

BRITISH HOUSES IN LATE MUGHAL DELHI

SYLVIA SHORTO



British Houses in Late Mughal Delhi

WORLDS OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

ISSN 1752-5667

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*BRITISH HOUSES IN LATE
MUGHAL DELHI*

Sylvia Shorto

THE BOYDELL PRESS

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First published 2018
The Boydell Press, Woodbridge

ISBN 978-1-78327-208-2

The Boydell Press is an imprint of Boydell & Brewer Ltd
PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF, UK
and of Boydell & Brewer Inc.
668 Mt Hope Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620–2731, USA
website: www.boydellandbrewer.com

A CIP catalogue record for this title is available from the British Library

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This publication is printed on acid-free paper

Typeset by Fakenham Prepress Solutions, Fakenham, Norfolk
NR21 8NN

This book is dedicated to my husband, Gavin, and my son, Hamish.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During the years I have been gathering material for this book, I have seen extraordinary changes take place in the city of Delhi. To be sure, the city and its surrounding countryside have always been in flux, with observers ready to express concern about how the future might differ from the past. In a letter written in 1821, for instance, William Linnaeus Gardner, who had married into the Mughal aristocracy, worried about proposed British modifications to local land settlements and about how the excessive taxes and rigid tenancy regulations then being introduced by the agents of the East India Company would ‘ruin and destroy the old hereditary families’.¹ His was just one voice in the longer stream of time, and his voice was ignored. Yet nothing from that period in history can compare to the rapid changes that a post-Independence Delhi is experiencing in the twenty-first century, making accurate narration of the many histories of this great city all the more important in the present moment.

Land and houses are inextricably linked. This book is about houses built by a group of East India Company officials between 1803 and 1853, during the transitional period when the Company first arrived in Delhi. It is about how houses were planned and built, and how the land for building them was acquired. It is about the ways the houses both related to and resisted established architectural conventions, both those in the city of Delhi and those in the minds of the incoming Company officials who would now use building to help secure their power. It is about meaning in the location of these houses.

The book straddles disciplines. In one sense, it is a work of architectural history, and as such it draws on early studies in the field that considered formal or functional variations to European precedent and assumed transplanted versions of an architectural core into an Indian periphery. It also references more recent critical texts, including interpretive work on architecture as material culture, not yet applied to building in early-nineteenth-century Delhi. But facts and interpretation must be in accord if interpretation is to have lasting value. When we examine a house closely, it can tell us a great deal about the mentalities of the people who built, owned or lived in it. My focus in preparing this book has been first to return to archival sources and then to consider critically how any new information uncovered might help us

¹ National Army Museum (hereafter NAM), Gardner papers, letter 88.

understand lives and social practices, both at the time of building and as use changed over time. In the analyses of Henri Lefebvre, architecture gives a physical frame to the way people interrelate with those who share their space. Both builders and planners shape physical environments that embody sets of socially accepted rules that they themselves endorse, whether consciously or unconsciously. Users then make these environments real by acting in and on them and by altering them for their own benefits. But how might these ideas be transposed to help us understand historical urban landscapes that were subverted or adapted after conquest? And how are distinctions, the differences between everyday practices and the social and political structures within which they exist, played out in an occupied city by a specific group of individuals? No society is static. If pre-existing buildings within neighbourhoods bear the imprint or mental map of the past, what might they tell us when they are adapted to suit the different and changing social needs of individuals from an incoming or over-powering group? How does the location of new building link to these changes?

In another, interrelated sense, the book is a group biography. Individual lives are an important window onto the past, and scholars are now beginning to consider the roles that personal, family and collective micro-stories can provide in wider historical frameworks when charting the rise of early modern Britain from mercantile to imperial power. If a private house and its contents define the boundaries of the self, then by writing about houses I am inevitably also writing about the individuals who built them. My narrative here is limited to the interconnected 'lives in building' of five Company officials – David Ochterlony, Charles Metcalfe, Robert Smith, William Fraser and Thomas Theophilus Metcalfe – and to the fifty-year period between the British conquest of Delhi and the death of the second Metcalfe, four years before the Revolt of 1857. But though there is a strong biographical dimension to this study, I hope it will not be read as an uncritical celebration of Scotsmen riding around with multiple wives on gaily caparisoned elephants. All the five life stories have proved to be far more complex than that.

The building activities of these five men have had to be carefully pieced together. Many local records were lost during the Revolt, and no single major source or group of sources provides authoritative information on British houses in the city in this period, either directly or indirectly. In returning to archival records to seek out new facts, I have had in mind an underlying set of questions, the foremost being to question how the knowledge they contain was constructed. The documentary resources I have used include private papers as well as official, public accounts, and I give equal consideration to both and – subject to my language limitations – to both British and Indian accounts. Official records are limited in their scope, but informal, private papers, particularly the letters and notebooks of women, give narratives of a different reality, full of observations about domestic detail that would otherwise be lost

to us. While the accounts of individuals are always held to be more subjective than official accounts, they reveal far more freely the complexities of colonial culture within specific contexts than do bureaucratic texts with their conventional formats and codified language. Private papers give us glimpses of lived experience, and they are invaluable fragments of archaeological evidence of otherwise undocumented discourses and beliefs. They can help us understand the experience of home life, revealing social, economic, technical, material and emotional concerns. Diaries, letters and travel journals are all used here to help reconstruct the domestic experience of the five men. Of particular interest have been the Fraser of Reelig papers, which have not been used before to narrate Delhi's buildings. The Gardner papers, the Canning papers, the Monson papers, the Lawrence papers and the Templehouse papers have also been consulted. In different measure they help clarify the sequences of building and the lives, ambitions and motivations of the individual builders. They all advance our overall understanding of life in Delhi in the early nineteenth century. But this, it turned out, was not enough. Information from archival sources has had to be cross-referenced against other types of record including visual representations – paintings, drawings, maps and photographs made for a variety of patrons – to try to fill gaps in our knowledge. Each provided its own perspective on building in Delhi, and each put up something of a struggle to be analysed within the terms of its own discipline, resulting in a richer and more detailed picture of changing British responses to the Mughal polity they gradually displaced.

Combining these varied sources, the book examines the houses built by the five East India Company officials in early-nineteenth-century Delhi. An introductory chapter outlines how we know what we know of Delhi in the eighteenth century – its social and physical topography immediately before conquest in 1803. The book is then organised into five chapters that focus on the lives of each of the five officials and their building (and collecting) activities, through a methodological dialogue between texts and surviving material culture. The study of Robert Smith has been particularly productive, as he not only built extensively but was also himself a painter. As Garrison Engineer in Delhi after 1822, Smith is known to have been involved in designing a number of monumental public buildings and in the restoration and conservation of several others. In the book I attribute houses to him on stylistic grounds through evidence in his drawings. Houses designed and lived in by Smith in England and in France after his departure from Delhi support these attributions. Considered as a group, these five lives demonstrate a shift from the initial embrace of Indian living to a manipulation of that way of life for political ends, as attitudes towards the country hardened before the outbreak of the inevitable Revolt in 1857. A concluding chapter reflects on the always present, semi-conscious desires of my subjects to return to live in houses in Britain. As an entry in *Hobson-Jobson* tells us, 'Nobody calls India

home – not even those who have been here thirty years or more, and are never likely to return.’²

Cities are the most intricate texts of all. As palimpsests, they embody layered information about the age in which they were built and the social and political circumstances of the generations who used and changed them. The city of Delhi still remains the most important primary source for its own study. Patterns of use can be imagined from those quarters where historic fabric still remains. But this must be augmented by secondary sources to try to explain parts of the urban fabric that are no longer there to see. Much of Delhi’s early-nineteenth-century built heritage simply does not exist any longer. Houses have long since crumbled and their bricks been reused, and what remains is fast being obliterated by other pressures, often more immediate than preservation. As Delhi expands into what now seems to be an almost limitless global megacity, and as its population burgeons and its middle classes swell, traces of a past that were once palpable, both in physical remains and in social practices, are quickly sinking below the surface, pushed down by time and relentless outside influences that do not abate. A new archaeological layer is being formed that will be very hard to excavate in the future. But embedded in change there is a discontinuous understanding of the past through the fragments of continuity, and this can give a narrative structure to histories. A chronological order does not quite work for my narrative, but perhaps neither does the one that I have chosen to use, of individual lives through their building. But whatever it still lacks, this book needs to be published now. The only constant is change, and even in the very near future a different book would surely have been the result, for that is the condition of our time.

In addition to the scholars whose work I have tried to build on, many friends and colleagues helped me during the course of researching this book. I would like to single out Kathy Fraser, whose own book on the lives of the five Fraser brothers was being written at the same time. I also thank Cathy Asher, Tim Barringer, Clive Cheesman, Andrew Cook, Ned Cooke, Abir El Tayeb, Narayani Gupta, Alireza Korangy, Marius Kociejowski, Rami Saab, R.C. Sharma, Richard Saumarez Smith, Nalini Thakur, Jim Wescoat and Ahmad Yehya for being generous with their time and their wide-ranging realms of expertise. William Dalrymple very kindly shared his transcriptions of the letters of William Linnaeus Gardner and of the Wak Kani letters. The archivists who helped me in Nice, Rome and Venice were consistently supportive despite my terrible French and Italian, enabling me to fill some of the voids in what we know of Robert Smith’s life. Essential financial support came from the American Institute of Indian Studies, the American University of Beirut, and from the Paul Mellon Foundation in the form of a Senior Fellowship and an Author Publication Grant. I am very, very grateful.

² *Letters from Madras*, 1837, cited in Henry Yule and A.C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson: a Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases ...* (London and Calcutta, 1886), p. 421

ABBREVIATIONS

IOR	India Office Records, British Library
NAI	National Archives of India
NAM	National Army Museum
TNA	The National Archives, Kew

GLOSSARY

akhbār	newsletter or bulletin
almirah	cupboard or wardrobe
bangla	vernacular Bengali house type
baoli	step well
baradari	garden pavilion
bībī	beloved
bigha	measure of land varying from a third of an acre to an acre, depending on yield and productivity
begum	lady of rank
bundh	closure or sluice
chabutra	raised viewing platform
chandni	white cloth spread over carpet to designate special area
chārbāgh	formal Persianate garden divided by water channels into quadrants
chhaja	broad projecting eave
chhatri	raised domed pavilion; an umbrella
chobdar	usher or attendant
chowrie	a fly-whisk
chunam	fine polished lime plaster resembling marble
dak	relay postal system; a post station or traveller's rest house
dālān	a veranda or peristyle
dargāh	Sufi shrine or burial place
deohri	public hallway of a house, often approached via a dog-leg bend to ensure visual privacy
dhobi	washer-man
dīvān	chief minister; minister responsible for fiscal administration
dīwānī	fiscal agency; revenue
doab	land between two rivers
durbar	ceremonial public reception; also an audience chamber
firmān	official decree

ghazal	Persian verse form composed of couplets
godown	store room
guldasta	pinnacle topped with a flower form
hajj	annual pilgrimage to Mecca
ḥammām	bath complex
hasht bihisht	literally, eight paradises. A formal Persian-derived plan with eight chambers surrounding a central core
hauz	man-made water tank or reservoir
haveli	mansion
howdah	ceremonial seat for riding on an elephant, sometimes with a canopy
hukkah	water pipe
hurkaru	running footman
imām	Muslim religious leader
īvān	vaulted hall open on one side to face a room, court or garden
jagir	revocable land assignment, or grant of income from such land
jharna	fountain
jharoka	small projecting covered balcony
jhil	seasonal freshwater lake
kārkhāna	artisanal workshop
khānabāgh	domestic garden inside a residential complex
kharīf or khurīf	seasonal crops harvested in the autumn
khil‘at	robe of honour or other honorific gift
kincob	rich silk fabric with patterns woven in a weft of gold- and silver-wrapped thread
kos	a variable measure of distance of 2,600 ‘ordinary paces’ or approximately 2 miles
kotla	fortress
kutcheri	court premises
lakh	one hundred thousand
lakhauri brick	flat thin rectangular indigenous brick
mahal	house or palace, in particular its inner, women’s apartments
maḥalla	neighbourhood
mahout	elephant handler
mansabdar	member of the non-hereditary imperial bureaucracy of the Mughal Empire, commander of an army
maqbara	mausoleum, tomb
maund	variable unit of measurement by volume. The measure was standardized by the British in Bengal

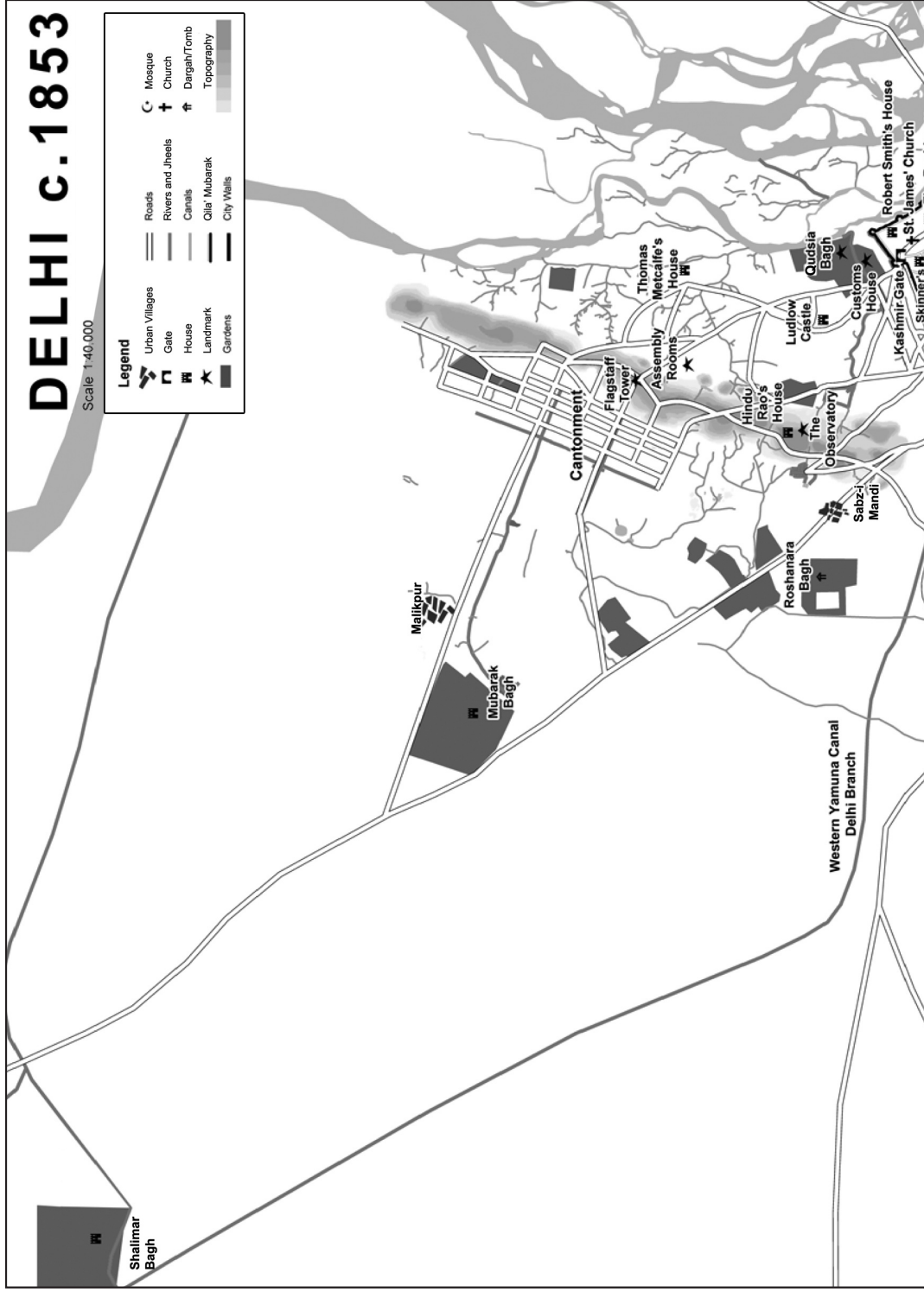
	in 1833 at 82.28 lbs (100 Troy pounds). 1 maund = 40 seers = 1,200 dams
minar	tower
mohur	gold coin
mu‘āf	rent-free land
munshī	scribe, translator
musāfirkhāna	a lodging for pilgrims
mushā‘ara	poetry assembly
musnud	a bolster for reclining
muthamman bagdhadi	square plan with canted corners
naqārkhāna	ceremonial drum room
nautch	performance by professional dancers
navvāb	Mughal viceroy or holder of rank; later an independent ruler
nazr	ceremonial gift presented to a superior
nujīb	informal infantryman or militiaman
nullah	watercourse for drainage
palankin	covered litter carried on horizontal poles
palkee	a palanquin; by extension, in procession
pankah	canvas-covered swinging fan suspended from a ceiling; a fan
parganah	unit for the collection of revenue consisting of a group of villages and their surrounding countryside
pīr	Sufi holy man
pukka	a permanent or brick-built structure
purdah	veil; cloth screening women’s quarters
qaṣīda	panegyric verse
qil‘a	fort
rajput	military caste of Northern India, traditionally landholders
rang mahal	women’s quarters; literally, coloured palace
ṣadr	law
sarkar	government
sepoy	a native foot soldier
serai	lodging for travellers and their animals; caravanserai
shahr āshob	lament for a city
shikār	ceremonial hunt
shish mahal	mirrored room or apartment
suba/ subahdār	province/provincial governor
taḥṣīl	administrative sub-district for collection of village revenue

taḥṣīldār	collector of revenue for a sub-district
taikhāna	suite of subterranean rooms for the hot weather
takhallus	literary pen-name
talwar	a curved sword with a broad tip
tatti	woven screen
toshkhāna	treasury; strong room for the receipt of ceremonial gifts
‘umarā	nobility
urs	death anniversary
vazīr	principal minister
zamīndār	holder of a patrimonial rental estate; landowner
zanāna	accommodation for women

DELHI c.1853

Scale 1:40 000

Legend	
	Urban Villages
	Gate
	House
	Landmark
	Gardens
	Roads
	Rivers and Jheels
	Canals
	Qila' Mubarak
	City Walls
	Mosque
	Church
	Dargah/Tomb
	Topography





Map of Delhi, c. 1853.

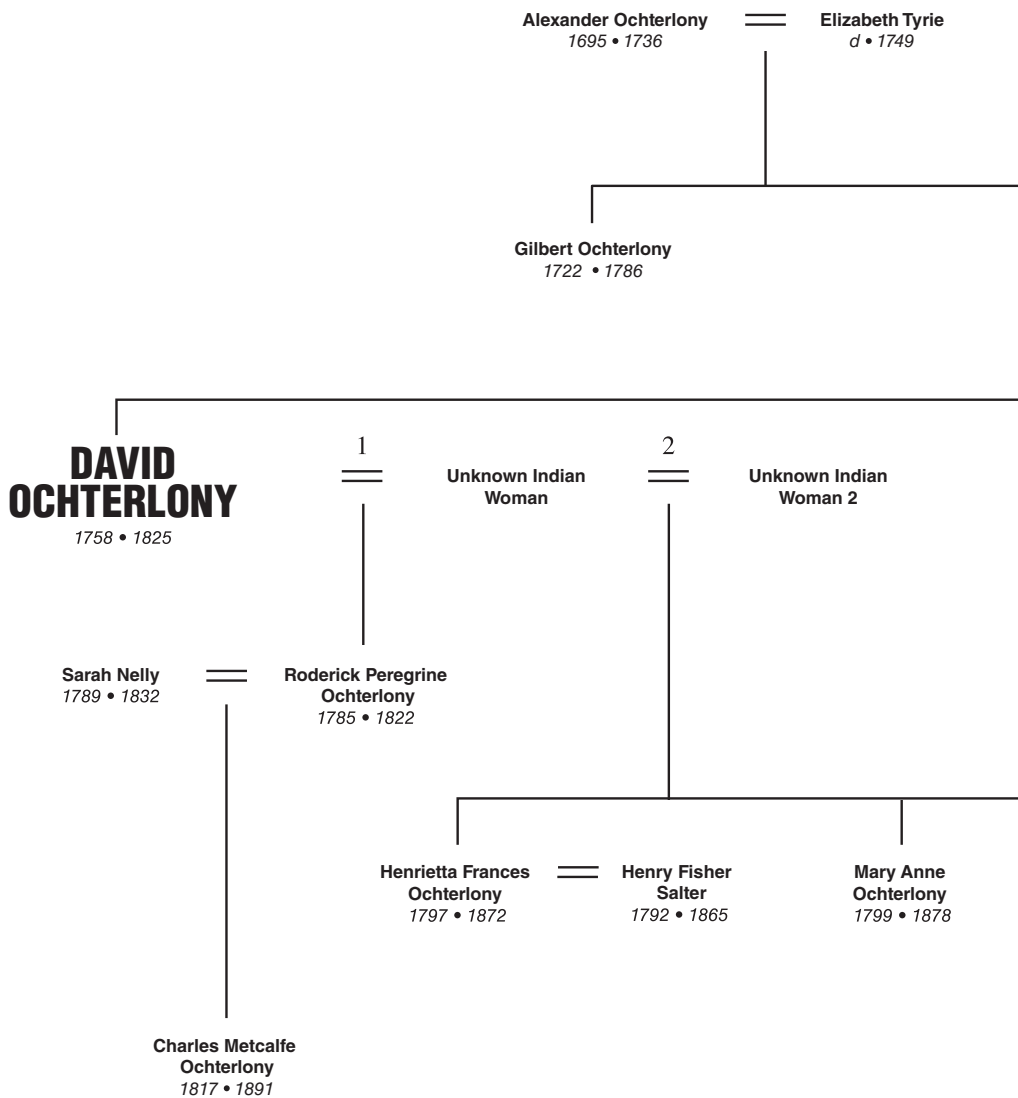
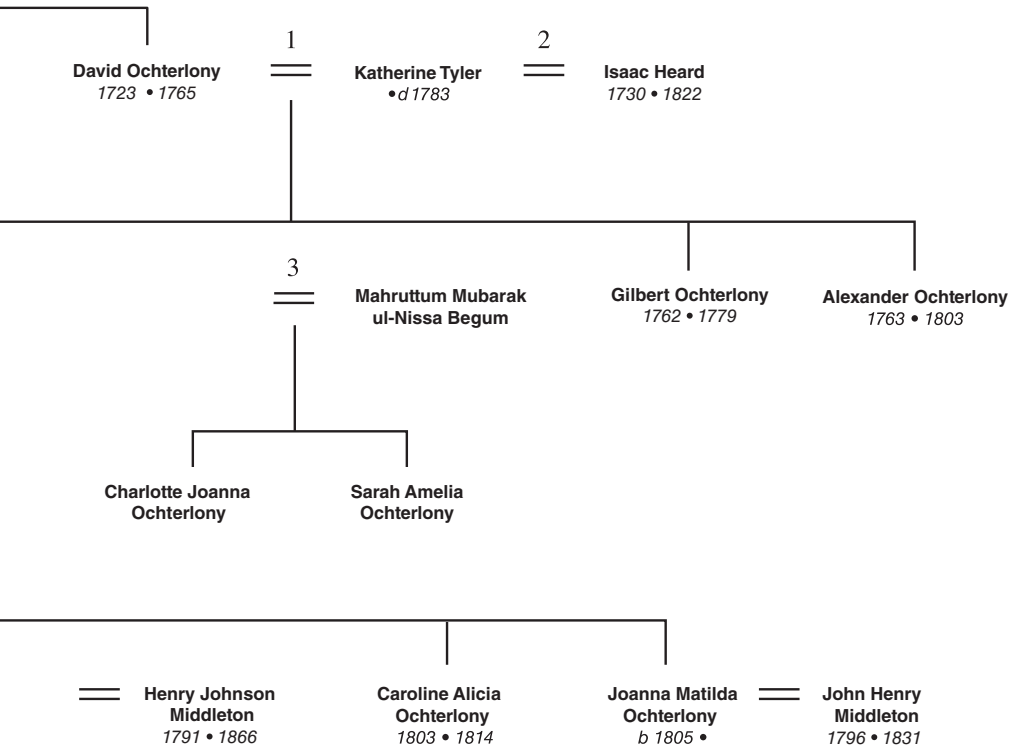


Table 1 The Family of David Ochterlony (1758–1825).



