



At a lecture given in Bombay, George Wittet stated that Bombay had never had a traditional indigenous style of architecture and the nearest approach to it was the old time bungalow, which in its composition had a touch of Portuguese renaissance, but such houses were steadily vanishing. "Bombay as we see it now, is the outcome of a rapid commercial growth in which European trade and influence have been prime factors and this is naturally reflected in its buildings and it is not for us or anyone to say its style shall change; it shall be so and so; any alteration in this direction must and will be the reflection of economic change", he said. To illustrate this point, Wittet cited the example of his design for the Institute of Science, which he did not perceive on Indian lines as he believed that a modern science college was not an Indian phenomenon. The Institute was thus designed in the Renaissance style but was built with local yellow basalt stone.

in RCC, each containing 80 single roomed tenements; of these, 32 chawls were built at Delisle Road, 42 at N aigaum, 121 at W orli and 12 at Sewri and the buildings were handed over to the Collector in 1929.

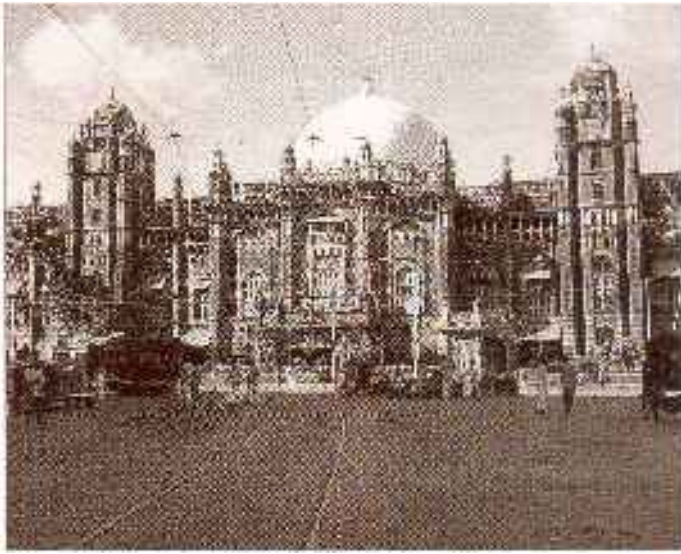
The renowned Bombay architect, Claude Batley, writing in the 1930s, described the three-storeyed chawls as "single-roomed tenements with concrete-louvred-faced verandahs, from which neither heaven nor earth could be seen. He wrote, "By the mercy of Providence only about 200 exactly similar, regimented blocks containing some 16,000 rooms were ever built; simply because the people, for whom they were being provided, wisely (even in their dire need for somewhere to live), refused to occupy them until thousands of rupees had been spent in modifying them into something remotely fit for human habitation... These cheerless, single-roomed chawls, architectless and gardenless, deserve to be dubbed 'Lloyd's folly' far more than did the finely conceived Back Bay Reclamation Scheme". Another group of Bombay architects writing around the same time, pointed out that the chawls found their spiritual level when those at W orli were used partly as a *satyagrahis'* prisoners camp during the Civil Disobedience movement in 1929-30.

### **Wittet's Bombay**

During the land market slump of the 1920s, very little private building took place, with the exception of a few commercial buildings in the Fort, some private bungalows and some outstanding housing colonies, primarily for the Parsi community. The public buildings constructed by the Bombay Government during this period proved far more successful than the schemes undertaken by its Development Directorate. This was largely to the credit of George Wittet, Consulting Executive Architect to Government, who was also responsible for laying out the prime Ballard Estate and the design for the new Customs House. Together with John Begg, his predecessor, Wittet introduced a new style of architecture for the city, termed Indo-Saracenic.

The shift from the Gothic style to the Indo-Saracenic was indeed a big shift for Bombay. The Indo-Saracenic style evolved as a result of the *Jeypore Portfolio of Architectural Details* that were produced by Swinton Jacob in 1890 under the patronage of the Maharaja of Jaipur. In these volumes Jacob presented over 600 large-scale drawings of elements picked from various buildings in north India dating from the 12th to 17th centuries.

What is particularly important is that the work was not organised by region but by function - coping and plinths in one volume, arches in a second, brackets in a third and so on. Swinton Jacob stated that the *portfolio* was intended as a "set of working drawings" and presented them on loose sheets in order that different examples of details may be compared and selections readily made.



What Jacob did as a result of this process was to construct a framework to enable this task of "reassembly" of traditional forms to evolve a composite architectural style fitted for modern buildings. But it was only through the work of British architects like R F Chisholm, John Begg and George Wittet that this style found its way to Bombay.

The earliest use of the Indo-Saracenic style albeit only as a proposal, was Chisholm's first prize-winning design for the Bombay Municipal Corporation building in the 1880s. However, for the administration that was favouring Gothic as the official Bombay style, this was hardly acceptable. Chisholm was bypassed by 'bureaucratic manipulation' and the commission was given to F W Stevens - the great Gothic Revival architect!

