

Yadgar

Inaugural Stone Ceremony of the City of New Delhi
held on 15th December 1911



A Photographic Exhibition

*“Many capitals have been inaugurated
in the neighborhood of Delhi... none ever held promise of greater
permanence or of a more prosperous... future”.*

Lord Hardinge, Governor General
at Foundation Stone ceremony
of the New City of Delhi,
15th December 1911.

Delhi, one of the oldest cities in the world, and the favoured capital of several dynasties is a legend in architectural style and design. Each stone tells a story, each structure is a tribute to a glorious heritage.



Coronation Durbar, 12th December 1911.

The British envisaged a city that would provide a testimony to its power and efficacy in South Asia. On 12th December 1911 at the Coronation Durbar, the King of England, George V announced that the Imperial capital of India was to be shifted from Kolkatta (Calcutta) to Delhi. The new capital city was to surpass all other capital cities in the world. This declaration set in motion the ambitious project of transforming the contours of this ancient city into a new Imperial seat of power and governance.

Keeping these objectives in view, the New Delhi Planning Committee was constituted in 1913. The responsibility for the construction of important buildings of New Delhi were given to Sir Edwin L. Lutyens and Sir Herbert Baker. Lutyens took up the challenge of



North & South Block under construction.

designing the city of Delhi and Government House, which later came to be known as the Viceroy's House (Rashtrapati Bhavan). Sir Herbert Baker was commissioned to design the two wings of the Secretariat (North & South Block) and Council House (Parliament House).



Transporting construction material to the site at Raisina Hill.

The Inaugural Stones were initially laid on 15th December 1911 by King George V and Queen Mary at a location at Kingsway Camp in Delhi during the Imperial visit to India. Later these stones were shifted to the precincts of North & South Blocks and placed in two separate chambers on 31st July 1915. Each stone made of yellow sandstone is set on a pedestal in the two chambers. An explanatory inscription of inlaid white marble encircles the two chambers, protected by iron gates.

The secretariat buildings convey an ethereal lightness as also stately grandeur fusing together the traditional Indian and the modern English styles of architecture. The North and South blocks showcase the characteristic features of Indian architecture: the open canopies, chhatris, overhanging eaves and balconies or chhajjas and the intricately carved stone and marble lattice screens or jalīs. Sandstones of the high plinths and the Dholpur stones for the walls and pillars add to the magnificence of these buildings. The decorative-art work in the Secretariat



A view of Indian spectators on the roof of North Block, 10th February 1931.

is evocative of the rich traditions and the mythologies of the subcontinent.

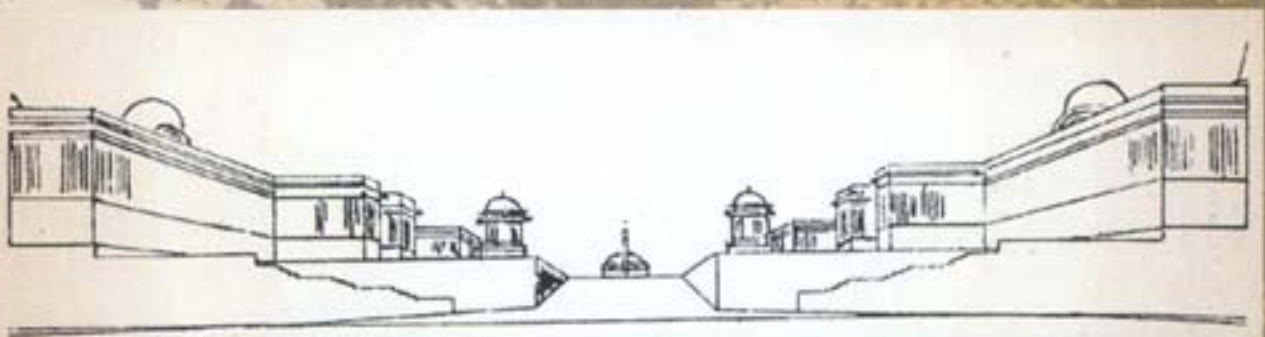
Inside, the North Block has a dome above the entrance hall and in the South block, it is set atop the Conference Hall. High ceiling rooms are clustered around open arcaded courtyards, which Sir Herbert Baker called the “**most important features of the Secretariat's design**”.

Adjacent to the North Block is the circular colonnade, Parliament House with a road leading to Connaught Circus and carrying on along the ramparts of Shahjahanabad till the Jama Masjid. The plan of the site is based on two crossing axes The King's Way (now Rajpath) and Queen's Way (now Janpath) and radiating axes, one of which links the Parliament House through Connaught Place to Old Delhi. At the head of the King's way on a hillock, the Raisina is the Viceroy's House (now Rashtrapati Bhawan).



View of the official ceremony, 10th February 1931.

Thus began the construction of the new city of New Delhi and the magnificent emergence of the monumental buildings on Raisina Hill. New Delhi was formally inaugurated by the then Viceroy Lord Irwin on 13th February 1931.



Outline perspective view from centre of Great Court, Grade (as agreed).