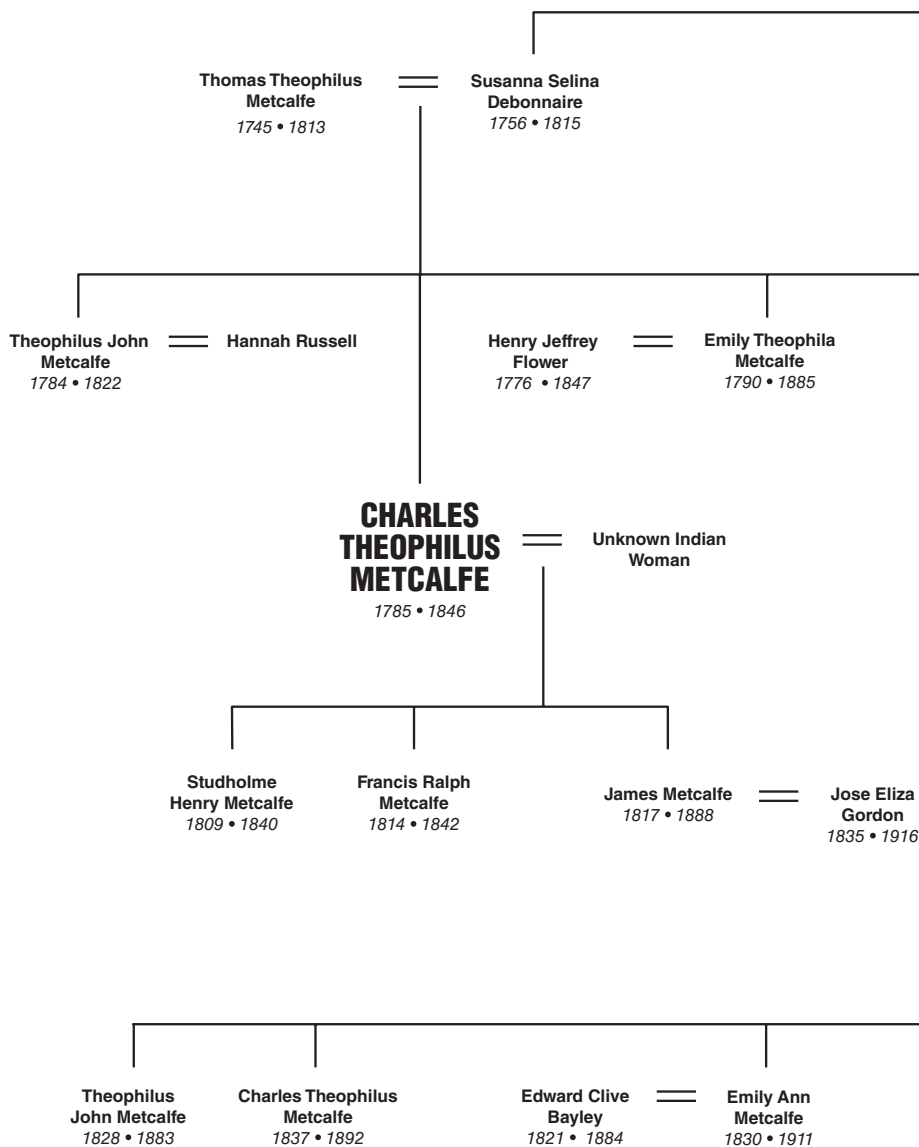
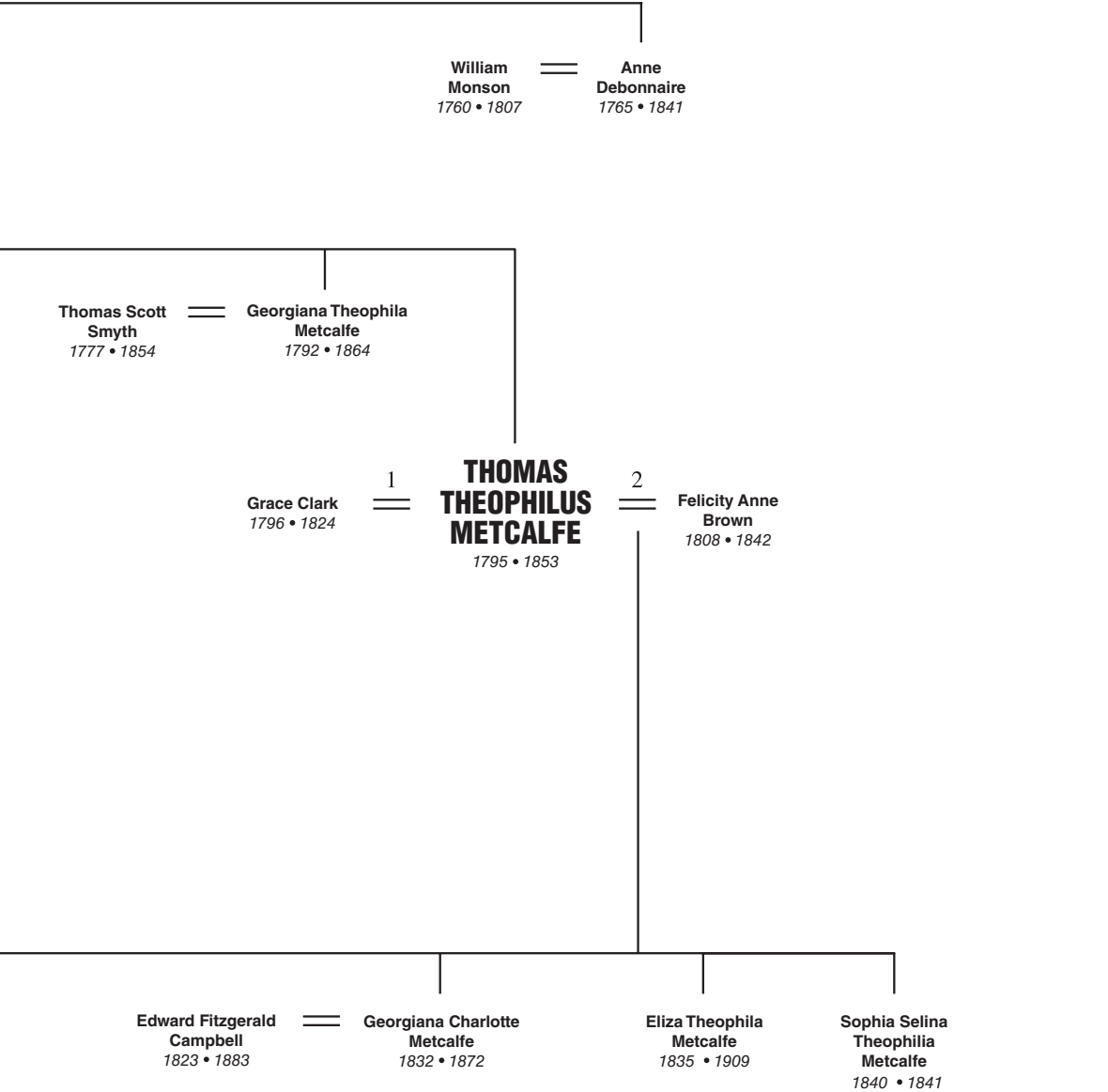


Table 2 The Families of Charles Metcalfe (1785–1846) and Thomas Theophilus Metcalfe (1795–1853).



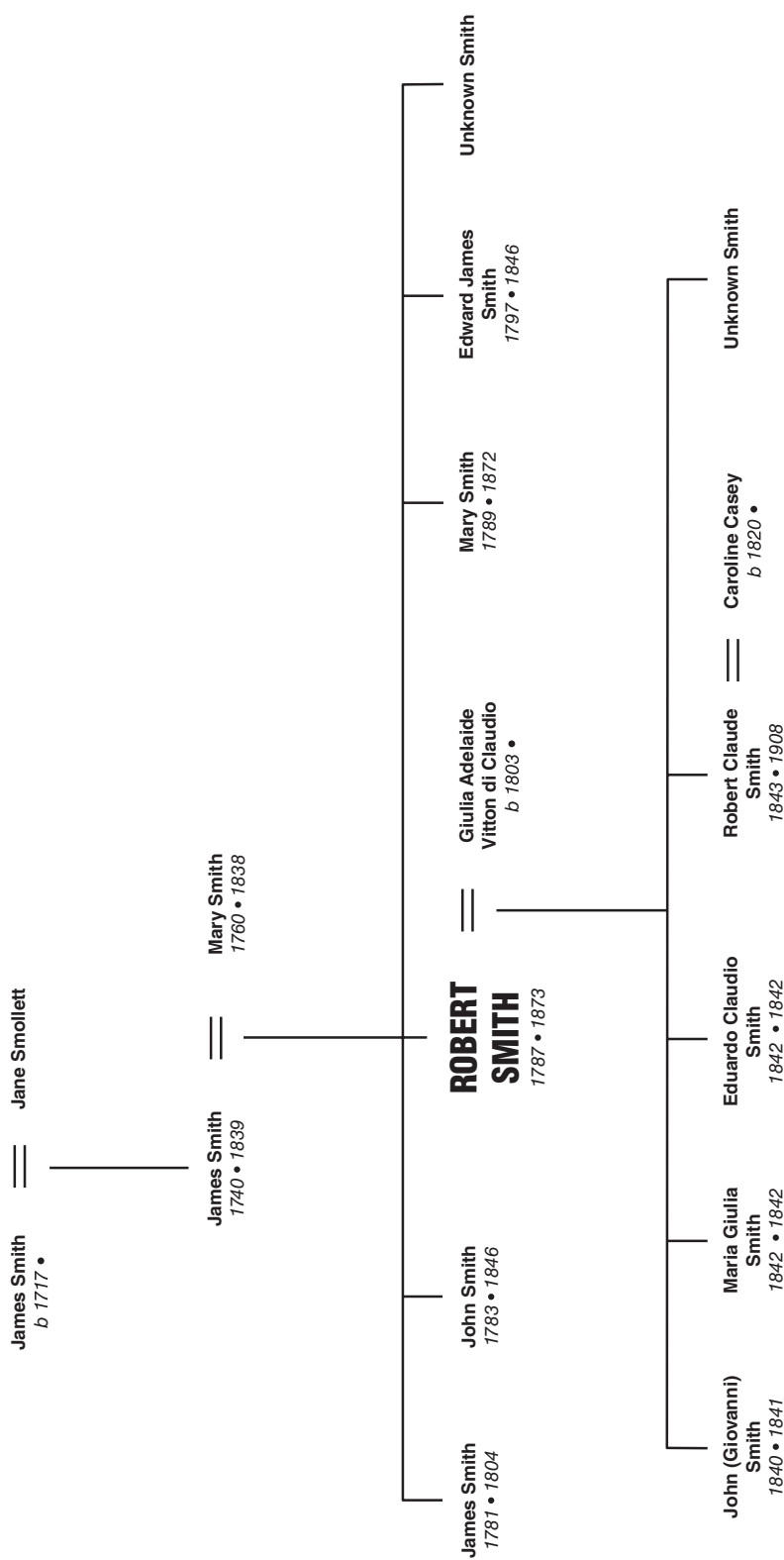


Table 3 The Family of Robert Smith (1787–1873).

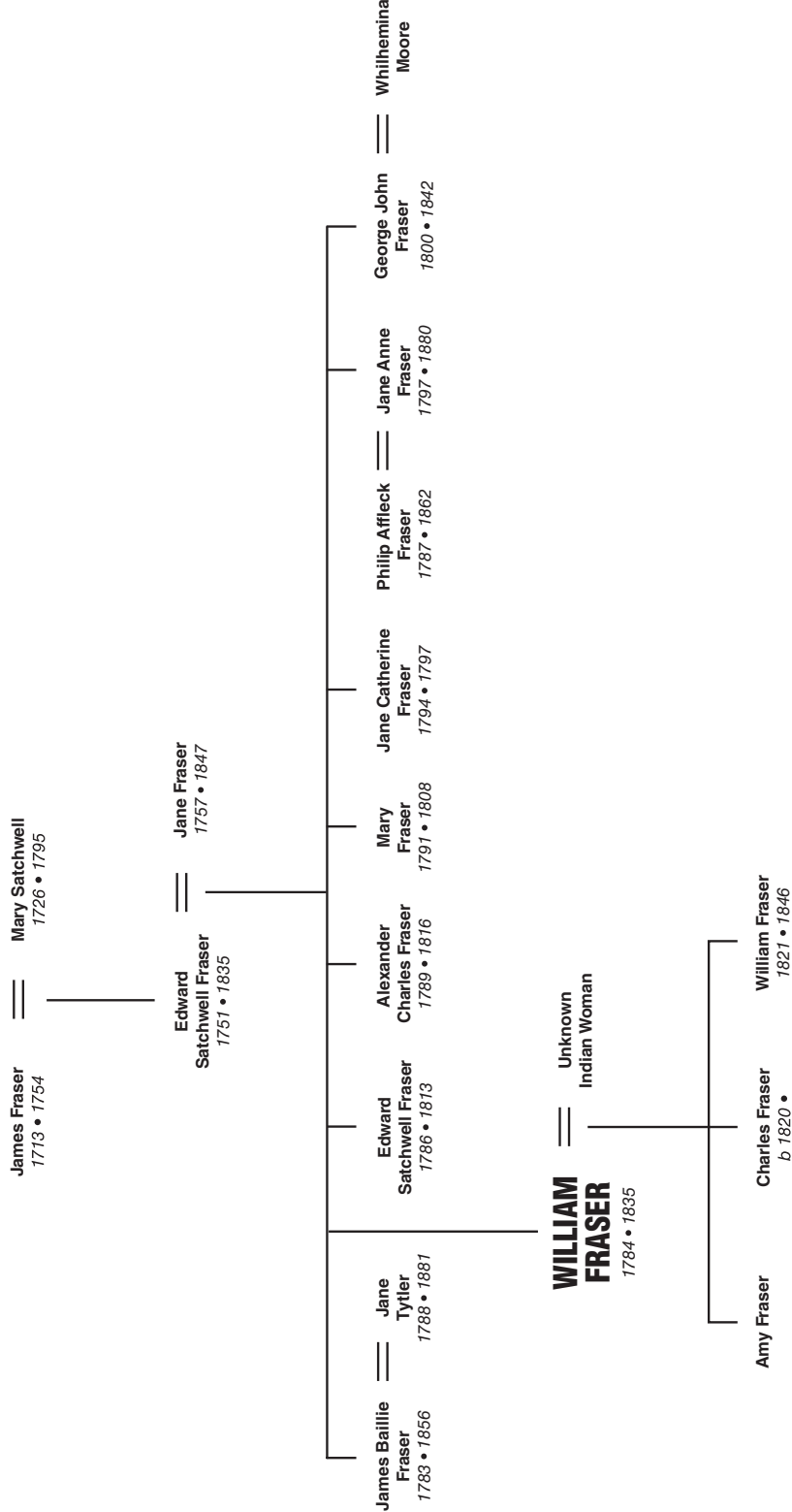


Table 4 The Family of William Fraser (1794–1835).

KNOWLEDGE OF DELHI: THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Houses, and the lives that were lived in them, are useful microcosms of history. Both houses and their contents can be used, directly and indirectly, as evidence in interpreting the underlying values and beliefs of the people who commissioned, built or used them.¹ Although houses are more often than not private places, they can help us understand the roles that the individuals associated with them might have played in broader historical chronologies. This book investigates the lives and building activities of five British East India Company officials who were resident in the Mughal capital, Delhi, in the first half of the nineteenth century: David Ochterlony (1783–1825), Charles Metcalfe (1785–1846), Robert Smith (1787–1873), William Fraser (1784–1835) and Thomas Theophilus Metcalfe (1794–1853). Through the vectors of their land transactions, their house-building and their collecting practices, it takes the ‘lives in building’ of these five men as a way to approach a deeper and more nuanced understanding of British attitudes in pre-Revolt Delhi. The study spans the period from 1803 to 1853; that is, from the time of the expulsion of the French-backed Maratha armies and the conquest of Delhi by the British Commander-in-Chief Gerard Lake in 1803 to the sudden death of the British Agent and Commissioner Thomas Theophilus Metcalfe in 1853. This fifty-year span was critical in the history of the already faltering East India Company. Deprived of its trading monopolies in Asia when its charter was renewed in 1813, the Company now assumed more and more of the bureaucratic responsibility for the administration of those parts of India under its control.² Focus turned now to ways to derive a greater share of the Company’s income from land revenue, and simultaneously British territorial expansion moved beyond Delhi in a slow and steady trajectory overland towards the north and west frontiers of the subcontinent.

¹ Jules Prown, ‘Mind in Matter’, *Winterthur Portfolio* 17 (1982), p. 1.

² See Anthony Webster, *The Twilight of the East India Company* (Woodbridge, 2009).

I have chosen for this study both private houses and the official Residencies from which Company business was conducted: sometimes the two categories merge into one. The houses can all be securely linked to my five subjects, each of whom served in the military or civil service of the Company and lived and worked in Delhi between 1803 and 1853. Grounded in the premise that value systems, principles and tenets are given shape in the built environment, I examine the choices the five men made about where to settle, how to design and build their houses, and how to live life in them. Many of the houses are either no longer extant or are inaccessible, but where the information is available I look at their plans and room function. The siting of the houses in larger settlement patterns shows the differing ways each of these individuals both related to and resisted the pre-existing spatial inscription of Delhi's Mughal built environment. Just as colonial knowledge production itself was a fluid and dynamic process, so individual encounters with day-to-day social practices demonstrate that colonisation was far more complex than the static exercise of hegemonic power. My case studies show the permeable distinctions between the official and the individual roles played by Company officials in Delhi at this time and call into question the strict categorisations of public and private that were now becoming firmly inscribed in domestic life in the home culture. If a house – even an official one – is an extension of the self, these five case studies allow me to compare the ways that both real and portable property defined the lives of my subjects. The way we organise domestic space is one of several languages embedded in social practice. For Michel de Certeau, houses are useful cultural texts, and by reading them we can 'explore the fault lines in a society's self-representations so that the ways in which that society's power to construct and control the identities, beliefs, aspirations and desires of its subjects can become explicit'.³ The houses, by extension, reveal both the specific encounters of the individuals under study with Indian culture in the city of Delhi over the fifty-year period and also the ways that their shifts in attitude came more closely to reflect the changing values of the larger cultural group to which they belonged.

At the start of the nineteenth century the city of Delhi, which had a symbolic and politically potent history, was virtually all that remained of the Mughal Empire, a once vast centralised state that from the early sixteenth century had grown to encompass more than two thirds of the Indian subcontinent. By 1803 this empire had dwindled in size to what Delhi's noted historian Percival Spear once described as 'little more than a sort of aristocratic city-state'.⁴ Moving into this diminished though still-fabled capital, the small group of East India Company officials who went there to administer

³ Simon Malpas, 'Historicism', in Paul Wake and Simon Malpas, eds, *The Routledge Companion to Critical and Cultural Theory*, 2nd edn (London, 2013), p. 66.

⁴ T.G. Percival Spear, *The Nabobs* (London, 1932), p. 26.

the business of the Company would often seek legitimacy through subliminal means. There were a number of ways that this was done. Among them was the appropriation of historic and strategically located buildings for adaptation and reuse. Another was through public ceremonial and participation in the rituals of the Mughal court, necessary for a smooth relationship with reigning emperors. Such practices had largely exhausted their usefulness in the successor states in those other parts of the country that were already firmly under British control. However, Delhi's royal status and the presence of the Mughal Emperor made them expedient to the aims of Company officials as they consolidated and expanded their hold on the land around the city and put into place the mechanisms to derive maximum income from it. Some senior Company officials also emulated the public and private social practices of the Mughal elite in ways that can be shown to have had far deeper personal meaning than political expediency.

Because Delhi was outside Company control until 1803, it is a useful and well-contained case study for exploring transformations in mentality that took place over an important fifty-year period during which the Company struggled to keep afloat. During this time, British attitudes towards India underwent a fundamental shift. Delhi in 1803, despite its historic and orientalist allure, was essentially a part of the hinterland of north India, and thought of by the British as something of a backwater when compared to Calcutta and the other established Presidency towns. These had already achieved a high degree of conformity based on adaptations of incoming norms and forms. The stranglehold of colonial culture came more slowly to Delhi, where there was still less pressure to conform, as well as a need for place-specific solutions to a variety of problems.⁵ This allowed for greater flexibility in individual behaviour. Yet even in Delhi, responses to the pre-existing built environment in the city differed from individual to individual. The decisions the five men made about their houses demonstrate a shift in mentalities during this short but critical period. Building in Delhi can thus be taken as a microcosm that gives an account of more widespread changes that would eventually result in a hardened politics of domination on the part of the British after the Revolt and during the period of Empire.

Since the first study on European building in India was published in the late 1960s, architectural historians have moved away from a tendency merely to catalogue assumptions about a core architectural culture transplanted to an Indian periphery, generally taking the form of an adaptation of neoclassical prototypes, less frequently of the neo-Gothic.⁶ More recent literature has concentrated instead on the conscious manipulation of the elements of style

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ The first important study was Sten Nilsson, *European Architecture in India, 1750–1850* (London, 1968).

from Indian architectural vocabularies in newly built, large-scale monumental public building during the later nineteenth century, when the British Empire sought legitimacy through the echoes of Mughal rule.⁷ It has also examined development in new suburban enclaves of standardised utilitarian typologies, particularly the bungalow, in settlements that expressed the roles and in turn reinforced the identities of their users.⁸ There has been almost no work on architecture in Delhi in the eighteenth century and very little on the early nineteenth. The individuals whose 'lives in building' I trace in this book did not automatically adopt either revival styles or new typologies, and they did not all conform. Instead, their houses embody a variety of choices, determined by their individual circumstances and locally inflected by building in the urban context they encountered in Delhi. The architectural story in Delhi is thus a distinctive one, revealing inherent contradictions within individual encounters.

The stories of my subjects' architectural choices are here juxtaposed with the circumstances of Delhi's administration by the Company. The apparent ease with which the British were able to dominate India has often raised questions of how indirect behaviour might have helped legitimate conquest. The development of a dynastic British cast of mind showed itself publicly in the increasingly large-scale ceremonial processions in India. The ritual ceremonies of the Mughal Empire comprised both public and private courtly activities inside the palace and highly public self-presentation in and around the city of Delhi. Public displays were echoed on a smaller scale on the city's streets by royal princes, who rode with entourages on spirited horses or in elaborate bullock carriages. The marriage processions of the city's wealthy merchants were a noticeable daily occurrence, and contemporary descriptions stress the cohesive significance of public ceremonial. Inside the court, there were deep-seated reasons for the structures of etiquette, ensuring the successful survival of the whole idea of the Mughal polity. Even in its decline, the court was attended by well-born neighbouring *navābs* and *rajas*.⁹ Their allegiance was especially important in a political climate where the power and control of the British posed an ever-increasing threat.

Within the context of their own changing knowledge of India, the British understood that the rituals of the Mughal court were not merely for show. We know from different representations – from written descriptions and from visual images – that the British participated quite seriously in Mughal court

⁷ Thomas R. Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj* (Berkeley, 1989).

⁸ Anthony King, *The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture* (London, 1984); Peter Scriver, 'Rationalization, Standardization, and Control in Design' (PhD dissertation, Delft Technical University, 1994).

⁹ See, for example, the large-scale painting on cloth, *Maharao Ram Singh of Kotah Visiting Bahadur Shah II* (c.1842), reproduced in Stuart Cary Welch, *India: Art and Culture, 1300–1900* (New York, 1985), pp. 284–86.

ritual and religious processions.¹⁰ While formal papers speak of increasing reluctance and impatience, and of a desire to reform the custom, private behaviour shows individual responses to Mughal ceremonial. Yet even as the officials of the nascent Raj were repelled, paradoxically the spectacles of the dwindling Mughal Empire would shape the grandiose and newly invented ritual British public self-presentations devised in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The spatial requirements of public ceremonial account at least in part for the way the British in Delhi overlaid themselves onto the established built environment. There have been studies of this in Lahore, also once an imperial capital.¹¹ Here, Mughal and later the Sikh Kingdoms had themselves already etched onto the landscape a memory of hierarchy and control through the placement of roads, monuments and, in particular, gardens. Mughal gardens were important markers of dynastic space. Early Mughal gardens have been read as a spatial opposition between the established citadels of the conquered and these new gardens themselves, which were, where possible, laid out on opposite river banks as signs of territorial victory and as statements of visible difference. Later gardens, also crucial to Mughal regnal definition, have been described as ‘nodes in an elite web of ceremonial movement’.¹² Both proclaimed differing stages of an absolutist system of rule. When the British laid out new settlements in Lahore after 1849, they took advantage of the resonance of both Mughal and Sikh settlement patterns, using a subliminal language of the histories of those they now controlled. They later marked out their own different territorial oppositions between the city, the civil or administrative spaces of government and the military space that reinforced it, along the web of new roads that linked the nodes in their landscape. But it was earlier, in Delhi, where the understanding of the deep-seated significance of Mughal spatial systems had been learned. The pattern of British settlement in Delhi, as will be demonstrated, was to make use of pre-existing ceremonial routes, incorporating elite palaces within the city itself and gardens in its suburban fringe.

Bernard Cohn has explored the adoption of Mughal ritual presentation of *nazr* and *khil'at*, participated in by the British if never clearly understood by them. (In court etiquette, a person tendering a *nazr* or gift was signifying submission to the ruler, who might reciprocate with a *khil'at* or robe of honour, a visible mark of his notice.) British participation in Mughal ceremonial can

¹⁰ There are several processional panoramas of public court ceremonial in the city. See, for example, *The Id Procession of Akbar II with Charles Metcalfe* (c.1815), India Office Prints, Drawings and Paintings, Add.Or.888, British Library. The painting is reproduced in Jeremiah P. Losty, ed., *Delhi, Red Fort to Raisina* (New Delhi, 2012), frontispiece.

¹¹ See William Glover, *Making Lahore Modern: Constructing and Imagining a Colonial City* (Minneapolis, 2008).

¹² James L. Wescoat and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, eds, *Mughal Gardens: Sources, Places, Representations and Prospects* (Washington D.C., 1996), p. 159.

be traced back to the *durbars* of eighteenth-century Bengal, or even to the cheerful processions of the seventeenth-century factory presidents in Gujarat, but it would burgeon to the heights of invention with elaborate new forms such as the Imperial Assemblage of 1877. The Raj would soon evolve into the most elaborate imperial hierarchy of all. As the early nineteenth century wore on and the novelty of the court wore off, British officials began to contemplate the Mughal court's transience and its ultimate uselessness. The authority of the Resident in Delhi increased between the time of the second term of David Ochterlony and that of Thomas Metcalfe, as the role grew from a hegemonic figure whose power rivalled, to one that soon supplanted, that of the Mughal. 'Rank and riches unsupported by the power of the Resident are of no avail', noted William Linnaeus Gardner as early as 1821.¹³

Mughal control had itself been achieved through a variety of subliminal means, including syncretic architectural practices, and evolving British knowledge of India's historic buildings would slowly reveal to them the usefulness of their preservation. Babur had asserted territorial distinctions by building enclosed gardens, and Akbar had made use of an eclectic indigenous architectural vocabulary to proclaim kingship over all Indians, grafting Hindu and other elements onto his architectural programmes. In the period of Shah Jahan, the monumental adaption of a particular form, the curving *bangla*, used for cornices and pavilion roofs, reinforced kingship connections with vernacular regional (Bengali) culture. These were all to a greater or lesser degree hybrid forms. Some of the houses I discuss below were newly built, but some were appropriations and adaptations of structures that were already standing. In a colonial context, the reuse of buildings, of the cultural landscape of the other, creates uncanny hybrid typologies that occupy a time and space in between cultures. This also begs the questions why were some buildings singled out to be put to new uses and what does their location in a changing urban landscape – one whose spatial logic is now often no longer easily discernible – have to tell us about the layered ways that relationships between colonisers and the colonised were constructed and negotiated? Reused Mughal domestic architecture and monumental religious buildings, I will demonstrate, were often located in places that, on closer examination, are found to have deep historic resonance. There are still many unexplored links between the mentalities of appropriation and nascent (and politicised) building preservation.

