

Gordon Sanderson's 'Grand Programme': Architecture, Bureaucracy and Race in the Making of New Delhi, 1910-1915¹

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abstract

This article explores the relationship between choreography of India's monuments and imperial hierarchies of race. It does so by situating one man's professional biography within the structures of authority and privilege to which he owed his position. Gordon Sanderson was appointed Superintendent of Muhammadan and British Monuments in Northern India in 1910 and was charged with overseeing the exploration and conservation of archaeological monuments in the new imperial city at Delhi. The classification of India's architectures offers a uniquely revealing insight into imperial ideologies of race and place. During his brief career, Sanderson demonstrated an intense dislike for the principles and practises of imperial Indian design, conservation and construction. Sanderson believed in a profound connection between landscape and architecture, a theory for which he found an antithesis in the imperial Public Works Department. Ultimately, his work was deployed by the Government of India as a repudiation of the credibility of Indian design and architecture.

Keywords: imperial architecture, archaeology, Archaeological Survey of India, Gordon Sanderson, Devdatta Ramkrishna Bhandarkar, Zafar Hasan, Y. R. Gupta.

This article examines the choreography of heritage in an imperial city. It does so through the professional biography of Gordon Sanderson (1887-1915), the British architect first appointed to the

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Abbreviations: British Library India Office Records (IOR), National Archives of India (NAI).

¹ This article is based on materials collected for an exhibition, 'The Grand Programme: Gordon Sanderson, New Delhi and the Architecture of India, 1911 – 1914', held at the Indian International Centre from 1 - 14 April 2015. I would like to thank Narayani Gupta for introducing me to Niall Campbell, Sanderson's great grandson, who gave unguarded access to Sanderson's papers and generous permission to reproduce Sanderson's drawings. I would like to thank the anonymous referees and Steve Legg for their invaluable comments and suggestions.

Imperial Archaeological Department in 1909 and who was quickly promoted to supervise the selection and cultivation of an Indian heritage for the imperial city. Sanderson's brief, illustrious career illuminates the imperial cultures of race that girded the curation of India's monuments in the capital. I argue that the maintenance and protection of imperial prestige was a persistent, and often explicit factor, in the organisation of personnel, the investigation and arrangement of India's physical past within an imperial present. This article explores the racial logic of Gordon Sanderson's rapid advancement and his dependence upon the expertise of the Indian scholars employed to work under him. The article goes on to consider the resentment Sanderson felt over the relatively exalted position of architecture, his own erstwhile profession, in comparison to archaeological research and conservation. Sanderson directed this resentment most vividly and graphically at the Public Works Department (the imperial department entrusted with both conservation work and of building the new capital) in a series of satirical sketches published in 1914. Sanderson had formulated his own theories about the relationship between architecture and place while still in England, ideas that were fundamentally at odds with the racially-coded, imperial convictions about the design of Indian buildings. Ultimately, although Sanderson's own racial identity secured him an elevated position within the imperial archaeological service, his ideas were blunted and contained by the contingencies of the imperial bureaucracy. The Government of India published, and simultaneously repudiated, Sanderson's work on modern Indian architecture after his death. Paradoxically, his qualified endorsement of living Indian design were deployed by the Government of India to reject demands for Indian design to have a significant influence in the new capital.² This article argues that a rupture between past and present lay at the heart of the imperial project, a rupture that the archaeological department embedded in the monumental and bureaucratic order it created and sustained.

² Sanderson, G. *Types of Modern Indian Buildings at Delhi Agra, Allahabad, Lucknow, Ajmer, Bhopal, Bikanir, Gwalior, Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur*. Government Press, United Provinces. 1913.

Between 1912 and 1931, a new imperial capital for British India was created on the open plains around the western banks of the River Jamuna with a bureaucratic and ceremonial centre built on land around Raisina Hill. The new capital was deliberately orientated around the materials of the region's past. The land selected lay just south of seventeenth-century city of Shahjahanabad and the city's planned urban fabric integrated a number of carefully selected monuments. This article examines Sanderson's role in the construction of an Indian past fashioned to serve an Imperial present. (Plate 1). Sanderson oversaw a 'grand programme' of documentation and monumental curation devised to cultivate a past of the new city. The documentation of Delhi's physical pasts, led by Maulvi Zafar Hasan and published in four volumes, remains the most thorough twentieth-century survey of urban heritage in India. The plan proposed a chain of monuments running from Shahjahanabad in the North to the Qutb Minar in the South, a curation that continues to provide the dominant axis of the city's heritage. By situating Sanderson's ideas and professional biography within the structures of authority and privilege to which he owed his position, this article will explore the politics of discernment that aligned bureaucratic culture, architectural knowledge and racial hierarchy.

Delhi's complex urban past, as a centre of Sultanate, Mughal, rebel and Imperial authority has created a fascinating and complex palimpsest of materials and meaning. A wealth of scholarship explores this palimpsest and its many iterations in the present. Sunil Kumar's work examines the dissonances of Delhi's many pasts between abstracted categories of scholarship and living localities.³ Jyoti Hosagrahar and Stephen Legg have explored Delhi's spatial histories, unpicking the threads of local, urban and imperial fabric that have shaped the city across three centuries.⁴ Legg points out that Delhi was far from an amenable canvas for the showcasing imperial authority.⁵ Taneja's recent

³ Kumar, Sunil. *The Present in Delhi's Pasts*. Three Essays Collective, Delhi. 2011. See also Santhi Kavuri-Bauer's *Monumental Matters: The Power, Subjectivity, and Space of India's Mughal Architecture*. Duke University Press, 2011.

⁴ Jyoti Hosagrahar, *Indigenous Modernities: Negotiating architecture and urbanism*. Routledge, 2005. Stephen Legg, *Spaces of Colonialism. Delhi's Urban Governmentalities*. Blackwell, 2007.

⁵ Legg, *Spaces of Colonialism*.

work has explored the complex interplay of devotion, past and place at Delhi's Feroz Shah Kotlah.⁶ The Imperial documentation, investigation and conservation of Delhi's physical past was an imperial endeavour that sought (unsuccessfully) to extricate these structures from their localities and many meanings. Redoubtable scholarship has unpicked the relationship between the institutional and intellectual history of archaeology in India; often focussing on the scholarly biographies of those who classified the subcontinent's material pasts from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards.⁷ Perhaps to avoid defaming contemporary Indian archaeology, some of this scholarship has arguably underplayed or sidestepped the question of race, acknowledging that imperial ideology may have marred the early stages of archaeological knowledge but pursuing no sustained argument from the imbrication of imperial and archaeological thought.⁸

The capital at New Delhi allowed British colonial authority to escape the political hothouse of Calcutta and re-establish, with the hope of reviving, imperial governance in a purpose built urban space. Calcutta had been the centre for a popular agitation provoked by Curzon's ill-judged decision to partition the Bengal Presidency, and to make no secret of his determination to divide resistance along the lines of religious community.⁹ The new imperial capital was to be anchored in a carefully curated past through which British authority could re-build its own legitimacy. According to the then Secretary of State for India, the Earl of Crewe, 'Not only do the ancient walls of Delhi enshrine an

⁶ Taneja, Anand V. *Jinnealogy: Time, Islam, and Ecological Thought in the Medieval Ruins of Delhi*, Stanford University Press, 2017.

⁷ Dilip K. Chakrabarti, 'The Development of Archaeology in the Indian Subcontinent', *World Archaeology*, Vol. 13, No. 3, Regional Traditions of Archaeological Research II (Feb., 1982), pp. 326-344; Sengupta, G. & K. Gangopadhyay (eds.). 2009. *Archaeology in India: individuals, ideas and institutions*. New Delhi: Munishiram Manoharlal. Sudeshna Guha, *Artefacts of history: archaeology, historiography and Indian pasts*. Sage: New Delhi, 2015; Guha-Takhurta, Tapati, *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Post-Colonial India*. Permanent Black: Delhi, 2004; Upinder Singh, *The Discovery of Ancient India: Early Archaeologists and the Beginnings of Archaeology*. Delhi, 2004.

