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## The Untold Exotic Architecture at Lalitpur

St. John's Church Lalitpur, 1884

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### Abstract

Church buildings in India are an important pedigree of social identity and continue to have a consort presence in public life. Concurrently religious practices have evolved, and it has become ostensible that church buildings not just only represent a religious heritage, but also equally importantly a historical heritage. Church buildings play an indispensable role in the urban and social structure of the town and surrounding landscape. Not only for the fellowships but also for the wider local community, these church buildings are provenance of great pride.

Due to their architectural form, location, and often their sheer size, Church buildings contribute to creating a local disposition and character. Therefore, the deviant nature of religious heritage compared to other heritage is mainly explained by the strong emotional connotations people have with the presence of the building.

Even church buildings without cultural-historical or monumental value might have a great emotional value for local residents. This makes religious organizations, governments, private parties, interest groups, and residents often convinced of the importance of preserving this cultural heritage.

The historical significance of Church buildings in the Bundelkhand region can be honored as comely, historic, scientific, and social value for past, present, and future generations. They can be referred to as incomparable valuable heritage that can take us into the aperture of the forgotten colonial past.

Understanding the significance of these historic buildings and the magnificent architecture on them depicts the unrevealed stories associated with this architecture, they narrate why it has become significant to conserve them.

### Introduction of the Topic

The establishment of the British Empire in central India incredibly influenced the architecture and culture of the Bundelkhand region of central India. The endowment of the British empire in the 18th century and the subsequent westernization of India paved the way for radical change in artistic taste and a new style of art. The Indo-Saracenic revival was an architectural style, which has rendered an intentionally grand scale.

One of the remarkable features of Uttar Pradesh is its Cathedral and churches. Most of them are originally from Anglican tradition now administered by the church of north India organization. The maximum churches of this region are under the direct authority of two dioceses of the Church of North India, The Diocese of Lucknow. Many churches constructed during British colonial rule fall under the authority of Roman Catholic organizations like the archdiocese of Bhopal, the Roman Catholic diocese of Gwalior, Indore, Sagar, etc.

## Purpose of Research

- There is a need to acknowledge that these are the true heritage of our country as far as the traditional skills of our Indian artisans and craftsmen are concerned and less in the objects, they created which they knew would deteriorate in time. Their conservation will reinforce prejudices and resurrect differences where none existed. Conservation encompasses all those actions taken toward the long-term preservation of cultural heritage, their sustenance provides a sense of identity and continuity in a fast-changing world for future generations.
- To explore the more effective way of serving and influencing society through the knowledge of the contribution of Britishers and Indian mansions in developing the cultural heritage of Malwa and the Bundelkhand region.
- To bring into light the knowledge of the unearthed study of respective regions of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh and traverse the Beautiful Architecture of Church Buildings and Cemeteries.

### St. JOHN'S CHURCH, LALITPUR



St. John's Church<sup>1</sup> is a small church dedicated to St. John in the Wilderness Lalitpur is situated near the superintendent's office, civil lines, and the main road at Lalitpur<sup>2</sup>. This church is affiliated with the Diocese of Lucknow and comes under the category of B-type civil churches of The Church Act of 1927<sup>3</sup>. This church is vested under the power of the crown in 1927. The church building was built and designed by a British official posted at Lullutpore (present-day Lalitpur). The church building was completed in the year 1884 in accordance with the stone placed on the right side at the entrance of the church building. The church was named St. John's Church which is visited quarterly by the chaplain of Jhansi, and there is also a European cemetery<sup>4</sup> which lies about a mile from the town on the Chanderi road,

The church building is located on the campus and is around 1 acre of land<sup>5</sup>. Currently, this is in possession of the Diocese of Lucknow<sup>6</sup>, which is the diocese of the Church of North India headquartered in Allahabad.

This Diocese covers the church building of eastern Uttar Pradesh (region between MP and UP) Bundelkhand region.

