing the two buildings as a gentle slope carefully designed to ensure that the immense vista was closed by the east colonnade and dome of the main house, but the task of supervising the design of the Secretariats and the gradient was allotted to Herbert Baker. It was built too steep. The result was disastrous for at the very point of climax in the Great Place the House disappears behind a huge expanse of asphalt, leaving only a remnant of the dome visible from the triumphal axis before the Secretariats. Ever after Lutyens referred to this as his 'Bakerloo'. Acrimonious recriminations soured relations between the two men for the rest of their lives. Mary Lutyens later wrote, 'We were brought up to look on Baker as a villain who had ruined Father's life's work.' For years after Lutyens lobbied vociferously to raise the necessary sum to rectify the mistake. Who was to blame? Probably both were at fault. Lutyens was difficult to work with and Baker was strong-minded enough to resist becoming a mere subordinate. Essentially it was a failure to collaborate closely enough in an area which fell between two stools. Both were absorbed in their own compositions and had different design philosophies. Also it is worth considering that if Lutyens had had his way the great courtyard area linking the two Secretariats on the crest of the hill would have been severed by the shallow gradient of the road.

Herbert Baker (1862–1946) was an immensely capable architect whose work has had the misfortune of being compared with that of a genius. In his earliest years he served as a pupil in the office of Sir Ernest George, where he became friendly with Lutyens, and when he joined him in New Delhi in 1912, he had an established reputation through his work in Pretoria, South Africa. There he designed the Union Buildings, the progenitors of the New Delhi Secretariats.



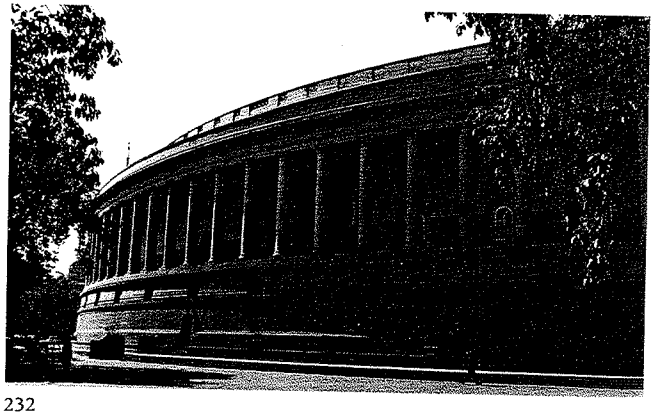
The flaw in the jewel in the crown. The steep gradient between the Secretariats conceals the facade of the Viceroy's House beyond.



The dome of the West Secretariat: the spirit of British sovereignty imprisoned in stone and bronze.

They are remarkably similar in conception – two ranges of classical buildings with projecting colonnades and large Baroque domes dominating the compositions. Both are derived from Wren's Royal Naval College at Greenwich. Baker appreciated the political significance of architecture and its use as an instrument of public policy, and when he arrived in New Delhi he considered that it should be built 'according to the great elemental qualities and traditions which have become classical, of the architecture of Greece and Rome', but they should 'graft thereon structural features of the architecture of India as well as decoration expressing the myths, symbols and history of its people.' And this is what his buildings essentially are – European in configuration, conception and form, but with Indian detailing applied as superficial ornament. There is no real assimilation of two cultures leading to the birth of a new Indo-British form of architecture which Lutyens achieved, yet ironically Baker's more conventional manner and patriotic fervour commended him to British officialdom. His connection with Rhodes in South Africa led to commissions for Government Houses in Mombasa and Pretoria, cathedrals at Capetown, Johannesburg, Pretoria and Salisbury and his appointment as architect to the Governments of South Africa and Kenya.

For all the absence of any real fusion of European and Indian forms, the Secretariats are wonderful pieces of civic design which have the same architectonic discipline as Lutyens's Viceroy's House – deeply recessed loggias, strictly controlled relationships of solid to void, the structural use of colour and the emphasis on mass, shadow, line and profile. As official buildings they embody the same hierarchical principles that pervade the whole city with space and ornament allocated on the basis of status and rank. The towers that flank the entrance from the Great Place were designed to be twice their present height to act as obelisks guarding the way to the inner Imperial sanctum, but they were reduced in scale and in the process lost some of their impact. The great domes which rise over each building are embellished with lotuses and elephants, and in axial view they frame Lutyens's great hemispherical dome beyond. On the north and south



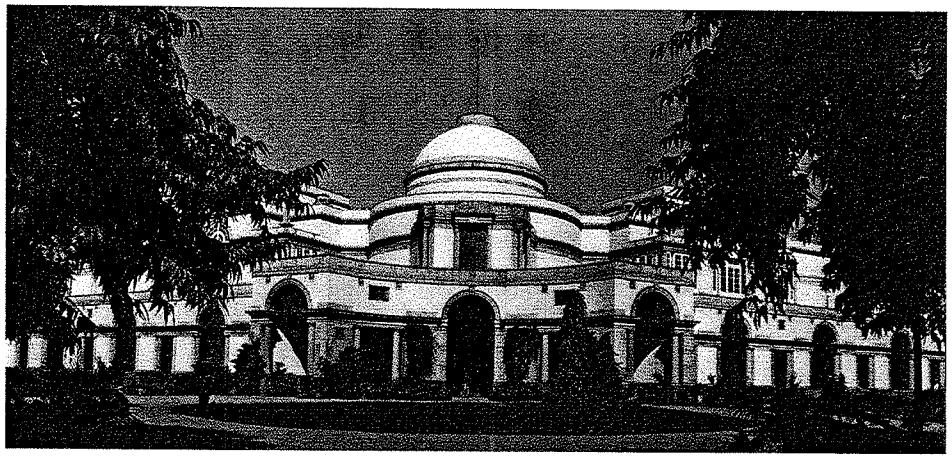
Council House, by Herbert Baker: the circular plan was suggested by Lutyens.

elevations stand huge Moghul gateways centred on the horizontal axis between the domes, each inscribed with a resounding inscription. 'Liberty will not descend to a people: a people must raise themselves to liberty; it is a blessing which must be earned before it can be enjoyed.' Thus reads the condescending one on the North Secretariat. There were many in India who felt that the blessing was an inherent right which should not have to be earned from a paternalistic alien government. In the Government Court, lying between the Secretariat and before the Viceroy's House, stand the four Dominion columns donated by the governments of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, each crowned by a bronze ship symbolising the maritime power which gave birth to the British Empire.

