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Stones of the Raj: The Hybrid Colonial Architecture of Allahabad

By

Sana Zehra[1], Dr. Taiyaba Munawer[2]
[1,2]Department of Architecture, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

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Abstract

Urban heritage *represents a dynamic link between the past and the present, shaping the character and identity of cities across the globe. As urbanization accelerates and cities evolve into major economic, social, and cultural centers, the urgency to safeguard both tangible and intangible heritage has intensified. Urban heritage encompasses far more than historic buildings or monuments—it is a living mosaic of cultural memory, spatial patterns, social practices, and historical narratives that collectively define urban identity (Bandarin & van Oers, 2012). The conservation and management of this heritage are essential not only for sustainable urban development but also for reinforcing community identity and enhancing cultural tourism (UNESCO, 2016). However, this need is increasingly challenged by the pressures of rapid urban growth, inadequate policy implementation, socio-economic transformations, and environmental vulnerabilities (Evans, 2002). The paper explores the core concept of heritage and its unique manifestation within urban contexts. It examines the various typologies of urban heritage, the contemporary challenges it faces, and the mechanisms by which it is identified, preserved, and integrated into urban planning and policy. The paper examines the same by conducting primary surveys and documentation of British Raj buildings of the city Allahabad.*

Keywords: *Heritage, culture, history, Allahabad.*

Introduction

The word heritage comes from the Latin term hereditas, meaning something passed down or transmitted from one generation to the next. In recent academic and policy discussions, heritage refers to a wide range of material and immaterial components that are identified by societies as part of their cultural heritage. The UNESCO World Heritage Convention of 1972 defines heritage as the physical artifacts (tangible) and intangible qualities of a society or group inherited from one generation to another, preserved in the present, and given for the purpose of future generations (UNESCO, 1972).

Heritage, then, is both physical objects and socio-cultural traditions. It is a store of values, memories, and identities. As Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge (2000) state, heritage is not an object or place but a process of cultural selection, interpretation, and valorization. It is political and contested in that it involves choices about what parts of the past are kept, remembered, or forgotten (Smith, 2006). In urban settings, heritage takes a very multi-layered and complicated form. Urban heritage encompasses historic buildings, archaeological sites, street layouts, open spaces, neighborhoods, markets, and cityscapes testifying to the historical path and cultural development of a city (Bandarin & van Oers, 2012). It is also strongly connected to urban social life, encompassing festivals, languages, rituals, and oral practices that have developed within particular urban environments (UNESCO, 2016; Blake, 2009).

The typology of heritage is commonly divided into tangible and intangible forms, with additional categorizations depending on context, function, and cultural importance (Harrison, 2013). Tangible Heritage comprised of Built Heritage: Historic monuments, architectural ensembles, temples, churches, forts, palaces, colonial buildings, urban streetscapes, and vernacular architecture (Feilden & Jokilehto, 1998). Archaeological Heritage: Pertains to traces of old settlements, excavation sites, ruins, and other remnants that testify to the early human habitation of cities (UNESCO, 2003). Natural Heritage: In certain urban environments, heritage also includes natural features like sacred groves, urban forests, rivers, lakes, and heritage trees (Rossi, 1982).

Intangible Heritage includes Cultural Practices: Historic festivals, fairs, religious ceremonies, craft production, music, dance, and oral traditions that are woven into the socio-cultural fabric of urban societies (Blake, 2009; Kuutma, 2007). Linguistic Heritage: The range of dialects, languages, and scripts employed in cities, particularly in multicultural and multilingual cities (Harrison, 2013). Social Institutions

*Corresponding Author: **Sana Zehra**

and Knowledge Systems: These comprise traditional systems of governance, customary laws, and local environmental, land, and health knowledge that have, throughout history, guided urban life (Logan, 2012).

Urban heritage is inherently hybrid since boundaries between intangible and tangible tend to be flexible. An example is that a heritage market or neighborhood has not only architectural value but also lived experience, commercial tradition, and community practice which have survived for generations (Jones & Leech, 2015). Although valuable in its several dimensions, urban heritage is also under growing threat. Both structural and dynamic challenges exist, usually embedded in socio-economic changes that are part of urbanization (Pendlebury, 2013).

The most widespread threat comes from hasty urbanization and infrastructure expansion. Heritage sites are destroyed or encroached upon to pave the way for roads, metros, high-rises, and commercial complexes in most cities (Bandarin & van Oers, 2012; Logan, 2012). Lack of proper integration of heritage issues into urban planning processes aggravates this danger (Pendlebury, 2013). In historic city centers, especially in the Global South, heritage neighborhoods and buildings tend to become grounds for spontaneous settlements as a result of socio-economic forces (UN-Habitat, 2016). Though such settlements are cheap to live in, they also support the deterioration of heritage buildings through overcrowding and the absence of conservation (Orbasli, 2000). Commodification of heritage for tourism purposes may result in over-commercialization, where the economic and aesthetic value of heritage takes precedence over its social or cultural value (Smith, 2006; Evans, 2002). Gentrification usually displaces original residents and transforms the cultural makeup of old neighborhoods (Zukin, 2010).