⁸ Lahiri, Nayanjot, *Finding Forgotten Cities*. Ranikhet, 2005. Nayanjot Lahiri Coming to Grips with India's Past and her 'Living Present': John Marshall's Early Years (1902-06) - Part II, *South Asian Studies*, 2000, vol. 16 (1), pp.89-107.

⁹ The Swadeshi Movement spread to other parts of British India and was most significant resistance to British power in South Asia since the 1857 rebellion. See Sumit Sarkar, *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, 1903-1908*. Delhi, 1973.

Imperial tradition comparable with that of Constantinople, or with that of Rome itself, but the near neighbourhood of the existing city formed the theatre for some most notable scenes in the old-time dramas of Hindu history, celebrated in the cast treasure-house of national epic verse.¹⁰ This deep and glorious past would allow the new city to eclipse the violent rebellion that had briefly overthrown British authority in 1857 and the counter-insurgency in which the area around the city of Shajahanabad was levelled. The new capital city would, wrote Viceroy Hardinge, signal, 'an unflinching determination to maintain British rule in India'.¹¹ The Imperial conviction that India's population was divided into stagnant, and antagonistic, communal factions was mapped into the classification of Delhi's past. The land selected for the creation of New Delhi was lauded as offering materials rooted in both, distinct, Hindu and Muslim pasts. The land was, claimed Governor General Hardinge, 'intimately associated in the minds of the Hindus with the sacred legends which go back even beyond the dawn of history. It is in the plains of Delhi that the Pandava Princes fought out with the Kurawas the epic struggle recorded in the Mahabharata, and celebrated on the banks of the Jumna the famous sacrifice which consecrated their title to Empire. The Purana Kila still marks the site of the city which they founded and called Indraprastha, barely three miles from the south gate of the modern city of Delhi.'¹² However, when Chief Commissioner William Hailey suggested a 'chain' of registered monuments that would run through the imperial capital, from Shajahanabad in the North to the large, landscaped grounds of the Qutb Minar complex in the South, that chain consisted entirely of remains that were identified, in the minds of British officials, with the Islamic history of the city. Sanderson's management of this 'Grand Programme' for the new city's monuments was to

¹⁰ Marquis of Crewe, Sec of State for India to Gov. General of India in Council, 1 November 1911. Transfer of the seat of the Government of India from Calcutta to Delhi and the constitutional change in the Bengals. Home Department (Delhi) Proceedings, December 1911. IOR.

¹¹ Lord Hardinge, Gov. General of India in Council to Marquis of Crewe, Sec of State for India, 25 August 1911. Transfer of the seat of the Government of India from Calcutta to Delhi and the constitutional change in the Bengals. Home Department (Delhi) Proceedings, December 1911. IOR. The appropriation of land under the 1894 Land Acquisition Act has recently been subject to renewed legal dispute. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/india/8681785/New-Delhi-villagers-seek-compensation-100-years-after-being-evicted-by-Raj.html>

¹² Gov. General of India in Council to Marquis of Crewe, Sec of State for India, 25 August 1911. Transfer of the seat of the Government of India from Calcutta to Delhi and the constitutional change in the Bengals. Home Department (Delhi) Proceedings, December 1911. IOR.

conserve that particular heritage around which the imperial present, and future, would be orientated. Sanderson lauded Delhi as an epicentre within a seventy-mile radius of which, 'Indo-Muhammadan can be studied, almost in its entirety'.¹³ Sanderson presented Delhi's monuments in eight dynastic categories, spanning from 1001 until 1857, tracing an arc that married aesthetics to authority and dovetailed dwindling Mughal authority with the establishment of British authority.¹⁴ Sanderson enthusiastically endorsed Hailey's proposal to Director General of Archaeology, John Marshall, who, in turn, recommended the substantial expense of the planned chain of monuments as 'justifiable from every point of view'.¹⁵ The chain of 'interesting and attractive groups of monuments' consisted of: (1) Firoz Shah Kotla (2) Purana Qila (3) Humayun's Tomb (4) The Lodi Tombs at Khairpur (5) Safdar Jung's Tomb (6) The Hauz Khas monuments, (7) The Qutb complex and (8) the fort at Tughlaqabad. These monuments were to be, 'made as attractive as possible, there being little doubt that, the buildings themselves having been first thoroughly repaired, pleasant and harmonious surroundings make them infinitely more interesting and easier of comprehension both to the "professional" and the "man in the street"'.¹⁶ In addition to the conspicuous conservation of these landscaped monuments, Sanderson was ordered to create a survey of unprecedented detail across the land selected for the new imperial capital. The listing of monuments in Delhi begun in 1913 after Marshall criticised the list submitted by the Deputy Commissioner for Delhi, an officer of the Government of the Punjab, as being 'altogether too meagre'.¹⁷ However, much to Marshall's irritation, the cataloguing of Delhi's physical past did not follow the procedures established by the

¹³ Gordon Sanderson, Supt. Muhammadan and British Monuments, Northern Circle, Agra. preface to 'List of Muhammadan and Hindu Monuments in Shahajanabad, Delhi', Archaeological Survey of India, Monuments Delhi Circle, New Delhi. File 118A, 1914. NAI.

¹⁴ The final category, 'late-Mughal', from the end of Aurangzeb's reign in 1707 to the Mutiny of 1857, was marked by 'but few buildings of any architectural excellence'. Gordon Sanderson, Preface in *Delhi Province: List of Muhammadan and Hindu Monuments. vol.1 Shahjahanabad*. Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta. 1916.

¹⁵ Note by DG of Archaeology regarding 'archaeological programme for Delhi Province'. Proceedings of the Department of Education, Archaeology and Epigraphy, March 1914, pp. 53-61. NAI.

¹⁶ Extract of a letter No. 959-107-5, 4 November 1913, from Superintendent of Archaeology, Northern Circle, to Director General of Archaeology. Records of the Chief Commissioner, B proceedings, 1913. File no. 314; Proceedings of the Department of Education, Archaeology and Epigraphy, March 1914, pp. 53-61. NAI.

¹⁷ J. H. Marshall, 2 July 1912. Preservation of the old city walls and other historical monuments and gardens at Delhi. Dept of Education, Archaeology and Epigraphy Branch. Procs., July 1913, Nos. 1-6. NAI.

Archaeological Department in 1909 for the collation and publication of structural remains and inscriptions. The Government insisted that 'the case of Delhi is quite special' and that the exceptional and detailed listing of the province's remains should reflect its status as both an imperial and global endeavour: 'The eyes of the world will soon be tuned on Delhi and we must be eager and in advance of things as we are to maintain the credit of Government.'¹⁸ Sanderson was ordered to report directly to Chief Commissioner Hailey, eliminating Marshall's authority and elevating Sanderson's work to the realm of civic politics.¹⁹

Character, Race and Education in the Department of Archaeology

Racial inequality was integral to the earliest archaeological exposition and the creation of the imperial archaeological department. The subordination of certain scholars and scholarship and the elevation of others defined the practises and institutions that emerged in the colonial period and, this article will argue, incorporated prejudice into its bureaucracy during a period when imperial authority more broadly was being forced to entertain the inclusion of Indian agency and opinion. Gordon Sanderson's authority and position rested entirely on his racial identity. He had no experience of Indian architecture or archaeology. Having trained as an architect in London, he was employed by the Department of State Buildings in Cairo between 1906 and 1909. It was in Egypt that he decided that he had a particular interest in Islamic architecture and on his return to London he applied for a position in India having already, as his references notes, 'had experience of Eastern life'.²⁰ Sanderson's application caught the eye of John Marshall, Director General of the Archaeological Department from 1902 until 1928, and thereafter, Sanderson's promotion within the service was swift. He arrived in Calcutta to take his position as Assistant Superintendent of the

¹⁸ S. H. Butler, 22 May 1913, 'Preservation of the old city walls and other historical monuments and gardens at Delhi'. Dept of Education, Archaeology and Epigraphy Branch. Procs., July 1913, Nos. 1-6. NAI.