Baker's other great building is the Council House which was added to the plan of the city in 1919 to accommodate the fledgling Legislative Assembly. It was Lutyens who suggested the form which the new building should take – an enormous circular structure which broke the formal symmetry of the layout, but closed a rather unsatisfactory vista which ended unresolved on the north block of the Secretariat. Ominously its circular form came to be regarded as an architectural parody of the simple spinning wheel which was the symbol of Gandhiji and the nationalist movement. Originally it was to have a crowning dome, but this was dropped and, when an attic storey was added ten years later, a rather pathetic little cupola was provided which is visible only from afar. Internally the building is divided into a circular library block and three convex-shaped chambers for the Council of State, Chamber of the Princes and the Legislative Assembly, the latter adorned with the escutcheons and arms of the territories of the British Empire. Here Baker's love of heraldry and symbolism was used for political ends in an overt attempt to mould the emerging national consciousness into a form which could be accommodated within the aegis of the Empire, but the building owed its very existence to the gathering momentum of political change and the aspirations of the Indian people.

Lutyens's role in New Delhi was not just confined to the city plan and its spectacular centrepiece, the Viceroy's House, although this remains his *chef d'oeuvre*. He was responsible for two major palaces for the Indian princes of Hyderabad and Baroda and he supervised the erection of a number of others. Hyderabad and Baroda House both have a similar plan based on a butterfly-shape, but adapted in a highly original manner. Hyderabad House is capped by a large plain dome rising over a concave entrance portal which forms part of a continuous arcaded loggia round the ground storey. The first-floor bays are punctuated by obelisks and urns and the whole building is articulated by the subtle variation in the depth of the principal secondary and tertiary cornices. Baroda House has many similar attributes – concave entrance and crowning dome over a circular salon – but Lutyens's genius for three-dimensional design overcame the difficulties inherent in the plan which in less gifted hands might have generated awkward internal spaces.

Along the great processional axis of King's Way Lutyens was



Hyderabad House, New Delhi by Edwin Lutyens.

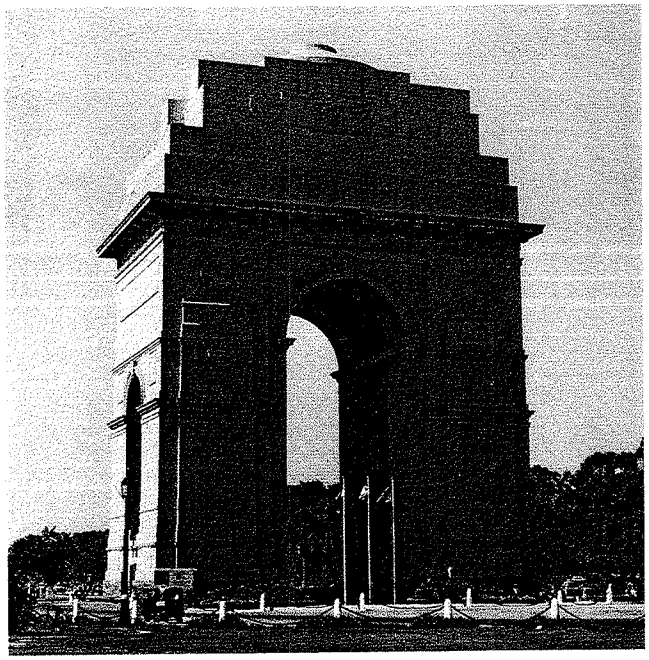
responsible for two major Imperial monuments which accentuated the formal symmetry of the street and provided a focus for state occasions. These were the All-India War Memorial Arch and the King George V Memorial. The Arch was not completed until 1931, but it was imbued with the same simple, elegiac grandeur as Lutyens's great war memorials in Flanders. It commemorates the 60,000 Indian losses in the First World War and the 13,516 British and Indian officers and men whose bones lay scattered across the mountains and defiles of the North-West Frontier. It is a colossal structure almost 140 feet high with sculptured panels of stonework relief and a dentilled cornice dividing the huge central arch from the massive masonry of the attic above, which is inscribed with the single word – INDIA. Crowning the attic is a shallow dome which quietly echoes that on the Viceroy's House almost one and a half miles distant, and from the eye at the top of the dome rises a column of sacred smoke. Five years later in the centre of a *rond-point* to the east of the Arch the King George V Memorial was raised, an elegant Indo-British *baldacchino* of cream and pink stone set in a rectangular pool adorned with symbols of kingship and rich in allegorical sculpture. Examples of architecture and public sculpture used for political ends, the Arch and the Memorial were intended to be emotive unifying symbols; one a testimony to the blood ties which linked Britain and India in perpetual fraternity, the other investing the concept of Imperial dominion with the mystical qualities of kingship. Today the radiating rays of the Imperial suns carved beneath the cornice of the Arch demonstrate that the stones which commemorate power are a more durable medium than power itself. Indeed from under Lutyens's great Moghul-Renaissance canopy the statue of George V has been removed, and it frames only thin air.