There is often a significant shortage of institutional capacity, technical expertise, and financial resources required to implement effective heritage conservation programs (Jokilehto, 2006). In many cases, fragmented governance and weak coordination among heritage agencies, municipal authorities, and urban planners further hinder preservation efforts (Roders & van Oers, 2011). Urban heritage frequently falls victim to neglect and cultural amnesia. Many heritage properties are not officially listed or acknowledged, and younger generations may lack awareness or emotional connection to them due to inadequate education and public engagement (Harrison, 2013). The emphasis on modernization and the pressures of globalization frequently leads to the marginalization of local histories, architectural legacies, and cultural traditions**,** relegating them to the periphery of urban policy, planning priorities, and collective public consciousness (Smith, 2006; Graham et al., 2000). This phenomenon is particularly evident in the case of Allahabad, where a substantial portion of the city's architectural heritage—particularly from the British colonial period—remains unrecognized, undocumented, and undervalued in both official frameworks and popular discourse. Structures such as colonial-era bungalows, public buildings, churches, educational institutions, and civic infrastructure hold significance far beyond their architectural merit; they serve as tangible repositories of the city's layered history, cultural hybridity, and socio-political transformations over time. Yet, in the absence of formal heritage listing, structured documentation, widespread heritage awareness, and dedicated conservation strategies**,** these sites continue to face gradual neglect, decay, and in some cases, irreversible loss. This neglect reflects broader patterns in Indian urban heritage management, where colonial-era urban forms are often overlooked in favour of rapid urbanization and infrastructural expansion. Addressing this gap requires not only policy interventions but also a reframing of heritage as a living component of the city's evolving identity, rather than a relic of a disconnected past. Without immediate intervention—through documentation, awareness campaigns, legal protection, and sustainable reuse models—this tangible link to Allahabad's colonial and Anglo-Indian past risks being permanently erased.

Urban heritage is an evolving and living field that encompasses the historical, cultural, spatial, and social dimensions of urban life. It serves as a vital bridge between the past and present, fostering urban sustainability, cultural continuity, and a sense of community identity (Bandarin & van Oers, 2012). However, the preservation of urban heritage faces significant challenges such as rapid urbanization, socio-economic transformations, environmental degradation, and ineffective policy frameworks (UNESCO, 2011; Hosagrahar, 2010. Recognizing urban heritage not merely as a relic of the past but as a dynamic component of contemporary and future urban development is essential for fostering resilient, inclusive, and culturally diverse cities.

Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative case study approach to examine the concept of urban heritage its relevance and the issues lying with the concept and its due effect on the heritage of a city/ place. The same is done through the architectural and historical analysis of two selected buildings in Allahabad - Mayo Memorial and Thornhill Mayne Memorial. These buildings have been chosen based on their historical significance, architectural value, and role within the urban fabric of the city. Research started with the **l**iterature Review to review of existing literature on urban heritage, colonial architecture, conservation practices, and the history of Allahabad will provide the theoretical foundation for the study. The second part of the research is a primary surveys and documentation of the selected buildings for in-depth analysis representing the heritage layer of the city from British raj and discuss the present conditions of these buildings and possible way forward.

Heritage concept and Meaning

The word "heritage" evokes images of identity, memory, and continuity. It suggests a legacy from the past that communities, societies, and nations opt to conserve, treasure, and pass on to subsequent generations. In the last two decades, heritage has become a unifying theme in academic, cultural, political, and development debates, representing its

*Corresponding Author: **Sana Zehra**

increasing relevance to understanding the ways societies negotiate their pasts and their futures. Heritage is rooted in cultural geography, anthropology, history, and heritage studies, and its meanings adapt to changing social, political, and environmental dynamics (Harvey, 2001; Graham, Ashworth, & Tunbridge, 2000).

The advent of modern heritage discourse is strongly connected with the emergence of nationalism, the evolution of museums and archives, and the codification of historical knowledge in Europe in the nineteenth century (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). Heritage began to be perceived as an integral element of national identity, especially in post-revolutionary and post-colonial nations where historical accounts were being used to legitimize claims to territory and cultural superiority. The destruction caused by World War I and World War II also highlighted the importance of safeguarding cultural and architectural heritage, leading to the formation of global systems such as the 1972 UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO, 1972).

From a scholarly perspective, heritage is now better comprehended not as a fixed object or place but as a social and cultural construct. As highlighted by researchers like David Lowenthal (1998) and Laurajane Smith (2006), heritage is a selection process, interpretation, and valorization. It is a matter of decision-making about what in the past to remember, celebrate, conserve, or reject. These decisions tend to be shaped by modern-day values, ideologies, and power configurations, so the heritage is subjective and political in nature.

Smith's path-breaking idea of the "Authorized Heritage Discourse" (AHD) deconstructs hegemonic Eurocentric trends that privilege monumental architecture, elitist histories, and expert-led conservation (Smith, 2006). AHD, in her view, marginalizes other, subaltern, and everyday forms of heritage, thus reinforcing dominant power structures. Her approach emphasizes that heritage is not passively discovered but actively constructed through social practice, institutional mechanisms, and discursive representations. Heritage also plays important cultural roles as a medium of collective memory, enabling communities to remember their past and shape their identities (Harrison, 2013). Pierre Nora's (1989) influential concept of *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory) suggests that heritage sites—whether monuments, archives, or commemorative landscapes—serve as symbolic anchors where collective memory is both preserved and ritualized. In this sense, heritage is not simply a remnant of the past but a means through which societies interpret and assign meaning to the past in the present.