## Church buildings



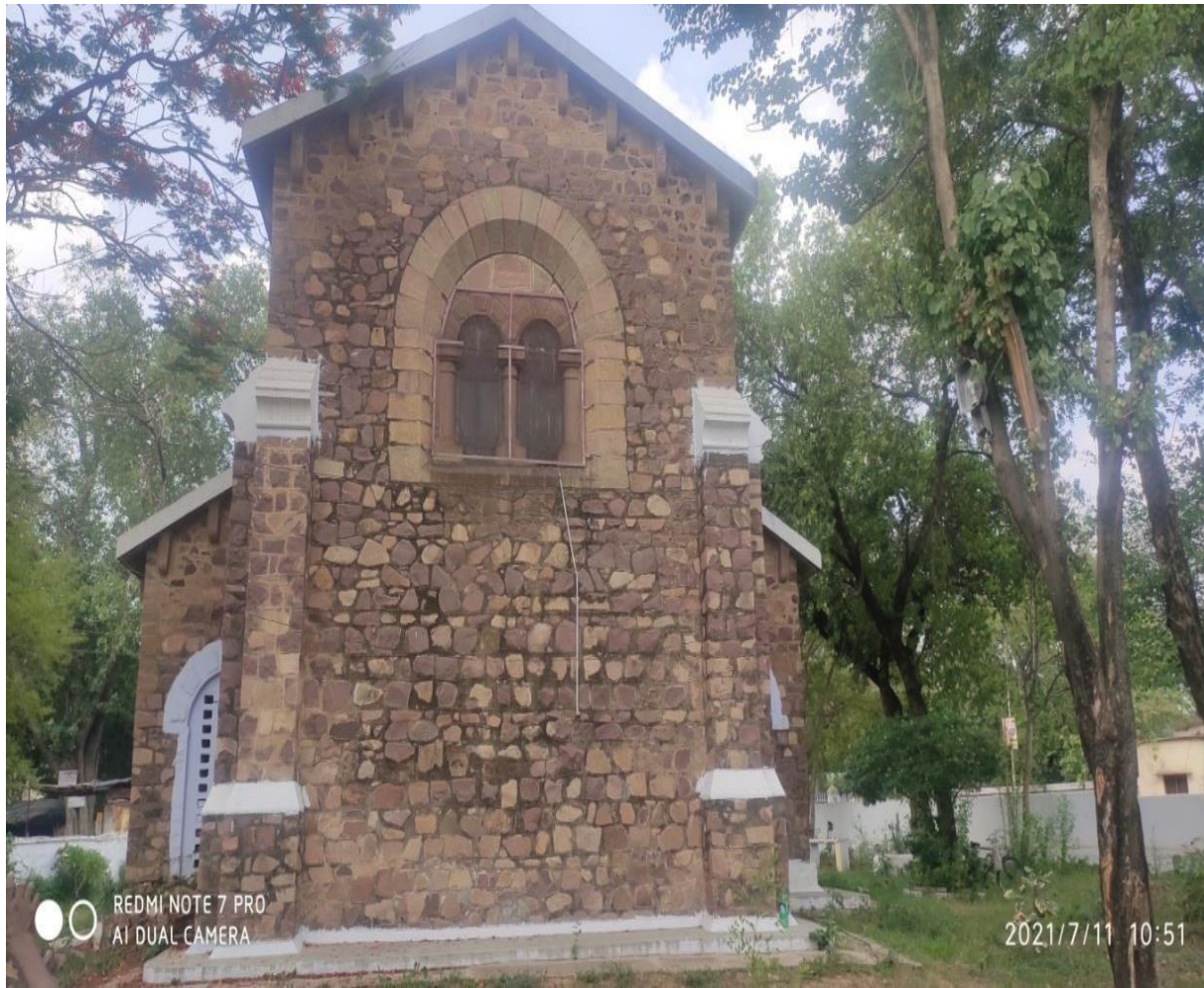
The building of Church is built in the Indo-Gothic style of Architecture. The following are the dimension of the church building:

1. Length of the building – 50' 4".
2. Breadth of the building – 40' 6".
3. Approx. height from floor to ceiling – 45 feet.

This church building allows the entry of approx. 40-50 people at the same time, and is made of materials like Amorphous stone, limestone, wood door, roof tiles, etc.

The church building has a small entrance door made up of teak wood forming Arch shaped, separated by a wooden column and a pair of two small wooden doors. Apart from that, the three pairs of reticulated Arch shaped designed windows run parallel to each other in the North-South direction of the church building, having one pair of stained glass in the East-West direction. The entire structure of the building is supported by pair of pillars built in the East-West direction of the building.

The uppermost part of the building is designed as a miniature replica of the exact church building but with definitely shaped stone, and a small arch-shaped vacated space within a structure to place a church bell in between. The amazing thing about this structure is the placement of a British-time original lighting conductor connected to the building, but currently not in a position of working.