Cities and Thrones and Powers
Stand in Time's eye,

Almost as long as flowers,
Which daily die . . .

Lutyens was active in two other areas in the city: on the Viceregal estate itself, where he designed a complex of staff quarters, and at the intersection of King's Way and its main cross axis, Queen's Way, where a large complex of civic buildings was planned, but only a fragment was completed – a building now occupied by the National Archives of India. On the Viceregal estate the staff quarters and bodyguard lines reflect in miniature the complex interlocking geometrical relationships of the city as a whole and the preoccupation of colonial society with hierarchy, status and rank. All the buildings are faced in snow-white stucco relieved only by channelling, rustication and deeply recessed window openings. Some are delightfully inventive exercises in Baroque and Palladian design. The Band House makes several allusions to English buildings including Chiswick House and the Horse Guards, with a central clock tower and cupola rising from a platform adorned with four corner obelisks, whilst some of the smaller ranges of buildings are grouped together as single architectural compositions.

However, the greatest number of buildings in New Delhi were designed neither by Lutyens nor Baker but by a largely unknown Englishman, Robert Tor Russell (1888–1972), who succeeded John Begg as Consulting Architect to the Government of India in 1919. Russell

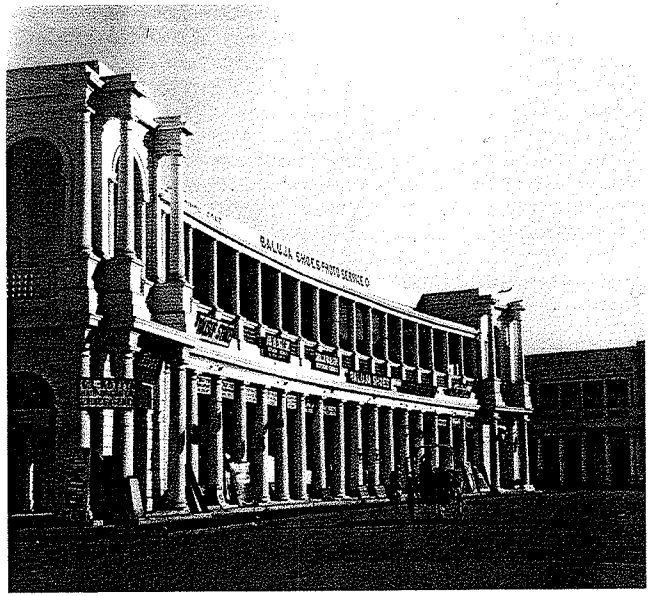


All-India War Memorial Arch completed in 1931. Beneath the cornice are radiating Imperial suns, emotive symbols of everlasting life.

came from a family of architects. He was educated at Bedford Modern School before joining his father at their Hitchin practice in 1906. In 1914 he joined Begg as his assistant in India and after distinguished war service, he assumed control for the design of all official housing, shopping centres, hospitals, bungalows, police stations and post offices in New Delhi. It was Russell who designed Connaught Place, a vast circular space around which were disposed the most important shops, restaurants, cafés and hotels in the new city. The circus comprises a series of two-storey stuccoed ranges with arcaded loggias at both levels. It is a determined exercise in classical civic design which provides a major centre of commercial activity mid-way between the old city and the formal avenues and boulevards of New Delhi. Architecturally it is impressive and creates a very distinct sense of place and purpose. Its muted classical detailing and cool arcaded loggias make a pleasant and relaxing environment in which to stroll and shop, the European antithesis to the native bazaar of Chandni Chauk in Old Delhi, where pandemonium reigns. Elsewhere in New Delhi elegant white stucco police stations and post offices arose and in Queen's Way Russell designed two parallel ranges of three-storey buildings – Eastern Court and Western Court – hostels for members of the newly-convened Legislative Assembly. Arcaded verandahs of a Tuscan order articulate the compositions which stand on massive raised basements. Russell's best work is Flagstaff House which was designed for the Commander-in-Chief, and which was occupied later by Prime Minister Nehru.

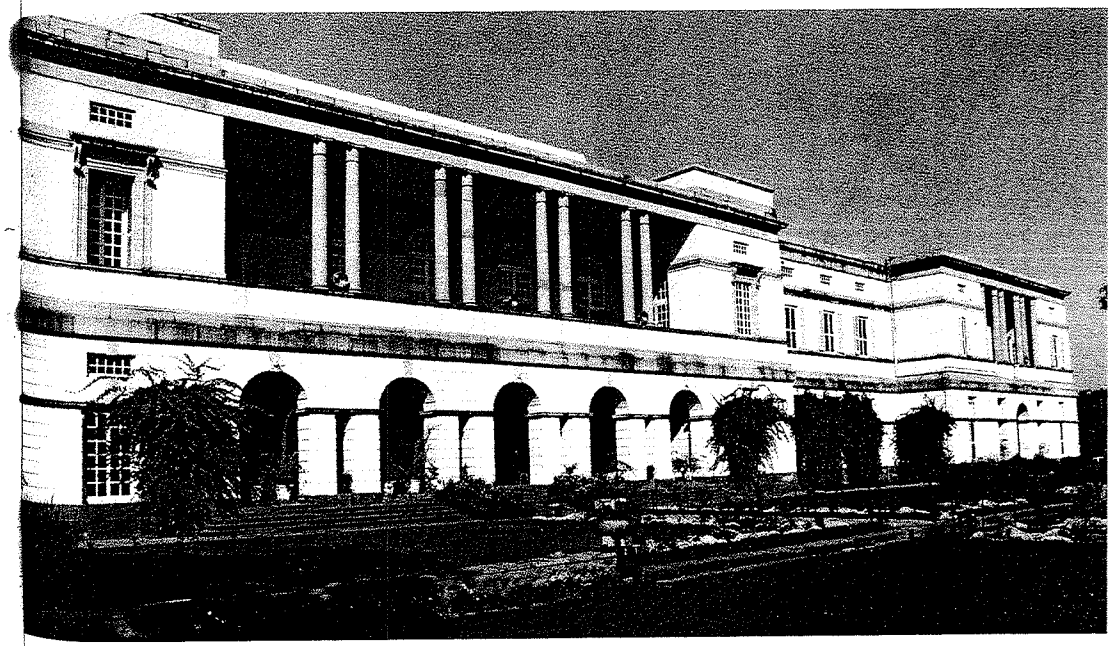
At Flagstaff House Russell's work comes closest to the style of Lutyens. It was finished in 1930, a long two-storey range executed in stucco with stone banding which accentuates its horizontality. The ground storey is faced in channelled stucco relieved by semi-circular headed openings, but on the south garden front the upper storey has a large recessed balcony. The entire house is sited on one of the main axial vistas from Viceroy's House, demonstrating the interdependent relationship between political and military power in India.