In any urban context, the location and scale of elite houses are revealing of ideas about rule. This book re-examines a widespread assumption that a desire to maintain separation was central to the colonial context. It argues instead that in this place and at this time – a time of instability for the

¹³ Letter 17, William Linnaeus Gardner to Edward Gardner, July 1820, Gardner papers, NAM.

Company – there was a complexity in the interrelationship between British and Mughal cultures, resulting in contradictions that often belie the idea of decline. This interrelationship produced, instead, a flourishing urban environment of a new and different kind: a time of surprising resurgence of culture and patronage of the arts in the city that included new, hybrid forms. This can be shown in the encounters of individuals working for the Company with the pre-existing built environment in Delhi: through the location of newly built houses; in the reuse of buildings; in the ways new buildings adopted traditional features; and in now hidden dimensions, including the ceremonial use of the built environment.

The history of colonialism is generally read as one of imposition and control. Yet unofficial histories, when closely analysed, reveal that it was also one of changing phases of assimilation and hybridity in the day-to-day lives of individual people. As Michael Fisher has noted in his study of the eccentric life of David Ochterlony Dyce Sombre, a frequent visitor to Delhi in his misspent youth, most commentators continue to stress the almost abstract ideas of the West and the East, tending to assign to each essentialist and indivisible characteristics.¹⁴ In an age of nation states it is easy to presume the correlation of ethnicities with borders. But real lives, the lives of individuals, almost always display multiple, fluid and context-specific characteristics that transcend categorisation. All lives are singular. There are distinctions between everyday practices and the social and political structures within which they are lived. These distinctions are often carefully constructed and manifest in choices about how to live, both publicly and privately.

To frame a physical context for the main subject of this book, I turn now to Delhi itself and to what we know of the city in the eighteenth century, immediately before the arrival of the East India Company. Present-day New Delhi, capital of the Indian Republic, straddles the Yamuna River, a snaking tributary of the Ganges, sprawling in all directions. But this is a relatively new development. Older settlements were on the western side of the river, contained within a strategically secure wedge of land formed to the west by the northern end of the Aravalli range (known as the Ridge by the British), a low rocky spine that runs north-east towards a bend in the river, and by a spur of the same range that met the river to the east. Together, the Ridge and the Yamuna formed a natural defensive barrier to a sheltered, 60-square-mile area known as the Delhi Triangle. This was at a strategic point in the larger fertile plain or *doab* between the Yamuna and Indus rivers. Invaders coming into the subcontinent from the north-west through the Khyber Pass, as most had done before the slow incursions of the East India Company from their

¹⁴ Michael Fisher, *The Inordinately Strange Life of Dyce Sombre: Victorian Anglo-Indian MP and a 'Chancery Lunatic'* (New York, 2010), pp. 2, 7.

main coastal trading posts, found rich grasslands essential for their horses, and it was here they massed their forces for forays into other parts of the country.

Delhi is best understood as a succession of settlements that served, one after the other, the needs for security, prestige and permanence during the epochs of nearly every conqueror in north India's history over a period of more than a thousand years. It dates in the popular imagination to the quasi-legendary city of Indraprastha, believed by some to lie beneath the site of present-day Purana Qil'a. The earliest archaeologically and historically secure cities in the Delhi Triangle are those of the Tomar Rajput ruler Anang Pal, who built Lal Kot in 1052 AD, and the Chauhan Rajput ruler Prithviraj, who later built Qil'a Rai Pithora encompassing and extending the Lal Kot settlement. Both are located in the south and west of the Delhi Triangle, near the present-day urban village of Mehrauli, an area dense with historic ruins. Mamluk invasions of Hindustan from 1192 marked the beginning of a succession of outsider occupations in the Delhi Triangle. The cities of the incoming groups overlaid the Rajput sites and then extended to the east and the north. Khalji and Tughluq Turks, Lodis and Suri Afghans all chose the region for their principal dynastic cities in India, and as many as six more Delhis can be verified between 1206, when the Delhi Sultanate was established, and the beginnings of the planned Mughal city of Shahjahanabad in 1638. At the beginning of the seventeenth century the area encompassed by partially discarded settlement stretched from Surajkund in the south to Firozabad, the first city to be located on the bank of the constantly shifting Yamuna River, to the north.

Zahir al-Din Babur (r.1526–30), a descendant of both Genghis Khan and Timur, invaded Hindustan in 1526 and founded the Mughal dynasty. Though his territory soon extended from Kabul to Bihar, Babur did not build at Delhi, but chose Agra, capital of the Lodi dynasty he had defeated, as his principal city. His son and successor, Humayun (r.1530–43 and 1555–56), began a new riverine city at Delhi in 1533 known as Din-Panah. The site chosen by Humayun was close to the fourteenth-century shrine of an important Sufi saint of the mystic Chishti order, Nizam al-Din Auliya. Then and later the Mughals would legitimise their rule through ritual connection to significant Sufi sites in Delhi.¹⁵ Humayun's city was probably never completed, and it was occupied and overbuilt by the Afghan Suris who interrupted Mughal rule for fifteen years from 1540. It was well enough established for a thriving population to be noted in about 1630, immediately before the construction of Shahjahanabad was begun, when the city was reported to be two *kos* in length.¹⁶

¹⁵ See Ebba Koch, 'Mughal Palace Gardens from Babur to Shah Jahan, 1526–1648', *Muqarnas* 14 (1997), pp. 143–65.

¹⁶ Joannes de Laet (tr. J.S. Hoyland and S.N. Banerjee), *Empire of the Great Mogol: A Translation of de Laet's Description of India and Fragment of Indian History* (reprinted Delhi, 1975), p. 48.

The great and enduring city that was subsequently built by the sixth Mughal emperor, Shah Jahan (r.1628–58), was to be the principal residence for the Mughal court from that time and was designed to express the strength of the Emperor's rule in architecture.¹⁷ Shah Jahan consolidated his power by moving the court back to Delhi, a strategy which the British would emulate in the early twentieth century with New Delhi, their expansive imperial beaux-arts city. Its site was chosen for historic and geographic reasons. Shahjahanabad was located to the north of Din-Panah and Firozabad, on the bank of the Yamuna and adjacent to a small extant island fortress, Selimgarh, built earlier by the Tughluqs and used by prior Mughal emperors on their periodic visits to Delhi's Sufi shrines.¹⁸ This was then the most northerly point at which the river could be easily navigated for commerce, yet where it could be bridged by boats or forded in very dry seasons. Pre-existing structures, including the Tughluq-period Kalan Masjid, were incorporated into the city plan. The organisation of the new city was also in part determined by existing roads. The site was already a place of pilgrimage, and routes ran out to the fourteenth-century Sufi shrines south of Delhi, at Nizamuddin and further south-west at Mehrauli. Tree-lined long-distance routes to Lahore, Ajmer, Kashmir and Agra, and the route that had run from Firoz Shah's *kotla* in Firozabad to the Jahanuma (his hunting box on the northern end of the Ridge), were all incorporated into the extensions of its street system.

The foundations of Shah Jahan's palace, known today as the Red Fort or Lal Qil'a and in contemporary court documents as Qil'a Mualla or Exalted Fortress, were laid in 1639 and the palace was largely complete by 1648. Shah Jahan had had the experience in the first decade of his rule of adding to and adapting the royal palaces in both Agra and Lahore before he turned his attention to his own new city. He now constructed a lavish palace/citadel of more than 125 acres. It occupied a low bluff overlooking the river along the eastern edge of the new city. Rigidly geometric in design, it formed an irregular octagon with a triangular appendage to its north-west, incorporating the pre-existing Selimgarh. Enclosed in high red sandstone walls, the palace had two main ceremonial gates, the Lahori Gate to the west and the Delhi Gate to the south, so called because it led to routes that passed the ruins of Firozabad and the older Delhis. The large palace complex was designed with open ceremonial and private pavilions and leisure gardens that functioned as open-air rooms.¹⁹

¹⁷ The essential source for the history of the city, drawing on both Persian and English-language primary sources, is Stephen P. Blake, *Shahjahanabad, the Sovereign City in Mughal India, 1639–1739* (Cambridge, 1991).

¹⁸ Ebba Koch, 'The Delhi of the Mughals Prior to Shahjahanabad as Reflected in the Patterns of Imperial Visits', in A.J. Qaisar and S.P. Verna, eds, *Art and Culture: Felicitation Volume in Honour of Professor S. Nurul Hasan* (Jaipur, 1993), pp. 3–20.

¹⁹ Blake, *Shahjahanabad*, p. 175. In 1650 the imperial household comprised 57,000 people:

The city of Shahjahanabad was also surrounded by a protective wall, built from 1651, with nine gates, also named for the places to which they led. The principal city gates were on an axis with the gates of the palace. These stood at the far end of two broad, Isfahani-influenced streets, Chandni Chowk and Faiz Bazaar, each of which had a central watercourse that ran its length, fed by a main canal that brought water into the city at its north-west corner. There were nodes that determined the formal organisation of the city including a congregational mosque (*Jama Masjid*), linked by a processional route to the Delhi Gate of the palace. The *Jama Masjid* and lesser mosques formed centres of the principal residential quarters in the city. The two main streets and four additional ones that radiated in all directions from the *Jama Masjid* linked the city's major monuments and neighbourhoods or *mahallas*. Another street ran from the Lahore Gate of the palace to the Kashmir Gate of the city to the north, past the principal sub-imperial palaces.

Close to the palace, on the choicest lots of riverside land, were the most prestigious of these sub-imperial palaces. Building near water was preferred by the Mughal elite, but river-front property in Shahjahanabad was at a premium. There was not the option, as there had been at Agra, for palaces on the river opposite the royal palace because of seasonal flooding of the Yamuna and its shifting habit. In the seventeenth century only a short stretch of the western bank of the river provided stable enough conditions for riverine palaces. These were sited both to the north and to the south of the imperial palace within the city walls, on land that was raised up slightly from ground level. At key locations throughout the city, near its walls, clustered around the *Jama Masjid* or in the residential quarters, were more palaces and mansions (*haveli*) of nobles and wealthy merchants, built on land deeded to them by the Emperor. Along with local mosques, these courtyard houses formed the nuclei of the city's thirty-six *mahallas* or neighbourhoods, named for the occupations of their populations, or after the principal families living there.²⁰ The finer grain of the urban fabric was not planned but instead grew organically over time. Then, as now, there was a striking difference between the controlled regularity of the planned parts of the city and the irregular and organic in-fill that comprised the built environment of its ordinary citizens.

Gardens were integral to the design of the city, with several large gardens within Shahjahanabad's walls. The palace itself was ringed with royal gardens, and beside one of these, the Buland Bagh, were large open encampment grounds for the imperial guard. In the very centre of the city the Sahibabad, a large, semi-public, Persianate planned garden with an adjacent *serai* for

10,000 cavalymen; 30,000 servants and dependants; 10,000 artillerymen and musketeers; 7,000 family members, clerks, officials and other non-military persons.

²⁰ See Jyoti Hosagrahar, *Indigenous Modernities: Negotiating Architecture and Urbanism* (London, 2005), chapter two, for an analysis of the fragmentation of another *haveli*, that of Qamar al-Din Khan, a nobleman in the service of Muhammed Shah (r.1718–48).

the accommodation of travellers, had been endowed by Jahanara Begum, a daughter of Shah Jahan. Many more private gardens graced the city, and all were dependent on the waters of the canal. They formed micro-environments that made the very hot, arid early summers of the northern plains a little more tolerable. They also made visible to the public the status and prestige of those people who had endowed them.

The greater Delhi of Shah Jahan's time comprised not only the planned, walled city with its enclosed palace, but also unplanned scattered villages, as well as the still-occupied remains of previous cities around it, covering a large area. It included pockets of settlement or urban villages that formed themselves often around wholesale markets on roads leading to the city gates and close to the city walls, essential to the functioning of the city itself. The more distant ruins of the prior cities of Delhi were also interspersed with royal or elite gardens and hunting reserves for the *shikār*. It was a courtly Mughal convention to ride out to gardens to take the air, and there were many gardens with pavilions, both imperial and sub-imperial, located in Shahjahanabad's suburban fringe. Gardens with or without pavilions had also been built to serve as staging posts for encampment, spaced a day's march apart. Principal royal halting places were commonly a short half-day's march from the final destination in a city, and the imperial garden closest to the city was the most important.²¹ Shah Jahan's court was seldom static, and when the Emperor moved it was with a huge entourage calculated to impress his status on his subjects and his might on his enemies. The vast scale of the court procession, the sublime cortege, had been described in the 1630s by the traveller Peter Mundy: 'All the face of the earth, soe farr as wee could see, was covered with people, troops of horses, Eliphants, etts., with innumerable flaggs small and great.'²² Miniature paintings of the period often documented such processions.

Many of Delhi's extramural pleasure gardens were concentrated to the north-west of the city, extending for a number of miles. There was a cluster of them along a strip of land beside the processional route to Lahore on either side of the banks of the broad canal that fed the city and palace. The numerous gardens along the canal, which are not yet well understood, suggest that the canal functioned as an alternative to the eastern bank of the unstable Yamuna River. Shah Jahan himself had a favourite garden on this route, the Shalimar Bagh, at a half-day's march from his palace. It would later be appropriated by incoming Company officials. The useful canal that

²¹ The Shalimar Garden in Lahore, for example, served this dual function. See James L. Wescoat, in Sajjad Kausar, Michael Brand and James L. Wescoat Jr., *Shalimar Garden, Lahore: Landscape, Form and Meaning* (Karachi, 1990), pp. 12ff.

²² Peter Mundy, *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608–1667* (London, 1934), quoted in Milo C. Beach and Ebba Koch, *King of the World: The Padshahnama, An Imperial Mughal Manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle* (Washington D.C., 1997).

augmented Delhi's river water ran for ninety or more miles from above Panipat to Delhi, passing through the city and the palace before spilling back out further down the Yamuna River. Begun by Firoz Shah Tughluq, the canal had been improved upon and extended in Shah Jahan's time by his *vazīr*, Ali Mardan Khan. Royal endowment of waterworks, including wells and *baolis*, was an important pre-Mughal tradition in India continued by the Mughals. As the canal approached Delhi, its sides were lined by formal gardens with garden pavilions, set against lush irrigated land. In addition to the gardens along the canal, there were palaces and gardens within their own enclosed walls to the south of the city on the road that led past the earlier Delhis and on towards Agra. They were described by eighteenth-century travellers, and their vestiges are visible in British-period maps of the area, as are the vestiges of the earlier cities themselves.²³ Mughal gardens were not merely pleasure gardens. The political significance of early Mughal gardens in the settlement of Hindustan, as separate from fortifications and citadels, has been seen as a territorial symbol of control.²⁴ A *chārbāgh* was often a garden to ride out to in a visible display of pomp and authority, not merely for the ruler but also for the powerful *umarā* and officials of the Mughal court. Nobles' pleasure gardens were used in life and sometimes after death for burial. This, then, was the landscape in and around Shah Jahan's city in the seventeenth century: a walled palace within a walled city with an active suburban fringe that contained gardens and tombs in gardens. The form of his city, including its wide processional roads, supported the elaborate spectacle and public ceremonial that were visible manifestations of Mughal political organisation.

In order to understand the effects that British settlement would have on the fabric of Shahjahanabad and its surroundings, we need to think beyond how the city was during the seventeenth century, the century of its construction, and to try to visualise the changes it had subsequently undergone. What was Delhi like in the eighteenth century? What was its condition when the Company arrived in 1803? Although historians have sought in recent years to portray north India in the eighteenth century outside of the stereotype of waves of invasion and times of trouble, there is nevertheless evidence that Shahjahanabad was in a sorry state at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It had been subjected to more than fifty years of virtual anarchy.²⁵ During the rule of Shah Jahan's son and successor, the sixth Great Mughal, Aurangzeb (r.1658–1707), the empire had reached its territorial limit and

²³ *Cantonment, City and Environs of Delhi 1867–1868*, scale, 12 inches = 1 mile, O/V/1, India Office Records (hereafter IOR), British Library.

²⁴ James Wescoat, 'Gardens versus Citadels: The Territorial Context of Early Mughal Gardens', in John Dixon Hunt, ed., *Garden History: Issues, Approaches, Methods* (Washington D.C., 1992), pp. 331ff.

²⁵ Sylvia Shorto, '"That Ravaged City": Shahjahanabad in 1803', in A. Petruccioli, M. Stella and G. Strappa, eds, *The Planned City?* (Bari, 2003), pp. 1192–98.

occupied more than two thirds of the subcontinent. The campaigns necessary to achieve this expansion, however, had strained available fiscal resources to the limit. A hundred years later, at the close of the eighteenth century, the once great empire had effectively been reduced to the city of Delhi and its surrounding countryside, an area of about 50 square miles. The slow process of fragmentation and decline began after the death of Aurangzeb, and by the time the British took possession of Delhi after the battle of Panipat in 1803, it had already been subjected to nearly a century of invasions. These, and natural, disasters had left it greatly changed.

In 1739 the Persian Nadir Shah famously occupied, sacked and looted Delhi.²⁶ However, destruction from the subsequent waves of invasions by competing groups that beset the city compounded, and may have exceeded, this initial disaster. After the withdrawal of Nadir Shah came the repeated incursions of the Afghani Ahmad Khan Abdali. There was a civil war in 1753 when Safdar Jang, then the *subahdār* (regional governor) of Awadh, challenged the Emperor, Ahmed Shah, over pay for the Maratha army. Safdar Jang then encouraged Jats to destroy the suburbs of the city, and from this time these suburbs were considered unsafe. Travellers' descriptions of the route between Agra and Delhi stress the desolate and uninhabited aspect of the countryside to the south long after this. There were continued Jat raids and raids by other tribal groups in the suburbs until the early part of the British period. After the mid-century war, the city underwent more social disruption and physical change. In 1757, Ahmad Khan Abdali raided Delhi twice more, took possession of the palace and forced the Emperor out into the Qudsia Bagh (see below). According to the memoirs of Jean Law de Lauriston, the French Governor of Pondicherry who had travelled in Maratha-held territory, by 1758 Shahjahanabad was like a desert.²⁷ Yet it was the subsequent troubles of the years 1759 to 1761 that marked a political watershed, when the empire, already weakened, was so reduced it could not withstand invasion.²⁸ The Maratha confederacy captured the city in 1759 but was soon challenged again for its possession by Ahmad Khan Abdali. Najib al-Daula Khan, leader of the Rohilla Afghan allies, was left in charge of the city and the Emperor, Shah Alam II, fled to Awadh, spending more than ten years in exile, for part of this time under the protection of the British at Allahabad. He returned to Shahjahanabad in 1770 with the help of the Marathas, now his allies, and with the bold Persian adventurer Najaf Khan as chief of his army he succeeded in carving out a small kingdom around the city. But Delhi was broken in spirit and lay in ruins.

²⁶ Blake, *Shahjahanabad*, p. 162, cites the records of the city's Jesuits, who lost two churches in the fires.

²⁷ Jean Law, *Mémoires sur Quelques Affaires de l'Empire Mogol 1756–1761* (Paris, 1913), pp. 354, 509.

²⁸ T.G. Percival Spear, *Twilight of the Mughuls: Studies in Late Mughul Delhi* (Cambridge, 1951), p. 13.

In 1784 the Maratha leader Mahadji Scindia took the Emperor under his protection. Scindia, with the assistance of a disciplined French mercenary army based at nearby Aligarh and commanded by the energetic General Benoit de Boigne, now essentially controlled Delhi and its ruler. But the troubles went on. A drought and severe famine in the Delhi territories that year decimated the population. In 1787, Rohilla Afghans under Ghulam Qadir defeated the Marathas, looted the palace and blinded Shah Alam in a symbolic act designed to render him politically impotent. In 1788 Scindia recaptured the city and Shah Alam finally accepted the Marathas as his formal protectors. With Delhi in the hands of the Marathas there was relative tranquillity for fifteen years until the British arrival, though Gujjar herdsman penetrated the previously fertile areas that had once been irrigated by the canal to the north and west of the city and Jats still raided the suburbs to the south. Beleaguered Delhi, though still the titular seat of empire, was diminished and exhausted. There was a local saying that reflected the shrunken Mughal realm: 'The realm of Shah Alam is from Delhi to Palam.'²⁹ Palam, near the present-day New Delhi airport, was then one of the imperial hunting grounds, but this was of relatively little use to a blind emperor.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the business of the East India Company was advanced by conquest as British occupation of the subcontinent moved in a steady, unrelenting arc up the Gangetic Plain towards the North-West Frontier. Delhi was taken for the British in September 1803 after the defeat of the faction of the French-backed Maratha army that had previously had control of the immediate area. The reigning Emperor Shah Alam II, who was the notional ruler of both the conflicting factions, British and Maratha, now signed a treaty with the British, the stronger force, to ensure what he judged would be the better protection of the fragmentary remains of his territory. Shah Alam II, however, had no illusions about the reputation of the British, who, after the devolution of power in Bengal by the grant of *dāwānī* in 1765, had already ended up in possession of the wealth and government of much of the subcontinent. Like his watchful predecessors, he knew that it was '[their] invariable custom ... in whatever country they are allowed to reside under fixed stipulations, speedily to seize upon that country'.³⁰ Shah Alam II died in 1806 after the British had been in Delhi for little more than three years, so it was his two successors who would see the inevitable results of this decision.

Delhi had now entered into a transitory period in its history which has been variously described as the Golden Calm, the Frozen Peace or the

²⁹ Quoted in Frances W. Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness: Urdu Poetry and its Critics* (Berkeley, 1994), p. 3.

³⁰ IOR H Home and Miscellaneous papers, 1803–34, vol. 492, pp. 251f., British Library.

Twilight.³¹ This last, widely accepted, designation was originated by historian Percival Spear. Scholars in a number of fields, including South Asian history, Urdu literature and both Indian miniature and Company School painting, have recently begun a re-evaluation of the idea that the Twilight was a period of intellectual decline.³² While this is still the consensual term for the final waning of the city's Mughal polity, it has also been argued that there was creative transformation in the changes that occurred.³³ In the fifty-odd years after 1803, a fresh burst of activity was generated by increased intercultural contact and a mingling of elements of British and Mughal society at a time when the fortunes of the city took an altered course.

In the eighteenth century many of Delhi's nobles and the craftsmen they had supported had fled to Lucknow or to other successor states, where they hoped to live more productive lives. But the arrival of the British presented a new, albeit a different, kind of patronage. There was patronage too from emerging Jain and Hindu middle classes whose presence had already begun to have an impact in north India's cities in the previous century.³⁴ Delhi became affluent enough once again to support both a late flowering of its traditions and to create new, hybridised forms. 'In those days, before the Mutiny, Delhi was in a very prosperous state,' wrote a contemporary nobleman, *nawvāb* Server-ul-Mulk Bahadur. 'From the artisans to the poets, learned men and *mashayaks*, people from distant countries assembled there.'³⁵ The well-to-do and learned passed their lives without worry, he tells us, though he also noted a sumptuous and superficial quality to the changes that were happening. Delhi's inhabitants appeared to be opulent when in fact they were starving.³⁶ But their practice of making conspicuous public display was well noted by the incoming British.

Exactly what did the British encounter when they arrived in the city? There is no secondary literature by architectural historians that details the

³¹ For the history of Delhi in this period, see Spear, *Twilight*; Narayani Gupta, *Delhi between Two Empires* (New Delhi, 1981), chapter one; and the relevant essays in Robert Eric Frykenberg, ed., *Delhi through the Ages: Selected Essays in Urban History, Culture and Society* (Oxford and Delhi, 1993).

³² Of particular interest for its analysis of intellectual currents in nineteenth-century Delhi is the work of Margrit Pernau, for example, 'The Delhi Urdu Akhbār Between Persian Akhbārāt and English Newspapers', *The Annual of Urdu Studies* 18 (2003), pp. 105–31; and the essays in her edited volume, *The Delhi College: Traditional Elites, the Colonial State, and Education before 1857* (Oxford and Delhi, 2006). See also C.M. Naim, 'Syed Ahmad Khan and his Two Books Called Athar-as-Sanadid', *Modern Asian Studies* 45:3 (2011), pp. 669–708.

³³ See Chanchal Dadlani, 'The "Palais Indiens" of 1774: Representing Mughal Architecture in Eighteenth-Century India', *Ars Orientalis* 39 (2011), pp. 175–97.

³⁴ See in particular, C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770–1870* (Cambridge, 1983).