Digitization of cultural artifacts has given rise to the category of *digital heritage*, which includes digital texts, audiovisual materials, databases, and virtual reconstructions of cultural sites (UNESCO, 2003; Cameron & Kenderdine, 2007). Digital heritage plays a critical role in documentation, preservation, education, and enhancing accessibility, especially in cases of physical degradation or destruction due to conflict, disaster, or climate change (Terras, 2011). It ensures that cultural knowledge can be transmitted across generations in new, interactive formats. Heritage, therefore, is not a static relic of the past but a dynamic, evolving phenomenon—constantly reinterpreted, recontextualized, and repurposed in response to ongoing social and cultural transformations (Smith, 2006). This dynamism is evident in how communities revive lost traditions, adapt rituals to contemporary contexts, or use new media to express cultural identity.

First, heritage is formed through both memory and forgetting. As Paul Connerton (1989) theorizes, societies remember and forget in structured ways, and heritage reflects these regimes of memory. The inclusion or exclusion of certain narratives—such as colonial histories, caste rituals, or gendered experiences—demonstrates how heritage can function as both a site of empowerment and erasure (Harrison, 2013).

Second, heritage is reactivated within various political and cultural contexts. In postcolonial societies, heritage is often mobilized to reclaim indigenous identities and resist colonial legacies (Smith, 2006). In post-conflict contexts, it can contribute to reconciliation and peace-building, as seen in the restoration of cultural landmarks in Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Cambodia (Logan, 2008).

Third, heritage is increasingly commodified and consumed. Cultural tourism, urban branding, and the growth of creative industries have transformed heritage into an economic resource (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2000). While this may generate revenue and raise public awareness, it also raises concerns about authenticity, community participation, and equitable access (Waterton & Smith, 2010).

Heritage is also an integral component of the creation of individual and collective identity. It offers a sense of belonging, continuity, and grounding in a rapidly globalizing world (Graham et al., 2000). National heritage is often employed as a mechanism for state-building and citizenship, fostering common values and a shared historical consciousness (Smith, 2006). Conversely, regional and local heritage nurtures community pride and social cohesion (Harvey, 2001). However, heritage can also become a source of conflict and exclusion. Disputes over sacred sites, linguistic heritage, or cultural practices may escalate into intergroup tensions. For example, the politicization of heritage in the Babri Masjid–Ram Janmabhoomi controversy in India illustrates how heritage can be instrumentalized for communal purposes (Chadha, 2006). Similarly, debates surrounding Confederate monuments in the United States reflect conflicting interpretations of history and memory (Alderman, 2010).

Heritage is thus a multidimensional, complex, and dynamic concept encompassing both material and immaterial legacies of human civilization. It is not solely about preserving monuments or artifacts but about the social meanings, values, and interpretations ascribed to them. As an intellectual construct, heritage encapsulates the interplay of memory, identity, power, and culture (Smith, 2006). It is

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simultaneously a process of remembering and forgetting, inclusion and exclusion, preservation and transformation. Understanding the concept and definition of heritage requires an interdisciplinary perspective that acknowledges its cultural, historical, political, and ecological dimensions. In the context of globalization, conflict, and climate crisis, safeguarding heritage must evolve into a participatory, inclusive, and adaptive process. At its core, heritage is about the human continuity of stories and the shared responsibility to care for the past in order to inform and enrich the future.

Challenges of Urban Heritage

Urban heritage sits at the hub of the cultural, architectural, and socio-political life of cities. It includes a vast array of material and immaterial components such as historic buildings, traditional neighborhoods, marketplaces, religious buildings, urban environments, and cultural traditions that together express the historical continuity and changing identities of urban settlements (Bandarin & van Oers, 2012). With urbanization accelerating in the 21st century, urban heritage management has become increasingly complex and contested. The task of maintaining the cultural and historical identity of cities must now be negotiated against the pressures of modernization, infrastructure development, population growth, gentrification, and climate change (UNESCO, 2011).

Drawing on scholarly literature, global policy documents, and empirical research, it identifies and explores leading issues such as: (1) rapid urbanization and infrastructural pressures; (2) commodification and tourism-induced changes; (3) socio-spatial inequalities and displacement; (4) fragmented institutional frameworks; (5) contested authenticity and identity; and (6) ecological and climate-related risks. The discussion concludes with a call for inclusive, integrative, and context-sensitive approaches to urban heritage that move beyond traditional preservationist paradigms (Pendlebury, 2013).

Perhaps the most pressing challenge is unregulated urban expansion. According to UN-Habitat (2022), more than 55% of the global population lives in urban areas, a number expected to rise to 68% by 2050. This rapid growth necessitates new housing, transportation, and commercial infrastructure, often at the cost of heritage precincts. Projects like the Delhi Metro expansion have led to the partial demolition of historic neighborhoods, raising questions about archaeological oversight and heritage-sensitive planning (Menon, 2014). Similarly, Istanbul's Tarlabaşı Renewal Project demolished 19th-century buildings under urban renewal plans, erasing cultural identities embedded in these urban fabrics (Gül & Dee, 2015).