In fact, this phenomenon of the British administration consciously pushing styles in a manner so as to give each city and region a separate identity is best captured in the following statement made in an address to the Royal Institute of British Architects by James Ransome. He was the first Consulting Architect to the Government of India in 1902 and stated, "In India, where ingenuity was required more than anything, we were forcing purity of style. I was told to make Calcutta Classical, Bombay Gothic, Madras Saracenic, Rangoon was to be Renaissance and English cottages were to be dotted about an over the plains of India".

In spite of bureaucratic opposition, for Bombay the shift in styles from Gothic to Indo-Saracenic came with John Begg and George Wittet's work. They were both Consulting Architects to the Bombay Government and thus designed a number of public buildings in the city.

John Begg came to India in 1901 as the Consulting Architect to Bombay and by 1906 succeeded James Ransome as the Consulting Architect to the Government of India. As Consulting Architect, Begg attempted to define a "method or style and architectural policy for building in India". What Begg really proposed was an architectural style that allowed for "all manner of once unthinkable unifications, agreements and meetings".

The summation of Begg's views can be seen in the General Post Office building which he completed in 1909. This building played a major role in establishing the Indo-Saracenic style as the official style for building in British India.

What perhaps made the Indo-Saracenic style acceptable in Bombay, was its close association with the Gothic. Although the Gothic and Indo-Saracenic styles had wholly different origins, they shared exuberant surface decoration, vibrant textures and

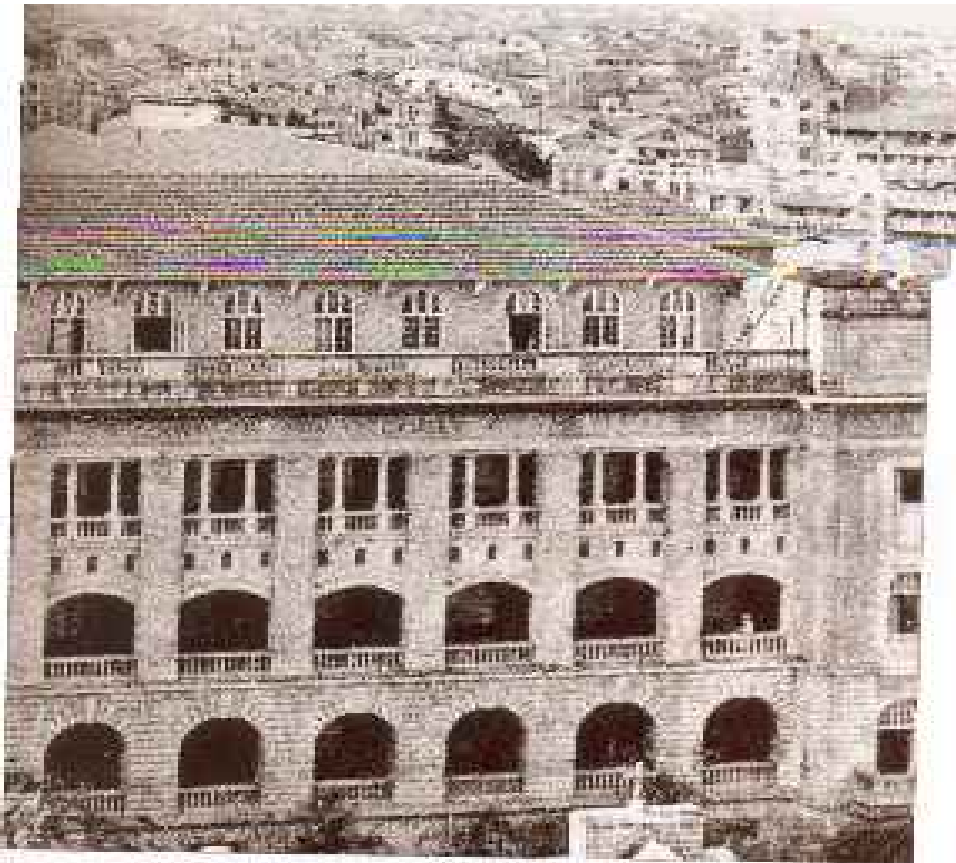
*Below: The General Post Office building designed in the Indo-Saracenic style. Built in local basalt with dressings of yellow stone from Kurla and white stone from Dhrangadhra, the Post Office features a vast central hall which rises through the height of the building to the dome.*

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the facile use of the variety of polychromatic stones available in Bombay. In addition, somehow the multiplicity of expressions possible in both these styles were more attuned to the commercial nature and spirit of Bombay. In any case, in the context of Bombay, the positive aspect of this shift in style led to the creation of a semblance of architectural pluralism in the newly structured core. The Indo-Saracenic style was given further impetus by George Wittet, who came to India in 1904 to assist John Begg, the then Consulting Architect to the Government of Bombay. Amongst the imposing buildings designed by Wittet were the Prince of Wales Museum, the Institute of Science, the Gateway of

*Right: The Small Causes Court at Dhobi Talao designed by George Wittet. Construction was begun on 13 August 1913 and completed on 1 May 1918 at a cost of Rs 11,06,790. Overleaf: Haseler's aerial view with the Prince of Wales Museum at the centre shows the circular garden with the statue of the Prince of Wales (King George V) by George Wade, donated by Sir Sassoon David, and the new wing designed by Gregson, Batley & King, opened in 1938 to house a natural history section. The Jehangir Art Gallery was financed by Sir Cowasji Jehangir and built in the 1950s to the designs of Durga Bajpai and G M Bhuta on the pool-site in the Museum compound.*





India, the Small Causes Court at Dhobi Talao, the Wadia Maternity Hospital and the complex of the IGng Edward Memorial Hospital and G S Medical College at Pare!.