³⁵ Server ul-Mulk, *My Life: The Autobiography of Nawab Server-ul-Mulk Bahadur* (London, 1932), p. 41.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

built environment in eighteenth-century Delhi, perhaps because there was little new monumental building in that century, which is what that discipline once tended to focus on to the exclusion of the changing urban environments of the less wealthy. Christopher Bayley and other historians have shown how there was movement away from Delhi to newly wealthy successor states like Awadh, as well as to smaller country towns, during the city's decline. As Bayley points out, it is important to differentiate between physical deterioration and a culture in decline, and he suggests that either one may indicate a change in the locus of culture.³⁷ There are, however, a number of documentary sources which help us piece together an idea of Delhi in the period immediately before 1803. They include contemporary histories and one contemporary diary, the elegies of Urdu poets lamenting the condition of their city, and some European travellers' accounts. In addition, Mughal and later British maps of Delhi give a framework against which to try to validate these unnecessarily subjective written descriptions. Most useful are a British sketch map dated 1807, a detailed map of intramural Shahjahanabad dated to about 1845 which is annotated with the names of places, and the first British ordnance survey map of 1868.³⁸

Delhi at the end of the eighteenth century was increasingly populated not by the Mughal elite that had created it, but by non-Muslim, middle-class merchants. There had been large-scale emigration from the city to the independent successor states that had coalesced during the period of Mughal decline. In the later eighteenth century, many people moved to Bengal. Artisans associated with court production sought employment at Awadh, at the growing court of Shuja ud-Daula at Faizabad (later at Lucknow); and so cultural and familial ties with Awadh were strong. Merchants moved to Agra and carpet weavers to Patna. There was now a corresponding large-scale migration into Delhi by Jain craftsmen from Panjab and Rajasthan. But despite these radical changes to the social fabric of the city, it remained the seat of the Mughal court, its high culture still following established courtly conventions.

One source of information on the city is through poetry. Delhi in the eighteenth century had a distinctive literary culture, and it is in the genre of poignant and self-referential poems known as *shahr āshob* or ruined-city poems by its Urdu poets that we find clues about how the contemporary fate of the

³⁷ C.A. Bayly, 'Delhi and other Cities of North India during the "Twilight"', in Frykenberg, *Delhi through The Ages*, p. 121.

³⁸ The maps are Francis Sellon White, *Sketch of the Environs of Delhi*, c. 1807, inscribed in English and in Hindi, E/VII/16, National Archives of India (hereafter NAI), reprinted by the Survey of India; IOR X/1659, British Library, published with translated inscriptions by Eckart Ehlers and Thomas Krafft, eds, *Shahjahanabad, Old Delhi: Tradition and Colonial Change* (Stuttgart, 1992); and British Library, Map Division, O/V/1, *Cantonment, City and Environs of Delhi 1867–1868*, scale, 12 inches = 1 mile (Calcutta, 1871).

city was experienced in the century of destruction, as well as in the nineteenth century before the Revolt. *Shahr āshob* have been described as ‘an unending lamentation for an upset society’.³⁹ The poems express a mood of resignation as the poet as chronicler of his times laid bare his emotional responses to the deteriorating conditions that he saw around him. Delhi poets writing in this style included Mirza Muhammed Rafi (1713–80), whose *takhallus* (pen-name) was Sauda, and Muhammed Taqi Mīr (1722–1810). Sauda, who left Delhi in 1757, wrote two lengthy poems that satirised the corruption of the city and mourned the loss of its past prosperity and social order.⁴⁰ He also wrote a prose satire on the changing conditions of the late Mughal Empire, expressing deep sadness at the passing of the city’s glory days:

How can I describe the desolation of Delhi? There is no house from whence a jackal’s cry cannot be heard. The mosques at evening are unlit and deserted, and in only one house in a hundred will you see a light burning ... The lovely buildings, which once made a famished man forget his hunger, are in ruins now. In the once beautiful gardens where the nightingale sang his love song to the rose, the grass grows waist-high around the fallen pillars and ruined arches.⁴¹

Sauda’s works also include valuable social descriptions of the impoverishment of the *‘umarā* and of the radically changed circumstances of their lives. In touching on these themes, the poet asked the wistful rhetorical question, was this devastation what Delhi deserved?

Similarly, the poet Mīr, miserable and homesick in his self-imposed exile at the court of Awadh from 1782, wrote of the fall of Delhi in both his poems and his valuable autobiography, the *Ẓikr-i Mīr*, as if it were the end of an era in civilisation.⁴² ‘This age is not like that which went before it. The times have changed; the earth and sky have changed,’ he lamented.⁴³ And he wrote of the ‘ravaged city’ that he contrasted with the past days of Shahjahanabad’s splendour:

There was a city famed throughout the world;
Where dwelt the chosen spirits of the age:
Delhi its name, fairest among the fair.
Fate looted it and laid it desolate;
And to that ravaged city I belong.⁴⁴

³⁹ Iqtida Hasan, ‘Later Mughals as Represented in Urdu Poetry: A Study in the Light of the Shahr Ashobs from Hatim, Sauda and Nazir’, *Annali Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli*, New Series 9 (1959), pp. 131–53.

⁴⁰ They are *Qaṣīda-i Shahr Āshob* and *Mukhammas-i Shahr Āshob*.

⁴¹ Sauda (Mirza Muhammad Rafi), cited in Ralph Russell and Khurshidul Islam, *Three Mughal Poets: Mīr, Sauda, Mīr Hasan* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), p. 67.

⁴² See M.M.T. Mīr (tr. C.M. Naim), *Ẓikr-i Mīr, The Autobiography of the Eighteenth Century Mughal Poet Mir Muhammad Taqi Mīr (1723–1810)* (Oxford and New Delhi, 1999).

⁴³ Mīr, cited in Russell and Islam, *Three Mughal Poets*, p. 22.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

Because of Delhi's status as imperial capital, there were always curious European visitors to the city. In addition to the accounts of its saddened Urdu poets, a bankrupt French nobleman, a Swiss engineer and three English functionaries were among those who described the circumstances of the city in the quarter century before the British defeat of the Marathas. In their accounts we find descriptions that, though written in different literary genres and for very different reasons, are connected to those of the poets. These sources give both generalised information and some useful particulars. In 1775, a French traveller, the Comte de Modave, estimated that a third of Shahjahanabad lay in ruins.⁴⁵ Significantly for this book, he described the diminished state of the court as being 'born of real poverty and not a weakening of the taste for external pomp'.⁴⁶ The urban environment, he said, also bore 'sad marks of ... past calamities'.⁴⁷ Even in the suburbs no building was left unscathed.

Antoine Polier, a Swiss engineer in the service of the *navvāb* Asaf ud-Daula at the court of Awadh, visited Delhi a year later, in 1776. In a letter to Colonel Ironside of the Company's army, Polier attributed the destruction that he saw in the city to Najib al-Daula Khan's Rohilla Afghans, likening them to 'pestilential gales'. He described the gardens that once surrounded the city as having 'scarcely a tree left standing' and the city itself as 'much fallen'.⁴⁸ Polier reported that the houses of the great nobles were in ruins, 'their woodwork and beams having served for fuel to the Mahrattas and Rohillas'. Polier had stayed in what had been one of Delhi's principal mansions, that of the powerful Qamar al-Din Khan, the *vazīr* to Muhammed Shah from 1724 to 1748, near the Ajmer Gate of the city. 'The house, though much decayed, still shows what it was, and the opulence of its master,' wrote Polier. 'It is certain a good estate might be bought for only what has been expended on gilding, from which you may judge the rest.'⁴⁹ The son of the Khan had fallen on very hard times, and Polier said he was '... in the deepest want of everything'. He inhabited 'a wretched dwelling on the outside of this house, which in the time of his father one of the servants would have disdained to live in'.⁵⁰

An observant Scottish naturalist and writer for the East India Company, James Forbes (1749–1819), arrived in Delhi by the southerly route that led from Agra to the Delhi Gate of Shahjahanabad late in the 1770s. 'The ruins of serais, mosques, mausoleums, and other magnificent structures commenced about three or four miles before the entrance to the present city,' he wrote,

⁴⁵ Comte de Modave, as cited by Jadunath Sarkar, 'The Delhi Empire a Century after Bernier', *Islamic Culture* 11:3 (1937), pp. 382–92.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Colonel Polier's letter was reprinted in the *Asiatic Annual Register* 2 (1800), pp. 29ff.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

commenting in particular on the ‘melancholy heaps’ around Humayun’s tomb, south of Din-Panah.⁵¹ We are indebted to Forbes’s innate nosiness, as it resulted in detailed descriptions of a terraced extramural garden with adapted pavilions in the area south of the city, taken from the journal of a peripatetic East India Company surgeon, Thomas Cruso:

On approaching the new city we passed several extensive gardens, but the owners not being able to afford gardeners, have built up gateways to prevent the entrance of cattle and the destruction of the pleasure-houses; the walls being very high we could not see the interior. At length we reached a garden belonging to an *omrah* [sic] still in power; this being open and well taken care of, I had the curiosity to alight and was highly gratified with the view of a large square, laid out with some degree of taste in beds of flowers surrounded by a number of dwarf pomegranate trees ... from thence we descended by many steps into another garden of similar dimensions, with an arcaded walk on one side shaded by grape vines ... This second garden was thickly planted with fruit trees ...⁵²

He also gave a detailed description of the layout and decoration of the palace within the city walls where he and his party stayed. Owned by the descendants of Safdar Jang of Awadh, it was part of a large modular complex of pavilions and gardens, which included a mirrored *shish mahal*:

In the evening on taking a more complete view of this Mogul mansion, we were surprised to find the apartments just mentioned formed only a very small part of this immense pile, which occupies six squares, corresponding with that in which we immediately reside ... The hall which we converted into a dining room was a square of 63ft, opening in front onto a pretty garden and backwards towards a large tank, paved with marble for cold bathing. Two rows of pillars in front gave it an elegant appearance; the roof of carved wood was beautifully painted. On each side of the hall was a central large room and two smaller ones, the former with a cove roof and the latter under a dome. The panels, walls and ceilings of these rooms were all carved and painted with taste, the concave roofs ornamented with borders and compartments of chain work, painted white, the interstices filled with looking glass.⁵³

There was also a marble *ḥammām*, which was of particular interest to an eighteenth-century man from a cold climate. ‘The baths of Sadat Khan’, he wrote, ‘are a set of beautiful rooms, paved and lined with white marble: they consist of five distinct apartments, into which light is admitted by glazed windows from the top of the domes.’⁵⁴

⁵¹ James Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs: A Narrative of Seventeen Years Residence in India* (London, 1813), vol. 4, p. 61.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 63f.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 437f.

Another British traveller, William Franklin, also in the service of the East India Company, visited Delhi in 1794 while conducting a survey of the *doab* and surrounding countryside. He also noted that the vista in the suburban fringe was one of decay and destruction. Franklin noted that ‘this once rich, flourishing and populous city’, which in Shah Jahan’s time when the court was in residence probably had upwards of 200,000 inhabitants, was ‘miserably reduced of late years’.⁵⁵ He then engaged in his own kind of lamentation on the lost splendours of Delhi:

... the prospect ... as far as the eye can reach, is covered with the remains of extensive gardens, pavilions, mosques, and burial places, all desolate and in ruins. The environs of this once magnificent and celebrated city appear now nothing more than a shapeless heap of ruins; and the country around is equally forlorn.⁵⁶

Franklin also described the faded but still ‘splendid palaces’ of the nobility, listing the original owners of some of the larger walled complexes:

Within the city of New Delhi [Shahjahanabad] are the remains of many splendid palaces belonging to the *omrah* of the empire. Among the largest are those of Kummer-u-din Khan, *Vizier* to Mohummud Shah; Ali Mirdan Khan, the Persian; the *Nabob* Ghazi-u-deen Khan; Sefdar Jung’s; the garden of Coodseah Begum, mother to Mohummud Shah; the palace of Sadut Khan; and that of Dara Sheekoah. All these palaces are surrounded by high walls and take up a considerable space of ground.⁵⁷

Franklin distinguished between the palaces of Safdar Jang and Dara Shukoh, both in the area to the north of the fort, which will be discussed below. His more detailed description of their remains shows that in layout they were very like smaller versions of the imperial palace, with axial gateways, entry courts and a *naqārkhāna*, gardens with pools and pavilions, and underground rooms for use in the very hot weather.⁵⁸

Finally, the merchant Thomas Twining, also travelling in the service of the East India Company, passed through Delhi in the same year and gave a now almost formulaic description of picturesque ruins around the city during the Maratha time, of the now familiar ‘striking scene’ with ‘houses, palaces and tombs in different stages of dilapidation’.⁵⁹ Twining’s account is of value because of a detailed description of a visit to the house of Shah Sahib, the

⁵⁵ William Franklin, ‘An Account of the Present State of Delhi’, *Asiatick Researches* 4 (1795), p. 442.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 437.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 435.

⁵⁹ Thomas Twining, *Travels in India a Hundred Years Ago* (London, 1893), p. 219.

governor of the city, confirming that although the suburban fringe was then apparently in ruins, it was never entirely abandoned. Shah Sahib was living outside the Delhi Gate 'a short distance in the country'. Twining's description of the visit gives us information about the layout of an extramural palace and about the necessary precautions and ceremony (it is a little hard to distinguish which is which in this instance) involved in a visit to such a palace:

I take with me my moonshy [*munshī*], and part of my guard with their shields and tulwars, without their matchlocks. Leave the city by the Agra gate by which we had entered it. Leaving the Agra road on our left, sloped into the country to the right of the gate and after going about a mile over a plain strewn with ruins, arrive at a large, walled enclosure in the centre of which stood the governor's palace. Having passed through a few courts, about which I observed numerous guards, I dismounted from my horse at the gate of a spacious and very beautiful garden. Nearby in the centre of this was the Bhurra-durri [*baradari*], a sort of open pavilion with an artificial piece of water before it.⁶⁰

This description conforms to others of urban noblemen's palaces, with an enclosed ceremonial forecourt and an inner, private domain. As Twining would not have been allowed there, there is no account of the women's quarters at Shah Sahib's palace.

These varied sources leave no doubt that there had been severe damage to Delhi, both intramural and suburban, in the eighteenth century. Apart from the ruins of the pre-existing Firoz Shah's Kotla (the citadel of Firozabad), riverine palaces had not extended beyond the walled enclave of the city in the seventeenth century. And little, if anything, apart from the Qudsia Bagh built in the reign of Ahmed Shah (r.1748–54), had been constructed to the north of the city walls because of the habit of the river, which ran into rivulets and *jhils* and seasonally flooded its banks.⁶¹ But all of these descriptions are subjective. When Thomas Twining visited the Qudsia Bagh in 1794, he said he found even this in an already neglected state.

There were other new structures started in Delhi between 1780 and 1800 associated with the Marathas. The *List of Monuments* indicates some new mosque and temple construction in the city, including that associated with newly arrived Jain and Hindu merchants.⁶² It is less clear if there was new elite house construction, and it seems more likely from the travellers'

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 225.

⁶¹ Hermann Goetz, 'The Qudsia Bagh at Delhi: Key to Late Mughal Architecture', *Islamic Culture* 26:1 (1952), pp. 132ff. The palace was built primarily of brick rather than sandstone and lavishly decorated with painted plaster, inside and out. It was depicted by Thomas and William Daniell on their trip to Delhi in 1789 and published in the portfolio of prints, *Oriental Scenery* (London, 1795–1806).

⁶² See Zafar Husain and J.A. Page, *List of Mohammedan and Hindu Monuments: Delhi Province* (4 vols, Calcutta, 1916–22).

descriptions that sub-imperial palaces were sub-divided, repaired and reused both by impoverished owners of long standing and by incomers. By the end of the eighteenth century, some buildings within the walled city had been repaired, though it is hard to determine to what extent. Franklin says 'largely rebuilt' by 1793 but does not give details.⁶³

European visitors to India were consistently impressed by the scale of conspicuous wealth they saw at the Delhi court and by the comparative size and importance of nobles' palaces. James Forbes noted that it was 'usual for the Mogul ameers to have mansions in the capital. Their magnitude in general, on account of their immense establishments, exceeds any of the palaces belonging to the nobility in Europe.'⁶⁴ But he also noted, 'The ameers' palaces, though extremely spacious and elegantly disposed within, make no figure from without, being all excluded from observation by walls and a dewry [*deohri*].'⁶⁵ Indian residential accommodation was in discrete, inward-turning compounds. Houses did not have conspicuous façades, and their interiors were screened from view. Server-ul-Mulk offered a modest description of his own childhood house in the Delhi Gate (Daryaganj) area. 'The house in which I was born was a double-storeyed building, the lower portion of which consisted of a *dhalan*, with rooms to the left and right, and with a courtyard in front for the kitchen, etc. To the left was the entrance gate, and in front of this were small side-rooms. The upper storey was a small courtyard with a verandah.'⁶⁶

The period between British occupation in 1803 and immediately before the Revolt of 1857 was a time of gradually accelerating political manipulation and subjugation by the Company of what remained of the Mughal polity. The British now took over many of the secondary sites of Mughal authority in Delhi, and throughout the first half of the century they would continue to lay claim to ruinous and disputed houses. They could not yet claim the imperial palace. This, along with the Tis Hazari (a fruit garden with revenues that went directly to the heir-apparent), the Qudsia Bagh, the Roshanara Bagh and a summer palace at Mehrauli, some 10 miles to the south and west of Shahjahanabad, as well as hunting grounds on the east bank of the Yamuna and at Palam to the west, continued to constitute the personal property of the Mughal ruler, whose revenue was derived from Assigned Territories to the east of the Yamuna. After the occupation of Agra in 1803, officers and troops had immediately been garrisoned in the Red Fort there, but in Delhi the fort and palace remained the domain of the Emperor until after the Revolt of 1857.⁶⁷

⁶³ Franklin, 'Account', p. 442.

⁶⁴ Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs*, vol. 4, p. 62.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁶⁶ Server-ul-Mulk, *My Life*, p. 11.

⁶⁷ Lady Nugent described the Commander's use of the *mahals* in Agra Fort. See also William Neville Parker, *A View of the Mahal Nikusiya in the Agra Fort* (1804), India Office Prints, Drawings and Paintings, WD4215, British Library.

This, then, is what we know of Delhi's architecture in the eighteenth century. But despite the ravages of the previous years, enough remained of elite housing and monumental buildings in the city to impress the British when they arrived in 1803 with both their beauty and usefulness, and with their suitability for use as residences. We will see in subsequent chapters that this architecture was sufficiently admired both to be reused and adapted, and to form part of a paradigm for new British building in Delhi. Though British taste would reject the inward-turning courtyard orientation in favour of houses that looked out onto the world from large lots of land, many of the more subtle elements of the design of Indian houses would be retained in a hybrid domestic architecture.

Some of the houses I write about no longer exist, and what we know of them is through rather patchy sources. Because I am writing about at best partially documented buildings with contents that have long since been dispersed, to try to form a clearer idea of what they comprised I have turned to a variety of sources of information. These include period images, both prints and paintings, from the hand of both Mughal and British artists. In a period before photography was used by travellers, the panoramic drawings and sketchbooks of military engineers form an important record. I try to build up a careful dialogue between surviving houses and official and informal written descriptions of them and their furnishings, and link this to the visual images. Material culture and the social aspects of consumption have not been studied for early-nineteenth-century Delhi. Published work on colonialism and material culture in general has been focussed on archaeological collection and museums, particularly ethnographic museums. But private collections, which are a revealing index of social capital, existed at all societal levels, and they certainly existed in nineteenth-century Delhi. Thomas Theophilus Metcalfe, for example, the Resident from 1835 to 1853, who was on a socially equal footing with the last emperor as ruler of the city, was an avid collector of Napoleonic memorabilia, a rather telling choice for an Englishman at that time. The value of the objects collected and the interiors they were put into ran deeper than survival or comfort or control, becoming a part of self-identity.

The 'lives in building' of the five East India Company officials in Delhi that I present in the chapters that follow demonstrate in microcosm changing mentalities after 1803. In a sense this book is a group biography. I think of these lives as the trace activities of house-building, and explore the personal, political and economic circumstances with which their career choices intersected. The houses show shifts in attitude of these individuals in Delhi, sometimes going against the growing policies of domination that would eventually result in the Revolt of 1857 and the dissolution of the Company. A complicated picture emerges that mixes individual personality and attitude, circumstance, and zeitgeist. The reasons for this are as complex as the characters were themselves.

Two

HYBRID ACCOMMODATIONS: DAVID OCHTERLONY, THE FIRST RESIDENCY AND THE MUBARAK BAGH

This chapter examines the building activities of the distinguished East India Company servant David Ochterlony (1758–1825), twice British Resident at Delhi and often cited as the paradigm of a man who effortlessly (and colourfully) straddled British and Indian culture. By 1803, Ochterlony had already been many years in India, and he brought to the post of Resident both the pragmatism of a soldier and the mentality of a colonial aristocrat. Indianised in his habits and lifestyle, he consciously emulated the manners of Delhi's urban aristocracy, reflecting in both his public and private roles the behaviour of the elites of a country in which had lived and worked for nearly fifty uninterrupted years by the time of his death in 1825. The chapter begins by looking at the establishment of the first Delhi Residency, a house Ochterlony occupied immediately after conquest in 1803. The Residency was located in part of an appropriated sub-imperial Mughal palace inside the walled city of Shahjahanabad, and I suggest reasons for the choice of this site and its meaning in the visual landscape of the Mughal city, both before and after conquest, linking its location to ideas of symbolic capital. I then compare the Residency with what we know of other houses built by Ochterlony in Delhi and elsewhere in north India, focussing on the Mubarak Bagh, a garden house in a fanciful blend of Mughal and neo-Gothic styles, part of which was perhaps also intended for use as his mausoleum. Viewed through the lens of Ochterlony's very particular life, a comparison of these two houses – the one public and reused, the other private and newly built – begins to illustrate the permeable ways that heterogeneous style, form and function merged in British houses in late Mughal Delhi.

David Ochterlony, already an established officer in the Company's army, had been Adjutant General under the British commander Gerard Lake in the second Anglo-Maratha war. He was rewarded for his service by appointment to a first term as Delhi Resident between 1803 and 1806. During this time,

much of his effort went towards forging a respectful relationship with the Emperor, Shah Alam II, and to following the protocols of the Mughal court. 'The mode in which Lt. Col. Ochterlony has invariably conducted himself towards Shah Alum and every branch of the Mughal family has obtained him the most marked honour of that sovereign,' wrote Lake in 1806, noting that thanks to Ochterlony's 'uniform kindness and justice' he had even seen Delhi 'increasing in wealth and population during a period of actual hostility'.¹ After conquest, the British had swiftly consolidated control over the city and the immediate area by establishing the Residency, their headquarters for the political agents of the East India Company at the Emperor's court. In the Residency system, the ruler was to be assured of protection from internal and external aggression through deployment of the Company's troops and administrators. And after helping conquer Delhi, Ochterlony did in fact defend the city, securing it from an unexpected secondary invasion by Holkar's infantry – the so-called Siege of Delhi of October 1804. He was given in return the Mughal title of Nasir ud-Daula or Defender of the State.

Because of the strong symbolic power of both the city of Delhi, even in its diminished state, and the remains of the Mughal polity under a weakened and blinded emperor, the public role of the Company's administrator and figurehead in Delhi, the Resident, was key. A suitable building had to be provided for the office that could support both the political and the ceremonial interactions that were necessary to the progress of a smooth relationship between the Resident and the Mughal court. 'Partly ancient, partly modern': this was a contemporary description of the first Residency house in Delhi, a building that would be in use for nearly thirty years.² The location of the building was determined by Ochterlony's intention to create an amicable and viable relationship with the Emperor on terms that were respectful of existing social conventions. Like a smaller version of a Government House, a Residency building, in addition to being the official home of the holder of the office, was the centre of public and political operations. The personal attitudes of the Resident would have had a bearing on the choice of its location and its architectural form. These, in turn, would have affected the community of which he was the senior figure. Ochterlony and other early holders of the post – including the polite and unassuming (and therefore less well-known) Archibald Seton (1755–1818), in office from 1806 to 1811; and the diligent Charles Metcalfe, in office from 1811 to 1818, and again from 1825 to 1827 – all lived in and worked from the same house, which had originally been a part of the principal sub-imperial palace in the city, that of Shah Jahan's favourite son and intended successor, Dara Shukoh

¹ Letter from Gerald Lake to the Governor in Council, February 1806, Seton papers, MS 19208, National Library of Scotland.

² Anon., 'Description of Delhi and its Environs', *Asiatic Journal* 15 (1823), p. 553.

(1615–59). Ochterlony moved into this building just eight days after conquest, in September 1803, beginning alterations to it shortly after that.

There were of course a number of practical reasons why part of the palace of Dara Shukoh was selected as the Residency building. Urban settings embody sets of socially accepted rules, and one way of investigating historical change to a built environment is by questioning now hidden dimensions, including how urban routes and pathways were understood in local memory.³ The buildings in Shah Jahan's great walled palace/citadel, the Lal Qil'a, and those in the mansions in the city's *mahallas*, though battered by a century of invasions had originally been organised in hierarchical symmetries to support the formal ceremonial which took place in them, and they were inter-linked for use in processions, when their eminent owners and the guests who visited them would appear to the wider population. The selection of Dara Shukoh's palace capitalised on an important location in the city and enabled the Company to make use of pathways that former princes would once have taken. The ritual of the *darbar* in the Lal Qil'a was a significant one. Carefully coded systems of reciprocity continued to be performed in the late Mughal period, with dignitaries and petitioners at the court tendering a *nazr*, a gift signifying their submission to the monarch, and the Emperor reciprocating with a *khil'at* or robe of honour, to be treasured by its recipient.⁴ Subsidiary gifts were exchanged with heirs apparent and other royal princes as well, and reciprocal visits were received as part of these circumscribed protocols. A road 600 yards long and 20 wide linked the Lal Qil'a with the palace of Dara Shukoh, and the remembered journeys of former emperors and princes could be traced along this pathway.