Heritage tourism, although widely promoted as a tool for economic growth, often results in the commodification of urban heritage. The "heritagization" of urban spaces transforms living environments into sanitized, consumable experiences, often displacing local cultural practices (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). Cities like Venice and Barcelona exemplify the negative impact of over-tourism rising property values, loss of residential character, and cultural superficiality (Russo, 2002; Novy & Colomb, 2016). Prioritization of monumental heritage over vernacular and intangible forms perpetuates elitist cultural narratives and marginalizes subaltern histories, as seen in the dominant emphasis on Mughal architecture in Delhi (Sen, 2018).

Institutional fragmentation is another persistent obstacle. In countries like India, multiple bodies—from the Archaeological Survey of India to municipal authorities—control different aspects of heritage management, leading to overlapping mandates, policy gaps, and implementation failures (Menon & Nigam, 2011). Moreover, heritage laws often focus narrowly on monument protection, ignoring broader urban contexts and intangible associations (Jokilehto, 2006). Institutional capacity, especially in smaller cities, is frequently inadequate in terms of technical knowledge, funding, and awareness. Heritage governance must be mainstreamed into urban planning, with cross-sectoral coordination and adequate investment in human and financial capital (UNESCO, 2011).

Heritage must no longer be seen as static relics of the past, but as active agents in shaping contemporary urban life. This necessitates a shift in focus: from preservation alone to meaningful integration within current urban planning frameworks, guided by principles of social justice, inclusivity, and long-term sustainability. (Wang Kaixuan, Fouseki kalliopi, 2025)

This study draws upon the city of Allahabad as a representative case of how rich architectural legacies—particularly those from the British colonial period—often remain unrecognized, undervalued, and at risk of erasure. Through the documentation and analysis of British legacy, the research highlights the urgent need to acknowledge such heritage as an integral part of the city's cultural and architectural identity. If ignored, these structures may soon vanish under the pressures of redevelopment, legal ambiguity, and neglect. Therefore, the study calls for a more inclusive and context-sensitive approach to urban heritage—one that honors the past, engages with the present, and prepares resilient strategies for the future.

Case of Allahabad

Allahabad, holds profound geographical, cultural, and political importance within the Indian subcontinent. Situated at the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati rivers**,** the city has long been venerated as a sacred site of pilgrimage and religious devotion (Singh, 2007). However, beyond its religious significance, the city's strategic geographical location encircled by natural water barriers—played a crucial role in shaping its emergence as a center of trade, governance, and education**,** particularly under British colonial rule (Gupta, 2001).

During the colonial period**,** Allahabad's prominence increased when it was designated as the capital of the North-Western Provinces**,** and later the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh (Metcalf, 1989). This period witnessed a transformation of the city's urban form, marked by the creation of planned zones

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such as Civil Lines and the Cantonment**.** These areas reflected the colonial ideals of order, hierarchy, and civic control**,** introducing features such as wide tree-lined roads, gridiron street patterns, expansive public spaces, and institutional architecture (King, 1976). Architecturally, this transformation brought about a hybrid urban identity**,** blending British architectural styles such as Gothic Revival, Victorian, and Neo-Classical with adaptations suited to the Indian climate and cultural context (Tillotson, 1989). Elements such as verandahs, high ceilings, and deep porticos were incorporated alongside European formal designs to create structures that were both functional and emblematic of colonial power.

Despite this rich architectural and historical legacy, much of Allahabad colonial-era built heritage remains under-recognized and insufficiently documented (INTACH, 2015). The city's urban fabric, particularly its public buildings, residential bungalows, churches, and educational institutions from the British period**,** is often overlooked in heritage discourse and policy (Jain, 2016). This study seeks to address this gap by examining the architectural forms introduced during the colonial era and analyzing their social, cultural, and environmental significance**.** In particular, the research focuses on three of the city's most prominent colonial public buildings—the Mayo Memorial Hall the Thornhill Mayne Memorial and All Saint cathedral**.** These structures not only represent the architectural ambitions of the colonial administration but also embody the layered urban heritage of Allahabad, illustrating the lasting imprint of colonial influence on the city's identity.

Mayo Memorial -
Mayo Memorial Hall was established in the year 1879. The hall was meant for public meetings, balls and receptions in commemoration of the assassinated Viceroy Mayo.

The building was designed by architect - Richard Roskell Bayne in classic Neo Gothic style of architecture merged with Indian elements.

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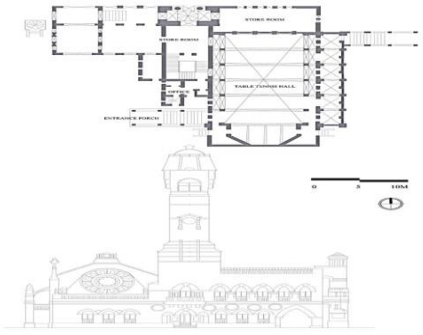

Figure 1 Drawings of the Mayo Memorial Elevation

The floor plan of Mayo Memorial Hall is a colonial architectural hybrid that blends the monumentality and verticality of Gothic Revival architecture with climatic sensitivity and spatial zoning characteristic of Indian architectural traditions. Its central hall, axial layout, pointed structural organization, and civic intent root it in British Gothic vocabulary, while its responsive planning, transitional zones, and long-term adaptability align with plan Indian vernacular logic.