¹⁹ L. C. Porter to J. H. Marshall, 19 June 1913, Education (Archaeology and Epigraphy). July 1913. Proceedings no. 5. NAI.

²⁰ James B. Dunn, FRIBA, Architect, 45, Hanover Street, President, Edinburgh Architectural Association, to Under Secretary of State for India, 7 Sept. 1910. Appointment of Mr Gordon Sanderson to be Assistant Superintendent, Archaeological Survey, Eastern Circle. Home Dept. Nov. 1910. proc. no 28-47. NAI.

Eastern Circle on 1 December 1910. Six days later, he arrived in Agra to temporarily replace R. Froude Tucker, the Superintendent of 'British and Mahomedan' monuments in the Northern Circle, who had died very suddenly at sea on 1 November of that year. The following Spring, Sanderson's appointment was made permanent.²¹ Sanderson's career in India was a brief one. At the outbreak of the war in Europe in 1914 he applied to be transferred to war service. He was killed, aged 28, by shrapnel on 13th October 1915 in the Battle of Loos in Northern France.

Sanderson's recruitment into, and accelerated promotion within, the Archaeological Department coincided with the denial of promotion to another archaeologist, Devdatta Ramkrishna Bhandarkar. Bhandarkar was an Assistant Superintendent in the Western Circle of the Archaeological department, based in Pune. The Bombay Government had recommended his promotion to replace Henry Cousens, the retiring Superintendent of the Western Circle.²² The archaeological authorities abjured this recommendation. Cousens, under whom Bhandarkar had worked for six years, was adamant that Bhandarkar could not be promoted to replace him. His objection was supported by John Marshall as Director General. Cousens damned Bhandarkar's case for promotion in a summation that ran from an identification of his skills, a diminishing recognition of his knowledge and, finally, a castigation of his (racial) character. Cousens acknowledged Bhandarkar's skills in epigraphy, his 'thoroughly accurate' (if rather slow) work and his 'unique' knowledge of Hindu mythology and iconography. However, Bhandarkar had no familiarity with 'Muhammadan' architecture and no aptitude for conservation work, 'not being of a practical turn of mind'. Having no understanding of construction, estimates and materials, he would not, wrote Cousens, 'command respect at the hands of the Public Works Department' in the necessary recommendation of 'repairs and restorations'. Neither would he be able to exert control over Indian draughtsmen who needed to be 'constantly supervised', said Cousens, if their work was to be trusted. Cousens recommended

²¹ 'Appointment of Mr. G. Sanderson as Superintendent of Muhammadan and British Monuments, Northern Circle'. Department of Education, May 1911. procs. no. 30. NAI.

²² Bombay Govt. letter 10 Sept. 1909. Appointment of Mr Gordon Sanderson to be Assistant Superintendent, Archaeological Survey, Eastern Circle. Home Dept. Nov. 1910. proc. no 28-47. NAI.

Bhandarkar for a post in the Epigraphical branch and suggested that if he was appointed to extend the department's research in Rajputana and Central India, as the Government of Bombay desired, he would have to be placed beneath a (presumably white) 'guiding hand'.²³ Cousens' description of Bhandarkar's constitution resonate with Imperial ideologies of white and Indian masculinity that held the latter to be inherently deficient.²⁴ 'His constitution is not strong, in fact, I should say effeminate. He often complains of the difficulties and arduousness of his journeys, and of his health being affected, where other officers take it all in the day's work and say nothing...He is very deficient in "grit" and "backbone", and has little command over, or grip upon the men under him, even the peons being impudent to him when so inclined – and in office the men do not show him that deference and respect.'²⁵ In other words, Bhandarkar could not be trusted to rule himself, let alone others. Sanderson, by contrast was described by Marshall, as 'the type of man who would be very useful in this country' despite his lack of any familiarity with Indian materials.²⁶ The case for promotion provoked a stand-off between the civil authorities, who were at least aware of the pressures for reform, and the Archaeological Department, a bastion of Victorian racial and cultural sensibilities. The Government of Bombay protested against the decision to appoint a European architect with no training in Indian archaeology over the head of Bhandarkar, 'a keen and able scholar': 'If, as the Government of India propose, Mr Bhandarkar is to be retained as assistant superintendent while some presumably quite junior office is brought in over his head to fill the post

²³ Henry Cousens, Supt., Arch. Western Circle, Confidential Report upon Mr. D. R. Bhandarkar's qualifications for a responsible post in the Archaeological Dept. 7 April 1910. Appointment of Mr Gordon Sanderson to be Assistant Superintendent, Archaeological Survey, Eastern Circle. Home Dept. Nov. 1910. proc. no 28-47. NAI.

²⁴ Sinha has described the conflation of race and gender hierarchies in colonial discourse during the Ilbert Bill controversy of the 1880s. Sinha, Mrinalini, Sinha, M., 'Re-configuring hierarchies: the Ilbert Bill controversy, 1883-84', in Sinha, M., *Colonial masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the late Nineteenth Century*. Manchester, 1995; Sinha, M., "'Chathams, Pitts and Gladstones in Petticoats": The politics of gender and race in the Ilbert Bill, 1883-1884', in Chaudhuri, Nupur and Stobel, Margaret (eds), *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*. Indiana University Press, 1992.

²⁵ Henry Cousens, Supt., Arch. Western Circle, Confidential Report upon Mr. D. R. Bhandarkar's qualifications for a responsible post in the Archaeological Dept. 7 April 1910. Appointment of Mr Gordon Sanderson to be Assistant Superintendent, Archaeological Survey, Eastern Circle. Home Dept. Nov. 1910. proc. no 28-47. NAI.

²⁶ J. H. Marshall, 10 Jan 1910. Appointment of Mr Gordon Sanderson to be Assistant Superintendent, Archaeological Survey, Eastern Circle. Home Dept. Nov. 1910. proc. no 28-47. NAI.

of superintendent, the effect will be unquestionably to deter any Indian scholar of position from entering the archaeological department in the future.²⁷

Marshall's sponsorship of Sanderson's rapid promotion and his reluctance to support Bhandarkar reflected a more general attitude towards Indian staff within the archaeological department. Colonial Indology accommodated the Indian participant as a largely shadowy informant or translator who facilitated, and who was then submerged by, the more conspicuous accomplishments of Europeans. Those who presumed to go further, to research, interpret and model, were treated with disdain. James Fergusson, the architectural historian still celebrated for his classifications of Indian architectural past, was vituperative, and plainly racist, in his condemnation of Rajendra Lala Mitra's published interpretations of ancient architecture in which his own work was, modestly, critiqued.²⁸ Scholarly and bureaucratic discussion on the role of native participation and publics in the organisation of India's past was an exposition of obstructions: the ill-informed and vulgar publics that abounded, the disinterest of elites, the weight of uncritical traditions of scholarship. The possibility of native involvement, as scholars of the past or as designers of materials in the present, was carefully qualified and calibrated against these impediments.²⁹ Against the barriers presented by the pretensions of native scholarship and the vulgarity of native publics, the 'European', or white, agency presented a patient willingness to survey, supervise and embark on the gradual education of both scholars and publics. Only Europeans could disambiguate valuable physical pasts from the inchoate Indian present and, in doing so, could determine which, or indeed whether, traces of India's past could be maintained in monuments or in living architectures. Remote and immediate physical pasts provided visual indices of India's cultural and political degeneration, both accounting

²⁷ R. E. Enthoven, Sec. to Govt. of Bombay, General Department, to Sec. to Government of India, Home Department, 10 Sept. 1910. Question of whether Mr Bhandarkar or Mr Longhurst should be promoted when Mr Cousens retires. Home Dept. Archaeology and Epigraphy, Feb. 1910 Procs. no. 11. IOR.

²⁸ Guha-Takurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories*. p.108-111.