The design for the Prince of Wales Museum, the foundation stone of which was laid by the Prince of Wales in 1905, was the work of George Wittet. The Museum was completed only in 1914 and during World War I, was converted into a military hospital. Lady Lloyd, the then Governor's wife formally opened it in 1922. The Museum occupied a vast crescent-shaped site on the Wellington Fountain Circle, at the southern end of Esplanade Road.

**"The Museum of Western India is an Indian composition", George Wittet once stated. "The real reason why it is so, is because I was instructed that the design should be Indian in character... What was left to me was to decide in what manner in which it should be treated and**

**this again was not difficult as from the nature of the group, namely a central block with flanking buildings forming three sides of a quadrangle, a dominating feature**

**UP** *Column position should lead seemed*

**necessary, and this feature in India was naturally a dome. And of all domed architecture in India, that of Bijapur has the greatest appeal for me and so the key was struck". Elements of traditional designs blended in the frontage include small bulbous cupolas on the towers, Saracenic arches, *jalis* as infill for Islamic arches, Rajput *jharokhas*, brackets of Hindu temples and semi-open verandahs in response to the climate.**



Wittet designed it in the Indo-Saracenic style, with a sensitive use of a combination of yellow and blue basalt stone quarried in the Bombay region. The dome of the building is similar to that of the General Post Office and bears a remarkable resemblance to that of the Gol Gumbuz at Bijapur. 1

Being situated in a compound, in its own context, the visual contribution of the Museum to the Wellington Fountain node was that of creating a swath of 'green' as a counterpoint to the urban edge of the buildings across the street. The Museum dome - clearly visible from the south - was in keeping with the diversity of the skyline around the circle. Besides adding another element to enrich the visual quality of the node, it also serves as a marker at the city level.

The foundation stone for the Royal Institute of Science was laid in 1911 on a plot opposite the Museum. Wittet designed it in a predominantly European style. Though completed earlier, the Institute was opened only in 1920 due to the intervention of World War I.

Although Wittet designed the Science Institute and the Museum in completely different styles, they were brilliant design responses to their individual sites. The Institute was designed as a visual extension of the Gothic buildings on Esplanade Road such as Elphinstone College and the Sassoon Library. The careful use of a single-coloured yellow basalt stone served as a device that reinforced this continuity.

The circular and flat-domed hall punctuated the wings of the building, which like the other buildings on this circle created its own unique skyline. However, it was a modest one humbly acknowledging the mighty gables of the Elphinstone College and the Rajabai Tower that fell within the same view corridor. In other words, the Institute of Science, together with the Cowasji Jehangir Hall (now the National Gallery of Modern Art) reinforced an existing visual context that was created by their predecessors - the great Gothic buildings of Bombay.

Perhaps the work most commonly identified with Wittet is the Gateway of India, planned to commemorate the visit in 1911 of the first British monarch to set foot on Indian soil - King George V with his consort, Queen Maud's. foundations of the Gateway were laid at Apollo Bunder on 31 March between 1915 and 1919, the land on which the Gateway was to be built was reclaimed from the sea, and a new sea wall was constructed. The RCC pile foundations, driven almost 36 feet deep, were ready in May 1920 and the construction of the monument itself was started in the same month.





George Wittet prepared alternate designs for the monument during 1912-13. Models as well as drawings were exhibited for the public and criticisms and suggestions were received and considered. It was only in August 1914 that the final plans were sanctioned. Wittet altered the alignment of the harbor front to arrange his scheme.

Included in Wittet's design was a grand processional avenue of impressive width, extending from the Gateway along the Apollo Pier Road to the Wellington Fountain, thus forming a magnificent ceremonial entrance to India. It was to be flanked by gardens and statuary with secondary roads on *either* side. For this purpose, buildings on the southern edge of the Apollo Pier Road including the Yacht Club Chambers were to be demolished. An old saluting battery which occupied a plot of 5,572 square yards on the land bounded by Apollo Pier Road, Colaba Causeway, Landsdowne Road and Battery Street was also to be incorporated in Wittet's proposed plan. However, due to changing economic conditions and the shortage of building sites in

*Opposite top and centre: The Prince of Wales Museum and an aerial view. Opposite below: The Royal Institute of Science with the Cowasji Jehangir Hall in the centre. Below: The Gateway of India.*



*The Gateway of India was completed at a cost of Rs 2.1 million defrayed by grants from the Central Government, Sir Jacob Sassoon, the Municipalities and the Port Trust. The aerial view shows the Gateway standing off-centre in the distance. Wigglesworth's plan for a wide, ceremonial avenue leading from the Gateway to Regal Circle was never implemented.*