The building's elevation is characterized by an asymmetrical composition, dominated by a tall, slender central tower which progressively reduces in mass as it rises. This tower features blind arcades, round-headed Romanesque openings, and culminates in a belfry-like upper structure capped with a cupola, reflecting the vertical emphasis of Gothic civic architecture.

The facade prominently displays a large rose window or oculus framed within a gabled projection, recalling the ecclesiastical tradition of European Gothic cathedrals. Below this, a rhythmic sequence of blind arcades supported by paired columns evokes the cloistered architectural forms of Romanesque Europe. The fenestration across the elevation combines round-headed arches, typical of Romanesque style, with narrow lancet windows in the tower that align with Gothic Revival sensibilities. String courses and cornices horizontally articulate the facade, providing a layered visual rhythm that counterbalances. Additional architectural features include decorative corner turrets capped with conical spires and ornamental buttresses, which reinforce the building's medieval stylistic references while serving little structural purpose. The use of local stone materials integrates the structure into the Indian context, although the architectural language remains distinctly British. The design reflects a deliberate choice to convey imperial authority and permanence through forms familiar to a Victorian audience, echoing British civic architecture like Manchester Town Hall.

Below are the photographic documentation of the building showing the hybrid features/ elements of both Indian and British architecture.

Figure 2 The buff sandstone and red brick used in construction are typical of Northern Indian construction methods, especially in areas like Lucknow, Delhi, or Lahore (historic Punjab region).

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Figure 3 Segmental arches and embellished with wrought iron floral grilles, which are both decorative and functional.

These floral motifs are commonly found in Mughal architecture, symbolizing stylized foliage like lotus or vines — popular in Indian design.

Figure 4 Steeply Pitched Roof Gable and Spires: circular window at the top is a hallmark of Gothic church architecture, particularly European cathedrals.

Colorful tile band is an Islamic architecture influence

Figure 5 The pattern reflects the 12 zoodiac signs or it incorporates symbolism and imagery that resonate with the idea of cycles, order, and the flow of energy, making it possible to interpret these architectural elements in a way that aligns with the concept of the zodiac signs.

Figure 6 The form of the ceiling is a barrel vault, common in Gothic and Renaissance churches and civic buildings.

The patterns on the ceiling reflects heraldic symbolism, common in European palaces, universities, and colonial structures.

These may represent coats of arms or symbolic protectors — often adopted by British colonial institutions.

Fig 7 polished red granite column, the monolithic cylindrical shaft consists of animal figures very densely arranged shows Indian art and architecture

These features contribute to the construction of a unique urban identity where architectural form becomes a visual expression of colonial authority, cultural adaptation, and symbolic integration. A defining feature of these buildings is the use of buff sandstone and red brick masonry, a material choice deeply rooted in Indian construction practices, particularly evident in the architecture of Delhi, Punjab, and Lucknow. The incorporation of these local materials served to ground colonial structures within the regional architectural landscape while simultaneously aligning with British preferences for durability and visual permanence.

The architectural vocabulary further demonstrates this hybrid approach through the inclusion of segmental arches and floral grills. The grills often display motifs such as stylized lotus flowers and vines, integrating indigenous symbolism of fertility, prosperity, and continuity into the otherwise Western architectural framework. This fusion reflects the colonial strategy of appropriating Indian aesthetic traditions to create buildings that were both familiar to the colonial administration and legible within the local cultural context.

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Elements such as steeply pitched roofs, pointed gables, and rose windows draw directly from Gothic Revival architecture, emphasizing verticality and evoking ecclesiastical associations with British and European cathedrals. These features were employed not only for their aesthetic value but also as symbols of authority, permanence, and the civilizing mission of the Empire.

The inclusion of zodiac motifs within floor patterns adds another layer of cultural synthesis. These motifs, referencing the twelve signs of the zodiac, merge European cosmological symbolism with Indian astrological traditions. Such integration suggests an awareness of the significance of cosmic order in both Western and Indian cultural narratives, positioning these public spaces as microcosms of universal harmony and control.

The use of polished red granite columns with ornate capitals, arranged in repetitive arcades, embodies classical architectural ideals of rhythm, proportion, and order. However, the choice of materials—granite sourced locally—demonstrates how British architects adapted their designs to available Indian resources while maintaining the visual language of imperial authority.

Mayo Memorial Hall, by contrast, belongs to the later Raj phase, where architecture became a medium of political grandeur, symbolic commemoration, and cross-cultural adaptation. Its Gothic verticality and decorative excess reflect the empire's matured aesthetic ideology, while its Indianized layout and environmental features show sensitivity to local realities. It is preserved but underutilized; under threat from neglect and lack of awareness.