The careful disposition of buildings within the city and their relationship to the supreme symbol of authority, the Viceroy's House, applied equally to ecclesiastical buildings. God too knew his place. Lutyens had prepared sketches for a great new Anglican cathedral in the city, but the funds needed to realise such an ambitious scheme were never forthcoming, and in 1923 a competition was held to find an alternative design. Lutyens chose an entry submitted by Henry Medd (1892–1977), one of the numerous young aspiring acolytes who revered his work. Until recently Medd was forgotten, but pioneering research by the architectural historian Gavin Stamp, has placed Medd in his rightful place at the forefront of that imaginative and inventive school who carried the ideals and beliefs of Lutyens onto a further level of refinement. Medd's early design for the Cathedral was for a site south of King's Way, but in 1926 a more prominent one was found on the lateral axis of the Jaipur Column. This was due to the personal intervention of the new Viceroy, Lord Irwin, an ardent Anglo-Catholic of such high moral integrity that even the saintly Gandhi was impressed. Irwin's personal enthusiasm for the Cathedral attracted large subscriptions



Connaught Place, designed by Robert Tor Russell. The commercial hub of the new city.

Flagstaff House, New Delhi: residence of the Commander-in-Chief and later of Jawaharlal Nehru. Designed by Robert Tor Russell and completed in 1930.

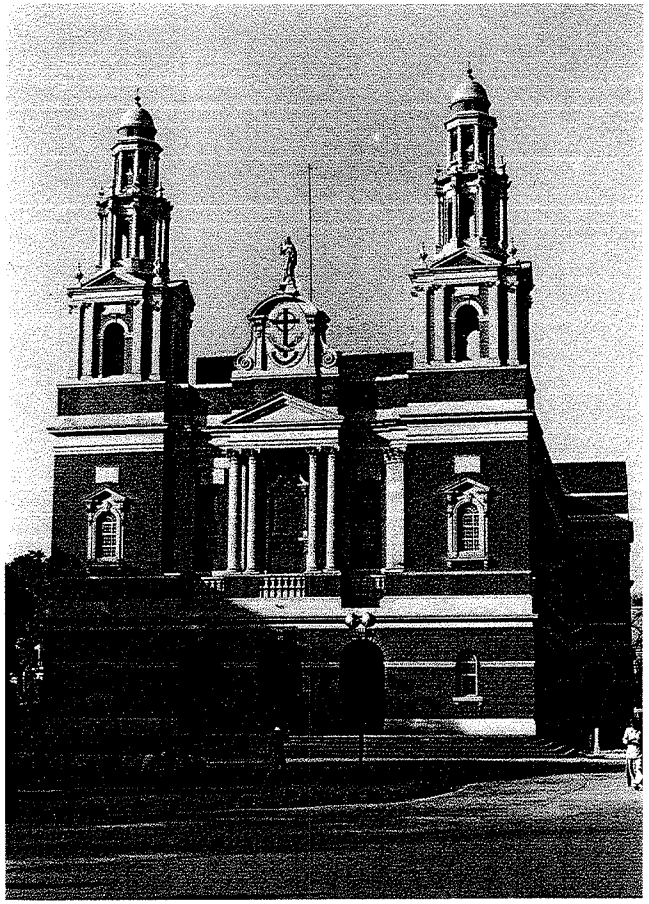


from Britain and in 1928 Medd's building began to rise on the skyline of the new city. Its design is strikingly similar to Lutyens's Free Church at Hampstead Garden Suburb with its projecting vestries, large crowning dome and Baroque detailing, but interestingly, whilst Medd acknowledged the reference to Palladio's *Il Redentore* in Venice, he maintained that he made no conscious attempt to reflect the Free Church. However, Medd's Cathedral Church of the Redemption is a finer building than its Hampstead progenitor, a powerful fragmented mass exuding spiritual strength in a heathen land. It is cleverly conceived in a Baroque manner with a dome over the central tower and a cool, shaded interior perfectly adapted to the unrelenting climate. The mass of the building rises in stages to the crowning dome and cupola. Window openings are kept to a minimum in the large expanses of external masonry, but internally