²⁹ *The Conference of Orientalists including Museums and Archaeology Conference held in Simla, 1911*. Government Central Branch Press, Simla. 1911. p.117-118.

for and necessitating the exclusion, or very grudging inclusion, of Indians in the selection and conservation of that heritage. Indians who espoused some interest in archaeological knowledge presumed to more than educated imitation, they claimed the capacity to transcend and defy the ordered understanding of India's past and present that white agency had been uniquely capable of decoding. The participation of Indian scholars, therefore, put at risk both evidence and argument for European superiority.

Architectural knowledge was pivotal in defining and protecting this hierarchy. Cousens' derogatory observations about Indian draughtsmen point to a two-fold hierarchy in archaeological staff between (preferably) European officers, whose taste and diligence made them natural supervisors, and Indian staff who possessed specific and useful skills but who were deemed incapable of acting without supervision. When Froude Tucker died in 1909, his assistant, Maulvi Shuaib officiated in his role. However, John Philippe Vogel, as officiating Director General, refused to make the replacement permanent stating that the Maulvi, did 'not possess the architectural knowledge to advise the Public Works Department'.³⁰ Marshall insisted that his replacement be found in Europe: 'there is no possibility of recruiting for it in India, as no architects are to be found here'.³¹ Marshall's definition of a credible candidate's training prioritised sensibility over knowledge. The ideal candidate would possess the necessary powers of arbitration and appraisal not just because he had been educated in Europe but because he had been *made outside* of India. The question of whether and those sensibilities could be instilled among Britain's non-white imperial subjects amounted to more than the provision of training in the technical skills of draughtsmanship or translation. The question hung between racial capacity – intrinsic, unteachable and innate - and education; the possibility that what Europeans knew (and indeed were) might be acquired by, natives. Education might, it was hoped, at least diminish embedded weaknesses of racial character but there is little in the debates of the time

³⁰ J. P. H. Vogel, Officiating DG, to Sec to Gov. of India, 9 Nov. 1909, 'Appointment of Mr. G. Sanderson as Superintendent of Muhammadan and British Monuments, Northern Circle'. Department of Education, May 1911. procs. no. 30. NAI.

³¹ J. H. Marshall, 10 Jan 1910. Appointment of Mr Gordon Sanderson to be Assistant Superintendent, Archaeological Survey, Eastern Circle. Home Dept. Nov. 1910. proc. no 28-47. NAI.

to suggest that education would ever allow those weaknesses to be eclipsed. In 1903 a set of scholarships were created and by 1915, eight scholarship holders were in post, five in British India and three in Princely States. The first tranche of scholarships emphasised language, the second set were in architecture, archaeology and archaeological chemistry. By the provision of these 'liberal facilities for Indians', Marshall expressed a hope that, 'veneration for the remains of antiquity...will become as marked a trait of the cultured classes in India as it is in western countries'.³² In 1911, the Congress of Orientalists met in Simla and set out a broad agenda for the greater involvement of Indians in their country's past. Sanderson attended sessions on archaeology and museums though made only modest interventions; mainly discrete points about the remit of his work. The conference deliberated, at length, on the two impediments that existed to the establishment of museums and archaeological practise on a modern footing: firstly, the 'old style of learning' propagated by *pandits and maulvis* and, secondly, the popularity of museums as places of vulgar and popular spectacle.³³ Perhaps relying as much on the opening line of Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, published a decade before, as first-hand observation, Vogel complained that, 'the popularity of our museums with the lower classes has resulted in making them unpopular with the higher... the Indian aristocracy look on a museum as something pleasing to the vulgar... A museum in India is called an *Ajaib ghar* or Wonder-house or in colloquial English "a curiosity shop or peep show" and not as an institution of education and research.' In order to make the museum a more attractive destination to the learned and to stem the 'constant flow of a noisy crowd', Vogel suggested introducing an entrance fee on certain days as was already in place at the Indian Museum in Calcutta.³⁴ Vogel's conviction of the disinterest of the Indian elite - 'Does one ever hear of an Indian chief or leading man giving a donation to a museum or giving some valuable object on loan?' – stood in stark contrast to the voluminous and concrete evidence for the antiquarian and archaeological societies that existed throughout India.

³² John Marshall, 'Note on Archaeology', Department of Education (Archaeology), 22 October 1915. Nos. 353-370. NAI.

³³ *The Conference of Orientalists including Museums and Archaeology Conference held in Simla, 1911*. Government Central Branch Press, Simla. 1911. p.1 & p.118.

³⁴ *Conference of Orientalists*. p.117-118. Kipling, Rudyard. *Kim*. First published in 1901.

The Delhi Archaeological Society had been established in 1847. Local museums and societies received patronage of museums and societies in Delhi, Calcutta and Dhaka. In stark contradiction to Vogel's criticism of the disinterested Indian elite, the Maharaja of Kashmir had lobbied at the Congress to prevent geological samples collected in Kashmir from being sent to Calcutta.³⁵

A broad and vague consensus was reached at the Congress that the 'old type' of learned scholar, the Pandit or Maulvi, could continue to exist but that, 'after they have fully acquired the old type [of] learning their outlook might be broadened by wider knowledge, by the study of modern languages and by critical research'.³⁶ In September 1913, in line with the Congress' recommendations, the government of India created three architectural scholarships, tenable in Bombay. Students would be trained by the Consulting Architect to Government and attend classes at the Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy School of Art in Bombay.³⁷ The provision of these scholarships promised the cultivation of individuals who would be cultural conduits, reforming and improving public sensibilities. Whereas the tastes and assurance of European officers were discrete and self-evident manifestations of (white) professional competence, Indian scholarship holders were the instruments by which the faltering tastes of their race might, in time, be improved.

This compromise is evident in the selection of an assistant for Sanderson's work in Delhi. The preparation of the comprehensive listing of the city's historical remains ordered by Chief Commissioner required skills that Sanderson did not possess. Two candidates who knew Persian and Arabic were proposed: Maulvi Zafar Hasan and Professor Ghulam Yazdani. Hasan had been one of five native scholars given archaeological scholarships in 1909 and had trained in Arabic and Persian under Dr J. Horowitz, Government Epigraphist for Moslem Inscriptions, in Aligarh. Yazdani had also

³⁵ *Conference of Orientalists*. p121.

³⁶ *Conference of Orientalists*. p.3.

³⁷ Resolution, 19/09/1913. Proceedings of the Department of Education, September 1913, Archaeology and Epigraphy, pp.277. IOR.

held a government scholarship in John Marshall's office. John Marshall preferred and recommended Hasan's appointment, describing Yazdani, as a 'competent' scholar but claimed that he had shown 'unreasonable bitterness' towards Dr J. Horowitz and had 'gone out of his way to belittle his work'. Zafar Hasan, Marshall claimed, was more 'loyal', a virtue that made sense only in a colonial context where disloyalty was presumed to be ubiquitous predisposition.³⁸ Hasan was highly recommended by Horowitz, who had lobbied for Hasan's appointment under him to be made permanent. Horowitz emphasised Hasan's familiarity with European techniques of ordering and presenting materials and, in particular, his acquisition of French that allowed him access the scholarship of the French orientalisists.³⁹ In June 1913, Maulvi Zafar Hasan was appointed as a temporary assistant to Sanderson on a salary of Rs300 per month. Marshall, in keeping with his limited faith in the abilities of Indians as archaeological officers, required that Hasan's responsibilities be strictly limited to listing monuments and that he be moved around India to prepare lists on the Delhi model of when that work was completed.⁴⁰

Sanderson's architectural training qualified him to supervise the archaeological conservation of structures, a remit that defined- the categories of 'Muhammadan and British' archaeology. The creation of two separate bureaucratic remits for Indian archaeology, divided between 'Buddhist and Hindu' and 'Muhammadan and British' has been created in 1910.⁴¹ The separation divided the supposedly discrete corpuses of archaeological and architectural remains by chronology and assumed they would be researched and curated by distinct expertise. The earlier period, 'Buddhist and Hindu', required archaeological and epigraphical scholarship as distinguished from the

³⁸ J. H. Marshall, 16 May 1913, Preservation of the old city walls and other historical monuments and gardens at Delhi. Dept of Education, Archaeology and Epigraphy Branch. Procs., July 1913, Nos. 1-6. NAI.

