



Marvelous British engineering at the oldest railway junction of Madhya Pradesh. St. Johns Divine Church Bina,1904

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ABSTRACT

Church buildings are treasure troves of artwork and symbolism relating to the spiritual life of the church and its congregation, tombs, and memorials showing the changes in style and fashion of the departed British revival structure. The work includes fixtures such as the fonts, pulpit, reredos screen, and lectern, all lit by daylight streaming through the stained-glass windows.

The church building can be stated as the source of inspiration that deserves more attention and recognition. It has its own specific value attached to this British architecture to find a new future and make these structures self-evident.

My research paper aims to expand knowledge of all subjects related to maintaining the condition and integrity of objects, structures, or sites because of their history, significance, and rarity or to educate on the quality of British construction in Madhya Pradesh. Apart from this, my agenda is to restore their identities, value their historical and cultural influence, draw the attention of citizens of the Bundelkhand region, and educate them about the conservation of this rich heritage in Madhya Pradesh.

The church building in India plays an important role in the urban and social structure of the city and surrounding countryside. Not only for the Christian community but also for the local community, the church building is the source of great pride due to its architectural form,

location, and often sheer size. All these factors contribute to creating local identity and strong character.

Many of the British-constructed church buildings, especially in Madhya Pradesh are in the thrash hold of deterioration. The main purpose of my research paper is to conserve their original shape and spatial structure, decorative and their architectural specialty.

On the other side, British church buildings' historic, and architectural cultural value can cause resistance and opportunity. These buildings should be restored to their identities and value their historical and cultural importance. The main agenda is to draw the attention of citizens of the Bundelkhand region and educate them about the conservation of British architecture in Madhya Pradesh.

Introduction of the Topic

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, 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. These church buildings are a provenance of great pride not only for the fellowships but also for the wider local community.

These churches have very intricate detailing and ornamentation reflecting the past and playing an important role in shaping the community to know about the ancient culture, way of life, architecture, level of development, building techniques, and use of material, art, and other aspects of the society of a particular period. The rich heritage structures are on the verge of deterioration and alarms for effective management. The surrounding areas are getting developed in a non-harmonious manner without any due respect to the fine existing architecture. The detracting and non-contributory buildings will deface the heritage area from losing its identity due to the non-harmonious approach by the agencies and people. These heritage monuments and areas are to be made their significance assessment for undertaking the conservation and preservation. The research on these subjects deals with the significant assessment of the heritage monuments in the heritage area of the Bundelkhand.

Purpose of research

- 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.

- British-constructed Monuments of different styles are scattered all over the heritage conservation area of their presidencies. Their Conservation in the region of my study period needs to shift its priority to what is becoming of our historic cities rather than to what they were.
- The styles of high architectural significance are getting vanished due to a non-comprehensive approach to protection and they are eluding their cultural consequential. These architectural styles are rarely available in the globe of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh and fortunately, the part of the built heritage in Malwa and Bundelkhand region needs to be identified, as they assessed its significance for protection and management of these monuments to future generations.

ST. JOHN'S DIVINE CHURCH.
Sagar District, Bundelkhand Region.



The St. John's church¹ is located in Bina² tehsil, Sagar district of Madhya Pradesh. It is located in the railway area³ near Bina railway junction station. The construction of church buildings was started in 1896 and completed in the year 1904⁴. This church is among the oldest archival buildings in the Bundelkhand region. This amazing Indo-gothic building comes under the category of part B civil churches category, which formerly belongs to the diocese of Nagpur⁵, but is currently run by the diocese of Bhopal⁶, the church of North India.



Bina was an important railway junction of the Sagar district of the great Indian peninsula railways⁷. In 1888⁸ the first railway lines from Bina junction on the Indian midland railways to Sagar district were opened. Perhaps this church building was for British railway official to conduct their religious service. This church building was under the authority of St. Peter's church Sagar situated in Sagar cantonment built-in year 1840⁹ as the chaplain to take church worship was sent by St. Peter's church¹⁰. Graveyard¹¹ located at Bina possess graves of British railways official of the Great peninsula region and their families.

Sideview of the Church building.

This Church building was made up of big boulders, perhaps it is the only Church building in the Bundelkhand and Malwa region of my study which is constructed from big boulders which are held together tightly with long iron rods fittings inside the church building and broad iron garter outside the church building clasped with big bolts all over the principal corners of the building providing amazing strength to building till date. This building has the capacity to accommodate approximately 100-120 people at one time. It also has a fascinating interior wooden roof structure supported by a wooden board platform.

The outer roof structure is of inverted V shape formerly its roof was made of tiles exported from the Basel mission tiles work factory of Mangalore¹²; a cross-shaped structure is placed on top of the western gate entrance attached to the western corner of the roof.

Façade of the Church Building



The Church building was originally brick in color, now it is painted dark red and white at the principal corner of the building.