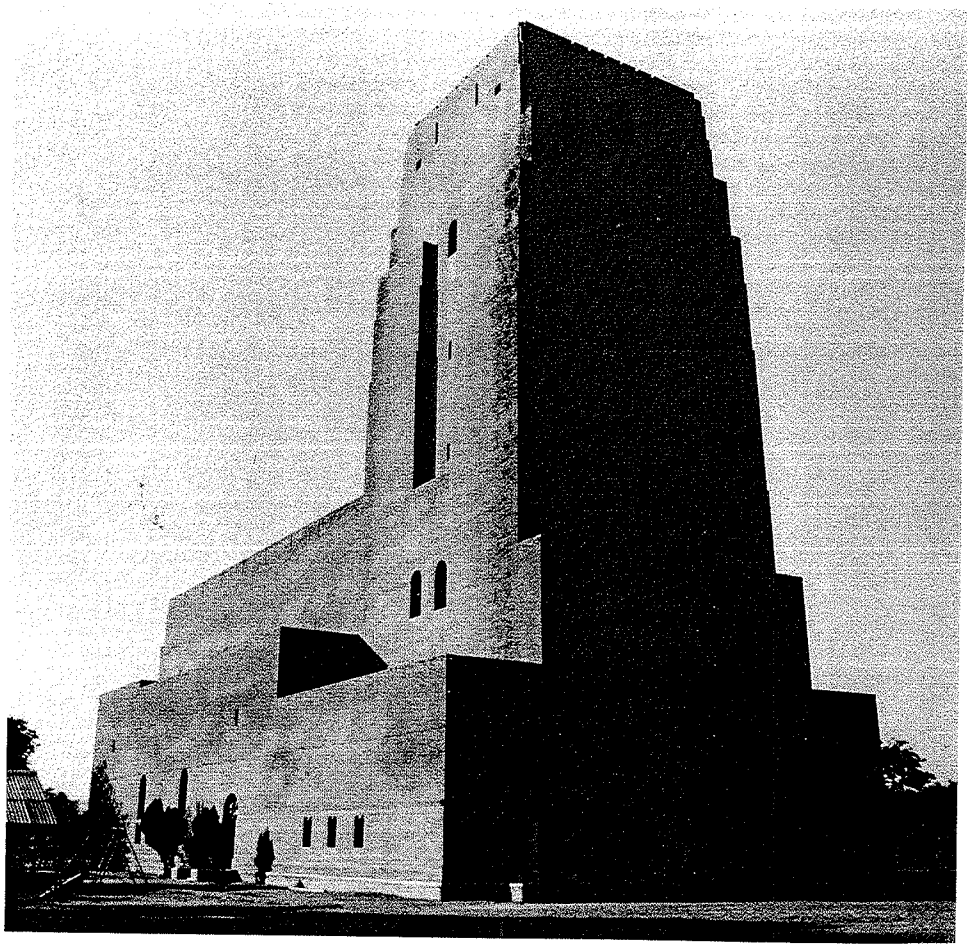
Cathedral Church of the Redemption, New Delhi by Henry Medd. Infused with the spirit of Palladio and Lutyens.

the building is light and voluminous assisted by the small square openings around the base of the dome, which is clad in split red sandstone like the cascading roofs beneath. The east end is apsidal with a mahogany reredos and there are the ubiquitous tropical cane pews, but the overriding impression is one of cool repose and dignity created by the barrel-vaulted ceilings and intersecting lateral arches.

Medd's other great work in New Delhi is the Roman Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart, completed in 1934, in which the interior is manipulated in a similar manner to the Church of the Redemption with a system of proportion, based on Lutyens's famous Thiepval Arch, whereby arches are piled one against the other, each springing from the level of the keystone of another. Externally the main south front was conceived with a single open tower, but the Church authorities insisted



Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart, New Delhi by Henry Medd completed in 1934.



St Martin's Garrison Church 1928–1930 by Arthur Shoosmith, a gaunt, sculptured cenotaph of brickwork, timeless, immutable and forbidding.

upon twin towers, and then proceeded to acquire an oval mosaic cartouche of St Francis, which they demanded be incorporated into the scheme. The result was that the façade lost much of its original simplicity of line and understated classical dignity which characterises the best work of the Lutyens school in India. Instead it acquired an over-ornate Italianate character which seems very fussy under the harsh glare of the Indian sun, and in sharp contrast to the huge expanses of unbroken brickwork on the flanks.

In Lutyens's designs for the Viceroy's House and elsewhere in New Delhi the size, number and position of window openings is carefully controlled in relation to the whole, and in Medd's two great churches

this discipline was refined much further, so that the only breaks in the vast expanses of surface walling are small rectangular openings punched through the brickwork.

Three miles from Raisina Hill lies the Garrison Church of St Martin designed by Arthur Shoosmith (1888–1974), between 1928 and 1930. Shoosmith had worked on the Viceroy's House for Lutyens and later designed the elegant Lady Hardinge Serai, but St Martin's represents the ultimate expression of that form of 20th-century Anglo-Indian architecture promulgated by Lutyens and developed by his disciples. 'I have no hesitation in saying [this] is one of the great buildings of the 20th century,' wrote Gavin Stamp, and it is without question an extraordinarily original composition – a massive gaunt monolith of $3\frac{1}{2}$ million bricks looming straight out of the arid Indian plain. The walls are battered and rise in a series of setbacks; a huge sculptured cenotaph of brickwork pierced by small deeply shaded openings cut straight through the mass. If the exterior is timeless, immutable and forbidding, the interior is surprisingly light given the minute window areas, but it is entirely devoid of any human comfort. Many have contemplated its strange form and most acknowledge its symbolic importance. To Robert Grant Irving: 'The stripped classicism of the church interior seemed to underscore the severity of cantonment barracks and the rigors of military life as well as to embody the Imperial code of ascetic duty and that stern doctrine of Curzonian efficiency which discarded non-essentials.' To Robert Byron simply, 'It is superb.' St Martin's is a great lumbering dinosaur of a building – 'Lego in Indis' – yet like all great works of architecture it embodies and reflects the spirit of the age, and the effect it induces is not so much one of grandeur as one of melancholy – a forgotten example of a style of architecture cut off in its prime by the shifting sands of history. Its atmosphere is forbidding, even frightening, for it is redolent of the great war memorials of Flanders. At the same time it anticipated the holocaust yet to come, and the great Pyrrhic victory of 1945 which spelt the end of British Imperial power in India.