³⁹ J. Horowitz, 23 Dec. 1913. Archaeology and Epigraphy, Feb. 1913, procs. 21-22. NAI.

⁴⁰ Appointment of Moulvi Zafar Hasan, as an Assistant Superintendent, Archaeological Survey of India. Department of Education, Archaeology and Epigraphy, August 1914, procs. no. 3 – 5. IOR.

⁴¹ The division followed that made in 1903 in Punjab and the United Provinces, between an Archaeological Surveyor of 'the architectural side of Muhammadan Archaeology' and a Superintendent to oversee 'Archaeological investigation in all other branches.' Proposal to alter the designation of the Archaeological Surveyor and the Superintendent...Home Procs. Arch& Epigraphy, Jan 1910, proc. no. 32. NAI.

architectural expertise needed to understand the later, 'Muhammadan and British' periods. As originally conceived, the new designation was surveyor of 'British and Muhammadan' archaeology. The Surveyor of the Northern Circle criticised the inclusion of British monuments as 'something of an anachronism' and, although the 'British' remained, it was relegated to follow 'Muhammadan'.⁴² British monuments consisted of commemorative monuments, either sepulchral or victorious.⁴³ The distinction these designations created between 'architect and antiquary' was contested in letters submitted to the Royal Commission on Public Services in India in 1914 by Sanderson and Bhandarkar who allied themselves in complaining about their comparatively meagre salaries compared to those of officers of the Public Works Department.⁴⁴ Sanderson complained that he drew a far smaller salary as an architect in the employ of the Archaeological Department than he could as a consulting architect to the Public Works Department. Assistant Superintendents of Archaeology received Rs300-500 per month or Rs400-600 per month if they were recruited in Europe (the usual code for their being white). Superintendents were paid between Rs500 and Rs800 a month.⁴⁵ In contrast, consulting architects were paid Rs1,000-1,200 a month by the Public Works Department, far more than architects employed by the Archaeological Department.⁴⁶ Bhandarkar's letter also broached the underpayment of employees of the Archaeological Department: 'architects or the antiquarian experts in the Archaeological Department have a claim to a scale of salaries not less than the architectural advisors in the Public Works Department or the members of the Indian

⁴² Arch. Surveyor, Northern Circle to Sec to Government of UP, PWD. 25 Feb. 1910, Decision that Archaeological Surveyor and Superintendent, Archaeological Survey, Northern Circle, shall in future be designated... Home Department, Archaeology and Epigraphy, April 1910. proc. no. 45. NAI.

⁴³ At independence, a stricter chronology was imposed to removed anything of less than 100 years in age from the rosters of defined antiquity.

⁴⁴ The Commission was established in 1912 and submitted its report in 1915. Proceedings of the Department of Education, Archaeology and Epigraphy, May 1914. Proceedings no. 21, pp.185-195. IOR.

⁴⁵ It was the policy of the Archaeology Department to give European officers a significantly higher salary than Indian officers in the same post though this was not mentioned in Sanderson's representation. Sanderson to Sec. to Government, UP PWD, Buildings and Roads, Allahabad, 13 February 1914. Proceedings of the Department of Education, Archaeology and Epigraphy, May 1914. Proceedings no. 21, pp.185-195. IOR.

⁴⁶ At the beginning of his first, two-year contract, Sanderson was given Rs400 per month rising in annual Rs25 increments to Rs600 per month. Employment contract of Gordon Sanderson. Appointment of Mr Gordon Sanderson to be Assistant Superintendent, Archaeological Survey, Eastern Circle. Home Dept. Nov. 1910. proc. no 28-47. NAI.

Education Service.’ His letter raised, quite graciously, the distinction between architects, like Sanderson, who were ‘recruited in England ... for their proficiency in architecture but for their general artistic ability and sympathy with archaeological research’ and antiquarians, like himself, who were, ‘recruited from the Universities both in Europe and India and are men of wide linguistic attainments with expert knowledge of oriental history and architecture, of the formative arts, or mythology, numismatics and iconography.’⁴⁷ Bhandarkar’s letter demonstrates that Indian employees had, of necessity, to affirm certain discriminatory aspects of colonial service even as they challenged others.

Within one year, the list of monuments in Shahjahanabad, the seventeenth century walled-city to the north of the new imperial capital, was complete and Hasan’s appointment as an Assistant Superintendent of Archaeology was made permanent. Another scholar, Y. R. Gupta of the Lahore Archaeological Office, joined Hasan. Hasan and Gupta undertook the extraordinary work of locating and describing thousands of structures, collecting local information about the ownership and translating inscriptions. The four-volume series, published between 1916 and 1922, remains a significant and valuable documentation of the city’s built heritage as it existed at the beginning of the twentieth century. Sanderson acknowledged that he had only done only the relatively ‘easy’ work of compilation and adding bibliographic and architectural information.⁴⁸ The work of the survey was comprehensive but Sanderson introduced certain qualifications to Gupta’s work. The documentation of Hindu temples was considered to be of lesser significance, temples being, ‘fewer in number and of less importance than those met with in other large cities, for Delhi has for many years ceased to be a “Hindu” city’. However, their documentation could ‘throw light on the study of

⁴⁷ D. R. Bhandarkar, Superintendent, Arch. Survey, Western Circle, to Sec. to Government, General Dept., Bombay. 14 Feb. 1914. Proceedings of the Department of Education, Archaeology and Epigraphy, May 1914. Proceedings no. 21, pp.185-195. IOR.

⁴⁸ Gordon Sanderson, Preface in *Delhi Province: List of Muhammadan and Hindu Monuments. vol.1 Shahjahanabad*. Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta. 1916.

forms of Hindu worship in the new capital'.⁴⁹ Gupta preferred a different rationale for the careful examination of the temples and their *murtis*, stating that though the temples in Shahjahanabad were 'modern and relatively insignificant' they offered useful information on 'the forms of Hindu worship prevailing in the ancient capital of India'.⁵⁰ To Sanderson, therefore, the documentation of temples was limited to their contemporary, ethnological value. Whereas Islamicate monuments offered the means to trace backwards into seven hundred years of history, Hindu remains were isolated and set adrift in the present. For Gupta, in contrast, these Hindu buildings offered glimpses of an ancient, historic capital. It was Sanderson, with no training in or familiarity with Indian architecture, who determined the monumental order through which the materials of India's past would be presented to the public. As in the case of Bhandarkar's stymied promotion, race was key in creating careers and choreographing India's monumental past.

Sanderson proposed the repair, conservation and maintenance of hundreds of monuments in Delhi, both those that formed the proposed chain and those 'somewhat off the beaten track'.⁵¹ Delhi, he said, 'is perhaps one of the most historically interesting places in the East and all attention is now riveted upon it.' The monuments at Delhi promised not only to assist in making 'the new Capital one of the most unique and attractive cities of the world' but also presented 'moments of a bygone art and civilization...as being the only illustrative records of that art and civilization'.⁵² Sanderson's drawings provide a visual summary of the colonial state's determination to make selected monuments prominent landmarks within the new capital of British India. In his drawings, the monuments are uninhabited, with scale provided by use of a shadowy, lone figure (Plate 2). These

⁴⁹ Gordon Sanderson, *Delhi Province*.

⁵⁰ Pandit Y. R. Gupta, Assist. Surveyor, Hindu and Buddhist Monuments, Lahore to Gordon Sanderson, Supt. Mahomedan and British Monuments, Northern Circle. Archaeological Survey of India, Monuments Delhi Circle, New Delhi. File 118A, 1914. NAI.

⁵¹ Extract of a letter No. 959-107-5, 4 November 1913, from Superintendent of Archaeology, Northern Circle, to Director General of Archaeology. Records of the Chief Commissioner, B proceedings, 1913. File no. 314.