After 1803, many of the buildings inside Shahjahanabad's walls were adapted for a variety of new uses by the Company. Two principal areas of the city were favoured: to the north between the palace and the Kashmir Gate; and in Daryaganj, which extended south from the Delhi Gate of the palace to the Delhi Gate of the city. Each prestigious area had river frontage and each was adjacent to the seat of Mughal authority. There was a concentration of both military and residential settlement by the British in Daryaganj, incorporating the site that had once been the encampment grounds for Shah Jahan's household guard just outside the Delhi Gate of the palace (now used by the Company's army). Residential use extended along the area behind the Faiz Bazaar, one of Shahjahanabad's two planned commercial streets. Both before and after new military lines were established beyond Delhi's protective Ridge in 1828, parts of this area were a fixed cantonment supporting Sappers and comprising hospitals, a church, stores and barracks, as well as accommodation

³ See Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (New York, 1966).

⁴ See Bernard Cohn, 'Representing Authority in Victorian India', in E.J. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, eds, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 165–210.

for officers and the chaplain, sometimes in conversions of parts of existing riverside *haveli*. There had once been six or seven large houses along the river between the Delhi Gates of palace and city.⁵ Large parts of the Daryaganj quarter were razed by the British after the 1857 Revolt, and although Mughal foundations and subterranean rooms still exist underneath newer construction, that part of the city has been less useful for detailed study than the better preserved Kashmir Gate area north of the palace. It was to the north of the Lal Qil'a that the remains of what had been Delhi's two most important sub-imperial palace complexes stood. The area was less densely populated than other city *maḥallas* and this was the obvious place to accommodate the elites of incoming power. The Company now grafted itself onto what remained of these two palaces, adapting their pavilions and their gardens for a variety of new uses. The first British Residency, in a palace pavilion, was one such adaptation.

When Shahjahanabad was built, the choicest building sites closest to the Emperor's palace and on the river front had been deeded to princes and high-ranking dignitaries so that they could build their own mansions. The palace of Dara Shukoh had occupied the second largest lot of land in the city. It was separated from the imperial complex by a garden, the Angauri Bagh (Grape Garden), and was linked to it by the ceremonial road. Dara Shukoh, who like his father had an interest in the art of building, had also erected palaces in Agra and Lahore.⁶ His Delhi palace was constructed between 1639 and 1643. We now have no clear idea of its plan, but we know that like other Mughal palaces it was a self-contained complex of dispersed buildings in a large enclosure, rather than a single structure. By 1803 the symbolic value of this palace had already been exploited by former conquerors of the city, fixing it in more recent memory as a site of secondary power. Between Dara's death in 1654 and the arrival of the British, it had been home both to other heirs-apparent to Mughal power and to other invaders, so it is possible to trace at least some of the subsequent history of its owners/occupiers after Dara's death.

In 1662 Prince Mu'azzam, son of the Emperor Aurangzeb and his eventual successor as Bahadur Shah I (r.1707–12), was given the palace by his father. Sometime after 1707 it was occupied by an influential Portuguese woman, Juliana Dias da Costa (1658–1734). Jean-Baptiste-Joseph Gentil (1725–92), an agent for the French government at Faizabad, reported in his posthumously published memoirs that Bahadur Shah I had awarded Juliana gifts equal to 900,000 rupees, four villages producing 50,000 rupees in *jagir* (annual

⁵ Stephen P. Blake, *Shahjahanabad: The Sovereign City in Mughal India, 1639–1739* (Cambridge, 1991).

⁶ For eighteenth-century images of these palaces, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum and other collections, see the Jean-Marie Lafont and Dhir Sarangi, eds, *Lost Palaces of Delhi: The European Connection* (New Delhi, 2006).

revenue) and the palace of Dara Shukoh.⁷ The palace was badly damaged at the time of the invasion of Nadir Shah in 1739, and it was some time after this that the large complex was divided into two. After the division, more is known of its southern half, closest to the palace. After 1744 this became the Delhi mansion of Safdar Jang (1708–54), *subahdār* or provincial governor and later vizier *navvāb* of Awadh. It was said to have been sold to Safdar Jang by Juliana's descendants at an undervalued price.⁸ Later-eighteenth-century accounts by both William Franklin and James Forbes mention Safdar Jang's mansion by name.⁹ Forbes published a detailed, if second-hand, description of part of the mansion (by then in the ownership of Asaf ud-Daula, Safdar Jang's grandson, and recently occupied by his senior eunuch, Lutafut), in which the then Resident at the Maratha court, Charles Warre Malet, and his surgeon, Thomas Cruso, stayed briefly in June of 1785.¹⁰ Forbes used the account of Dr Cruso to describe how the great size of establishments like this exceeded that of any of the palaces of the nobility in Europe. Despite their descriptions of destruction, eighteenth-century European visitors were consistently impressed by the former lavishness of even Delhi's secondary palaces. Forbes described the typology as a 'multiplication of courts and edifices' and his account includes a description of its *zanāna* or women's quarters, of a mirrored *shish mahal*, and of a *taikhāna* or suite of subterranean rooms for use in the hot weather.¹¹ A ceremonial gateway opened onto a principal, public courtyard and from this to open pavilions and to the shady enclosed gardens called *khānabaghs* that functioned like outdoor rooms.¹² Like the imperial palace, it also included artisanal workshops (*kārkhānas*) to provide the luxuries of princely life.

After 1803 the British used part of the land on which this half of the palace complex stood, including several of its still-sound structures, for their magazine and for quarters for the officers in charge of artillery, as well as for subsidiary functions such as stabling and workshops. A portion of its open land was used as the Christian burial ground, located near a building that had served as the first Delhi garrison church. This information can be verified through analysis of an important and highly detailed hand-drawn map in the British Library, dating to about 1845, which shows the remains of an

⁷ Jean-Baptiste Gentil, *Mémoires sur l'Hindoustan* (Paris, 1820), pp. 373f.

⁸ Taymiya R. Zaman, 'Visions of Juliana: A Portuguese Woman at the Court of the Mughals', *Journal of World History* 23:4 (2013), pp. 761–91.

⁹ William Franklin, 'An Account of the Present State of Delhi', *Asiatick Researches* 4 (1795), pp. 434ff.

¹⁰ James Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs: A Narrative of Seventeen Years Residence in India*, vol. 4 (London, 1813), pp. 62f.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² For this garden typology, see Stephen Blake 'The Khanah Bagh in Mughal India: House Gardens in the Palaces and Mansions of the Great Men of Shahjahanabad', in J.L. Wescoat Jr and J. Wolschke-Bulmahn, eds, *The Mughal Garden* (Washington, D.C., 1996), pp. 171ff.

enclosed complex of arcaded buildings ranged around courtyards.¹³ Both to guard and to announce the Magazine, protective walls and a large gateway on the road (by now extended as Lothian Road), which from the configuration of buildings on the map were almost certainly those of the original Mughal princely palace, were now over-built by the British in a simplified military Gothic style (Plate 1). The Magazine was given a second similar entry a few hundred yards to the south. Early in the British period, some of the nearby land was still in the ownership of the rulers of Awadh when, in return for property 'in front of the magazine', a grant of alternate land was made to them by the British government.¹⁴ Although the Magazine was largely destroyed during the events of 1857, its neo-Gothic gateways, now in the middle of a busy main road, are still intact.

However, it was not this but a part of the northern portion of Dara Shukoh's divided palace that was adapted for use as the British Residency. An elegantly decorated pavilion, now locally referred to as Dara Shukoh's library, was selected. The pavilion, overlooking a garden, had already been reused. When Thomas Twining visited Delhi on Company business in 1793, he was offered a large palace for the duration of his stay, but wrote of his preference instead for what was almost certainly this same pavilion:

From the great court which fronted the palace I turned into a fine garden, at the extremity of which, and adjoining the principal building, was a handsome pavilion consisting of a splendid hall with a deep verandah towards the garden, and numerous rooms of smaller dimensions. Preferring this delightful appendage to the palace itself, I took possession of it for my own residence ...¹⁵

Though Twining recorded only that the garden was 'not so extensive' as one he had previously had access to in Agra, although it was 'very delightful', his account of the pavilion is useful.¹⁶ The occupier of the palace at that time, he tells us, was Sayyid Reza Khan, the representative of Gerard Lake at the court of the regent, Scindia, at the imperial court: a kind of second-degree Residency during the pre-British Maratha occupation of Delhi. As urban land in pre-British Indian towns was often royal property which was conferred on individuals or families, title to *havelis* and palaces was not necessarily permanent. The sense of private real estate was neither legally or socially strong, and this situation changed only after British law gradually

¹³ Map of Shahjahanabad, IOR X/1659, British Library. The map was redrawn by Eckart Ehlers and Thomas Krafft, eds, *Shahjahanabad, Old Delhi: Tradition and Colonial Change* (Stuttgart, 1993). The *terminus a quo* for the map is the inclusion of the Zafar Mahal in the Imperial palace, which was built by Bahadur Shah II in 1842.

¹⁴ Press List 1, #255, Delhi Residency and Agency Records (1806–57), Punjabi Provincial Archives of Pakistan.

¹⁵ Thomas Twining, *Travels in India a Hundred Years Ago* (London, 1893), p. 222.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

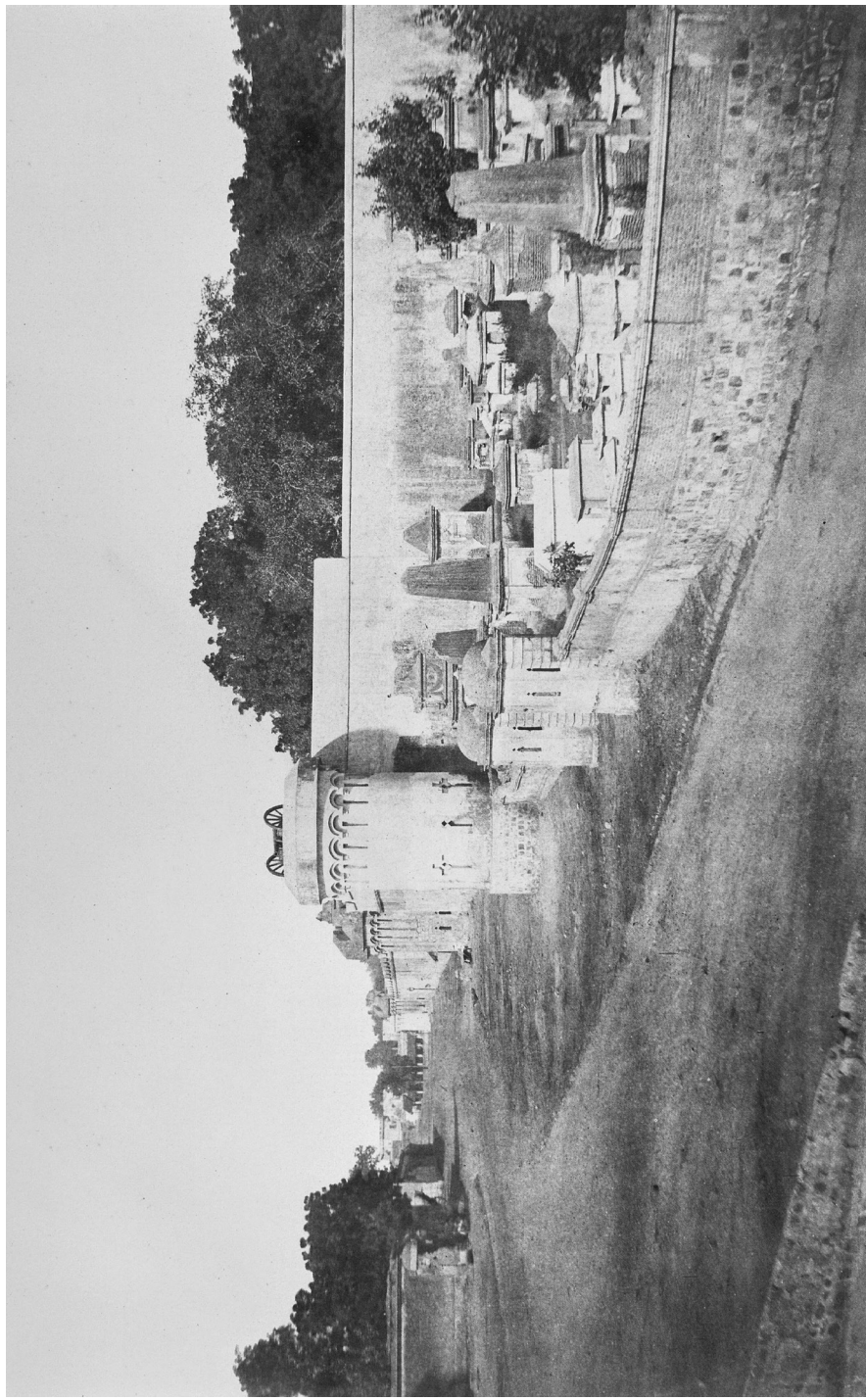


Plate 1 Robert Tytler (1818-72) and Harriet Tytler (1828-58), *The Road in Front of the Magazine at Delhi* (1858). Albumen print from calotype negative.

introduced the concept of freehold private property. Scindia had apparently been given this part of the palace by the Emperor for the Khan's use, and so it is reasonable to assume that it would then have been transferred by Shah Alam II in 1803 to those he now accepted as his new 'protectors'. It was this pavilion in the northerly half of the palace that would become the first British Residency. Its location would establish the relative standard of the newcomers in the eyes of the public.¹⁷

It may be asked why the British did not live in the half of Dara Shukoh's compound closer to the palace, where they instead put their magazine. This might have had to do with the condition of its structures and their reuse prior to 1803. It very likely also involved a conscious desire for distance from the imperial household. British artillery and armaments were placed between the palace and the Residency, and studies on the later evolving planning principles and on the positioning of cantonments and civil stations in British towns in India have noted the growing rationale for a separation of several miles as the nineteenth century progressed.¹⁸

The pavilion that would become the Residency was situated on the southern edge of a large formal *chārbaḡh*. However, it was not centred on the edge of the quadrilateral garden, as was common with the form of *baradari* or garden pavilions, suggesting perhaps that perhaps the pavilion was once one of a pair. There were many precedents for centring a Mughal pavilion on a garden edge.¹⁹ There were also precedents for paired pavilions, including those on the Ana Sagar in Ajmer, built by Shah Jahan in 1637, though not for single off-centre pavilions. The Delhi pavilion faced its garden, which had a central pool and mature plantings. However, its garden was adjacent to the river not facing it, as were the princely gardens at Agra. Instead, one side abutted the city wall, with a raised viewing terrace planted with shade trees that ran along the ramparts of the city on its river side.

Adaptations and enlargements to Dara Shukoh's pavilion were started during David Ochterlony's first term as Resident. They were made incrementally, with changes throughout the thirty years that it served as the Residency. The record is often sketchy. There are no known documents that relate to its initial adaptation, lost in the Revolt of 1857 perhaps, along with many others that might have helped fill in the details of Delhi's building history in the early

¹⁷ Anthony King, *Colonial Urban Development: Culture, Social Power and Environment* (London, 1976), p. 191.

¹⁸ Peter Scriver, 'Rationalization, Standardization, and Control in Design: A Cognitive Historical Study of Architectural Design and Planning in the Public Works Department of British India, 1855–1901' (PhD dissertation, Delft Technical University, 1994).

¹⁹ A notable example is the Shahi Bagh or Princely Garden, built between 1616 and 1628 by the future Shah Jahan which, like the riverine noblemen's palaces in Agra, overlooked a formal waterside garden. See Catherine B. Asher, 'Sub-Imperial Palaces: Power and Authority in Mughal India', *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993), pp. 281–302; Ebba Koch, 'Mughal Palace Gardens from Babur to Shah Jahan, 1526–1648', *Muqarnas* 14 (1997), pp. 143–65.

British period. But we do have some records of decisions taken by Residents after Ochterlony, as well as several informal descriptions by visiting travellers, that help us trace the evolution and use of the building. A useful account, published in 1823 but written in about 1818, gives us a *terminus ad quem* for the Residency after principal additions had been made to it. It demonstrates how the existing pavilion on the edge of the *chārbāgh* influenced the form of the additions but did not dominate the design. ‘The Residency ... [was] very extensive, partly ancient, partly modern’, according to the anonymous writer of the account reprinted in the *Asiatic Journal*.²⁰ Its modern part, as the writer understood it, consisted of ‘... a grand, lofty hall fifty feet by twenty six’, the central *darbar* or formal reception hall, which extended through the house. This incorporated part of the original pavilion and added a bay on its garden façade, with doors and steps opening onto the *chārbāgh*. Off this were ‘... two rooms leading from the centre, one on each side, thirty by twenty feet’.²¹ These served as dining room and drawing room respectively. The house continued with a set-back enfilade wing on either side, each containing a suite of several rooms and each with an arcaded veranda. One side wing was far longer than the other and extended into a range of apartments for offices, services and servants. The other – to the west – incorporated more of the Mughal fabric. In addition there were a stabling yard and other outbuildings in a 10-acre compound. The resulting house eventually ended up running along most of the edge of the Mughal garden. There was no attempt to centre the new additions on the garden. Instead these were oriented to the southern façade of the house and onto a new curved driveway for carriages that led from a large tripartite Palladian gateway past the lawns in front of the colonnaded main entrance. The 1818 description tallies both with information from the detailed map of Shahjahanabad of c.1845, on which an elongated house overlooking a *chārbāgh* is identified in Persian script as the house of the Resident (*Koṭhī Rajī Dandī*), and with a measured plan of the building as it stood in the late 1990s (Figure 1).²²

One of the earliest descriptions of the Residency tells us that the building sometimes had to be augmented with tents. In 1812, early in the first term of Charles Metcalfe as Delhi Resident, Maria Nugent was a guest in this house when she and her husband George, the Commander-in-Chief, were on their winter tour. The *chārbāgh* then needed to be used for encampment, and the tents of some of her husband’s large retinue were ‘... pitched in a lawn at the

²⁰ ‘Description of Delhi and its Environs’, pp. 551ff. The article, which first appeared in the short-lived *Calcutta Journal* published between 1818 and 1823, was written before the restoration and re-opening of the Delhi canal in 1820.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² The plan, which incorporates later additions and changes, was drawn by the students of the Conservation Department, School of Planning and Architecture, under the supervision of Professor Nalini Thakur. I am grateful to Professor Thakur for providing a copy.

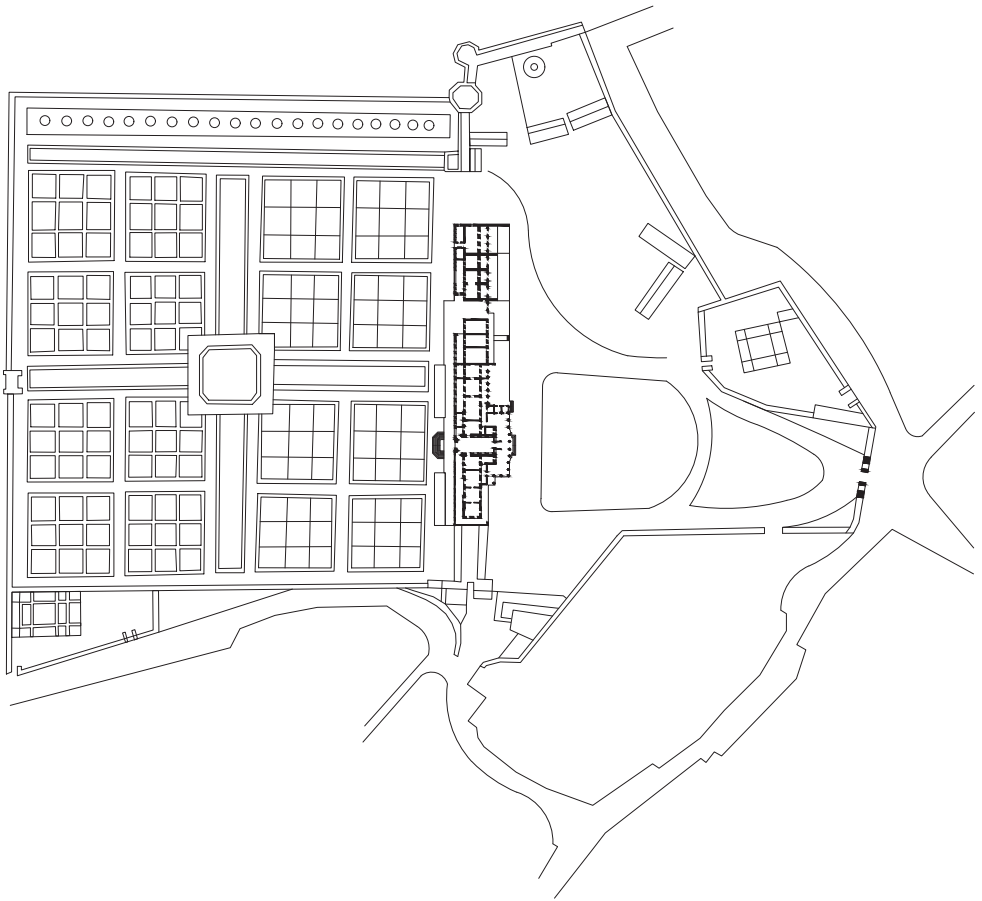


Figure 1 The First Delhi Residency and Gardens.

back of the house, almost in the centre of the garden, and look very pretty'.²³ Those of the rest of the party were set up on the new front lawn. Lady Nugent wrote, 'The site of this house was formerly that of the Sultan Darah-Shekoah [sic].' She admired the garden which she rather vaguely described as being 'in the Hindoostanee style'.²⁴ In addition to the formal *chārbaḡh* there was a productive kitchen garden and a farm, which Metcalfé took Lady Nugent to visit. Shortly after her description was written, Charles Metcalfé was called to account by the Company for his spending on the equipment and furnishing of the building. Chapter Three will deal with this in more detail.

²³ Ashley L. Cohen, ed., *Lady Nugent's East India Journal: A Critical Edition* (Oxford and Delhi, 2014), p. 187. Cohen republishes Indian sections of Maria Nugent's journals, originally issued for private circulation in 1839.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

Today, what was once the Residency is a shabby colonnaded government building standing in the campus of the Delhi College of Engineering, backing onto what is now a dusty football field. Until recently it housed the library of the Archaeological Survey of India. The building, once described as having a 'solemn and imposing air', measures 360 feet and is oriented towards the south.²⁵ Its original 60-foot-high colonnaded portico of (in the 1818 written description) eight massive Ionic columns was augmented later in the nineteenth century. At the time of the earliest known photograph of the building, taken by Dr John Murray in 1858, there were many more, some destroyed in the Revolt (Plate 2). Entry into the Residency's *darbar* hall was through the portico via a flight of ceremonial steps, originally fifteen in total. Its main, southern façade was highly visible from the road that ran between the Imperial palace and the Kashmir Gate. Visual impact derived from its gateway and guard house, its expanse of lawn and these formal entry stairs leading to the colonnaded façade. Since the construction of Government House in Calcutta, which had a grand ceremonial stairway on its exterior, a spectacular entrance had become a convention of elite British Indian building. It was significant in Delhi in the context of court etiquette: weekly ceremonial *darbars* which the Resident attended were held at the palace, and the Emperor customarily returned the formal visits of the Governor General and other senior British officials on their periodic visits to Delhi from Calcutta. In 1827, for example, Governor General Lord Amherst was received in the palace and in turn received the Emperor in the *darbar* hall of the Residency, where a Peacock Throne had been temporarily placed for the occasion. The Emperor and his entourage would have arrived and departed from the British enclave in a sumptuous procession as, to a lesser degree, would the Resident and his entourage when attending the rituals of the Mughal court. Even on informal and private occasions, David Ochterlony was recorded as having liberally scattered handfuls of silver among the populace as he passed by.²⁶

In its British iteration, the rear or northern façade of the Residency was the more private, less formal side of the building. Here there were more steps that led down into the garden, steps that have recently been demolished to expose more of the lower level of the original Mughal *chabutra* or platform on which the older pavilion still stands. Still visible at ground-floor level is a lobed red sandstone arcade with slender paired baluster columns from the period of Shah Jahan. The columns support an incongruous

²⁵ Emma Roberts, *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindustan, with Sketches of Anglo-Indian Society* (London, 1835), p. 179. Roberts was in Delhi before 1831.

²⁶ In 1808, Mrs Deane described travelling with Ochterlony on an elephant with a silver *howdah*: '... we had in addition to our own attendants his bodyguard, forming altogether a grand cavalcade'. Mrs Deane, *A Tour through the Upper Provinces of Hindostan between the Years 1804 and 1815* (London, 1823), p. 161.

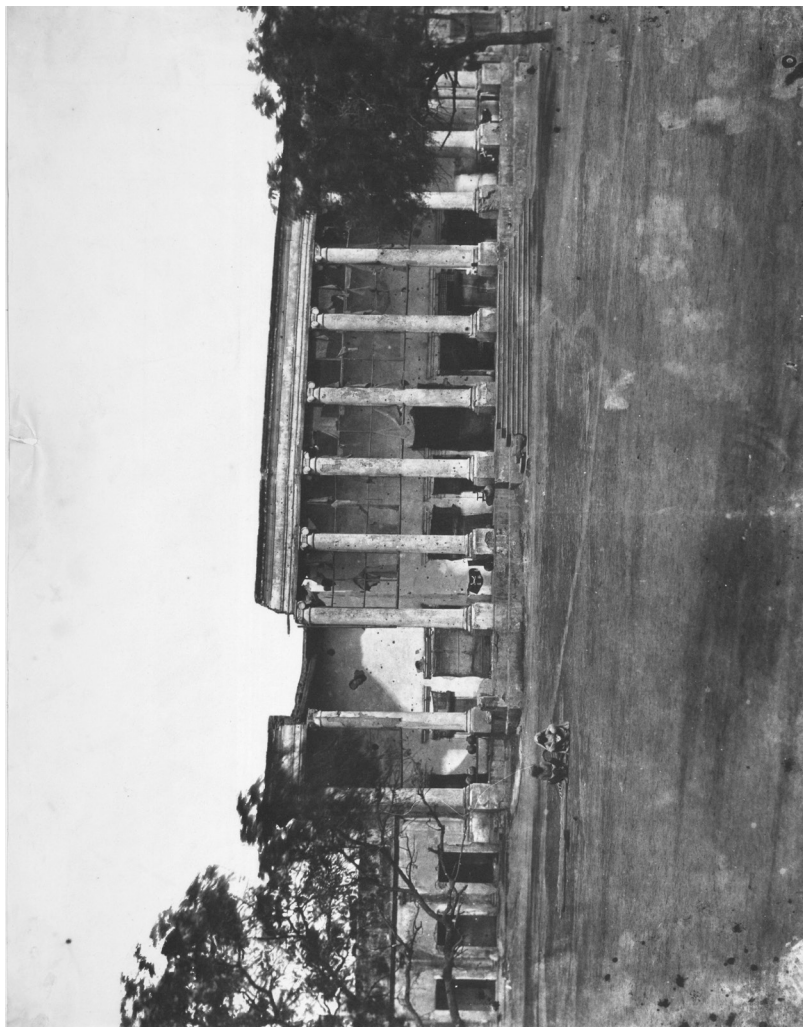


Plate 2 John Murray (1809–98), *The College, Delhi*, c. 1859. The building was the first Residency.
Print from calotype negative.

jack-arched ceiling from the British period, built to bear the additional weight of extended building above. The basement chambers are now bricked up.