*The Apollo Bunder, on which the Gateway and Taj Mahal Hotel are located, was named after the palla or palwah, the sable fish found in the surrounding waters. The original plans for the Taj bear the signatures of D N Mirza and S Uram Khanderao Vaidya, who worked closely with F W Stevens on several public building projects.*

*Many architectural features of these buildings were thus incorporated in the Taj, including a majestic cantilevered stairway, similar to that at Victoria Terminus. Vaidya died in 1900 and Jamsetji Tata appointed W A Chambers as the consulting architect.*



Bombay, Wittet's proposal for the grand avenue was never implemented. That is why today, the Gateway of India stands off-centre to its approach road from the Regal and Wellington Fountain Circle.

The design of the commemorative portal was in the style of 16th century Gujarati architecture. The main structure was built in yellow basalt stone from the Kharodi quarries in the Thana district. The domes and galleries, however, were made of reinforced concrete, the central dome being 48 feet in diameter and 83 feet at its maximum height. The Gateway of India, which further intensified the 'grand' image for visitors arriving by sea, was formally opened by the then Viceroy, the Earl of Reading, on 4 December, 1924.

George Wittet's works in the northern part of Bombay were equally impressive. The construction of the two major hospitals at Parel designed by him, was to see the gradual transformation of this precinct from an exclusive quarter scattered with elegant and palatial country villas, into one that symbolised public medical welfare.

West Parel had already evolved as a major centre of the textile industry and was dotted with mills, railway workshops and congested workers' chawls.

The character of East Parel, where the former Government House had been located, had begun to change when in 1899 the Governor's grand mansion was converted into the Bombay Bacteriological Laboratory, later renamed the Haffdne Institute in honour of the doctor who initiated research into plague. Nearby, a new building for the Veterinary College was completed in 1906 on a property purchased from Framji Jeejeebhoy, which lay adjacent to the Bai Sakarbai Dinshaw Petit Hospital for Animals.

By the Bombay Police Charges Act of 1907, it became mandatory *for* the Municipality to extend medical relief work in the city and the King Edward

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*llight: The King Edward  
Memorial Hospital  
designed by George  
Wittet, comprising a  
centrally located  
administrative block  
with four ward pavilions.*

Memorial Hospital was conceived in 1909. The Corporation concluded that a fully equipped hospital was urgently required for the north of the island, which was becoming increasingly populated by the working classes that needed constant medical attention.

In 1916, the Trustees of the late Advocate General, Seth Gordhandas Sunderdas, offered a donation of Rs 1.45 million to build a medical college on certain conditions, including the employment of qualified Indian doctors who were not in government service. The college and hospital, both designed by Wittet in consultation with Mr Pite, a recognised expert who designed King's Hospital in London, were opened in 1925 and 1926, respectively.

The Hospital and College were built of a uniform greyish yellow stone quarried locally. The College, which was the largest single block, comprised three storeys while the remainder of the hospital buildings were two storied, but constructed in a way that would permit the addition of an extra floor.

Wittet was also responsible for the design of the Nowrosjee Wadia Maternity Hospital, funded by Sir Ness Wadia and built on a large plot of land opposite the G S Medical Hospital. With the completion of the two hospitals in Pare!, the former elitist precinct transformed into one most frequented by the industrial working class. The Wadia hospital was completed in 1926, the year of Wittet's untimely death by acute dysentery.

The importance of Wittet's contribution to Bombay lies in the fact that he transformed the expression and style of the public architecture of the city. In fact, in his own development a clear transformation is evident where his early works bear a mark of Indo-Saracenic architecture and the later works are in a Classical or Renaissance Revival style - with an unmistakable Wittet touch. But more than that, his buildings carried an incredibly urbane response to the context and were extremely sensitive to reinforcing the urban design qualities that were emerging in Bombay. In that sense, his most important contribution to the city was the Ballard Estate scheme where as Consulting Architect to the Port Trust, he designed the control guidelines for the development. Ballard Estate achieved in its final form a humane urbanistic quality that Bombay had not experienced earlier - a fitting tribute to his architectural talent.

## Greater Bombay

Simultaneous to the Government's Back Bay scheme and the efforts to construct *chawls* and imposing new public buildings, came the move to develop the northern suburbs for city expansion.

The Municipal authorities had been concerned with the development of the suburbs, and especially of the Mahim area, since 1888. Borough Municipalities were established at Bandra in 1876, at Kurla in 1877 and Thana in 1863. Amongst the farsighted Bombay citizens who had anticipated the

**GS Medical College further encouraged the study of medicine. This was in contrast to the time the Grant Medical College was established, when, according to Kabraji, "so intense was the prejudice against what was regarded as the contamination of dead bodies and human bones, that for a time it was feared that the public endowment fund for the institution had been simply thrown away. Inducements were held out to students to set the institution going. Not only were they admitted free, but**

**everyone was given a stipend of Rs 10 per month". The first doctors faced bias against western methods of treatment. People "were mortally afraid of the application of a blister and regarded even the harmless mustard poultice with grave misgivings. Indeed, it was believed that the doctor applied a blister only in extreme cases when there were few chances of the patient's life being saved. When this remedy was resorted to there was mourning and lamentation in the house".**





rapid development of the suburban region was the pioneering industrialist, Jamsetji Tata. Although most of his schemes did not see fruition primarily due to the short-sightedness of the authorities, they are worth recounting to understand the magnitude of Jamsetji's foresight.