⁵² Extract of a letter No. 959-107-5, 4 November 1913, from Superintendent of Archaeology, Northern Circle, to Director General of Archaeology. Records of the Chief Commissioner, B proceedings, 1913. File no. 314.

monuments would be curated according British archaeological sensibilities and aesthetics of repair and reconstruction. They would be conserved and landscaped as places of public resort under the sole custody of the archaeological authorities, physically static and socially sterile. Sanderson, like most archaeologists, made the clearance of inhabitants away from monuments a priority in their conservation. In 1912, Sanderson expressed his 'righteous indignation' at finding, 'bathing going on in the tanks, and ablutions and coffee-grinding in the arcades' of Jahangir's tomb at Shahdara near Lahore.⁵³ In Delhi, he cleared away a 'large untidy village' from the Purana Qila and evicted the people living in within the vaults of the Kila Kohna Masjid in 1913.⁵⁴

Sanderson took a dim view of reconstructions, an aversion that combined a European preference for the romance of ruins and a scientific dislike of conjecture. His panoramas of the Purana Qila and Shahjahanabad have the commanding scope of post-1857 photographs taken by the Italian photographer Felix Beato after 1858.⁵⁵ Whereas Beato's photographs demonstrated the scale and violence of the rebellion and the subsequent colonial retribution, Sanderson's stylised panoramas elide the British violence of the previous century. In his drawing of Shajahanabad, 'The Citadel of the "Great Moghul", Delhi', buildings which were torn down in the aftermath of the rebellion were remade to present a complete, if monumental, landscape (Plate 3).⁵⁶ While restoring the city from the violence of counter-insurgency, Sanderson edited out the urbanism that had accumulated around the fort by the second decade of the twentieth century. The choice of spelling, 'Moghul', is deliberately antique, while his choice of font is reminiscent of the modernist *art nouveau* style. These landscapes animated by Sanderson's imagination and by a specific sense of form, structure and style rooted in early-twentieth century art and architectural history.

⁵³ Extract from *The Pioneer*, September 1912. Sanderson's papers.

⁵⁴ Undated cutting from *The Pioneer*. 1914.

⁵⁵ Jim Masselos and Narayani Gupta (eds) *Beato's Delhi : 1857 and beyond*. New Delhi: Ravi Dayal Publisher, 2011.

⁵⁶ Bhargava, Meena. 'Delhi Under the Mughals' in Liddle, Swapna and Lopez, Annabel. *Delhi: A Living Heritage*, IGNOU/INTACH Delhi. 2010, pp. 42-43.

Deliberating for New Delhi: Modern Buildings, Master Builders and Architects

In 1914 *The Builder* published an anonymised set of sketches by Sanderson entitled, 'What not to do at Delhi!'⁵⁷ (Plate 4) The sketches lampooned the work of the imperial Public Works and Archaeological Departments, suggesting that the departments lacked both the creativity to either conserve India's architectural monuments or to create new architectures for the subcontinent. 'Imitation "Qutb Minars" as Power House Chimneys, etc' depicts the fourteenth-century minar as an industrial chimney, with plumes of black smoke bellowing out of the minaret (Plate 5). A rough sketch of a temple is sub-titled, 'Not temples as you might think but bungalow with lodge & drive designed by President of the "anti-Public Works Dept Society (India Branch)"' (Plate 6). Sanderson's sketches published in *The Builder* summarised his low opinion of the Public Works Department, the department he was forced to rely upon to carry out his programme of restoration work on the city's monuments and whose architects commanded salaries so much larger than his own. The brief editorial text published alongside the sketches describes them as 'signs of the lighter side of life', 'danger signals which keep us off the dangerous rocks of design'. Although treated lightly by *The Builder*, the objects of Sanderson's satirical observations responded to a critical debate about India's past and imperial future.

Sanderson's sketches publically, if anonymously, satirised the colonial bureaucracy that had appointed and promoted him. Sanderson regarded government building in India as an incompetent hot-potch of design that reflected the qualities and characters of neither British nor Indian architectures. In 1913, a satirical architectural proposal appeared in *The Pioneer*, anonymous but likely written by Sanderson, which lampooned the incompetence of the Public Works Department and the absence of its accountability. 'The Neglected Indian Designer' describes a house with 'an extensive hall which may be of some 100ft. by 80ft. or of any area required. It will have neither pillars of iron, wood, brick or stone nor cross beams of any material. The roof may be of such beauty and magnificence as to be approached by the European and Native Engineers...There is a rose-bed at

Commented [SL3]: Perhaps a good place to use some arch hist to reflect on what he might be alluding to? The Victorian trend of dressing up factory chimneys as Venetian follies? Mark Crinson on Neo-Orientalism? Rabinow on techno-cosmopolitanism?

⁵⁷ 'What not to do at Delhi', *The Builder* 6 February 1914, p. 153.

distance of one mile or so from a building or palace, you can have the sweet scent in whatever room always or at any time you desire...A large building or guest-house is going to be build or has been built, and it has some bathing rooms, but there is no supply of water in them: you can have the management of water tepid or cold at whatever time you require.'⁵⁸ The Public Works Department, Sanderson suggested, had no understanding of architectural form, fabric and location and made persistently aesthetically poor and impractical design choices. A sketch, 'Houses of the Plains (II)' that includes optional cuppolas for Rs50, illustrates Sanderson's poor opinion of the Public Works Department's ethos, talent and taste for architecture (Plate 7). Neither were they the worthy protectors of India's monumental remains. Sanderson asked the Public Works Department to avoid damaging the walls around the old city, walls that he compared to those of York , 'whose walls are perfectly preserved and one of the great features of attraction in that city'. The Delhi walls, by contrast, had been both neglected and damaged in the course of public construction.⁵⁹

The two architectural realms of construction and conservation met decisively in deliberations over the most appropriate style for the new capital. The form of the city of New Delhi was, 'to express, within the limits of the medium and the powers of its users, the ideal and fact of British rule in India, of which New Delhi would ever be the monument.'⁶⁰ The particular form this expression would take prompted a vociferous debate that broached credibility and future and British imperial authority in India. These larger issues pivoted upon the extent to which the new capital would rely upon, or involve, Indian architects and Indian design.⁶¹ E. B. Havell (1861 – 1934), an art historian and colonial administrator, who had served as the Principal of the Government School of Art in Calcutta and was

Commented [SL4]: Irving touches on this in Indian Summer too? And Metcalf's Delhi work maybe?

⁵⁸ 'The Neglected Indian Designer', *The Pioneer*, 1913. p.7-8.

⁵⁹ Supt., Muhammadan and British Monuments, Northern Circle, to Sec. for Govt. of the Punjab, PWD, 8/1/1912. Proceedings of the Department of Education, July 1913, Archaeology and Epigraphy, pp.223-224. NAI.

⁶⁰ quoted in, Byron, Robert, 'New Delhi', *The Architectural Review*, vol. 69, no. 410, Jan 1931.

⁶¹ See: Thomas R. Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj*. Oxford University Press, 2002; Michael Mann and Samiksha Sehrawat, 'A City With a View: The Afforestation of the Delhi Ridge, 1883–1913', *Modern Asian Studies*, Volume 43, Issue 2, March 2009, pp. 543-570;

a key European proponent of Indian arts and crafts, lobbied for the adoption of an Indian style for the new city. The new capital would be located, argued Havell, 'at the heart of Hindustan, where the artistic traditions of Indian building are still, for all practical architectural purposes, as much alive as they were when Akbar, by calling into the service of the State the skill of Hindu temple builders, gave Saracenic architecture in India a wonderful new impulse.'⁶² In a letter to *The Times*, Havell reminded government that more than aesthetics were at stake; a growing body of nationalist opinion included those whose loyalty was tested by the Government of India's apparent dismissal of Indian culture and talent. He criticised, 'the unstatesmanlike policy of the Public Works Administration in blocking up of many avenues of artistic employment for Indians, both literate and illiterate. It is not a good policy to make all educated Indians lawyers and politicians.'⁶³ In 1911, the India Society, based in London, had successfully lobbied the Secretary of State for India to launch an enquiry into the living, modern traditions of Indian architecture. T. W. Rolleston, as Secretary of the Society, said that to European artists and architects (as opposed to bureaucrats and politicians) it was a 'fact that 'Indian art has an unbroken tradition of design and craftsmanship handed down from remote antiquity'. This tradition was embodied by 'skilled master builders', the direct descendants of those who had built India's acknowledged monuments.⁶⁴ This survey of architecture was delegated to Superintendents of Archaeology, from all over India, who were instructed to report on examples of modern architecture in their province. The majority of archaeologists were dismissive of the exercise. Superintendents in Bombay, Bengal, Burma and the North Western Frontier Province claimed that nothing of interest existed in their circles. Punjab sent one photograph of the carved wooden frontage, created around 1908, of a store-house of the Burha Mahedeo temple in Nithar in

⁶² E. B. Havell, letter in *The Times*, 22/12/1911.