CHAPTER 10

ARCHITECTURAL REFLECTIONS

The architectural dialogue between Britain and India was not entirely one-sided. In order to complete the picture it is important to acknowledge the few instances where Indian styles were able to impress themselves on buildings in Britain, and also to assess the future prospects for conservation in India.

For thirty or forty years after the Battle of Plassey in 1757 the prospect of rich pickings in Bengal lured many eastward in search of wealth. For most it was a one-way journey which ended in South Park Street Cemetery or one of the many other burial grounds of Bengal and the Carnatic, but a few made vast individual fortunes and returned to England in search of the status and respect to which their new-found wealth entitled them. These were the Nabobs.

To the aristocratic élite who ruled England, the Nabobs were a bunch of uncouth, ruthless opportunists from the trading classes who had acquired wealth which in some instances exceeded their own, not by birth, blood or sheer hard work, but by speculation and double-dealing. Contrary to popular opinion, this capital did not finance the Industrial Revolution. Very little was reinvested in trade, commerce or manufacturing enterprises. Most went into land or government stock, which provided security and social standing.

There were few allusions to the origins of their wealth in the houses built by the Nabobs. When Clive returned to England in 1767 he devoted the last years of his life to the improvement of his newly-acquired estates, and when William Chambers built a great new house for him at Styche, it was an urbane English Palladian mansion that arose, the only allusions to India being in some of the paintings and furnishings. Few Nabobs had any desire to advertise their dubious past by indulging in architectural references to India, and few English architects were even aware of India's astonishing cultural heritage, let alone capable of expressing it.

In the last quarter of the 18th century this changed with the publication in England of the paintings and engravings of William Hodges and of Thomas and William Daniell. It was these which provided the inspiration for the handful of Indian-style buildings which were designed at this time and they constitute a limited, but unique chapter in the history of English taste. Between 1785 and 1788 Hodges's *Select Views of India* was published based on his travels in the sub-continent between 1781 and 1783. It had an immediate impact on certain circles of society and suggested new models of composition and form. The architect George Dance was an acquaintance and neighbour of Hodges, and when, in 1788, Dance was asked to design a new south

front for the Guildhall in the City of London, he produced one with a strong Indian flavour, although few recognised it as such. Elsewhere Dance used Indian motifs and details such as scroll mouldings, but always within the discipline of a European composition. Warren Hastings's house at Daylesford by S. P. Cockerell was exceptional in reflecting its owner's Indian career. The garden was laid out in a similar manner to his house at Alipur, and Cockerell, also a friend of Hodges, designed an Eastern salon in the basement, which was adorned with Hodges's paintings. Two carved marble chimneypieces by Thomas Banks were installed in the first-floor drawing rooms, depicting Indian themes. Over the exterior rose a shallow dome crowned by an Indian finial.

Between 1795 and 1808 a whole series of wonderful aquatints by Thomas and William Daniell were published in *Oriental Scenery* based on their six years of travel in India. They provided a fresh source of inspiration for those interested in esoterica. On the basis of these illustrations Indian themes and details became popular and were mixed with other exotic styles from the Levant and Far East in idiosyncratic hybrid designs. Some tea merchants and dealers boasted elaborate Indian-style shopfronts. However, at Sezincote House in Gloucestershire there is the only Indian country house ever built in Europe. It owes its origins to the fortuitous combination of a wealthy Indian Nabob, Charles Cockerell, his brother the architect S. P. Cockerell, and their acquaintance with Thomas Daniell, whom Charles had met in India. The house is faced in a rich orange masonry, not dissimilar to the burnt umber colour of painted Indian stucco, and it is dominated by a single onion dome with four chimneys at its base. The central block has a large bracketed *chujja* to the parapet which is adorned with four corner *chattris*. To the west an orangery sweeps in an elegant curve to terminate in an hexagonal aviary capped by a domelet and finials. It is not merely the profile and general impact which is Indian, the detail is too, with cusped arches, radiating curved glazing bars and carved ornament. The garden is adorned with a Hindu temple, and two pairs of Brahmin bulls stand on the bridge which Daniell designed.

A creative imitation of Indian styles occurred virtually simultaneously at Brighton, and with little reference to Sezincote. Here the architect William Porden designed the great domed Royal Stables and Riding House which were completed in 1808, modelled on the Daniells' engraving of the Jumma Masjid (Great Mosque) in Delhi. In the Prince Regent's search for an exotic style for his sea-side Xanadu he consulted the most eminent designers of the day including Humphry Repton, James Wyatt and Henry Holland, but it was John Nash who finally recast the existing group of buildings into a wild extravaganza of Indian Regency Gothick, which dominated local architecture for seventy or eighty years. As late as 1880 Sir Albert Sassoon, the Jewish magnate, built himself a circular mausoleum in Brighton with scalloped arches and an ogival roof. Even the elegant West Pier reflected the prevailing Oriental ethos of the resort.