According to his biographer, Frank Harris, Jamsetji bought land on the island of Madh, in Juhu and Bandra and built bungalows on each plot in the 1890s. On the island of Salsette (which mainly comprised the Bandra region), he purchased a house and the whole village of Anik. After the severe outbreak of the plague in 1896, Jamsetji revitalised his interest in developing the northern suburbs, and particularly Salsette, where he had continued to purchase considerable land over the years.

Large numbers of people had fled to Salsette during the plague epidemic and had built small, ramshackle houses amidst the swamps and scrub. Jamsetji made plans to build houses for the middle class at moderate rents on the large properties he owned north of Bandra. His various schemes, however, were frustrated by a series of building fines imposed by the Bombay Government on



undeveloped lands. Jamsetji endeavoured to persuade the Bombay Government to reverse its revenue policy.

The Collector of Thana indicated that a fine of Rs 1,500 per acre would have to be paid on the houses built in the locality and on the gardens and compounds that surrounded them. The levies were, in fact, much higher than those at Bombay itself and the enterprise would have run at a definite loss. Realising the absurdity of the fine, especially in view of the City Improvement *Trust's* intentions to develop the suburbs, Jamsetji carried on a protracted correspondence with the Collector.

In 1899, as spokesman for the residents of Salsette, Jamsetji petitioned the Bombay Governor. "Apart from a mere handful of Bombay residents desirous of having country houses in the suburbs, those desirous of building residences there are mostly men of moderate means, who cannot afford to invest in this way any considerable sums. By far the greater portion of these are the permanent residents of the suburbs themselves, who have awakened to the need of better houses and surroundings than they have been hitherto content with, and the remainder of them are middle-class residents of the city of Bombay".

The Government, however, took the stance that the properties were, in fact, owned by capitalists and offered to assess the properties on the market value of the land. In sheer frustration, Jamsetji finally wrote to the then Viceroy, Lord Curzon. Whilst pointing out that he was the only 'capitalist' among the signatories to the appeal, he asked for protection to the 10,000 landholders of Salsette. Although the press and the public supported Jamsetji's stance, the Government continued to adopt an intractable attitude.

Meanwhile, Jamsetji persisted in his efforts to implement other plans including a reclamation scheme of lands around Mahim Creek, stretching from the Causeway to Bandra and Santa Cruz. To improve the health of these localities, Jamsetji proposed to government a detailed scheme for the reclamation of low-lying swamps and their conversion into pasture ground for milch cattle, to serve the dual purpose of eliminating the nuisance of malarial areas and providing superior grazing for cattle. He also hoped to create a fishery at the Mahim Creek that would provide a sizable supply of salmon, mullet and prawns to feed the city's rapidly growing population.

Again, though the general schemes were approved in theory, various departments of government raised vague objections. The only assenting voice was that of the Agent to the GIP Railways who believed that Jamsetji's schemes would create "a favoured suburb for a class of people for whom there is now no

*Opposite: A 1930s aerial view of Bandra-Mahim showing the Causeway and the BB&CI station. Top: Statue of Jamsetji Tata on its original site near Victoria Terminus now relocated near Mantralaya. Above: Reti Bunder at Mahim creek.*

really suitable accommodation on the Island". Jamsetji answered each objection with rational assurances, but to no avail.

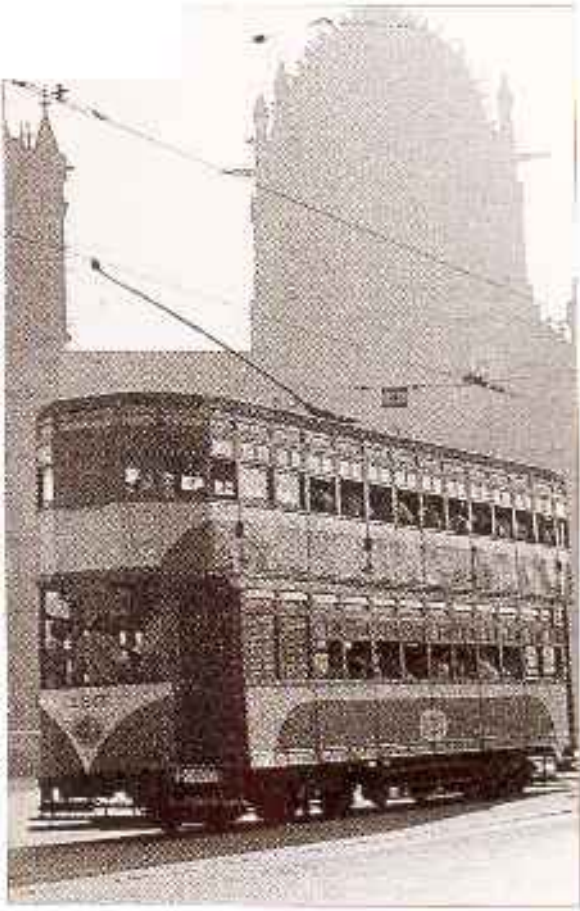
Yet another splendid project he envisaged was the development of a suburban Venice on 1,200 acres of low-lying areas. These were to be crisscrossed by creeks and bounded on the west by the island of Juhu Tara, where he proposed to reclaim 500 plots, each comprising an acre, to be surrounded by canals with sluice gates. In addition, the village of Juhu Tara was to be developed as a fashionable seaside resort. Jamsetji unfortunately died in 1903 and although his sons and successors were keen to implement his ideas, priority was given to constructing the Tata Steel works at Sakchi and the reclamation projects were indefinitely postponed.