The position of the Delhi pavilion on the edge of its garden determined the alterations that were made to its plan. It resulted in one distinctive typology for domestic architecture in British India – the enveloping of pre-existing Mughal structures inside new and often classicised exteriors.²⁷ The Shahjahani pavilion and its decorated rooms were now completely hidden from public sight, the classicised façade of the house proclaiming the style-identity of new occupants. But the Mughal rooms were still there, and some remained unaltered. We unfortunately have only fragmentary information about their use and appearance then. One tantalising account comes from Reginald Heber, the Bishop of Calcutta. In 1824, Heber stayed in the house and described his arrival, passing ‘... along a tolerably wide street to the Residency, which is a large, straggling building consisting of two or three entertaining rooms added by Sir David Ochterlony, when Resident, to an old Mussulman palace’.²⁸ His travelling companion, a Mr Lushington, was lucky enough to have his bedroom in part of the old structure, in what Heber described as ‘... a very singular and interesting little room with a vaulted roof, richly ornamented with mosaic painting [sic]’.²⁹ There is one widely reproduced miniature painting in gouache in the collection of the British Library that also demonstrates the hybrid nature of the building. It shows Ochterlony (probably during his second term of office – he is a silver-haired man) in an interior almost certainly part of the central *darbar* hall of the Residency.³⁰ The lunette window above an open door into the garden and the sash windows correspond closely with what remains in the building today. Paintings of assorted Scottish ancestors hang very high on the walls, tilted forward at precarious angles, a British Indian convention that may have had to do with the placement of candle sconces for illumination. But the European nature of the interior ends here. Ochterlony, who is wearing Indian clothes, is seated on a *musnud* on a floor spread with a Mughal carpet. He is smoking a *hukkah*

²⁷ In Britain from the second half of the eighteenth century it had become increasingly common to encase earlier houses or give them new classicising façades. An often-cited example is Syon House in Middlesex, altered by Robert Adam in 1769.

²⁸ Reginald Heber, *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India*, vol. 2 (London, 1828), p. 286. Heber’s narrative reveals an interest in Indian houses and their gardens. He commented on a nobleman’s house, that of Lala Shugan Chand. ‘The house itself was very pretty and well worth seeing as a specimen of eastern domestic architecture,’ he wrote, ‘Comprising three or four courts surrounded by stone cloisters, two of them planted with flowering shrubs and orange trees, the third ornamented with a beautiful marble fountain’.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Sir David Ochterlony in Indian dress ...* (c.1820), India Office Prints, Drawings and Paintings, Add.Or.2, British Library.

while watching a *nautch* performance.³¹ All of his companions and attendants are Indian.³²

David Ochterlony, often cited as an example of a man who easily straddled cultures, was born on 12 February 1758 near Boston, Massachusetts. But he was of recent Scottish descent and did not regard himself as an American (see Table 1). His paternal grandfather, Alexander, had been the laird of Pitforthly in County Angus. After his immigrant father David died insolvent while trading on the island of St Vincent in the Caribbean, his mother, Katherine Tyler, left Boston for London with her three young sons. There in 1770 she married the childless Isaac Heard (1730–1822), the Garter King of Arms. Heard would later be instrumental in helping Ochterlony obtain arms of his own.³³ Ochterlony was schooled in Scotland, boarding with his uncle Gilbert Ochterlony, the successor as laird. In 1776, at age seventeen, he returned to London and through his stepfather's agency joined the East India Company's army. He sailed for India early in 1778 as a cadet and was commissioned shortly after this – the start of a highly successful military career. Ochterlony fought the French in Karnataka, and was wounded and taken prisoner at the siege of Cuddalore in 1783. Freed in 1784, he then rose quickly as an officer. As Adjutant-General, Ochterlony was with Gerard Lake at the capture of both Delhi and Agra and was rewarded for this by his first appointment as Delhi Resident. This first tenure ended abruptly in the summer of 1806 when, the range of his skills as an administrator not considered by the Company to be his greatest strength, he was abruptly moved to command the fort at Allahabad. He was sent to the North-West Frontier three years later to establish the Ludhiana Agency, the channel of Anglo-Sikh military and diplomatic communications. This would later be transferred first to Karnal and then to Ambala, where Ochterlony is still remembered. As a general, Ochterlony led the famous march on Kathmandu in 1815, helping defeat the Gurkhas. After the annexation of Nepal in 1816 he was created a baronet.³⁴

³¹ The painting is not inscribed but its identification as Ochterlony in later life is supported by a miniature portrait on ivory in the National Portrait Gallery in London, NPG 1266.

³² The image and the way of life it indicates are in stark contrast to a portrait of the man who succeeded Ochterlony in 1806, Archibald Seton of Touch. In a recently discovered miniature inscribed in elegant *nasta'liq* script, Seton is shown in a European interior seated on a chair and wearing spectacles and a high hat. He is attended by a single Indian servant. This mounted album page with gilt-decorated borders was sold by Duke's Auction House in Dorchester in November 2015.

³³ See Clive Cheesman's useful article, 'The Heraldic Legacy of Sir Isaac Heard', *The Coat of Arms* Series 3 1:1 (2005), pp. 22–37.

³⁴ Information on Ochterlony's life is taken from the Ochterlony Papers in the Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge University, microfilm box 2, 20B. These papers include an account from notes collected by his grandson, Charles Metcalf Ochterlony, edited and privately printed by David Fergusson Ochterlony in 1902. A second biography, by Walter Kendall Watkins, *The Ochterlony Family of Scotland and Boston in New England*, was also privately printed in 1902.

The political climate in north India had already begun a slow change and David Ochterlony, though admired as a soldier, came to be regarded as an eccentric outsider among the British, and the Company was uncertain about where best to place him. In early 1818 he was briefly appointed Resident in Rajputana and Commissioner General to the Rajput States. He was then offered the option of the Lucknow Residency, where his understanding of the mores of elite Indian society might have been put to very good use, but this he refused, explaining in a letter that he ‘... could not at that moment bring [himself] to give up the happiness of [his] domestic circle’.³⁵ For by now Ochterlony had become the head of a large extended family. As a man in his sixties, it was his rich personal life more than his role in the Company that seems to have most occupied his attention. In January 1818, when he was being considered for a second term as Delhi Resident, Ochterlony wrote again about his fondness for this family. If the second term were denied to him, he said, he would be ‘... happier at Karnal than anywhere – for there, or near it, are, or will be at no distant date, I trust, assembled all those whom I love with paternal affection; and there, like a patriarch, I wish to live in the greatest enjoyment this life can bestow – the society of those I love and who, I believe, return it with sincere and fond affection’.³⁶ Late in 1818 the Company returned Ochterlony to Delhi for a second term, the appointment lasting until October 1821. During this time, he continued to live and work officially from the same Residency house enclosing the Mughal pavilion. But he was now a substantial landowner in his own right, with more than one private estate in Delhi’s suburban fringe and several others outside the city in the area around Karnal and on the route north and west towards Ambala and Ludhiana. His time was divided between these estates and living in tents when travelling with his entourage on Company business. The personal was now of increasing importance to Ochterlony and he was busy making provision for the future of the members of his extended family.

Though David Ochterlony was never married, his several beloved children, a son and six daughters born to three Indian women, were publicly acknowledged. His first child and only son, Roderick Peregrine (1785–1822), had been born shortly after his father’s release as a prisoner of war, perhaps in Madras. Two daughters, Henrietta Frances (1797–1872) and Mary Anne (1799–1878), came a decade later, both born in Chunar Fort, near Varanasi. Two more daughters, Caroline Alicia Henrietta (1803–14) and Joanna Matilda (1805–c.1825), were born in Delhi.³⁷ We do not know the names of the mothers of

³⁵ David Ochterlony to William Fraser, 1821, bundle 349, Fraser of Reelig papers. The Fraser of Reelig papers are still in the family’s possession, and are accessible through the National Register of Archives for Scotland.

³⁶ Letter to Charles Metcalfe, quoted in John William Kaye, ed., *The Life and Correspondence of Charles, Lord Metcalfe*, vol. 1 (London, 1854), p. 470.

³⁷ India Office Family History Search database, British Library; and MS Beltz-Pulman A. VII,

any of these five children, though from the spacing of their births we might safely assume two, perhaps more, separate relationships. However, there were two further daughters born late in Ochterlony's life, Charlotte Joanna and Sarah Amelia, whose lives took a different trajectory. We know a lot more about their mother, Mahruttum Mubarak ul-Nissa, known as the Mubarak Begum or sometimes as Begum Ochterlony, through the detailed provisions made for her in Ochterlony's will. She will be discussed below.

Roderick Ochterlony, who worked with his father in the Ludhiana Agency, married Sarah Nelly in Allahabad in 1808 and soon they had children of their own.³⁸ By 1817, the elder two of David Ochterlony's daughters, now married to Company officials, had also borne him grandchildren.³⁹ Wills in the India Office give us detailed and reliable statistical data on the liaisons and marriages of Company officials and show that co-habitation, intermarriage and religious conversion were very common up to the first quarter of the nineteenth century.⁴⁰ Yet the lives of Anglo-Indian children are not always easy to track later, as in order not to be ostracised in Britain if they were to return there, their mixed-race origins had to be at least partially obscured. Ochterlony feared for the future of his elder daughters. In a letter written from Delhi in 1803 to Hugh Sutherland, also the father of a child with an Indian woman, he confided, 'My children are uncommonly fair, but if educated in the European manner they will in spite of complexion labour under all the disadvantages of being known as *the natural daughters of Ochterlony by a native woman* – In that one sentence is compressed all that ill nature and illiberality can convey.'⁴¹ He thought seriously about how his children would fit into British society. The first five were baptised, and the four older girls were all in London in 1812, though the reason they were sent and the duration of their stay are not yet clear.⁴² Ochterlony would make careful provision for them all, later even securing a new patent of creation so that his arms as well as his title could pass to his eldest surviving grandson, Charles Metcalfe Ochterlony (1817–91), whose father died unexpectedly in 1822.⁴³

f. 250, College of Arms. Caroline Ochterlony died in London in 1814, aged nine, and she was buried in Marylebone cemetery. Joanna Ochterlony was alive at the time her father's will was written but died before her husband, John Henry Middleton (1796–1831).

³⁸ Sarah Nelly, the daughter of John Nelly of the artillery, also had an Indian mother. Miniature portraits of them are held by the Massachusetts Historical Society, catalogue 03.237.

³⁹ Henrietta Ochterlony married Henry Fisher Salter in 1814, and Mary Anne Ochterlony married Henry Johnson Middleton in 1817. India Office Family History Search database, British Library.

⁴⁰ The wills show that in the 1780s over one-third of British men in India were leaving all their possessions to one or more Indian companion (*bibi* or beloved), or to their children. See Durba Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India* (Cambridge, 2006).

⁴¹ Papers of Col. Robert Sutherland, 1793–1803, MSS Eur.D547, British Library.

⁴² MS Beltz-Pulman A.VII, f. 250, College of Arms.

⁴³ The recreation of the title from Baronet of Pitforthly in 1816 to Baronet of Ochterlony in

Much of David Ochterlony's wealth had been made through buying and selling land in India. He had several personal estates. The principal one in Delhi, from which he often conducted Company business during his second term in office, was at the Mughal Shalimar Bagh, about 6 miles to the north and west of the city, on the main road to Lahore (the Grand Trunk Road, today Route 10). Property at Shalimar had originally been given to him by Shah Alam II in 1805, at the time that he was honoured for his defence of the city from the secondary invasion by Holkar's infantry in October of 1804. Ochterlony would later sell it, then buy it back (for a reported 60,000 rupees), and in his second term would spend a considerable amount more money on improving the estate, even building a new banqueting hall on the foundations of one of its Mughal reservoirs.⁴⁴ When he was ordered by the Company to leave Delhi and move his establishment to Neemuch, which he did in 1822, he considered selling the house again, but changed his mind and asked the Company to let him live quietly and privately there. During the last two years of his life, he is known to have spent much of his time at Shalimar.⁴⁵ The full story of the ownership of this property is also part of the story of Charles Metcalfe in Delhi and will be told in more detail in the next chapter.

David Ochterlony owned additional land and built several more private houses in north India, including two large houses in Karnal, one for the Company and one on which, according to William Linnaeus Gardner, he had allegedly spent a *lakh* of his own money.⁴⁶ In the tradition of Mughal garden houses, the Karnal house stood on a large plot on the right bank of the Western Yamuna Canal, to the south of the town's Civil Station. Karnal, some 75 miles from Delhi, was the major cantonment on the extreme north-western frontier of the British territory, bordering that of the Sikh kingdom, though administratively it formed part of the Delhi Territory. Its gridded cantonment and civil station, one of the first in north India, with large bungalows set in spacious lots of land, was a precursor of Delhi's Civil Lines. While Emily Eden would describe it disparagingly in the 1830s as '... a great ugly scattered cantonment, all barracks, and dust, and guns, and soldiers', Ochterlony's house, with two sentry boxes at its monumental gateway, was an impressive building, almost palatial in scale, with fluted *chunam* pillars in the central *darbar* hall.⁴⁷ It still stands today.

1823 enabled it to last through five more generations of male Ochterlonys.

⁴⁴ Letter 100, William Linnaeus Gardner to Edward Gardner, September 1821, Gardner papers, NAM.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, letter 98. Frequent visits to Shalimar are also indicated in the headings of Ochterlony's official correspondence. See N.K. Sinha, and A.K. Dasgupta, *Selections from Ochterlony Papers (1818–1825) in the National Archives of India* (Calcutta, 1964).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, letter 100.

⁴⁷ Emily Eden, *Up the Country: Letters Written to her Sister from the Upper Provinces of India* (London, 1866), p. 104; Cecil Henry Buck, *Annals of Karnal* (Lahore, 1914), pp. 15ff. Buck describes

Ochterlony also commissioned houses elsewhere for the Company and for himself. In 1822 he was moved from Delhi to Jaipur and then given the position of Resident at Neemuch, which became the headquarters of the now combined political agency of Rajputana and Malwa, the political boundaries in today's Rajasthan incrementally altered after the Third Maratha War in 1817. He was first told by the Company to find a suitable house that could be adapted for use in Tonk, then the headquarters of the Company's forces.⁴⁸ He settled instead on Neemuch, building a large classical house with a *darbar* hall measuring 28 by 70 feet and costing 50,000 rupees.⁴⁹ That house was later – fancifully – described as being a big building with a corridor going down one side for his Muslim wives and another down the other side for his Hindu concubines.⁵⁰ Mention of the general's sexual prowess is often present in accounts written after his life. Reginald Heber, a major contributor to our image of Ochterlony's orientalist lifestyle, avoided that issue altogether when he preached from the house in February 1825, noting only 'a fine house here built by Sir David Ochterlony and well furnished, but which he has never occupied' – perhaps not quite accurate, as after Ochterlony's death there were sales of his wines, household furniture, live- and deadstock, wearing apparel and sundries in the Company-owned Neemuch and Delhi houses and also in a house in Nasirabad.⁵¹

During his second term as Delhi Resident, there was reportedly a change in David Ochterlony's character. His actions became domineering and his behaviour erratic. 'He is quarrelling with the King ... They managed these things better in Metcalfe's time,' grumbled William Gardner, adding in a later letter, 'I have no hesitation in saying the English name is at present disgraced. Well it is for the place that power is divided, otherwise the town would be

the subsequent owners of the house and reports that Bhai Udai Singh, ruler of the nearby Sikh state of Kaithal, would copy Ochterlony's house on an even larger scale.

⁴⁸ IOR F/4/829/21961, January 1822–September 1823, British Library: 'You are to ascertain whether that place or any eligible spots in the vicinity affords buildings which you might convert into a dwelling.'

⁴⁹ The Neemuch house, then with a wooden roof to its main hall, 25 feet high, was by 1871 in 'precarious condition' and was rebuilt with brick arches on iron girders. A second room of about the same size was reroofed using wood. Public Works Department, *Annual Administration Report of the Public Works (Rajpootana and Western India States Agencies) for the Year 1871–1872* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 13. The building is now used as a mess by the officers of the Central Reserve Police Force.

⁵⁰ H.P. Hall's oral history, part of the Louisiana State University online exhibition *British Voices from South Asia*, retrieved from www.lib.lsu.edu/special/exhibits/e-exhibits/india/intvw2.htm. In Hall's account, Ochterlony was still locally esteemed: 'General Ochterlony had died about a hundred years before, but the local people still revered him. In fact there was a little plaque to say that he lived there, and there were flowers, wreaths and things, still there to the day that I was there.' The house during Hall's time in India was used as an opium factory.

⁵¹ Heber, *Narrative*, vol. 2, p. 491. See also the probate inventory of David Ochterlony of 1826, IOR L/AG/34/27/86/00316-20, British Library. Nasirabad, a cantonment town near Jaipur, was named after Ochterlony's Mughal title.

exposed to, and certainly suffer great oppression. I wish for the sake of his character, that Sir David would die'.⁵² There were kinder reports, such as that of James Baillie Fraser, who visited and sat with Ochterlony in October 1820 and reported, 'The general is amazing and like the idea I had formed of him. He was gracious, pleasant and I liked his manner on the whole, and found nothing of that ... haughtiness which has been said he shows and others have come to think of him.'⁵³ But by now public perception of Ochterlony had changed and the tide had turned against him. 'Sir David is very unpopular here with all natives and all Europeans,' wrote William Gardner in 1820.⁵⁴ What had happened to cause this shift in opinion?

Maps of Delhi from the first half of the nineteenth century, most usefully a sketch map of 1807 by Francis Sellon White, a lieutenant in the Company's army, the original of which is in the National Archives of India, and a manuscript map in The National Archives in London that dates to about 1850, as well as the large detailed sheets from the first full British ordnance survey, printed in 1867/68, show that surrounding Delhi there were remains of many formal gardens especially to the west and north-west along the road that led towards Lahore and close to the canal.⁵⁵ They were described in the 1818 account as 'the country houses of the nobility', and included the Shalimar Bagh, Roshanara Bagh, *Vazīr* Khan's garden, the garden of Narayan Das and many other smaller private gardens there that had been built in Shah Jahan's time and later.⁵⁶ Owners would ride out to a pleasure garden and stay there in lavish tents or in pavilions decked with portable furnishings for luxury and comfort. In the case of imperial gardens, there was a long-standing convention of camping and resting at half a day's march before arriving, in full pomp, in the city. That convention accounts for major gardens at that distance from those other cities that had been Mughal capitals, such as the two gardens known as Shalimar in both Delhi and Lahore. Near the end of his life, David Ochterlony would build another, private house in a garden in this same part of Delhi. It was known as Mubarak Bagh, though sometimes referred to in later British correspondence as Ochterlony Gardens. We know about it from documents and from two miniature paintings; the house no longer stands. Apparently built in a liberal mix of classical,

⁵² Letter 17, William Linnaeus Gardner to Edward Gardner, July 1820, and letter 28, September 1820, Gardner papers, NAM.

⁵³ Personal diary of James Baillie Fraser, 5 October 1820, bundle 303, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁵⁴ Letter 16, William Linnaeus Gardner to Edward Gardner, undated (June or July 1820), Gardner papers, NAM.

⁵⁵ NAI, *Sketch of the Environs of Delhi*, 1807; The National Archives (hereafter TNA), MPI 1/443/1: Map of Delhi and its environs showing the walled town, important buildings, the river and causeway, high ground, canals, roads and other buildings and sites outside the walls. Scale: 1 inch to 1 mile; and British Library, Map Division, O/V/1, *Cantonment, City and Environs of Delhi, 1867/8*.

⁵⁶ *Asiatic Journal* 15, p. 557.

neo-Gothic and Mughal architectural styles, the house is a material record of the story of Ochterlony's late-life relationship with an extraordinarily clever and ambitious woman, whose full name and titles are recorded in his will as 'Beebee Mahruthum Moghahnucku Moobaruck ul-Nissum Begume' alias 'Begume Ochterlony'.⁵⁷ As a case study the house links research on British property speculation in Delhi with an informal marriage and the children it produced.

Begum Ochterlony had obscure origins but is popularly said to have begun life as a dancing girl from Pune of Brahman parentage who later converted to Islam. As a Muslim she would go on to build a small and still well-preserved mosque in the Hauz Qazi district of Shahjahanabad, dated by inscription to 1823. In a later, post-Revolt British account, she is said to have been given as a gift to Ochterlony by his senior mistress when she was a very young girl.⁵⁸ Though the details of her early life are far from clear and seem to have slid into the realm of gossip, it is certain that she became Ochterlony's favourite late in his life, certainly by the time of his second term as Resident.⁵⁹ Far younger than Ochterlony, she seems to have had some considerable power over the aging general at a time when his fortune was well established but his health and authority were beginning to waver. Accounts of her own high-handed behaviour and sense of entitlement – including public reports in the palace newsletters (*akhbār*) of the ceremonial gifts she exchanged with dignitaries visiting the city, for example, or the adoption of a royal Mughal title for herself, Qudsia Begum – are concurrent with the reports of Ochterlony's growing unpopularity in Delhi.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Will of David Ochterlony (1824), Bengal Wills 1780–1938, IOR L/AG/34/29/37, pp. 185ff., British Library.

⁵⁸ Delhi Commissioner's Office, Mubarak Bagh Papers, F. 5/1861: 'Mubarik ul-Nissa was originally a girl of Brahmin parentage, who was brought from Poona in the Deccan by one Mosst. Chumpa, and presented or sold by the said Chumpa to Genl. Ochterlony when 12 years of age. Mosst. Mubarik ul-Nissa from that time resided in Genl. Ochterlony's house, and Mosst. Chumpa resided with her there, being known by the name of Banbahi'. Cited by William Dalrymple, *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth-Century India* (London, 2002), p. 183, n. 51.

⁵⁹ Begum Ochterlony also had a connection to Ludhiana, perhaps as a result of Ochterlony's favour. According to my colleague Richard Saumarez Smith, who has done extensive research on land settlement in Punjab, after Ochterlony's death she enjoyed a *jagir* of half of a large village immediately to the east of the town, granted her by the Raja of Jind and then continued by the British after Jind's Ludhiana estates were taken by the British by escheat in 1835, including the town of Ludhiana with its own urban estates. Email from Richard Smith, April 2016.

⁶⁰ Letter 87, William Linnaeus Gardner to Edward Gardner, August 1821, Gardner papers, NAM: 'Mobarruck Begum, alias Generalee Begum, fills the paper with the accounts of Nizars and Khiluts given and taken by her in her transactions with the vauqueels of the different powers.' There are several other scathing comments about her from Gardner, who had himself married a princess from Cambay and had converted to Islam more than twenty years earlier.

The powers of the Mubarak Begum were made unambiguously clear in David Ochterlony's will, written in March 1824. In it he left the bulk of his Indian real estate to 'Begume Ochterlony', who was further described as the mother of his two youngest children – Charlotte Joanna and Sarah Amelia.⁶¹ Unlike Ochterlony's other children, there is no record of the baptism of these girls, probably because of their mother's religion, and we do not know the exact dates of their birth. Their names, however, appear as an addendum to the documents filed when Ochterlony, with the help of his stepfather, Isaac Heard, the Garter King of Arms, applied for arms. The documents show how Ochterlony was constructing his lineage as he strove in various ways to legitimate his progeny. His first four daughters were all in London in 1812, but not the two youngest, which suggests that they were then either infants or, more likely, were born after the time Ochterlony obtained his first grant of arms in 1817 but before the new patent was issued in 1822.⁶² Ochterlony's only son, Roderick Peregrine, whom he had expected would succeed to his title, died unexpectedly in Neemuch in 1822, and it was in that same year and shortly after the death of his stepfather that a new patent of creation was arranged so that both title and arms could pass to his grandson, Charles Metcalfe Ochterlony.⁶³

Ochterlony's will of 1824 reveals the influence of the strong-willed Mubarak ul-Nissa on his decision-making and his life. Mubarak ul-Nissa was to all intents now Ochterlony's wife. On his death in the summer of 1825 she inherited all the jewels, carriages, silver plate, linen, furniture and other articles of personal property that she had lived with and used during their informal marriage, as well as a lump sum of immediately accessible money (5,000 *kuldar* rupees) to enable her to live in unbroken comfort while the will was being settled.⁶⁴ Ochterlony also left her interest on the sum of 20,000 *sicca* rupees settled on her for life.⁶⁵ She apparently drove a hard bargain as this was increased in a first codicil, written in April of the same year, giving her additional income of three hundred rupees a month from his investments. He also gave her title to all his other real estate within the city of Delhi – which unfortunately is not specified in greater detail, either in the will or in the documents of its settlement – as well as land in the vicinity, including parcels of land in the *parganah* of Aliverdi. As the Mubarak Begum also later received the *jagir* from estates near Ludhiana, this made her a rich woman. But most important for this discussion, Ochterlony also gave her title to 'the houses,

⁶¹ Will of David Ochterlony, Bengal Wills 1780–1938, IOR L/AG/34/29/37, pp. 185ff., British Library.