Splendid though Sezincote and the Royal Pavilion are, they were never more than eccentric aberrations. The fashionable vogue for

exotic Orientalism faded. Changing perceptions of India and the Empire and cultural superiority coloured European views towards the East. The fearful events of the Great Mutiny in 1857 merely confirmed Western suspicions of Indian culture. Thus when the Durbar Court of the new India Office was erected in London in 1867 to the designs of Matthew Digby Wyatt the building was thoroughly classical in conception, based on Italian Renaissance sources with *Della Robbia* majolica friezes. There was no suggestion of infusing Indian motifs or forms into the structure. Twenty-eight busts of British worthies from Admiral Watson to General Havelock commemorated the triumph of British arms in India together with four sculptured panels of high relief depicting scenes from Indian history.

In the later 19th century Victoria created the Durbar Room at Osborne House as a focus for her interest in Indian affairs. John Lockwood Kipling designed some of the *basso rilievo* plasterwork. At Elvedon Hall, Suffolk the exiled Maharajah Duleep Singh created an elaborate Indian interior for his own use between 1863 and 1870 to designs by the Goth, John Norton, but these odd exceptions remained the fanciful expressions of personal caprice and never suggested a wider cultural exchange with India. As late as 1914 Sir Herbert Baker's India House in Aldwych was designed in a thoroughly European manner superficially ornamented with Indian devices and allusions, but it never embodied the gorgeous exoticism of the Indian Empire. Language and social custom rather than architecture remained the areas of greatest cultural exchange.

Far more typical of England's connection with India are the commercial buildings and warehouses which once lined the river frontage and East India and London Docks. Today the great majority of these robust but elegant buildings are demolished or derelict. Few bonded tea warehouses remain, but here and there traces of the Indian connection survive. Free Trade Wharf – the riverside warehouse of the East India Company, was built in 1795 to the designs of Richard Jupp, Surveyor to the Company. It lingers on empty and derelict, the entrance still crowned by the Company arms. From here goods were brought up for later distribution throughout the country to the great complex of warehouses at Cutler Street on the edge of the City of London. Until 1980 Cutler Street remained one of the finest groups of early 19th-century warehouses in England, but their partial redevelopment and conversion destroyed much of their gaunt Piranesian grandeur. Not far from Free Trade Wharf stands the little church of St Matthias, Poplar, with its roof supported by the teak masts of old East Indiamen. Here crews and passengers put themselves in the hands of God before departing on the hazardous voyage east. Today the churchyard lies overgrown, and the tombs of old sea-captains are worn smooth with age and neglect. The church too is ruinous, though there are hopes it may be saved.

Contrary to Kipling's 'Recessional', much of Britain's architectural pomp is not at 'one with Nineveh and Tyre' for the Indian authorities have acknowledged the importance of their national legacy of British buildings. Some of the most prominent have statutory protection,

including St Mary's, Madras, the Ochterlony Monument, and the Victoria Memorial in Calcutta. It would be impertinent to criticise the Indian government for not having done enough to conserve the best examples of Anglo-Indian architecture, when the British have taken relatively little interest in their own connection. The very limited resources devoted to architectural conservation in India need to be allocated to the care of many ancient monuments infinitely older and more fragile, from the Buddhist, Moghul and Hindu past. If 7th-century temples are crumbling then 19th-century churches cannot be regarded as a particularly high priority. However it would be Britain's loss as well as India's if any of the buildings mentioned in this book were to disappear.

Neglect is always the worst enemy. All buildings decay, and time, money and expertise are required to secure their long-term conservation. India is fortunate as it has a large reservoir of expertise in the conservation of ancient monuments which is the envy of most countries. This is based on generations of effort. As early as the late 18th century Company officers carefully noted and recorded Indian monuments in sketchbooks and drawings. In 1808 the Governor General, the Earl of Minto, set up a Taj committee, and government funds were set aside for repairs to monuments at Agra and Fatehpur Sikri, but a coherent policy towards ancient monuments and archaeological remains only came with the foundation of the Archaeological Survey of India in 1861. Unlike England, it was the Government which led the way. Conservation was delegated to the provincial Governments with advice from a centrally-appointed Curator of Ancient Monuments, although the post was abolished later in 1883. It was Lord Curzon who provided the present statutory framework for architectural conservation in India. In 1900 he noted 'I cannot conceive of any obligation more strictly appertaining to a Supreme Government than the Conservation of the most beautiful and perfect collection of monuments in the world.' As a result the Archaeological Survey was reorganised under Sir John Marshall, and in 1904 the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act was introduced, providing statutory protection for India's heritage for the first time.

Under Marshall the highest principles of architectural conservation were formulated and set out in the 'Conservation Manual', a document of profound significance, which became the working philosophy of the Survey. It set standards which are rarely attained even now in England. It exhorts conservation officers to:

> Never forget that the reparation of any remnant of ancient architecture, however humble, is a work to be entered upon with totally different feelings from a new work or from repairs to a modern building. Although there are many ancient buildings whose state of disrepair suggests at first sight a renewal, it should never be forgotten that their historical value is gone when their authenticity is destroyed, and that our first duty is not to renew them but to preserve them.

Since Independence these principles have been developed and incorporated into the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act 1958 and the Antiquities Act 1972. India has adopted a mature and sensitive policy to the architectural heritage of its Imperial past, regarding it as the most recent element of its richly diverse history, and one which gave birth to four of its greatest cities – Bombay, Madras, Calcutta and New Delhi, together with countless other settlements and buildings across the sub-continent. A start has been made on protecting individual buildings, but integrated policies designed to safeguard complete areas have yet to come. In the great cities whole neighbourhoods and streets retain their original period character. In Bombay the entire core of the Victorian city should be designated as a Conservation Area from Apollo Bunder through Horniman Circle, Mahatma Gandhi Road and the Esplanade and on to Victoria Terminus, including the triangle of buildings in Carnac Road, Cruickshank Road and Hornby Road. Conservation should not be regarded as a constraint against change, but rather as a discipline for change which must take place within a tighter physical and historical framework. The concept should be extended to other Indian 'heritage cities' such as Jaipur, Fatehpur Sikri, Benares and Allahabad.