Although Jamsetji's many plans did not see fruition, his efforts symbolised the potential that private entrepreneurs were recognising for the Greater Bombay region - the potential of not only creating better living environment in the suburban areas, but an indication that there also lay financial gain in developments of this nature. Perhaps these indications were explicit enough to mobilise the Government to now seriously commence investment in infrastructure for this region.

In 1907, the Governor-in-Council invited opinions of different representative bodies on a town-planning scheme, which contemplated the development of Trombay Island as an upmarket residential area. For lack of support, however, the scheme was abandoned. The Bombay Development Committee proposed in 1913 the development of Salsette for residential and other purposes and suggested swift communication links between Bombay and Trombay, which it foresaw as developing in the future as a part of Bombay.

In 1918, the Municipal Corporation requested the Municipal Commissioner to investigate the possibility of expanding the limits of Bombay and placed at his disposal the services of C H Cowan, the Development Officer for Salsette, who recommended in his detailed report the inclusion of Kurla within the Municipal limits. District Municipalities were created at Ghatkopar in 1916 and at Juhu in 1921 with Borivali, Kandivali, Malad and a number of village panchayats like Chembur, Mulund, Malwani, Manori, Goregaon and Bhandup, termed as 'Notified Areas'.

In an attempt to emulate the Improvement Trust's schemes at Oadar, Matunga, Wadala and Sion, the Development Directorate commenced to provide space for expansion and to motivate people to move away *from the* congested southern localities. For this purpose, the western trunk road from Bandra to Ghodbunder was widened and tar macadamised up to Jogeshwari Station and improvements were carried out to the Sion-Trombay Road. The new railway line between Kurla and Chembur was also extended to Mankhurd. From 1921, the Directorate sanctioned 4,000 building plans including 2,500





Industrial and residential schemes were Kurla Kiroli, Trombay, Chembur, Danda, Khar, Bandra. By the early 1~30s town-planning 'ruz, Vile Parle, Andheri, Malad, Borivali and begun in earnest.



Structure and buildings -.-' Port Trusts, the Bombay based s to other existing

on of the tramway. A y Electric Supply and Tramways Company was registered in London and combined the business of electric traction with electric light and power supply. The first electric cars were put on the road in May 1907. Within two years the line was extended to cover 20 miles of track, operated by the trolley overhead system of electric propulsion.

Similarly, to meet the growing demand of domestic and industrial consumers, many alterations and additions were made to the Bombay Gas Company's plant (which had been established at Parel in 1866) to provide additional supplies of piped gas. The Tata Hydro-Electric project - an engineering feat of its time - began to supply power from the Khopoli power station to 30 textile mills in the city from 1915. By the early 1930s, the Company had two additional power stations at Kalyan and Bombay, the energy being received in bulk through 10 receiving stations of the BEST & Company.

Above: A double-decker electric tram near Victoria Terminus.

Local, national and global communication links were strengthened with the introduction of the automatic telephone in 1924 and the inauguration of the Bombay to London Beam Telegraph service in 1927. Five years later, cable and wireless operations were merged with the formation of the Indian Radio and Cable Communications Company. In 1933, the Japanese Beam Service and the Overseas Radio Telephonic Service were commenced.

Simultaneously, in education, with the opening of the S N D Thackersey University for women in 1916, a major stride was taken. A few years later in 1922, the Primary Education Act was passed to enable local authorities to control and manage compulsory primary education within their own areas of





jurisdiction. The Secondary Teachers' Training College, the Sydenham College of Commerce and the Royal Institute of Science were opened in the 1920s, adding prestigious institutes and new faculties to the educational facilities already established.

The vast new population and the growing tourist industry necessitated the opening of more restaurants and hotels in the city. More *khanawals* were set up, and together with the city's many bakeries and Irani restaurants, catered to industrial workers who had no cooking facilities in the small rooms of their *chawls*.

At the other end of the social spectrum, the Taj Mahal Hotel was the most important new hotel to be built. The expansion of the city in the 1890s had led to the construction of more and more hotels such as the Apollo on Colaba Causeway, but most of these were open only to Europeans. It was perhaps to counter the racial prejudice of the times that the

far-sighted Jamsetji Tata decided to build the Taj, where Indians of all castes and creeds could freely socialise amongst themselves and with Europeans on neutral ground.