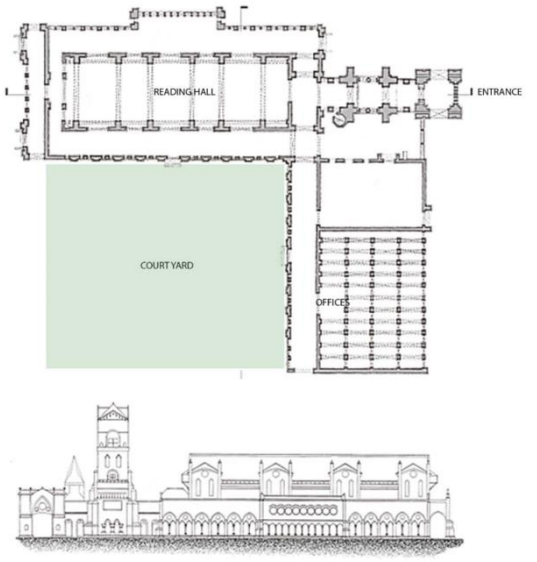

Figure 8 Drawing of Thornhill Memorial

Thornhill and Mayne Memorial

The Thornhill Mayne Memorial was established in the year 1864 and is housed in the 133-acre Alfred Park.

Sir Richard Roskell Bayne (1837–1901) was the architect of this structure. He was an employee of the East Indian Railway and built many landmarks such as the the Sir Stuart Hogg Market in Kolkata, the Husainabad Clock tower in Lucknow, and the closely situated Mayo Memorial Hall in Prayagraj.. Initially, the memorial served as the house of Legislative Assembly in the British era when Prayagraj, known as Allahabad back then, was the capital of North Western Provinces.

The plan follows a T-shaped arrangement, with the main hall reading hall aligned linearly and connected to a perpendicular block of rooms administrative or reference rooms). The central axial corridor and symmetrical layout reflect Western classical planning ideals—a core feature of British institutional design. The repetitive bays created by structural columns are typical of Gothic Revival interiors, emphasizing rhythm and structure. The Thornhill Mayne Memorial plan beautifully exemplifies a hybrid colonial planning approach.

The elevation of the Thornhill Mayne Memorial exhibits a striking composition characteristic of Gothic Revival Particularly Scottish baronial architecture, blended with elements of Romanesque influence. The building's façade is organized horizontally, creating a balanced yet monumental appearance. A prominent square tower with a steeply pitched roof and pointed finials dominates the one side of the elevation, establishing vertical emphasis typical of Gothic civic architecture.

The central portion of the elevation features a series of arcaded openings at the ground level, forming a continuous rhythm of pointed arches resting on paired columns. This arcade contributes to the cloister-like appearance of the structure, aligning with Romanesque precedents. Above the arcade, a distinctive horizontal band of circular windows (oculi) creates a visual break and emphasizes the horizontal spread of the building, while also referencing Gothic ecclesiastical forms such as triforia and clerestory windows.

The upper register is punctuated by projecting gabled bays that house paired lancet windows, further reinforcing the vertical articulation against the otherwise horizontal massing. These bays culminate in steeply pitched roofs, adding to the complexity of the silhouette. The interplay between horizontal continuity and vertical emphasis is a defining characteristic of the Victorian Gothic Revival style.

The right end of the elevation mirrors elements of the central arcade but terminates with a simpler vertical bay, providing visual balance without competing with the central tower's dominance. Overall, the design employs a mixture of round and pointed arches, repetitive columns, blind arcades, and circular fenestration, reflecting the 19th-century British fascination with medieval architectural forms adapted for public and institutional buildings. However, upon closer analysis, there are subtle ways in which the building engages with Indian architectural traditions and materials, creating a hybrid identity typical of British colonial civic architecture in India. These Indian elements are not always overtly stylistic but are embedded in the material, construction techniques, and symbolic spatial organization.

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Following are the photographic documentation of the building showing details of the elements used in the building.

Figure 9 The capital is intricately carved with acanthus leaves., typical gothic column detail

The capital's most distinctive element is the central scene depicting two figures. The dress of the figurines is Indian.

Figure 10 This particular window features a central rosette surrounded by multiple concentric rings of decorative elements. The design incorporates geometric patterns, floral motifs, and stained glass sections

Figure 11 Use of decorative pinnacles and spire emphasizing the verticality and adding to the Gothic aesthetic.

Figure 12 Tall, arched windows with decorative tracery are visible, allowing natural light to enter the space. These windows are a hallmark of Gothic design.

The use of stone and wood is evident, with the stone providing structural support and the wood used for the ceiling panels.