⁶² MS Beltz-Pulman A.VII, f. 250, College of Arms.

⁶³ Cheesman, 'The Heraldic Legacy', p. 28.

⁶⁴ Will of David Ochterlony, Bengal Wills 1780–1938, IOR L/AG/34/29/37, pp. 185ff., British Library.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

gardens and hereditaments called after her name, Moobaruck Bhaug' for her sole use and benefit for the term of her life.⁶⁶ On her death, this title was to pass to their two daughters, Charlotte Joanna and Sarah Amelia.

It was near the end of his second term in the office of Resident in Delhi that David Ochterlony had purchased land in the area north and west of Shahjahanabad close to the road to Karnal on which to build the Mubarak Bagh. Information on the acquisition of this land can be found in the Fraser of Reelig papers. In 1821, Ochterlony had written informally to William Fraser, then an Assistant Resident and responsible for land settlement and revenue, to appeal for help with a private purchase which he wished to make, as he put it, 'on rather specific terms'.⁶⁷ Ochterlony, who had been criticised during this second term for his interference in settlement procedures, both the act and the manner of them, by other civil administrators in Delhi, seems to have taken great care with his colleague on this occasion to act with discretion. In the Fraser correspondence we learn that Ochterlony already owned some land near Malikpur, a village with many gardens north-west of Shahjahanabad, and that he now wanted to buy about thirty *bighas* more land to extend and regularise the plan of the garden he was planning there. Ochterlony also wanted to own the land outright, outside of any proprietary claims of the British collector or the local landowner or *zamīndār*, and for this he was prepared to pay a quit-rent – a lump sum equivalent to rent over a fixed period. We also learn from the correspondence that he had already run a subsidiary branch from the Delhi canal system, now newly repaired, onto his property in order to irrigate the garden. 'The truth is,' Ochterlony confided to Fraser, 'I wish to make its size up as much as possible, as the person for whom I buy it (my Lady) like all other natives will not consider it good property if it is not exempted from any *parganah* whatsoever.' He went on to tell Fraser of his intention to build 'a very fine and extensive park or garden or a union of both as *bibi*'s taste there will surely hereafter decide when I have gained the proprietary rights'.⁶⁸

Charged with the responsibility of assessing the validity of this request was Henry Middleton, who in 1817 had become Ochterlony's son-in-law when he married Mary Anne, Ochterlony's second daughter (by a different Indian companion). Middleton wrote telling Fraser that he had looked at the whole of the land which his father-in-law wanted. His letter refers to an enclosed sketch plan of the land, though this unfortunately is no longer attached to the letter. The land was described as comprising two lots, numbered I and II on the plan, and Middleton – perhaps not surprisingly – told Fraser that these

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Letter from David Ochterlony to William Fraser, 28 January 1821, bundle 351, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

were of relatively little value: 'No. I tho' at a considerable distance from the village belongs to Mullichpore [Malikpur]. I do not think it comprises quite so much as 6 beegar. 4 of the beegar are uncultivated, nothing growing on them but a few babool trees. The small bit that is cultivated yields khureef [*khurīf*]. No. II is all cultivated though it appears very poor land. The khureef is the only crop obtained from it.' The correspondence also refers in more detail to the supply of water to the property: 'The branch of the canal which Sir David has made, to lead the water to his garden, runs adjacent to No. II. This is an additional inducement to Sir D to wish to get this land as otherwise the water-course will be productive of disputes, etc. The moafee [*mu'āf*] land Sir David will I believe endeavour to purchase of the zamindar. And if he succeeds in getting this, and in making some arrangement with Samuel Ludlow he will, should the plans he has detailed to you succeed, possess a quadrangular estate.'⁶⁹ The letter is signed H. Middleton, 29th January 1821.

It is very rare to have documents that give account of land transactions for a large garden house – or any house – that was to be built for an Indian companion. The structure that resulted, the construction of which we can consequently date to between 1821 and 1824, is rarer and more surprising still. Ochterlony's new garden house was located in a prominent position, at the apex of the triangle of land formed by the two major roads that led out to the north-west from the walled city: one from the Kashmir Gate, through the Civil Lines and the new cantonment; the other from the Lahore Gate and past the Sabz-i Mandi. It was on this 'quadrangular estate' that the Mubarak Bagh was built. A remarkable hybrid construction in a walled enclosure, it included a large Gothic garden house and pavilion, a mosque and a mausoleum, combining fanciful interpretations of European with Mughal and other indigenous Indian decoration. The historian Percival Spear saw its ruins at the end of the 1930s, but unfortunately did not describe them in any detail.⁷⁰ Apart from a slightly earlier account by Constance Villiers-Stuart, which rather astutely suggested that they represented 'a sort of resolution of Ochterlony's worries', what little we do know of the appearance of the buildings comes from two late Mughal miniature paintings.⁷¹ The first and better known image is of the side of the building complex probably intended to have been a *maqbara* or mausoleum for Ochterlony. It is in this context that the building has always been previously understood. It was painted by a Company School artist for inclusion in the Delhi Book, an album of miniature paintings thought to be from the atelier of Mazhar 'Ali Khan and compiled by the later Delhi Commissioner Thomas Theophilus Metcalfe in

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Letter from Percival Spear to Mildred Archer, c.1970, Spear papers, Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge University.

⁷¹ Constance Villiers-Stuart, *Gardens of the Great Mughals* (London, 1913), pp. 106f.

the mid 1840s (see Chapter Six below). The album contains a rather roughly executed miniature of a building that, from this view, appears to have had a symmetrical five-part Palladian plan.⁷² It comprised a rectangular central block with two flanking wings in the form of octagonal pavilions, linked by open colonnades, all raised up onto a platform. From the central block an octagonal drum rises to support a ribbed dome, often compared to that of Delhi's St James's Church, probably because of the cross on top (although that dome would not be built until long after the Mubarak Bagh had been completed).⁷³ The architectural details of this elevation, however, are far from standard and are a very far cry from Palladian. There are pointed arches and Mughal friezes, sometimes in unexpected places, and both the central section and the wings are ornamented with high, tapering pinnacles or *guldastas*. Those that frame the triple-arched entry are ornamented with blind niches. The side pavilions were decorated with classicising urns almost large enough to be read as *chhatris*. This side of the building, on its raised *chabutra*, seems to have been reached by a short ramp. The perspective in the painting is ambiguous, but it is possible that this part may have fronted a water tank, in the tradition of some Mughal tomb pavilions.

The handwritten annotation in the Delhi Book, in the hand of Thomas Metcalfe, states that Ochterlony intended the central domed block in this depiction to be used as his mausoleum: that he intended to always be remembered at the Mubarak Bagh. Because there had also been an earlier tradition of rather grandiose building of Mughal tomb-types by Europeans in India (in Agra and in Surat in particular), as well as a continuation of the tradition in the later-nineteenth-century *maqbara* typology, the text in the Delhi Book has never been questioned.⁷⁴ A conspicuous precedent is the near contemporary tomb of the French general Claude Martin, who built himself a cavernous mansion in Lucknow called Constantia, directly based on the *hasht bihisht* plan of the Taj Mahal. At its core was a tomb chamber where Martin was buried in a lead coffin, having given very precise instructions for this in his will.⁷⁵ The mausoleum also ensured that his house remained in his estate. But while there is a temptation to compare the two, burial at Mubarak Bagh was not specified in Ochterlony's will, written in 1824. In any event, he was to die unexpectedly in the hot weather of the summer of 1825 at Meerut and was quickly interred there by his colleagues in the cemetery of St John's

⁷² The Delhi Book, India Office Prints, Drawings and Paintings, Add.Or.5475, ff. 67v–68, British Library.

⁷³ St James's Church was consecrated in 1836. See Chapter Four, below.

⁷⁴ For example, the showy, Mughal-influenced double tomb of the Oxenden Brothers in Surat, built in 1674, by which they '... strove to perpetuate the idea [of their memory] even in death by grand mausolea in imitation of the Mahometan nobility'. Theodore Hope, *Surat, Broach and Other Old Cities of Gujarat* (Bombay, 1868), p. 2.

⁷⁵ His instructions are reprinted in *Bengal Obituary* (Calcutta and London, 1851), p. 169.

Church.⁷⁶ Ochterlony's life and career would later be publicly memorialised in Calcutta with the construction of a hybrid column that freely combined Egyptian revival, classical and Islamic architectural details, and privately in an estate in Scotland.⁷⁷

An even more spectacular, minutely detailed view of the Mubarak Bagh is to be found in the collection of the Art Museums of San Francisco (Plate 3).⁷⁸ This very fine little painting sheds much more light on the extent of its plan and its buildings with their mixed architectural styles, showing that they were sited in an enclosed and well-treed garden. One of two single sheets purchased by the museum in 1979, its painter and the date of its execution have not yet been determined, though it must have been made in the 1820s. The miniature may have been taken from a topographical album in the ownership of members of Ochterlony's family, some of whom are also known to have collected miniature paintings.⁷⁹ It is inscribed in Persian 'Auspicious Plan of General David Ochterlony's Garden outside Shah Jahanabad'. Though tiny, measuring less than 5 inches in width, it is extremely precise in its detailing. The artist here takes a different view of his subject, focussing on the entry gate to what appears to be a walled palace complex, giving us more idea of scale and overall size. A back view of the structure perhaps intended as Ochterlony's tomb can easily be identified to the left of the picture. In the foreground, an asymmetrical gatehouse combines Gothic windows with a lobed Mughal door leading into an enclosed garden, onto which a number of different structures give, including a large Gothic revival house. We might even be tempted to compare it to a Scottish castle, though its style details are eclectic. There are quoins, windows with slatted shutters over trefoil windows, crenellated turrets with flattened Ionic pilasters and elaborate string courses. To the back of the garden sits what is apparently a mosque, with finials on top of a tent-shaped dome. With its parapets and pinnacles, the complex of buildings muddies style. What kind of Gothic are we talking about here? Not the Gothic of moral force and Evangelicism found in the British churches built in India after the 1840s. Not the simplified collegiate Gothic of near contemporary constructions such as Agra College or Bishop's College in

⁷⁶ Ochterlony had resigned over the issue of the Bharatpur succession in early 1825. In 1824 Durjan Singh of Bharatpur tried to seize power after his uncle Baldeo Singh died leaving his infant son Balwant Singh as Raja. Ochterlony supported the rightful heir and issued a proclamation in defence of the Raja that was repudiated by Lord Amherst. Amherst's lack of confidence is believed to have left Ochterlony feeling 'abandoned and dishonoured' and to have hastened his death on 15 July 1825.

⁷⁷ Known today as the Shaheed Minar, it was designed by J.B. Parker and completed in 1828.

⁷⁸ 'Auspicious Plan of General David Ochterlony's Garden outside Shah Jahanabad', Art Museums of San Francisco, 1979.2.25.

⁷⁹ Letter 90, William Linnaeus Gardner to Edward Gardner, 16 August 1821, Gardner papers, NAM: 'Middleton is a fine young man who likes painting and painters (so does his wife) better than business.'



مقتطفه من كتاب تاريخ حيدرآباد
 من تأليف ميرزا قليچ بيگ

Plate 3 Anonymous (Indian), *Auspicious Plan of General David Ochterlony's Garden outside Shah Jehanabad c. 1825* (Mubarak Bagh). Transparent and opaque watercolour on paper; sheet size 72 × 126 mm.

Calcutta. This is an elaborate hybrid confection, a far cry from the synthetic Indo-Saracenic style of public building from the later century that was used to proclaim British dominance through the mixed use of details from across the Islamic world. This is the dream house of an Anglo-Indian relationship.

The architects who had turned Dara Shukoh's pavilion into the Delhi Residency were undoubtedly engineer officers. As a result of the training schemes of the Company, it was civil engineers rather than gentlemen-architects who would build for British India in the early nineteenth century, and one name has been proposed, that of George Rodney Blane (1791–1821) of the Bengal Engineers, a man who had already built classicising structures near Calcutta. But Blane did not arrive in Delhi until 1816, when he was sent by the Governor General to work on the restoration of the Delhi canal system (see Chapter Three below), arriving after the changes made by David Ochterlony and by Charles Metcalfe.⁸⁰ The Mubarak Bagh, however, can be securely dated to the time between the land transaction of early 1821 and Ochterlony's will of March 1824. Because of their work in neo-Gothic styles, I suggest two likely architects for the Mubarak Bagh, George Hutchinson (1793–1852) and Robert Smith. Hutchinson, Delhi's Garrison Engineer between 1816 and 1822, was later the builder of St Peter's Garrison Church in Fort William, Calcutta, constructed between 1822 and 1828 and a rare example of the so-called Regency Gothic style of architecture in India. Hutchinson was also responsible for completing Bishop's College, the theological college begun in 1820 by the Orientalist scholar William Jones. Smith, the subject of Chapter Four of this book, was Hutchinson's successor as Delhi's Garrison Engineer, taking up the post on his return from leave in England in 1822. Smith is known to have built several large structures that combined Mughal and neo-Gothic detailing both before and after his departure from Delhi early in 1830. In addition, Smith was the originating architect of St James's Church, whose dome so resembles that of the Ochterlony mausoleum. Further investigation into the work of these architects might settle the matter and would also be very useful in linking David Ochterlony's building activities to the wider ongoing debates about India's role in the meaning of the origins of the Gothic.

David Ochterlony's will was detailed and specific, written with clarity and executed with expediency. Apart from the substantial bequest to the Mubarak Begum, Ochterlony charged the management of all his other real estate, goods, chattels and effects to John Palmer and John Studholme (both members of the House of Palmer in Calcutta), to Henry Middleton and Henry Fisher

⁸⁰ Blane had already executed a number of architectural projects for Hastings, including the classicising Temple of Fame at Barrackpore, c.1813. These drawings are in the Drawings Collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects, catalogue SB 78/1 (1–10).

Salter, two of his sons-in-law, as well as to other executors.⁸¹ After he died they sold his remaining property privately or at auction, putting the proceeds in trust and allocating the money amongst all five of Ochterlony's living natural daughters and the Begum Ochterlony herself in equal parts of one sixth.⁸² Immediately after Ochterlony's death, then Resident Charles Elliot went to Shalimar Gardens to prepare a list of Ochterlony's effects, and there was a sale of his property at auction, including houses, fetching 100,000 rupees.⁸³ The dispersal of Ochterlony's additional property and estates in Scotland is dealt with in Chapter Seven.

David Ochterlony made an interesting provision in the will for the future of the Mubarak Bagh and also for the future of his name in India. If his two youngest daughters were to die before their mother, the buildings and gardens were to be offered, on her death, as a gift to the British government in India. This was to be on the condition that government establish a school there for the instruction of Muslim youth (boys and not girls, apparently) in English, astronomy and mathematics. If the government would not accept the terms of the will, then the property was to be sold and the proceeds used to set up, with the assistance of private subscriptions, a similar kind of school. Ochterlony was quite specific about what he wanted to achieve in this school. It was not to attempt religious conversion but was to be 'for the sole purpose of the enlightenment of minds'. His hope, nevertheless, was that by reading 'the best authors' and through 'the habit of reasoning', as he put it, this conversion might eventually take place of its own volition.⁸⁴ But the school was never established. Perhaps because he was not interred there, which would surely have safeguarded the building better, we lose the thread of the story of the Mubarak Bagh between when it was inherited by the Mubarak Begum and the time of the Revolt of 1857, when it was the scene of fighting. It was then sold on to an Oudh noble, and later still part of the garden was used as a nursery to raise the trees for planting Lutyens' New Delhi.⁸⁵ In 1944 what remained of the estate was sold to a consortium for residential development.⁸⁶ As nothing of the house remains today, its plan will probably never be any better understood.

While it has been argued that British interaction with the forms of Indian culture happened only in the private sphere, the placement and organisation

⁸¹ These were men who were linked to his business connections in London as well as in India: John Ross, George Frederick Beltz, Matthew Foster, James Fergusson, and George Birch.

⁸² Caroline Alicia Henrietta Ochterlony had died in London 1814.

⁸³ *Delhi Diary*, p. 165.

⁸⁴ Will of David Ochterlony, Bengal Wills 1780–1938, IOR L/AG/34/29/37, pp. 185ff., British Library.

⁸⁵ Villiers-Stuart, *Gardens*, pp. 106f.

⁸⁶ Punjab-Haryana High Court ruling: Bhagwat Dayal Mattu Mal and ORS vs. Union of India Ministry, 18 December, 1957. Retrieved from <http://indiankanoon.org/doc/1638231/>.

of the Company houses that David Ochterlony built in Delhi and elsewhere in north India suggest that this is not the case.⁸⁷ Distinction between public and private in Delhi at the beginning of the nineteenth century hinged on the relationship to the hierarchy of prior Mughal social structure. It was closely allied with and emulated practices in pre-capitalist society in the West, in which the king and court embodied the public sphere. In Delhi in the early nineteenth century a new British elite lived side by side with old Indian society in this sphere. In different ways, each of Ochterlony's houses straddled the normative understanding of British and Indian culture as two separate entities. While the classical façade of the first Residency, the more public building, hid its Mughal rooms, the private Mubarak Bagh with an overtly Gothic/Mughal exterior proclaimed its hybridity, both in appearance and in function.

The lives of individuals almost always display multiple, context-specific characteristics that work against strict categorisation. The large establishments built by David Ochterlony tally with the generally accepted image of him as a figure living in almost kingly estate in hybrid environments constructed to suit his roles and his self-image. Ochterlony, in his second term, not only participated in the ceremonial exchange of gifts when granted royal audience; he entered the city to the salute of guns, accepting gifts of fully caparisoned horses or elephants and other luxuries.⁸⁸ In 1825, shortly before he died, Ochterlony would continue to receive guests whilst dressed in Indian clothing, fanned by servants with peacock feathers. Accounts, including that of Reginald Heber, describe Ochterlony's private and public self-representation as that of a sort of Indian potentate. When travelling late in life with his family and personal followers from Delhi to Jaipur, for example, he was reported to have moved like a Mughal prince, with a retinue of servants, escorts, European and native aides-de-camp, horses, elephants and camels, 'the number of his tents, the size of the enclosure hung around with red cloth, by which his own and his daughter's private tents were fenced in from the eyes of the profane, were what a European, or even an old Indian whose experience had been confined to Bengal, would scarcely be brought to credit'.⁸⁹ Reginald Heber thought that 'the whole procession was what might pass in Europe for that of an Eastern prince travelling'. In public Ochterlony was an active participant in a social structure in which people signalled their place in the scheme of things through dress, equipage and retinue both when they received guests and when they left home. As the many descriptions

⁸⁷ Barbara D. Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf, *A Concise History of India* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 65.

⁸⁸ Delhi Diary, p. 164.

⁸⁹ Reginald Heber, 'Characters of Public Men in India: The Late Sir David Ochterlony', *Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register* 25 (1828), p. 624. The text is excerpted from Heber's three-volume account.

of manners and mores in Delhi, by travellers and administrators, make abundantly clear, it was important from the start to show an understanding of the local distinctions of social rank if the British were to deal equitably with the Mughal court. This had been the case from the time of the earliest interactions of the English ambassador Thomas Roe at the seventeenth-century court of Jahangir, when after a number of false starts and misunderstandings, Mughal social and political rituals and organisation were slowly decoded by the English. They became a mechanism of control, and as Heber so sagely observed at the end of David Ochterlony's life, '... so far as it suits the ideas and habits of the natives themselves, this may have a good effect'.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Three

A LOVELY WILDERNESS: CHARLES METCALFE AND THE GARDEN HOUSES AT SHALIMAR

‘I feel the want of a country house incessantly,’ wrote a melancholy Charles Theophilus Metcalfe (1785–1846) in a letter to his favourite sister Georgiana in England. ‘As long as I live at the Residency,’ he went on, ‘it will be a public house; and as long as the billiard table stands the Residency will be a tavern.’¹ The letter was sent shortly before the Christmas of 1824 from the lavish Residency in the princely state of Hyderabad, where Metcalfe had recently been transferred as senior East India Company official. In this and in other rare remaining personal correspondence with Georgiana and his few other intimates Metcalfe lamented the lack of a meaningful family life, which he had consciously sacrificed to the public responsibilities that charted his career. His letters are testimony to the loneliness and sense of alienation that this important public figure always seems to have struggled with in private.

Charles Metcalfe is generally regarded as an exemplary servant of the East India Company at a critical time in its history. The third baronet Metcalfe (later elevated to baron), he, like David Ochterlony, was twice Resident at Delhi. His first term in office was from 1811 until the end of 1818 and his second, shorter stay from 1825 until 1827. Metcalfe’s distinguished career as an honest and earnest if moralising public figure was well documented from shortly after his death. His was the kind of life that was a magnet to Victorian biographers.² Less has been written about his private life, as there is very little left to narrate it with accuracy. This chapter will attempt to better understand Metcalfe’s self-avowed love of privacy and domesticity by looking at his building activities and living arrangements during his two terms in Delhi. The focus will be on reasons for his involvement in the British use of land at the Mughal Shalimar Bagh to the north of Shahjahanabad and on a struggle for the rights to ownership of property there after 1816.

¹ John William Kaye, ed., *The Life and Correspondence of Charles, Lord Metcalfe, from Unpublished Letters and Journals Preserved by Himself, His Family, and His Friends* (London, 1854), vol. 2, p. 13.

² Ibid.; Edward John Thompson, *The Life of Charles, Lord Metcalfe* (London, 1937).

Charles Metcalfe came from a socially assertive family that was already a prosperous one, though not yet as wealthy as it needed to be to fulfil its continuing ambitions (see Table 2). His father Thomas Metcalfe (1745–1813) had risen through the ranks of the East India Company's Bengal army to the lucrative position of storekeeper. He was apparently not a well-liked man, and the sharp-tongued Calcutta observer William Hickey credited him with an inflated sense of self-importance. He was also described as 'time-serving, pompous, and sycophantic'.³ Thomas Metcalfe returned to England from Calcutta in 1786 shortly after the birth of Charles, his second son, having amassed sufficient fortune to buy and furnish two substantial properties: a newly built Adam house in London at 49 Portland Place and a large, early-eighteenth-century house in a landscaped park near Windsor in Berkshire, called Fernhill.⁴ Following the way of life that has been rather neatly described as that of 'gentleman-capitalist' – men of trade with financial clout who aspired to the social values of the aristocracy (and in the case of the Metcalfe family, later married into it) – Thomas Metcalfe became a director of the East India Company in 1789, ran for Parliament probably to defend the Company's already faltering interests, and was knighted in 1802.⁵ When Thomas's oldest son, Theophilus John (1784–1822), died only nine years after his father, Charles unexpectedly inherited a title and all the responsibilities, as third baronet, for the name of the family, as well as for the properties in England. Ironically, these were properties in which he would never be able to afford to live. 'I shall be obliged, when I retire from India, to look to the rent from Fernhill and Portland Place House, as a part of my means of subsistence,' he wrote in 1825.⁶ Although others in his family prospered socially and economically in subsequent generations, Metcalfe would never become wealthy enough in a changing economic climate to sustain his inherited position.

Charles Metcalfe had been born in Calcutta. He was both homely and reserved, but a studious and very clever boy, and after returning to England

³ See the entry on Thomas Metcalfe in R.G. Thorne, ed., *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1790–1820* (London, 1986).

⁴ Portland Place and its original houses were designed by James and Robert Adam for the Duke of Portland in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Number 49 now houses the Embassy of the People's Republic of China. Fernhill, today a Grade II building listed by English Heritage, is in private ownership. In addition to the Fernhill estate, Metcalfe made other speculative farm purchases in the Windsor area. The Monson papers in the Lincolnshire Archives contain details of the management of his estates at the time of his inheritance.

⁵ Gentleman capitalists are described in Anthony Webster, *The Twilight of the East India Company* (Woodbridge, 2009).

⁶ Letter from Metcalfe to his sister Emily, Lady Ashbrook, March 1825, Monson papers, Lincolnshire Archives. Fernhill was at this time rented out to William Wellesley-Pole, an elder brother of the Duke of Wellington.

with his parents he was sent to be educated at Eton. But in 1800, at age fifteen, he was abruptly taken out of school and sent back to Bengal, his father not yet considering himself to have sufficient fortune to provide for three sons without their fashioning careers for themselves.⁷ His brother Theophilus John had already been sent to China in the Company's service. In Calcutta, Charles distinguished himself in the study of languages in Lord Wellesley's new Fort William College as one of its very first pupils. After an exploratory start to his career – and with the unwavering patronage of Wellesley – he opted for a civil rather than a military vocation within the Company. By 1806 he had been sent to Delhi as First Assistant to Archibald Seton, David Ochterlony's successor as Resident. Delhi, then at the extreme edge of the sphere now claimed by the Company, was an outpost for negotiations with those other groups with territorial ambition in the region that still fell outside its sway, the Sikhs, Jats and Marathas, and was also strategically important in preventing any possible new incursions by the French. In 1808/9 Metcalfe, already known for his stoic and methodical character and his political acumen, was sent by the Governor General Lord Minto on a diplomatic mission to the court of Ranjit Singh in Lahore to try to draw the Sikh ruler into a peaceful alliance with the British. Here he successfully negotiated the Treaty of Amritsar.⁸ By early 1811, a still young Charles Metcalfe had been promoted to Resident at Delhi. He was just twenty-six years old, and he would hold this first appointment for eight years, until the end of 1818.