The following is the dimension of the Church building: -

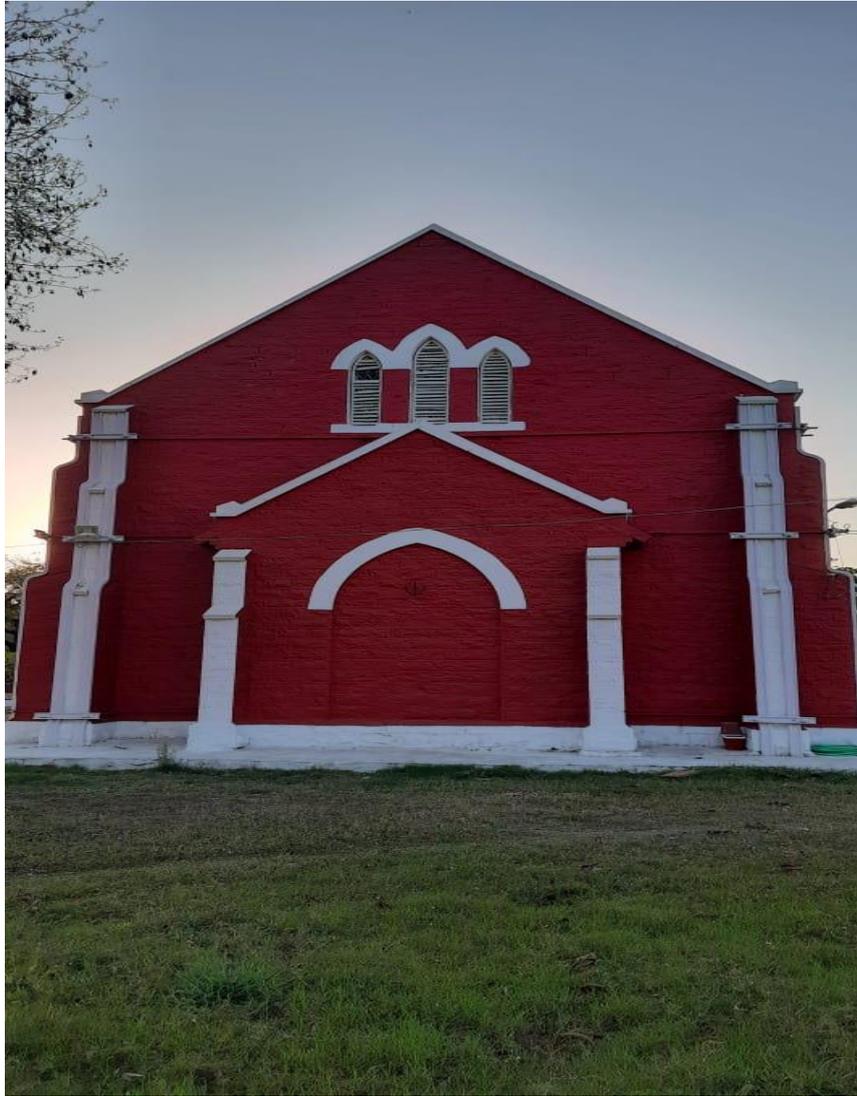
length -59 feet 5 inches,

breadth -46 feet and 5 inches

height of approximately 60 feet.

It is built in an Indo-gothic style. The gothic style encompasses many forms of art including sculpture and furniture. The gothic architecture showcases semi-circular arches, great height, light, and volume. Its signature element is the pointed arch which can be seen at the entrance door and windows of St. John's church Bina. Architecture is the European style of masonry that values height, intricacy, sizable windows, and beautiful arches. The building also embraces advanced British structural engineering standards, hence fine use of steel, iron, and poured concrete can be seen. It also appends thinner walls, pointed arches,

Rearward of the Church building.



The Church building architecture is always saluted, 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 this church building only difference is the façade of the church building has an entrance door and that of the rearward which is closed. Otherwise, it is the facsimile of the front view of the Church building. The front view also has a cross-shaped structure at the top of the architecture of the church building at mid inverted V-shaped which is absent at the posterior side.

Roof tiles



The roof tile of the Church building is from 1865 as inscribed on it. With a length of 1 foot 4 inches and a breadth of 10 inches, the tiles belong to the Basel mission tiles factory the Indian first tile factory established in Mangalore¹³ in 1860. perhaps Britishers preferred these tiles for their government buildings (post offices) located in the railway area.

The Vault



The Vault is the specific area in the sanctuary of St. John's Church, Bina. It is made up of heavy iron metal and its fire resistance is safe. It was built and established by the company of Calcutta.

It measures around in length 2' 6 '' and breathes 2'. The Vault is used to keep precious silver wear utensils like Calice, paten, and communion cups.

Importance of research

- The old architecture has an intrinsic value that is abstract in nature and cannot be compared to any other architecture, their upraise is a must.
- Architectural preservation of these church buildings should always be the first port of call before the possibility of demolition is even considered. This is because once this architecture is gone it can never come back in its original form and it's only when looking closely that the unique features of the building can be appreciated.
- Church Buildings of the Bundelkhand region are untouched areas of research and they need to be lifted up, as it reveals much about the fashion and practices of the time. They are rich in architecture and sculptures.
- Most important aspect of the Architecture sculptures is that they have their own instrumental value and should need to be restored as they are unique in their identities and possess amazing values in historical, cultural, and influential character.
- It is important to transfer knowledge in conservation and the potential rewards from these breathtaking draftspersons' architectures.

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.* Synagogue
- c.* Sati
- d.* Diocese
- e.* Narthex
- f.* Missionaries
- g.* Congregation
- h.* Indo-Saracenic

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