**REARWARD ARCHITECTURE OF CHURCH BUILDING**

Any view of the church building architecture is always acknowledging that there is much more than individual effort. Usually, the rearward structure of the church building is the counterpart of the frontal view or façade. But at St. John's church Lalitpur, it is a complete perspective view as far as architecture is concerned. The church is made up of Amorphous stone of different shades of colors varying from dark brown to light yellow, supported by a pair of two pillars running North-South and one pair facing in the eastern direction. The rooftop is in a divergent shape (inverted V) upheld by 10 pairs of voussoir stone. The upper middle part of the building has Arch shaped window having a pair of stained glasses facing towards the east. The outer arch and the arch of the stained windows are the same but of different proportions. This part of the building is still untouched by any means. It never got painted. The stonework gives a pleasant scenic view as they are placed in unsymmetrical proportions supported with mortar. The Hip roof<sup>7</sup>, stonework, different shape and shade of the stone, the supporting column, and the Arch window along with stained glasses provide an amazing blend of the architectural beauty of the British era.

## RETICULATED WINDOWS

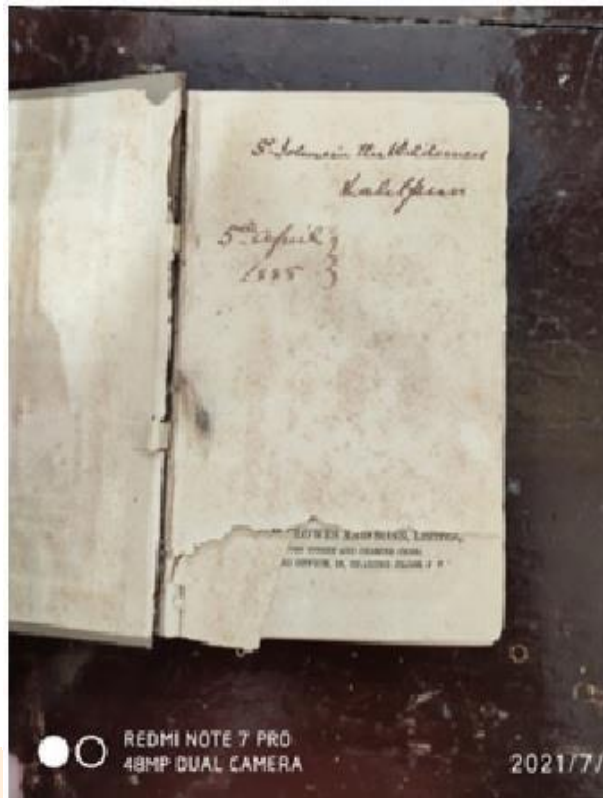


The church building comprises three pairs of reticulated Arch shaped windows running parallel to each other in a North-South direction. The main purpose of such direction is to provide proper ventilation by allowing healthy air from the height of the window, which is 7'10" and breadth, which is 4'5".

## FRAGMENTED LAMP PIECE



This is the damaged and separated part of the lamp that was in use during British time. The originality of the lamp lies in the name of the manufactured company having a patent right on it. This lamp belongs to JAMES HINK AND SON'S COMPANY headquartered in Birmingham.

**SMALL HYMNS BOOK AND THE BIBLE**

The church owns and preserved The Bible of the British Era published and printed in London. This might be used by British officials during church services. Apart from this, they also own a small hymn book consisting of Ancient and Modern Hymns (songs) printed by William Cloves & sons, limited Stamford Street & Charing Cross publishing office 13, Charing Cross, London.

**Importance of Research**

- British architectural heritage in India is largely concentrated in cities like Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta, and hill stations like Shimla, Lutyens's New Delhi is well known but in Madhya Pradesh, the glimpse of colonial architecture in Bundelkhand is only present in the form of either church buildings or in the form of railway Bungalows. Apart from these two heritages, cemeteries in the Bundelkhand region show variant architectonics exhibiting impressive architecture in their own way, and this heritage, in particular, is still unearthed as part of research that need to be elevated.
- The development of India's conservation movement has largely been fueled by this architecture and by a handful of homegrown initiatives but in the sustention of this colonial Architecture.
- Taken as a whole, India's cultural heritage may be the richest in the world, but the realization especially in Uttar Pradesh that it is a massive asset that requires management has yet to be fully appreciated.
- These Important heritages further help to strengthen the historic relationship between Britain and India through conservation Because to date many British citizens visit the memorable graves of their families.

**Conclusion**

- The development of India's conservation movement has largely been fueled by this architecture and by a handful of homegrown initiatives but in the sustention of this colonial Architecture, taken as a whole, India's cultural heritage may be the richest in the world, but the realization especially in Madhya Pradesh that it is a massive asset that requires management has yet to be fully appreciated.

**Keywords**

- a) **Indo-Gothic**
- b) **Rearward**
- c) **Wilderness**
- d) **Voussoir**
- e) **Hip-Roof**
- f) **Facade**

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7. Aineias Oikunomou, Research Paper Title-Design and Construction of Timber Roof in 19<sup>th</sup> C Churches, Published on June 2014.