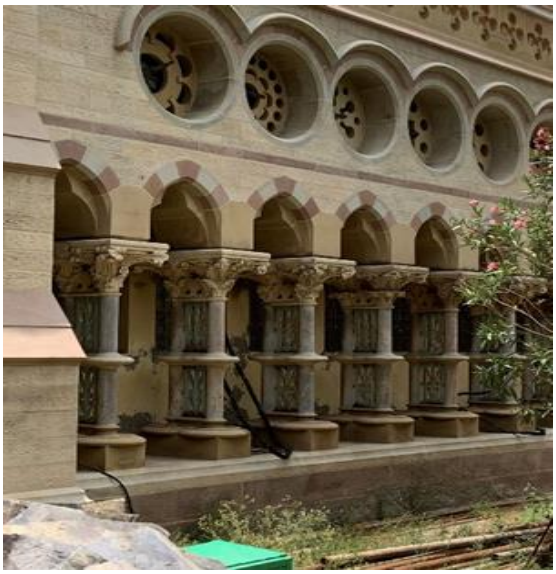
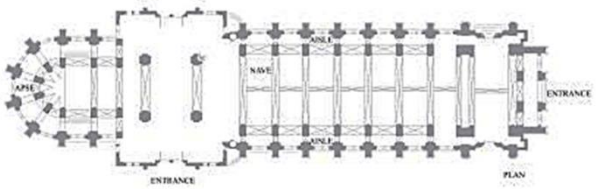


Figure 13 Includes a series of arched openings supported by ornate columns. Above these arches, there is a row of circular windows.

The columns have detailed capitals, and the arches are accented with alternating light and dark-colored voussoirs.



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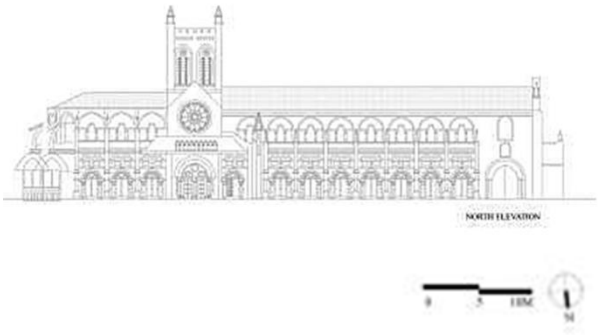

Figure 14 Drawing of All Saint Cathedral

All Saint Cathedral

All Saints' Cathedral in Allahabad, designed by the British architect Sir William Emerson, is a fine example of the Gothic Revival style in India. The foundation stone was laid in 1871 and the construction was completed by 1891. This church, made primarily of cream-coloured sandstone with bands of red sandstone, is often referred to as Patthar Girja, meaning "Stone Church," by the local community. Architecturally, the cathedral follows a traditional cruciform plan typical of English Gothic churches, emphasizing verticality and grandeur.

The plan of All Saints' Cathedral, Allahabad allows a traditional cruciform (cross-shaped) layout, a characteristic feature of Gothic Revival ecclesiastical architecture. The central and most prominent space within the plan is the nave, which is flanked on both sides by aisles. The nave is articulated into bays by a series of pointed arches supported on clustered columns, a design that not only provides structural clarity but also reinforces the vertical emphasis typical of the Gothic style. Parallel to the nave, the aisles assist in distributing the structural loads from the clerestory and the roof through the columns and buttresses.

Intersecting the nave at its midpoint is the transept, which forms the cross shape in the overall layout. The crossing, where the nave and transept meet, acts as both the spatial and symbolic centre of the cathedral. Rising above this point is the central tower, a feature reflected clearly in the elevations and emphasizing the vertical axis of the structure.

The north elevation reveals a richly articulated facade, organized into two levels of pointed arches — the lower arcade and the clerestory. A large rose window dominates the central facade at the crossing tower, enhancing the verticality and decorative richness of the design. The tower itself is detailed with slender lancet windows and vertical elements that emphasize its height.

Overall, both the plan and the elevations of All Saints' Cathedral reflect the core principles of Gothic Revival architecture — verticality, light, and rhythm. The use of pointed arches, stained-glass windows, and the clear articulation of structural bays combine to create a design deeply rooted in medieval ecclesiastical traditions, adapted here for a colonial Indian context. The symmetry of the plan and the axial alignment from entrance to apse reinforce the cathedral's ceremonial and symbolic purpose, while the architectural language expresses both structural logic and ornate beauty.

The interior of All Saints' Cathedral, though primarily designed in the Victorian Gothic Revival **style**, subtly incorporates certain Indian architectural elements that reflect local influences and adaptations. One of the most notable features is the use of perforated stone screens, or jali work, particularly evident behind the altar area. Their inclusion within the Gothic framework of the cathedral demonstrates a conscious hybridization of Indian and Western architectural vocabularies. While European Gothic churches typically feature stained glass or stone tracery in such locations, the adoption of jali reflects both local aesthetic traditions and practical considerations suited to the Indian climate.

In addition to these elements, the cathedral showcases the use of locally sourced sandstone throughout its columns, walls, and vaults. This material choice not only grounds the building within its geographical context but also highlights the skills of Indian stonemasons. Below is the documentation of the building showing the details of the elements used in the buildings representing Indian and Gothic architecture.

Figure 15 Use of intricately carved jali screens on the windows in the pointed arches depicts a beautiful blend of gothic and Indian architecture and represents the architecture according to climatic need

Figure 16 The tall, pointed arches and ribbed, vaulted ceiling are classic Gothic features, emphasizing height and grandeur.

*Corresponding Author: **Sana Zehra**

Figure 17 colorful stained glass windows, typically seen in Western churches and cathedrals.

Figure 18 rose window in stained glasses exhibits a combination of vivid colours and floral and symbolic motifs, organized around a central rosette.

