

Impressive Colonial Architecture in Kolkata



One of India's most historic and cosmopolitan cities, Kolkata has been at the center of activity of various civilizations at different points in time. Large populations of Chinese, Armenian, Jewish, and other immigrant communities have all called Kolkata home, and the city's stunning architecture pays testament to its social, political, and cultural richness. The colonial architecture can be witnessed in its truest avatar in this city. The colonial-era buildings are striking reminders of a Calcutta that served as capital to British India for a long long time.

St.Paul's Cathedral



Believed to be the largest cathedral in Kolkata, St.Paul's is surviving in all its colonial gilt and glory. Established in 1847, St.Paul's is one of the finest examples of revival of Gothic form of architecture. Designed by the famous English Architect, Major W.N.Forbes, this

church is a beautiful piece of art with slender vertical piers, counterbalancing buttresses and pointed arches. The interiors display depictions from the life of St. Paul's through pictures, posters and other documents. With stained glass windows, the pristine white cathedral was built to tend the growing European community and till date remains one of the outstanding examples of colonial architecture in the city.

Location: 1A Cathedral Road, Kolkata

Kolkata Town Hall



The imposing colonnaded cube of the former Town Hall Building dates from 1814. Architect and engineer Maj.-Gen. John Garstin constructed Kolkata Town Hall in Roman Doric Style, as a space for the European community to gather for social events. Today, it is an introduction to the city's heritage through a lively collection of working models, videos and interactive exhibits. The design of the structure represents a mix of neo-classic

and Palladian style, said to be in imitation of the architecture of the majestic magnificence of the Roman Senate. The two storied building covers more than 1200 square meters. It is an emblem of pride and civic celebration of Bengal

*Location: Esplanade Row W, BBD
Bagh, Kolkata*

Raj Bhavan



During the pre-independence period, this beautiful mansion was known as the Government House. After the transfer of power from the East India Company to the British Crown in 1858, it became the official residence of the Viceroy of India. However, after shifting the capital from Calcutta to Delhi in 1911, it became the official residence of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. Designed by Capt. Charles Wyatt on the lines of the Curzon's family mansion of the Kedleston Hall of Derbyshire, the Raj Bhavan was constructed in neoclassical style with distinct Baroque overtones. It is considered to be the best example of Georgian architecture in the country. The metallic Dome was added in 1860s by Lord Elgin. In 1899, Lord Curzon

introduced electricity and installed a lift to Raj Bhavan The ornamentally designed little lift, known as the Bird's Cage Lift, is still in use. There are about 60 rooms in Raj Bhavan, beside public halls, verandas, porticoes, banquets & halls and the Throne room, each displaying intricate interiors.

Location: Raj Bhavan, Kolkata

General Post Office



The postal system was introduced in Calcutta by Warren Hastings in 1774 and the first Post Office of Calcutta was situated on Old Post Office Street.

Designed by Walter L. B. Granville, the designer of Calcutta's High Court and the Indian Museum, the imposing building of the GPO was constructed by Mackintosh Burn Ltd. Construction and remains a glowing colonial structure.

The outstanding architectural feature of the GPO is its lofty dome, rising over 220 feet on the southeast Corner, which forms one of the most conspicuous landmarks of Calcutta. The dome is supported by aesthetically arranged Corinthian columns. The multi-dialed illuminated clock is a notable feature. The southeast angle of the building is semi-circular, leading to a lofty circular hall,

which accommodates the public letter boxes. The building consists of two lofty storeys, the east and south fronts being faced with handsome Corinthian columns. A Postal Museum also opened in 1884, which displays an excellent collection of artifacts, first day covers and stamps.

Location: BBD Bagh Area, Kolkata

The Calcutta High Court



Constructed in neo-Gothic style, The Calcutta High Court was opened in 1872 and has jurisdiction over the state of West Bengal and the Union Territory of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. In fact, the building of the Calcutta High Court was constructed ten years after the establishment of the court itself. The design, by the then government architect Walter Granville, was loosely modeled on the 13th-century Cloth Hall at Ypres in Belgium, which was devastated by artillery fire during World War I. The building is carved out of beautifully sculptured Caen stone. The oldest high court of India remains one of the most architecturally illuminated buildings in the city of joy.

Location: 3 Esplanade Row, BBD Bagh, Kolkata

Belvedere Estate



Belvedere House is said to have been Warren Hastings' abode till the 1780s. It is believed to be one of the many houses built by Mir Jafar Ali Khan, who later transferred it to British East India Company. The architecture of the Belvedere House is of the Italian Renaissance style. It is built amidst a 30acre ground. Since 1948, one of the buildings in the estate houses the

National Library of India is the largest library in India.

Location: Alipore, Kolkata

Victoria Memorial



The design of Victoria Memorial is based on what is known as the *Indo-Saracenic* revivalist style that uses a blend of architecture styles lent from Egyptian, Mughal, British, Deccani, Islamic and even Venetian elements. In memory of Queen Victoria, this magnificent building was commissioned by then Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon.

Planned by British architect William Emerson, the building is constructed of white marble sourced from Rajasthan. Whether it is the great dome or the corner stones or the chattris, it is an architectural landmark in the city. It has a lush green garden designed by David Prain and Lord Redesdale that covers an area of 64 acres land which is visited by thousands in the city.

Location: 1 Queens Way, Kolkata