The Majestic Hotel was opened in 1909 and the Grand in 1922 within the elegant new business district, Ballard Estate. Situated only a few minutes' walk away from the Ballard Pier, the hotel offered a variety of dining and other facilities to its clients.



*Top: Apollo Hotel at Colaba. Above: Majestic Hotel near Regal Cinema, was designed by W A Chambers. In the 1960s it was taken over by the*

*Government for the dual function of a cooperative general store and a hostel for Legislative Assembly Members.*

*Right: Taj Mahal Hotel at Apollo Bunder, completed in 1903.*

*Opposite: Kayani's Irani restaurant at Dhobi Talao.*





With the growth of the hotel and restaurant industry came new forms of entertainment such as musical shows and cabarets, presented in the ballrooms of new hotels. Jazz was introduced in the 1920s when bands of ships visiting the port were invited to perform in hotels like the Taj and Greens. Musicians of the calibre of Leon Abbey, Crickett Smith and Teddy Weatherford entertained Bombay audiences and famous actors like John Barrymore and Douglas Fairbanks came to Bombay as guests of the Maharajas.

## **Social Expression**

Renowned personalities from the arts like Anna Pavlova performed on the Bombay stage. The cinema also made its entry into the city when the first performance of 'moving pictures' on an electric cinematograph was inaugurated on the night of December 26, 1905, on the Esplanade Maidan, opposite St Xavier's College. In 1907 came the Novelty and the Empire theatres, built on the newly laid out plots on the Hornby Road Estate.

The grand Royal Opera House was planned in 1908 by J F Karaka in association with Maurice Bandmann, a well-known theatrical manager from Calcutta. The large frontage of the theatre enabled carriages and cars to drive right up to the entrance. Inside, the theatre was accommodated with 26 boxes and orchestra stalls furnished with cane chairs. Each floor had a separate refreshment room and bar and a promenade for taking the air during intervals. By 1917, the Opera House, like many other dramatic theatres, began to show films, catering to the growing popularity of the cinema industry and in 1925, Pathe's





Cinema rented the whole theatre. From 1929 to 1932, however, Madan's Theatre leased the Opera House to various Indian theatrical concerns like the Parsi Elphinstone Dramatic Company. Bombay audiences were captivated by live

performances by leading actors and musicians like Bal Gandharva, Bapu 'endharkar, Londhe, Pandit Dinanath, Jyotsna Bhole, Hirabai Barodekar, addanbai, Manji Khan,

Fayyaz Khan, Nissar Hussain and Siddheshwari Bai.

Meanwhile, with the arrival of many Maharashtrian intellectuals in Bombay, Marathi musicals and social dramas with political overtones flourished from the early years of the century. These dramas were also performed in local parks and within the courtyards of large chawls, specially during the Ganesh festival celebrations initiated by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, under the guise of which political propaganda was made.

The *chawls* built by the Improvement Trust and the Development Directorate, in fact, formed a perfect setting for these dual purpose dramas and the forms of entertainment favoured by the labour classes such as *bharuds* and *bhajans*, *powadas* and *tamashas*, which often had an underlying political message. In fact, as the freedom movement gathered momentum, ironically, the entire new city built by the British, became a vast podium for the nationalists. The period also saw the formation of politically activist religious organisations like the Hindu Mahasabha and the growth of the Khilafat Movement. Popular venues for meetings of the various political parties were open spaces like the Chowpatty beach, the parks and *maidans*, and the courtyards of *chawls* and *baghs* such as Shantaram's Chawl in Girgaum and Madhavbagh in Bhuleshwar.

The early 20th century also saw the establishment of several new clubs in the city. The Orient Club, founded in 1900 was perhaps one of the first of

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*Opposite top: Empire Theatre before its renovation. Opposite below: The Opera House. Below: A Ganesh procession and a Marathi play enacted during the festival.*

*Left: WjJingdon Club. Sir Stanley Reed writes, "Here were 18 acres of derelict land, the site of the original Great Breach through which the tide swept until it was closed by the Hornby Vellard. For nearly a century the town refuse was dumped on the swamp, raising it to road level. This was permanently scheduled as an open space; a lease was obtained from the Improvement Trust."*



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vned by the Rogay family at  
its own imposing premises,  
ust's newly laid out plots at

uropeans and Indians was the  
n stands on Clerk Road (now  
nby Vellard, was mooted by  
office, the Governor told Sir  
come "with a direct mandate  
down this damning racial  
o and golf, tennis courts and

the closing years of the 18th  
n India Turf Club race course,  
ks of Sydney, Australia, were  
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anges in the political and civic  
Morarji, Thackersey, Walchand  
were identified as magnates of  
h, M R Jayakar, Sir Lallubhai  
wielded considerable influence  
etween industrialists and the  
e political movements that had  
nal Congress in 1888.