Unthinking modernisation and redevelopment are threats to much of what remains. In Madras the Victoria Memorial Hall and the elegant Indo-Saracenic Moore Market by R. E. Ellis are at risk from proposals for railway expansion: the story of the Euston Arch all over again. Once we exhorted India to follow our example, and now perhaps it is not too late to warn against the chimera of rampant commercial development. Experience shows that the dreams of planners are often the nightmares of the people. Elsewhere in Madras Henry Irwin's South India Co-operative Insurance Building has been demolished, and many other commercial buildings have been lost to random redevelopment proposals. The scale and insensitivity of recent building and the adoption of aggressive international styles devoid of local character does not augur well for the future. At Fort St George and in the Pantheon complex, Madras, new multi-storey buildings have been erected which are entirely out of keeping with the character of their surroundings, and more are threatened. The Fort Museum, including the Old Exchange Hall, where factors and traders once met and dined, is threatened by proposals for an expanding secretariat. Elsewhere Wellesley House, where the future Duke of Wellington stayed when stationed in Madras, is in a state of partial collapse, and there have been no moves to restore it. The event went unreported in British newspapers, and not a single British voice has been raised to save it. How insular we have become. More promisingly Bentincks Building, which houses the Collectorate, and which has been threatened with demolition since 1974, has been saved through the personal intervention of the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, after a local newspaper campaign to preserve it.

In the grounds of the former Residency at Hyderabad Kirkpatrick's little model house lies smashed by a fallen branch, and few care. In Calcutta the tomb of its founder Job Charnock is affected by proposals

to sell part of St John's Churchyard for redevelopment, and an unholy row continues in the columns of the Indian press about the obtrusive nature of the multi-storey block proposed for the site. Opponents of the scheme have brought in the West Bengal Government, and the Archaeological Survey of India have expressed deep reservations. Fortunately, in the absence of a sophisticated planning inquiry system the resolution of such disputes takes many years and the site remains intact. Nearby, Garstin's Town Hall remains threatened with demolition. It still stands, although no one seems clear what its future will be. Its demolition would be a major loss for the city's heritage of Georgian buildings. Equally destructive are new proposals to construct a bridge link between Granville's Gothic High Court and its nearby modern annexe.

In New Delhi international demand for multi-storey offices is beginning to have an adverse impact on the spacious character of the city. Originally built for a population of 60,000 the population reached 6 million in 1971. Land values have soared and the poorer classes have been pushed out from the centre. Indeed it is surprising that it still appears so unaffected, given such acute social and economic pressures. Here too there has been a civic response to the problem. In 1979 the People's Party called for a ban on all high-rise development and in 1980 there was a major public exhibition devoted to the history and architecture of the city, calling for stricter control over new development and statutory protection for the entire area between Connaught Place and the Safdarjang Tomb, including the Central Vista. In the garden city of Bangalore similar pressures and high-rise proposals threaten the symmetrical axis at the centre.

There is evidence of a growing awareness of the dangers. In Bombay the Save Bombay Committee has waged a successful battle against the State Government to stop further land reclamation in the Back Bay area. It has had considerable success in mobilising public opinion against unco-ordinated expansion of the city and in favour of the preservation of historic buildings. In conjunction with the Bombay Local History Society it has done much to stimulate interest in the early history of the city. The long and invaluable task of identifying and listing buildings for preservation has commenced. Elsewhere there are healthy signs of a grass-roots reaction to the sometimes reckless and haphazard development of historic areas. An Indian Heritage Society has been formed. Encouragingly there is growing interest in Britain. South Park Street Cemetery in Calcutta has been saved, and the British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia is now active throughout India recording and collating information on some of the oldest surviving European graves. Recently under the aegis of the British Council, the English specialist in architectural conservation, Donald Insall, assisted the Indian authorities in formulating ideas and policies for the future, whilst Angus Stirling, the Director of the National Trust, has advised on the creation of a National Trust for India, a device which would offer hope for a large number of outstanding, but neglected, historic buildings and ancient monuments. Other exchanges are in the offing, but until there is greater integration between the work of the Archaeological Survey

Senate House, Calcutta University by Walter Granville. Demolished in 1961.

and day-to-day planning control the prospect of planning policy paying due regard to historic buildings remains in doubt.

A coherent national strategy is needed with supreme control vested at a national, rather than local level. Existing conservation machinery needs to be overhauled with a national body responsible for the preparation of criteria for the listing of buildings and for the actual survey work. This body should also have the power to designate Conservation Areas where provincial or state authorities prove reluctant or recalcitrant. Protection needs to be extended to the setting of buildings and monuments, and aggressive commercial advertising must be curbed. The whole management of ancient monuments and sites for tourism remains in its infant stages, but if properly looked after and developed India's architectural heritage could prove one of its most valuable assets.

The purpose of this book is to draw attention to one relatively recent aspect of this heritage and to plead for its long-term conservation. It is a shared heritage, the physical expression of the special relationship that exists between the two countries. More than most nations, the people of India acknowledge that the past and present are part of a single continuum. In simple recognition of the patterns which bind the two countries, part of the proceeds of this book will go towards repairing the little model in the garden of the former Residency at Hyderabad. It is as much a symbol of love as the great Taj itself, the love of one nation for another, and with love comes understanding.

Begum's garden in the former residency, Hyderabad. The endearing model house built by Major James Achilles Kirkpatrick for his wife: a unique heritage in ruins.