⁶³ E. B. Havell, letter in *The Times*, 22/12/1911.

⁶⁴ T. W. Rolleston, Hon Sec., India Society. to Undersecretary of State for India, 20 Nov. 1910. Suggestion of the India Society that Surveyors of the Archaeological Department may be instructed to photograph when on tour any interesting types of modern buildings. Education Department., March 1911. proc. no. 22. IOR.

the Kangra District.⁶⁵ Madras was the only province from which a more substantial, and entirely overlooked, report was submitted.⁶⁶ The Government of India dealt with the issue as an irritant provoked by an influential but inexpert metropolitan lobby: 'the question raised in Mr. Havell's letter to *the Times* is one regarding which we are likely to hear more, possibly from not very well instructed opinion, but certainly from opinion which will make itself heard.'⁶⁷

As part of this corralling of information, if only to repudiate the Society's position, Sanderson was ordered to submit a report on 'the capabilities of modern Indian architects and master-craftsmen'.⁶⁸

Sanderson had already collected 150 photographs of modern Indian buildings in Agra, where his office was based, and from Delhi, Allahabad, Lucknow, Ajmer, Bhopal, Bikanir, Gwalior, Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur. The publication of Sanderson's work on modern Indian architecture and his photographs, together with a (crucial) note by James Begg, Consulting Architect to the Government of India from 1909 to 1921, was a government-orchestrated response to 'the question of employing Indian talent in connection with the building of the new Imperial city, Delhi.'⁶⁹

Types of Modern Indian Buildings at Delhi Agra, Allahabad, Lucknow, Ajmer, Bhopal, Bikanir, Gwalior, Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur, was published in 1913. When the question of the architecture for the new capital at Delhi was discussed in the Houses of Parliament, *Types of Modern Indian Buildings* was used to endorse Indian work under Imperial guidance: 'Indian builders working independently of the Public Works Department generally showed much greater power for original work and a higher standard of technical skill' than the Public Works Department itself.⁷⁰ Secretary of

⁶⁵ J. T. Farrant, Sec to Govt. of Punjab, to Jt. Sec to Govt. of India, Education Dept., 31 Jan 1912, Illustrations and statistics of modern Indian architecture collected by Archaeological Surveyors. Dept. of Education. Archaeology and Epigraphy, Procs. May 1913, Nos. 15-33. NAI.

⁶⁶ Illustrations and statistics of modern Indian architecture collected by Archaeological Surveyors. Dept. of Education. Archaeology and Epigraphy, Procs. May 1913, Nos. 15-33. NAI.

⁶⁷ H. Wheeler, 24 April 1912, Illustrations and statistics of modern Indian architecture collected by Archaeological Surveyors. Dept. of Education. Archaeology and Epigraphy, Procs. May 1913, Nos. 15-33. NAI.

⁶⁸ Jt. Sec, Dept. of Education to Sec. to Govt. of United Provinces, PWD, Buildings and Roads Branch, 13/6/1913. Proceedings of the Department of Education, May 1913, Archaeology and Epigraphy, pp.143-173. BL.

⁶⁹ 'Re. collection of information on Modern Indian Architecture', Proceedings of the Department of Education, May 1913, Archaeology and Epigraphy, pp.143-173. BL.

⁷⁰ Joseph King, Question to Secretary of State for India, reported in *The Builder*, 22 May 1914, p. 615.

State Montagu was asked whether the Government of India would instruct the architects chosen to design the new city, 'to make the fullest possible use of the constructive ability of Indian builders in the light of the new information with regard to their capacity given in the Report on Modern Indian Architecture, recently published by the Government of India?'.⁷¹

Sanderson's text was an amalgam of ideas. It combined theories of architecture that he brought with him to India, his dislike of the Public Works Department and his acculturation into imperial mores of distaste toward Indian design. His descriptions of Indian architecture contained the usual axioms of European critique. Informed by James Fergusson's universalising typologies of subcontinental architectures from the 1870s, they lamented, and often connected, the tendencies for degeneration and over-ornamentation. He noted the 'predilection for minute and profuse ornament, an evident indifference to cost and labour' as representing, 'those peculiarities in Indian architecture which are so hard to explain.'⁷²

Sanderson gave lectures about his research in 1913 that expressed his scepticism of the credibility of a government architecture. The British government could not, he argued, be 'regarded as an universal provider who can sell a new Indian style of architecture at so much per pound.'⁷³ What Sanderson sought in *Modern Indian Architecture* was an Indian equivalent to what he described as 'true architecture'. Sanderson believed an intimate connection existed between landscape, culture and architecture. A short study of the architecture of Settle in west Yorkshire published in 1911 set out his belief that architecture should reflect – in form and material – the spirit of a particular place: 'The dalesman had no architectural taste or ideas... The architect can find as much to study in these simple moorland cottages as he can in the greatest Gothic cathedrals and they have a great lesson for all. They are the embodiment of true architecture.'⁷⁴ Architects who wanted to build new

⁷¹ Joseph King, member for Northern Somerset, to Secretary of State Montagu, 15 July 1913. Hansard C Debates 15 July 1913 vol 55 cc1039-41.

⁷² Sanderson, *Types of Modern Indian Buildings*. p.*

⁷³ Quoted in *The Pioneer*, 5 April 1913.

⁷⁴ Sanderson, Gordon. *Architectural Features of the Settle District with Notes and Illustrations*. Peter Lund, Humphries and Co., Ltd. London. 1911. p.17, p.56.

structures could learn most from buildings traditions embedded in the mores of local culture and built from locally hewn materials. These traditions were strongest, he argued, in the princely states; in building practises that were located beyond the malignant influence of the Public Works Department. Sanderson drew a sharp distinction between the living traditions in small towns, and in particular princely states, and the transformation effected by colonial modernity elsewhere: 'In Rajputana, Indian life is very much the same as it was three or four centuries ago, and architecture is still a living art. In spite of the railways, telegraphs, and the visits their rulers and nobles pay so often to Western lands, it is almost purely *native*, and the building traditions are still unbroken. The buildings of Bikanir, for example, as surely represent the life and character of their occupants as do the low, small windowed and sturdy looking cottages, sheltering from the wind in some depression on a Yorkshire moor.'⁷⁵ In villages and small towns, he argued, there were living traditions of architectures that owed their meaning and value to their relationship to the spirit of place. Sanderson's lectures indicated a clear, if qualified, support for Indian builders (though not architecture). He believed in a living tradition of Indian builders though distinguished them from architecture: 'Excellent master-craftsmen there are in plenty', he argued in Lahore. The creation of New Delhi would provide the necessary stimulus to identify and cultivate the work of 'master craftsmen' who would work under the guidance of architect: 'he must not be content to make replicas of the monuments of the past. He must by a conscientious and careful study of them endeavour to analyse the methods of the old builders and to understand the arrangement and reason of their work. This study must be backed up by a knowledge of sound planning and practical modern methods of construction.' Sanderson recommended a building style which relied upon the 'excellent master craftsmen' of India and warned against, 'dwelling too constantly on features of historical styles or adapting misunderstood European forms of design.' Sanderson argued for the

⁷⁵ Sanderson, *Types of Modern Indian Buildings*. p. 20.

recognition of a modest seam of tradition in which past and present met.⁷⁶ For him, this fragile continuity was compatible, which is to say, governable, by modern architectural practise.