Figure 19 The image depicts a gargoyle a classic feature of Gothic Revival architecture, intricately carved in the form of a dragon-like creature Gargoyles historically serve both a functional and symbolic

Figure 20 The entrance is marked by a deeply recessed pointed arch, composed of multiple concentric orders, particularly notable feature is the archivolt ornamentation, with a continuous floral motif carved in relief.

The facade of the cathedral features tall pointed arches, deeply recessed portals, and elaborate Gothic tracery. A central tower, positioned at the crossing of the nave and transepts, rises modestly with an octagonal spire, adding to the vertical emphasis characteristic of the style. The church incorporates lancet windows with some sections containing stained glass, and a prominent rose window on the western end enhances the facade's decorative quality. The high-pitched timber roof exposes its structural framework internally, reflecting authentic Gothic construction principles. The interior is distinguished by polished stone, teak wood furniture, a marble pulpit, and a brass eagle lectern, all contributing to its solemn ecclesiastical atmosphere.

The Gothic Revival style is expressed throughout the building through pointed arches, ribbed vaults, lancet windows, and buttresses, all emphasizing verticality and the symbolism of religious architecture. The cathedral's cruciform plan further strengthens its spiritual and architectural identity. Though the building adheres closely to European Gothic traditions, some adaptations were made for the Indian context, such as the use of local sandstone and high ceilings to allow for better ventilation in the hotter climate.

Present Condition and Concerns

The colonial architectural heritage of Allahabad presents a significant yet increasingly fragile aspect of the city's urban identity. Buildings like the Thornhill Mayne Memorial, Memorial Hall, and All Saints' Cathedral embody the British colonial presence, reflecting distinct architectural styles such as Scottish Baronial, Italian Gothic Revival, and Victorian Gothic Revival respectively. Despite their monumental and cultural value, these structures face varying degrees of neglect, posing critical challenges to their conservation.

The Thornhill Mayne Memorial stands as one of the most prominent civic structures from the colonial period, yet its current condition reflects years of under-maintenance and neglect. While the building remains structurally sound and continues to function as a public library, it suffers from facade deterioration, pollution-induced staining, biological growth, and unsympathetic modern repairs. Despite it being protected by state government conservation interventions have been

*Corresponding Author: **Sana Zehra**

sporadic and superficial, failing to address deeper structural and material issues.

Similarly, the Mayo Memorial Hall, once a civic centrepiece designed for public gatherings and cultural events, now faces a state of semi-neglect. Although its imposing tower and Italian Gothic details remain largely intact, the building exhibits visible signs of deterioration such as cracks in masonry, water damage, and decaying finishes. Its periodic use for minor government functions and events fails to justify any consistent maintenance or adaptive reuse strategy. Without a clear conservation framework or active engagement from heritage authorities, the building risks further degradation, with its architectural and historical value becoming increasingly marginalized within the rapidly urbanizing city.

In contrast, All Saints' Cathedral demonstrates the best state of preservation among these three structures, primarily because of its continuous use as an active place of worship. The building retains its architectural integrity, with key features like the rose window, ribbed vaulting, and stained glass still in place and generally well-maintained. However, issues such as stone weathering, pollution-related discoloration, and lack of specialized conservation for delicate elements like stained glass and timber roofs persist. Although the religious function ensures a baseline level of care, there is little effort towards formal heritage management or public engagement with its architectural significance beyond its ecclesiastical role.

These three case studies collectively highlight the broader challenges of heritage conservation in Allahabad. Key issues include institutional neglect, lack of awareness, absence of sustainable reuse strategies, and inadequate conservation expertise. While heritage listing offers some nominal protection, it often fails to translate into meaningful preservation action without dedicated policies, funding, and public involvement. Furthermore, the growing urban pressures of infrastructure development and changing land use priorities threaten these structures' survival in the long term.

In conclusion, the present condition of these colonial-era buildings reveals the urgent need for a coherent conservation strategy that not only focuses on structural preservation but also integrates these sites into the contemporary cultural and urban fabric. Effective conservation must go beyond restoration campaigns to include active management plans, community engagement, adaptive reuse policies, and awareness programs to ensure that Allahabad colonial architectural heritage is not only preserved but also appreciated as a vital part of the city's historical narrative

The city of Allahabad possesses a rich and layered urban heritage, encompassing a diverse range of architectural, cultural, and historical asse**ts**. From colonial-era institutions like the Thornhill Mayne Memorial**,** Mayo Memorial Hall, and All Saints' Cathedral, to its historic neighborhoods, religious sites, and institutional buildings**,** the urban fabric of the city reflects a complex interplay of Mughal, British colonial, and indigenous influences**.** However, much of this heritage is currently at risk due to neglect, urban pressures, lack of public awareness, and weak conservation policies.

Conclusion

The preservation of Allahabad's urban heritage requires a multidimensional strategy that moves beyond isolated conservation efforts to a holistic, integrated approach encompassing policy, planning, public engagement, and sustainable development. By valuing its historic assets as part of its urban identity and future growth**,** Allahabad can set an example for other Indian cities grappling with similar heritage challenges.

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*Corresponding Author: **Sana Zehra**