

Jewels on the Crescent

Masterpieces of the
Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya
(formerly Prince of Wales Museum of Western India)

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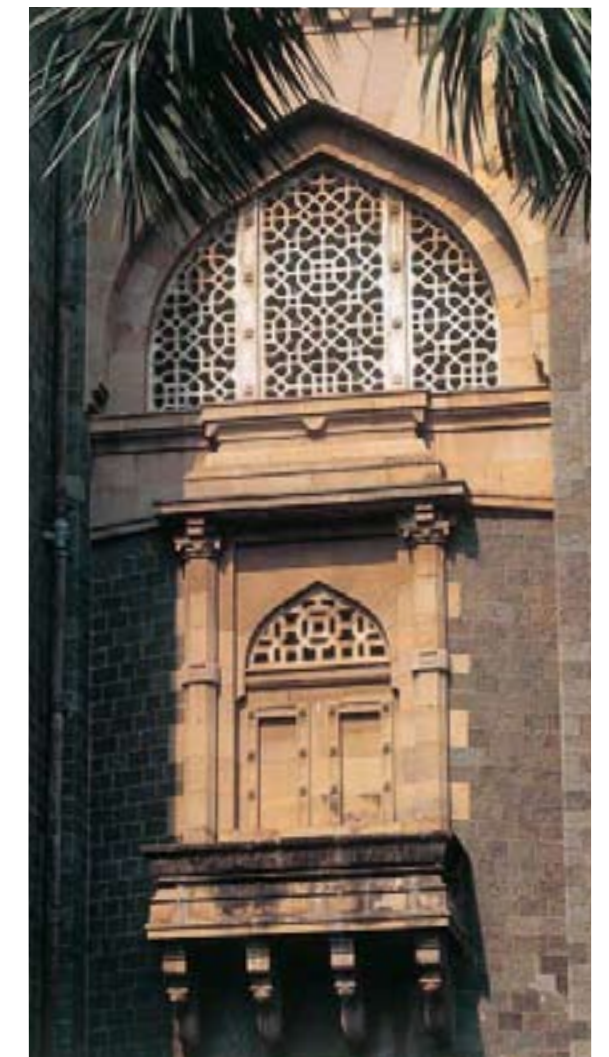
THE MUSEUM



ON 14th August 1905, a number of prominent people of Bombay gathered at the Town Hall and resolved to erect a Memorial to the visit of the Prince of Wales (later King George V) in the form of a public museum which would be named after him. The meeting was attended by Sir Pherozshah Mehta, Badruddin Tyebji, Gokuldas Tejpal, Dr. Chandavarkar, David Sassoon and many other dignitaries known for their outstanding contribution in their respective fields and also in the development of the island of Bombay. The Foundation Stone of the museum was laid by the Prince of Wales on 11th November 1905 and the museum was named Prince of Wales Museum of Western India. For a long time people had also felt the need for a good museum in the city and finally the museum was established by public contribution aided by the then Government of the Bombay Presidency.

This memorial in the form of a museum was to be erected on the plot of land known as the **Crescent Site** on the southern tip of the island. The architect of the building, George Wittet, was selected after an open competition in 1909. Wittet is known for the

Traditional *jalis* on the facade to facilitate ventilation





Key gallery, the first floor railing and the intersecting arches below the dome of the Museum



View of the main dome through the southern terrace and miniature domes, decorative brackets in the foreground

View from the terrace of the museum



Indo-Saracenic style of architecture of which this museum is one of the best examples. The Indo-Saracenic style combines Hindu and Saracenic architectural forms, at times incorporating some elements of Western architecture. However, the Indian pillared hall, arched pavilion, the dome rising above the huge intersecting arches forming a beautiful geometrical pattern makes this building a typical example of Indo-Saracenic style. Small *jalis* for light and wind add to the grandeur of the building. George Wittet skillfully incorporated the original wooden arched pavilion purchased from a royal house (*Wada*) at Nasik in Maharashtra, as a circular railing on the first floor of the building. The dome of this building is designed after the Gol Gumbaz of Bijapur and the finial is copied from the Taj Mahal at Agra.

The building was completed in 1914 but it opened to the public much later on January 10, 1922 after being used as a hospital and Children's Welfare Centre for a few years during the first world war.

Many things have changed since then. Bombay is now known as Mumbai and the name of the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India is changed to the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya. Set against a well laid-out garden which retains its original plan even today, the museum is an important Heritage building of the city.

Section 1
SCULPTURE

TERRACOTTA
STONE
BRONZE



TERRACOTTA



1 HEAD OF THE BUDDHA
Stucco
Gandhara, Pakistan. 4th century A.D.
14.3 x 9 cms.



2 MARA'S SOLDIER
Stucco
Gandhara, Pakistan. 4th century A.D.
Ht: 12 cms.

DETAILS OF FIGURE 2