Sanderson's illustrated report on Indian architecture was published posthumously amid heated debates about the most appropriate style for the new Imperial capital in Delhi. Some argued that the incorporation of Indian form and design was essential to signal a changing and reforming spirit of imperial governance. Others held that only a design based on the western architectural canon would embody the grandeur and anticipated longevity of the British imperialism in India (a rule that would end a mere sixteen years after the capital was completed in 1931). The report was published as a rapid and deliberate rebuttal to pressure for the adoption of an Indian style for New Delhi.⁷⁷ James Begg, Consulting Architect to the Public Works department provided an introduction that repudiated the argument Sanderson made in the subsequent pages of the report. Begg argued that what Sanderson saw in the Princely States was a mirage; a projection of misguided optimism that could, if indulged, imperil British authority. Key to this rebuttal was the distinction between the 'abundance' of master craftsmen and the non-existence of 'master-builders'.⁷⁸ For Begg, the inadequacy of Indian architecture reflected nothing more or less than the circumstances that necessitated British governance: 'The architecture of a country is an expression, in one of several mediums, of the life of that country...If we see the architecture of the day as inchoate we must admit that Indian life is that too. It is undergoing a process of transition from what it was into something else – better, we hope, but anyhow different...the life of the country is no longer distinctly native.'⁷⁹ Begg's note deftly gives

⁷⁶ Sanderson quoted in *The Pioneer*, 5 April 1913.

⁷⁷ 'The sooner, now, the book is brought out the better, while interest in the matter is rife', J. Begg, 25 Oct. 1912, Illustrations and statistics of modern Indian architecture collected by Archaeological Surveyors. Dept. of Education. Archaeology and Epigraphy, Procs. May 1913, Nos. 15-33. NAI.

⁷⁸ J. Ph. Vogel, for Dir. Gen of Arch., 24 Feb 1912, Illustrations and statistics of modern Indian architecture collected by Archaeological Surveyors. Dept. of Education. Archaeology and Epigraphy, Procs. May 1913, Nos. 15-33. NAI.

⁷⁹ James Begg, Consulting Architect, 19 March 1912. Illustrations and statistics of modern Indian architecture collected by Archaeological Surveyors. Dept. of Education. Archaeology and Epigraphy, Procs. May 1913, Nos. 15-33. NAI.

qualified endorsement to, before quashing, Sanderson's conclusions. Sanderson's photographs may illustrate the existence of a 'living tradition' but though living, any 'art' or 'style' expressed by that tradition in the buildings is 'perfunctory', 'mechanical' and 'dormant'. 'Is it worth re-awakening? this meagre and limited tradition?', Begg asks, 'Whatever might be there of merit may take one hundred years 'to find itself'.⁸⁰ In his correspondence with government about Sanderson's report, Begg was circumspect to the point of ridicule: 'I have looked in vain for the Indian architect for the past eleven years. I am therefore not surprised that Mr. Sanderson, who cannot have been in the county much more than as many months should have failed to find him.'⁸¹ It was inconceivable to him that architect and craftsman could collaborate as Sanderson suggested: 'Collaboration implies some degree of equality. Will not the master-builder's illiteracy, his ignorance of modern constructional methods, of modern official and social life (to say nothing of his 40 rupees a month) fatally conflict with all sense of equality.' Such a collaboration could only, argued Begg, 'be antagonistic' and their 'work a bastard product'.⁸²

Begg's and Sanderson's disagreements returns us to the distinctions of race and rule. Begg's refutation of Sanderson's thesis asserted distinctly imperial principals. Sanderson saw the 'arrangement and reason' in the work of Indian builders as the product of their connection to locality. For Begg, the fundamental and necessary social and cultural inequality between white architect and Indian builder made it inconceivable that Indian craftsmen could have any part in the creation of the buildings and environs of Delhi. Begg consigned Indian form to the past, and to the provenance of archaeology not architecture. The tracing out of the physical past amidst India's degraded present could have no connection to the practise of architecture as a living art: 'since I know there will be a clamour in India...for the building of the new Delhi in correct archaeological

⁸⁰ 'Note on the Development of Indian Architecture', Illustrations and statistics of modern Indian architecture collected by Archaeological Surveyors. Dept. of Education. Archaeology and Epigraphy, Procs. May 1913, Nos. 15-33. NAI.

⁸¹ James Begg, Consulting Architect, 19 March 1912. Illustrations and statistics of modern Indian architecture collected by Archaeological Surveyors. Dept. of Education. Archaeology and Epigraphy, Procs. May 1913, Nos. 15-33. NAI.

⁸² J. Begg, Dept. of Education. Archaeology and Epigraphy, Procs. May 1913, Nos. 15-33. NAI.

imitation of the old, I take this early opportunity of depreciating any such handicapping of the architect.⁸³ Swinton Jacob's Indo-Saracenic designs, which drew on a range of Indian structural elements, were 'admirable – but archaeologically not architecturally'.⁸⁴ What Sanderson had discovered in Rajputana might be 'interesting archaeologically' but it could not be regarded as 'artistic'.⁸⁵ Begg defended the much-maligned Public Works Department, claiming that they had begun to appoint trained (European) architects and that the department at least represented a living, if imperfect, provision of the most suitable habitats for the pursuit of India's modernity.

Commented [SL5]: Looking forward to Lutyens' views, again, might be instructive. Onion topped Taj Mahal etc

Sanderson's interest in modern Indian architecture ultimately had no influence on the architectural style of the new city.⁸⁶ His report, which might have been used very differently, was engulfed by the broader mores of imperial governance and was re-purposed as a rejection of Indian design or Indian builders in the creation of the new capital. The debate confirmed that any quality or originality evident in Indian architecture was to be consigned to the sealed vault of archaeology.

Sanderson's early death in 1915 arguably eased the circumstances of Begg's refutation. However, the fate of his ideas were sealed by the intellectual hierarchy between the realms of archaeology and architecture, the temporal hierarchy between the native past and imperial present and, ultimately, the racial hierarchy between Indian and European.

Conclusion

⁸³ James Begg, Consulting Architect, 19 March 1912. Illustrations and statistics of modern Indian architecture collected by Archaeological Surveyors. Dept. of Education. Archaeology and Epigraphy, Procs. May 1913, Nos. 15-33. NAI.

⁸⁴ James Begg, Consulting Architect, 19 March 1912. Illustrations and statistics of modern Indian architecture collected by Archaeological Surveyors. Dept. of Education. Archaeology and Epigraphy, Procs. May 1913, Nos. 15-33. NAI.

⁸⁵ James Begg, Consulting Architect, 19 March 1912. Illustrations and statistics of modern Indian architecture collected by Archaeological Surveyors. Dept. of Education. Archaeology and Epigraphy, Procs. May 1913, Nos. 15-33. NAI.

⁸⁶ The style chosen made little use of indigenous art and design. New Delhi was built, between 1911 and 1931, in a modernist, neo-classical style which admitted Indian design such as chattries (cupolas) and jalis (screens) only as fragments.

A rupture between past and present lay at the heart of the imperial project. The separation of architectural construction and archaeological conservation were calibrations of imperial authority. A reformist position, like that of the India Society, argued that the credibility of the colonial state depended some deployment of Indian workmanship and Indian participation were the only means through which British authority in India could credibly continue. For James Begg, the assimilation of any Indian form unwisely transgressed the racial and civilizational hierarchies that characterised and necessitated imperial governance. Both ends of the argument saw any possible inclusion of Indian design as a matter of colonial expediency. All agreed that any architectural formula for India's imperial future would draw on remnants and survivals from India's past rather than its degraded present. Sanderson, with only the slightest familiarity with Indian building, past or present, had asserted an elemental argument about architectures of place that was incommensurate with the imperial system.