Political unrest in the city intensified in 1907 when the Bombay press began to increasingly criticise the Government's repressory measures. The Nationalist Movement was now being supported by all sections of society including the masses, the press, the intelligentsia, leading traders and captains of industry. In the following year, thousands of mill workers went on strike to protest against the arrest and conviction of Lokmanya Tilak on a charge of sedition. In 1911, however, the city warmly welcomed King George V and Queen Mary.

Four years later, an equally cordial reception was given to M K Gandhi on his arrival at Bombay from South Mrica. On 12 January, 1915, a public reception presided over by Pherozeshah Mehta and attended by more than 600

leading citizens, was held at the Petit family residence. Gandhi's  
...arrival was to bring new concepts such as *swadeshi* and *satyagraha* 1  
t-j that helped to further intensify the political movement in Bombay.

World War I affected the City s economy With a marked  
drop in imports and exports and the textile industry was badly affected  
by the discontinuation of imported dyes from Germany. in  
1918, an estimated 125,000 industrial workers struck work for a fortnight to  
protest against an enormous rise in the cost of living.



The year also witnessed severe epidemics of smallpox, cholera, plague and *Opposite: Tilak's* influenza that resulted in an extremely high rate of mortality. Labour unrest *funeral procession on* continued through the following year with over 120,000 mill hands striking for *Girgaum Road, 1920.*

month.

*Below left: Women*

In 1919, Mahatma Gandhi commenced the Non-Cooperation *volunteers of the* effort, which led to a series of disturbances. 6 April 1919 was declared as *freedom movement*, [Massive meetings were fierce at Chowpatty belonging to lee, Sandhurst Road, Sandhurst and French Bridges, Girgaum Back several communities.



Road, C P Tank Road, Madhav Baug and the Grant Road mosque. The participants protested against the repressive Rowlatt Bills, which made possible trials of certain political cases without juries and imprisonment of suspects without being tried.

In 1921, vigorous efforts were made by the nationalists to paralyse the Government to secure political privileges. These took the form of picketing of liquor shops and an intensified call for *swadeshi* - the use of *khadi* in place of foreign textiles. Gandhi held several meetings in the city and suburban areas like Bandra, Ghodbunder and Bassein, appealing to liquor and textile dealers and manufacturers to co-operate in these efforts. These movements were particularly important to Bombay because in a sense they were questioning, testing and establishing what the city would have to sacrifice to strengthen and fuel the freedom movement. Unlike the Royal Tour in 1911, the visit of the Prince of Wales in 1921 aroused considerable hostility and violence in Bombay.

Meetings were held in 1924 to call for a boycott of British goods to protest against the treatment of Indians in Kenya. Bombay was clearly becoming the focus of political activity in the country. In 1928, a committee was appointed by the All-Parties Conference in Bombay, to draft a constitution for India. The committee published the Motilal Nehru Report that accepted Dominion status for India - a significant step for India towards freedom.



From the closing years of World War I, the city underwent radical transformations both in its physical structure as well as in social make-up on account of the establishment of new industries and further immigration. The period also saw the rise of a class of educated intellectuals and the emergence of a much larger middle class, comprising clerks, secretaries and salespersons at one end of the spectrum and professionals, managers and bureaucrats at the other.

*Right: Ibrahim Manor, residence of Sir Ibrahim Rahimtulla on Peddar Road and an old palatial villa which still exists at Bandra. Opposite below: Deen Dayal's view of Walkeshwar Road, 1890s. Many bungalows on Malabar and Cumballa Hills were demolished in the 1950s and 1960s.*

The decade of the 1920s began auspiciously for Bombay, for it brought a period of prosperity, but ended in the doldrums when it was affected by the severe economic depression that hit the world. I

In Bombay, the recession brought about a sharp drop in land values, which slowed down the progress of reclamation and building schemes that had characterised the preceding decades.

The down cycle fortunately did not last long and by the early 1930s, the worst was over as the economic situation in the country improved. Construction activity now intensified to such a frenzied pace that investors quickly bought up every available plot in the established commercial and residential areas. During the decade between 1933 to 1942 building activity reached its peak as the city's population grew from 1.16 million (1931 census) to 1.49 million (1941 census) and pressure on land escalated with over 50,000 people with no accommodation at all.

All vacant plots in the city, privately owned or those laid out by the Improvement Trust, Port Trust, the Government and the Municipality, were completely built over with ranges of multi-storeyed residential and office blocks and private bungalows mushrooming all over the city. This phenomenon continued right through the period of World War II and despite the shortages the war brought in its wake!

As the city developed further, levels of affluence continued to influence the choice of residential areas. The wealthier classes began to build bungalows and apartment blocks in upmarket areas that were situated overlooking the foreshore, like Malabar and Cumballa Hills, Cuffe Parade extension, Apollo Bunder, Worli seaface, Pali Hill at Bandra and later, on the new reclamations at Churchgate, Backbay and Marine Drive. Holiday and weekend homes were also being built at the seaside resorts of Juhu, Versova, Marve and Mudh island. The escalation in construction activity covered a wide variety of building typologies spanning palatial mansions and villas and seaside holiday homes built by the wealthy, to garden city type houses and housing complexes built for the middle class. These included several residential Parsi *baghs* such as