It is well known that the personal ambitions of East India Company employees were often at odds with those of their employer. Of the men under study in this book, it is probably safe to say that Charles Metcalfe was the one who consistently displayed the greatest degree of public spirit. A contemporary noted this dedication: 'Metcalfe stalks abroad in all his majesty of rectitude – open, candid and fair in all his opinions, and the people of the old school as well as the inhabitants stare at him with admiration and amazement.'⁹ Nowhere in the record does Metcalfe ever appear to have aspired to making a fortune for himself. His sense of responsibility to the Company and his personal ethics were his priorities. In this, his family history might be productively contrasted with others, such as that of the Russell family, with whom Charles's life would later intersect in Hyderabad.¹⁰ A

⁷ See the current *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* entry for a brief outline of Metcalfe's life.

⁸ See M.L. Ahluwalia, ed., *Select Documents Relating to Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Negotiation with the British Envoy Charles Theophilus Metcalfe, 1808–1809* (New Delhi, 1982).

⁹ Box 16, Spear papers, Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge University.

¹⁰ See the detailed work of Margot Finn on the family of Henry Russell, Metcalfe's predecessor at Hyderabad. Her case study on their house, Swallowfield, also in Berkshire, can be retrieved from <http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/eicah/files/2013/01/Swallowfield-Case-Study-PDF-Version-Final-19.08.14.pdf>.

slightly pessimistic character, described by his biographer as ‘morally firm and economically conservative’, Metcalfe was staunchly opposed to the perquisites that many officials had become accustomed to taking.¹¹ His task, as he saw it at this stage in the Company’s wavering history, was to fully understand how to stabilise and administer the revenue-producing countryside around Delhi, how to realistically assess the value of the land, and how to raise from it money solely for the benefit of the Company.¹² Charged with reorganising revenue collection, including that from territories specially assigned to provide income for the Emperor’s court, his focus was to build upon pre-existing local systems.¹³ The pragmatic Metcalfe, believing that first-hand, practical understanding should guide policy-making in the local administration of villages, devised the so-called Delhi or Metcalfe System, which took into account landholding structures already in place. In the system, villages retained their local autonomy and were treated as undivided entities, and government at the local level was left largely in the hands of village elites, undisturbed as long as regular payment was made. As Delhi, then under the administration of the Bengal Presidency, was exempted from the non-royal Bengal Regulations that governed the rest of the Presidency, administration of the Delhi Territory was able to evolve locally, in its own way. During this period in his career Metcalfe was opposed to further territorial expansion by the Company, on economic grounds.

Personal money worries were often at the forefront of Charles Metcalfe’s mind. Although he regarded himself as having a prudent character, he found himself repeatedly sliding into debt, apparently trapped somewhere between his own practical nature, the value system into which he had been born and raised, and the extravagant demands that arose from living as the representative of the Company at the court of the Mughal. From his earliest time in India, Metcalfe experienced financial problems.¹⁴ As a young assistant appointed at Delhi he had been offered the opportunity to live with the generous Archibald Seton in the Residency. But because of his intensely private nature, Metcalfe had opted instead to build a house for himself, something that he almost certainly could not then afford to do. By June 1807 he was deeply worried about his finances, which he described in a letter to his Eton friend John Sherer, now a Civil Auditor at Fort William in Calcutta,

¹¹ Pitt’s India Bill of 1784 had long since put restrictions on a Company servant’s right to receive and keep gifts.

¹² From 1813, the East India Company no longer had a monopoly on trade, and in his correspondence Metcalfe made repeated references to the insecure position in which he consequently felt it to be.

¹³ T.G. Percival Spear, *Twilight of the Mughuls: Studies in Late Mughul Delhi* (Cambridge, 1951), p. 38.

¹⁴ Even his champion, Kaye, noted that Metcalfe’s salary was never sufficient for his way of life, and that he had even been in debt very early in his career when in Calcutta. Kaye, *Life and Correspondence*, vol. 1, p. 228.

as ‘... quite ruined, exhausted beyond hope of any reasonable repair’.¹⁵ He complained that because of the necessity of building he was ‘... up to [his] neck ... in bricks and mortar, mud and dirt, and ... threatened, in consequence, with being over head and ears in debt’. He was, he said, only building ‘a small bungalow fit for a bachelor’, but that nevertheless the expenses were considerable.¹⁶ The location of this, Metcalfe’s first house in Delhi, is unfortunately not known to us and cannot really even be guessed at, although it is likely to have been in the Kashmir Gate area and close to the Residency. It must have been a simple *pukka* or brick-built house, probably with a central hall, surrounding rooms and a veranda of the standard typology identified by Anthony King.¹⁷ Metcalfe was not to live in it for long, however, as shortly after its completion he succeeded Seton as Resident, and in 1811 he moved into the hybrid Residency house discussed in detail in the previous chapter.

Charles Metcalfe now began to question seriously both his career trajectory and his financial future, planning to leave India as soon as he could afford to. At this time he wrote to a confidante, his widowed maternal aunt Anne Debonnaire Monson, asking her how much money she thought it would cost him to live in England. ‘I hope to lay by at the rate of 3000 pounds per annum,’ he told her, ‘which in twelve or fifteen years ought to be enough to enable me to live at home in the plain manner in which I mean to live as an Old Bachelor; for, you must know, that I have no thought of ever marrying, as I shall never have money enough for it.’¹⁸ Yet from this time, a pattern emerges in Metcalfe’s life of overspending by taking on expenses that should have been the responsibility of others. He spent as an expression of the prestige of his employers, and in doing so he accumulated what amounted to revolving personal debts. In a real sense, and because of his morally upright nature, in his early career he was owned by the East India Company.

A Resident, and especially the one at Delhi, kept what we might equate with a court of his own, receiving a monthly allowance in addition to his salary from the Company (referred to as the ‘table allowance’), which was intended to enable him to impress British standards on visiting dignitaries. This was, of course, another subliminal method of control, one of several, but one that the directors in England, if not the officials of the Bengal Presidency in Calcutta, often had a hard time accepting if it seemed to be costing them a lot of money. The Resident was both diplomat and administrator. In addition

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 154. The letter to Sherer continues, ‘... ever since I came to this Imperial station I have gradually been losing the ground which I had gained in the world, and at length I find myself considerably lower than the neutral situation of having nothing; and without some unlooked-for and surprising declaration of the Fates in my power, I see nothing but debt, debt, debt, debt after debt, before me’.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ See Anthony King, *The Bungalow* (London, 1984), chapter one.

¹⁸ Kaye, *Life and Correspondence*, vol. 1, p. 244.

to superintending the government of the Delhi Territory – its revenue collection and its judiciary – he was charged with managing the affairs of the Emperor. This involved maintaining a presence as the representative of the government at the Mughal court, and it meant dignifying the deep-rooted traditions and elaborate protocols of the court, as his predecessors Ochterlony and Seton had done. These included the presentation of gifts and the receipt of ceremonial dress, as well as participation in *darbars* and in public ceremonial and procession. It was an expensive pursuit and so was constantly under scrutiny by the directors.

The Resident extended official hospitality to a large number of people. In addition to maintaining a presence at court, Charles Metcalfe had to accommodate reciprocal visits from the Emperor and other members of the Mughal royal family. He also had to entertain Delhi's growing European society and the entourages of senior Company officials on their winter tours, as well as European travellers who passed through the city. The Residency building was supplemented with tents in its gardens when need be and was described as being like 'a huge caravanserai' from which no one was turned away. But there was a constant tension between what the Resident deemed to be necessary expenditure and what the Company was prepared to part with. In Archibald Seton's time, the Resident's allowance had been 8,052 rupees a month with an additional 5,193 rupees in supplementary Resident's charges, but in February 1811 this supplement expired and though renegotiated it was clipped back by 2,000 rupees in 1815, leaving Metcalfe lamenting that he would now have to remain in India for the rest of his life. From his allowances Metcalfe also had to keep an open house for the many unattached officials in Delhi: a Resident had a 'family' of colleagues, with a degree of responsibility for not just unmarried officials but also those (not yet many at this stage in Delhi's history) with wives and families, and there was a convention of offering public meals to members of the 'family' at both breakfast and dinner.¹⁹ Metcalfe is known to have kept up this tradition throughout his time in India. He was reportedly a generous and kind host, if perhaps a little boring in the eyes of some of his younger guests.²⁰

When he moved into the Residency in 1811, Charles Metcalfe claimed he found the house '... in a poor state of equipment' and without 'a single article

¹⁹ Breakfast was an informal but socially important meal for high-ranking Company employees at which business might be done. Silver breakfast sets were often used. In 1808 William Fraser wrote to inform his younger brother Aleck that this would be an important part of his household equipment in Delhi. The estate inventory of George Fraser, William's youngest brother, who died in India in 1842, included a silver breakfast set, perhaps the same one once owned by Aleck.

²⁰ Diary of Isabella Fane, 1-Fane/6/7/1, Lincolnshire Archives. The restive young Isabella Fane was later entertained by Metcalfe at Government House, Agra on four successive nights and confided to her diary: 'We eat our last dinner with Sir Charles, to the delight of all parties.'

of public property in the way of furniture for the house or equipment for the table'.²¹ To maintain the standing of his post, he briskly set about putting this in order, spending 67,686 rupees from the public account on repairs and improvements to the building and its furnishings. Shortly after Maria Nugent's account of her comfortable stay there in 1812, the Bengal government and the Directors in London began to question this charge.²² For a while Metcalfe faced the prospect of having to return a large part of this money (48,119 rupees) out of his own pocket.²³ The rebuke he received over what was perceived in London as exorbitant overspending came shortly after the outcry over the building of Government House in Calcutta, the *ne plus ultra* of British Indian houses and a manifestation of the Marquis of Wellesley's grandiose interventionist policies, the great expense of which had resulted in Wellesley's recall.²⁴ Metcalfe was asked to explain why he had spent so much. He responded that there was no furniture or silver in the Delhi house, and that he could not bring any from the Residency he had just come from (at the court of Scindia at Gwalior) because it was public property that remained for the use of his successor – though, he maintained, much of that had been paid for out of his own monthly allowance.²⁵ 'That some furniture for the Residency house and some equipment for the Residency table were necessary will, I hope, be admitted,' he wrote. 'It is obvious that a house is useless without furniture, and that a table cannot be kept without equipment.'²⁶ Other Residencies – those at Nagpur, Hyderabad, Pune and Mysore – all contained property that had been charged to the public account, and Metcalfe said he felt justified in assuming the same for Delhi. Yet his purchases had been made without advance sanction, and even when the Bengal government approved the expenses after the event, the directors in England continued to make a fuss about their endorsement, warning of dangerous tendencies to extravagance. They would soften only after lengthy correspondence.²⁷ Metcalfe's distress was acute because censure was a negative reflection on his character.

²¹ Kaye, *Life and Correspondence*, vol. 1, p. 361.

²² IOR F/4/400/10080, British Library.

²³ IOR F/4/552/13387, British Library.

²⁴ Government House, Calcutta, attributed to the military engineer Charles Wyatt, had a plan based on early published drawings for Kedleston Hall in Derbyshire by James Paine with additions by Robert Adam. Wyatt was a member of the family of the clerk of works employed by Adam in the later stages of the construction of Kedleston. Graceful, thoughtful Kedleston, designed to have four dependencies, only two of which were built, was rather brutally modified for the social, political and physical climates of Bengal. The widely spread quadrants of Government House were linked to a central core by curving loggias. Other adaptations for the hot and humid Calcutta summers included large windows set in opposing pairs to seize every breath of air, as well as the external ceremonial staircase.

²⁵ The court and headquarters of Daulat Rao Scindia had been a moving camp until 1810 when they were settled in Gwalior.

²⁶ Kaye, *Life and Correspondence*, vol. 1, p. 361.

²⁷ A sequence of correspondence in Records of the Board of Commissioners documents

In suggesting ways to avoid future conflict, he would propose that all the plate, furniture and equipment he had purchased be his and that the Residency be run unequipped by government, as it had in the time of his older, wealthier and longer-established predecessors, Ochterlony and Seton. This, of course, he really could not afford to do.

We know that Charles Metcalfe, a shy man, often chafed at the public roles he had to adopt when living in the Residency house and that he yearned for the privacy and intimacy of family life. When the Nugent party of more than twenty were staying there in 1812, Charles wrote that he found them all very pleasant but confided, 'I often wish that I had some cottage to retire to, where I might live in obscurity and uninterrupted solitude for a time. I feel myself out of my element in attempting to support the appearance which attaches to the situation I hold.' He went on, 'Tomorrow will be Christmas-day, when all friends meet at home. I have a party of 50 to dine with me, among whom I cannot reckon one real friend. What a blank it is to live in such society!'²⁸ But Metcalfe was soon to find a way to get a country retreat, and this in spite of his debts and of a struggle that would later ensue for his privacy at the property. The property was a house built on land that was part of an important imperial Mughal garden, the Shalimar Bagh, about 6 miles to the north and west of Delhi on the royal route towards Lahore. The Shalimar had been designed to serve as the last main halting place for the large entourages of imperial processional journeys returning from northern parts of the empire. In 1811, Metcalfe and a group of the young Company officials who worked with him, including James Fergusson, James Wilder, Peter Lawtie, Edward Gardner and the brothers Aleck and William Fraser, divided up a large plot of land at Shalimar and began to build a complex of new houses there in a walled compound. The houses were largely complete by 1813.²⁹ In emulation perhaps of life in the garden houses that ringed Calcutta, the Shalimar houses were intended as an escape from business in the dense urban fabric of Shahjahanabad and the city's searing summer heat.

In the time of the Emperor Shah Jahan, Shalimar had also been a haven from the affairs of the city. There, the Emperor had enjoyed a formally planned, terraced pleasure garden with lavish pavilions on land that was adjacent to the canal of Ali Mardan Khan, the main canal that fed water to the city. The land and garden had been presented to him by his wife, A'izz

the gradual resolution of this problem. See IOR F/4/400/10080; F/4/552/13387; F/4/647/17832, British Library.

²⁸ Letter from Charles Metcalfe to his aunt Anne Monson, 24 December 1812, Monson papers, Lincolnshire Archives.

²⁹ Letter from Peter Lawtie to Aleck Fraser, December 1813, bundle 336, Fraser of Reel papers. There is also an early published reference in the c.1818 'Description of Delhi': 'The Residents and Assistants have their country houses at this place ...'.

un-Nissa (also known as Akbarabadi Mahal).³⁰ In 1650 she began to build him a new garden, A'izzabad, constructed over the course of four years and at a cost of two *lakhs* of rupees.³¹ The name by which the garden is better known was associated with other favourite gardens of the Emperor, the Shalimar in Lahore and the Shalimar in Srinagar. As well as the name, common to the three was a triple-terraced plan with pools and water chutes. Its sophisticated waterworks once drew from Persian wells and from the canal. A centrally aligned channel ran through the garden feeding a large central tank and then running in cascades and smaller streams flanked by lateral pavilions and *baradari*.

We have no architectural drawing of the Shalimar garden. It can still be visited, but as what remains of it today is in a very ruinous condition and defaced by modern encroachment, it is probably too late to attempt an accurate plan. Some ruins on the site, as well as written descriptions in both Mughal regnal chronicles and British travellers' accounts, help us understand its form. Of the latter, the most useful is that of William Franklin, written in 1793 when the garden had already fallen into disrepair.³² The entrance, he said, was through a brick gateway which faced a *divānkhāna* or audience hall, a domed, arcaded ceremonial pavilion with lobed arches, baluster columns and a large *ivān* covered in fine polished *chunam* and once containing a marble throne on a raised platform. This was linked to extensive women's apartments by a 'noble canal' with a fountain in its centre. 'The extent of Shalimar does not appear to have been large,' wrote Franklin, '... not above a mile in circumference.'³³ A high brick wall, damaged by Franklin's time, encircled the garden, and there were octagonal pavilions of red sandstone at its corners. He wrote that the garden was laid out with admirable taste, and he saw 'the finest *chunam* and beautiful paintings of flowers of various patterns' on the walls of the women's apartments, though '... a great part of the most valuable and costly materials [had already] been carried away'.³⁴ In a more lugubrious account written in 1794, the Shalimar garden was said to be '... for the greater part a flowerless and deserted waste'.³⁵ The Delhi Shalimar was built on land surrounded by fruit orchards. The orchards with their ancient mango trees were still standing in 1803, but the enclosure itself and many of its principal structures were then already lost, and the possibility

³⁰ One of three wives. See Catherine B. Asher, *The Architecture of Mughal India* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 201.

³¹ Constance Villiers-Stuart, *Gardens of the Great Mughals* (London, 1913). She cites Muhammad Saleh Kamboh's official account from the time of Shah Jahan.

³² William Franklin, 'An Account of the Present State of Delhi', *Asiatick Researches* 4 (1795), pp. 431–2. Franklin here is following the account of Alexander Dow.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Thomas Twining, *Travels in India a Hundred Years Ago* (London, 1893), p. 256.

of repair or even maintenance of the site could no longer be afforded by the Mughal court.

David Ochterlony is known to have used the garden pavilions at Shalimar in his first term as Resident. In 1805, they had been given to him for his personal use by Shah Alam II, along with various titles and honours, after his actions in defending the city against Holkar's secondary invasion. Exactly which parts of the property Ochterlony used are nowhere clearly specified. Details of ownership of the garden after Ochterlony left Delhi in 1806 are also unclear. I have found no record of Shalimar having been used by Archibald Seton, whom we know was dedicated to carefully saving his money for necessary repairs to Touch House, his estate in Scotland. The garden and land adjacent to it were included on an early British sketch map of the Delhi area by Francis Sellon White made in Seton's time, and White indicated not one but two enclosures, indicating the relationship of the terraced Mughal garden to another, flanking garden, perhaps the area with the fruit orchard.³⁶ From the scant evidence I conclude that Ochterlony, who we know lived in Indian houses elsewhere in the country (in a *baradari* in Patiala, or in a mosque converted to a house in Allahabad), made use of the Mughal *shish mahal* in his first term in Delhi. The new houses at Shalimar were to be built a little later.

The cluster of new British buildings on the Shalimar land was located near the orchard with its mature mango trees, to the side of one quadrant of the overgrown Mughal garden. The buildings, begun in 1811, were all but complete by the end of 1813. A letter from Peter Lawtie, an Assistant in Delhi, to Aleck Fraser, another Assistant, then in Calcutta, dated 27 December 1813 confirms this. 'We are all now settled at the Shalimar,' he wrote. 'Metcalf's house is finished as are likewise Fergusson's, Wilder's and mine.'³⁷ The Shalimar houses stood clustered in a compound that seems to have consisted – with one exception, Metcalf's house – of rather simple structures with terraced roofs. They were depicted soon after their completion by Sita Ram, the Indian painter who accompanied and recorded the tour of Governor General Lord Hastings in 1815.³⁸ One watercolour shows a walled enclosure with rusticated sentry boxes at the gate and a number of small, nondescript buildings clustered in front of a larger house with a high classical portico (Plate 4).³⁹ At the same time, Sita Ram painted a view of the remains of the Mughal garden at Shalimar with the large pavilion known as the *shish mahal* at the end of the garden. In Sita Ram's view, the *shish mahal* looked onto

³⁶ See Francis Sellon White's *Sketch of the Environs of Delhi* c.1807, reprinted by the Survey of India, 1989.

³⁷ Letter, 27 December 1813, bundle 336, Fraser of Reelig papers.

³⁸ See J.P. Losty, *Sita Ram's Painted Views of India: Lord Hastings's Journey from Calcutta to the Punjab, 1814–1815* (New Delhi, 2015). Sita Ram was active as a painter until 1822.

³⁹ India Office Prints, Drawings and Paintings, Hastings Album, Add.Or.4806, British Library: *Charles Metcalf's Establishment at the Shalimar Gardens North of Delhi* (1815).



Residency at Shalimar

Plate 4 Sita Ram (fl. c. 1810–22), *Charles Metcalfe's Establishment at the Shalimar Gardens North of Delhi*, 1815. Inscribed 'Residency at Shalimar'. Watercolour on paper; 322 × 520 mm.

a symmetrically planned terraced garden with canals and a pool surrounded by mature trees.⁴⁰

The British compound was not laid out in the same way as the Mughal garden. Instead, the organisation of the houses was very like that of a tent encampment. The layout of the houses at Shalimar was perhaps conceived of, at least in the painter's mind, as a permanent tent encampment.⁴¹ Camps of high Company officials when they were touring the Indian provinces were themselves modelled on the hierarchal organisation of a Mughal camp, which we know about from the time of Akbar.⁴² Reflecting a still tentative and semi-permanent quality, the houses at Shalimar had a similar formal organisation: a principal structure, an arc of smaller subsidiary ones leading to it, with a guard house behind the main structure, all in a walled enclosure adjacent to the large ruined Mughal garden with its surrounding mature plantings.

The main house in the British compound was depicted in a more conventional watercolour by George Hutchinson, then Garrison Engineer at Delhi, in the British Indian equivalent of a country-house portrait.⁴³ Signed and dated May 1820, this representation gives us more architectural detail of the Palladian house in the Sita Ram painting (Plate 5).⁴⁴ Set in a well-treed park, the two-storey house had a flat roof but was fronted with a high pedimented portico in the Tuscan order. The front was of seven bays, and there was a Serlian doorway with louvred shutters and flanking windows under the portico. The closed shutters of the house were painted green, and there were small upper windows with blind vents on the sides, which were of four bays. In the painting, a carriage with an accompanying retinue of soldiers is seen driving up to the house and there are servants waiting at the door. In the wooded park setting with grazing horses there is a small Mughal pavilion or *chhatri*. This *chhatri* is the fulcrum to understanding the spatial relationship of the new British houses to the adjacent Mughal garden, as it also appears in the background to the Sita Ram painting of the *shish mahal*. The Sita Ram and Hutchinson paintings, as well as an untraceable sketch published in an early newspaper article in *The Statesman* by Albert Batty about the Shalimar residents, are important to our understanding of the property as very little

⁴⁰ India Office Prints, Drawings and Paintings, Hastings Album, Add.Or.4807, British Library.

⁴¹ In at least two other paintings Sita Ram had depicted encampments, that of the Governor General (Hastings) and that of the ruler of a nearby principality, Begum Sumru. India Office Prints, Drawings and Paintings, Hastings Album, Add.Or.4797 and Add.Or.4803, British Library.

⁴² From the plan in the *Ain-i Akbari*.

⁴³ George Hutchinson (1793–1852), in the Company's service from 1810, was Garrison Engineer and Superintending Officer at Delhi from 1816 to 1822, the predecessor of Robert Smith in that post. See Vernon Charles Paget Hodson, *List of the Officers of the Bengal Army, 1758–1834* (London, 1927–47), p. 513.

⁴⁴ George Hutchinson, *A Palladian Garden House in a Park-like Landscape, Delhi ...* (May 1820), India Office Prints, Drawings and Paintings, WD3825, British Library.



Plate 5. George Hutchinson (1793–1852), *A Palladian Garden House, Delhi (Shalimar)*. Inscribed: 'G. Hutchinson. Dehlee. May 1820'. Watercolour on paper, 338 × 565 mm.

else remains.⁴⁵ A recent article publishes Archaeological Survey of India photographs from the 1950s of the one extant small house, as well as the foundations of Charles Metcalfe's Palladian house, but of this principal house on the estate nothing but partial foundations remain.⁴⁶

The large house at Shalimar had a glancing relationship both to Fernhill, the family house in Berkshire that Metcalfe would soon inherit, and to the garden houses that Metcalfe had visited and been entertained in, and would later live in, when in Calcutta. In that city, many of the wealthier European residents since the eighteenth century had kept a second property outside the town, as did the regional rulers in nearby Murshidabad and elsewhere. These so-called garden houses were located, as Mughal gardens were, a short ride out from the city. They were generally storeyed houses, and in Calcutta they were concentrated at Garden Reach on the Hooghly River; in an inland area to the south of the city called Alipur; and to the north in the region known as Dum Dum. Travellers frequently mentioned the riverine houses at Garden Reach which, like the riverside garden palaces of Agra's Mughal noblemen, for example, were a spectacular sight to people who approached the city by boat. 'The banks of the river are as one may say absolutely studded with elegant mansions,' gushed Eliza Fay in 1780.⁴⁷ Her sentiment was echoed by many others, including William Hickey, who wrote of the '... rich and magnificent view of a number of splendid houses, the residences of gentlemen of the highest rank in the Company's service'.⁴⁸ Some wealthy English residents like Elijah Impey, the first Chief Justice of the Calcutta Supreme Court, and Robert Clive before him chose not riverine but inland garden houses. In 1766 Jemima Kindersley wrote, 'In the country around the town, at different distances, are a number of very pretty houses which are called garden-houses, belonging to English gentlemen ... in the hot season, all those who can, are much at these garden-houses, both because it is cooler and more healthy.'⁴⁹ Warren Hastings, Governor General of Bengal from 1773 to 1785, owned more than one such house at Alipur. One of them, begun in about 1776, is depicted in the background of Johann Zoffany's well-known conversation piece of Hastings and his second wife, Marian Imhoff. In the painting Hastings makes a recognisable sweeping gesture of ownership towards an estate that includes a jewel-like little house in a garden setting.⁵⁰ Hastings

⁴⁵ Box 17, Spear papers, Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge University. Reproduced in Spear, *Twilight*, facing p. 164.

⁴⁶ Jyoti Sharma, 'Mughal Gardens of the Indian Subcontinent and their Colonial Legacy: The Treatment of Delhi's Shalimar Bagh', *Journal of Landscape Architecture* 4:2 (2009), pp. 32–47.

⁴⁷ Eliza Fay, cited in Jeremiah Losty, *Calcutta: City of Palaces* (London, 1990), p. 44.

⁴⁸ William Hickey, *Memoirs of William Hickey (1749–1809)* (London, 1914), vol. 2, p. 120.

⁴⁹ Jemima Kindersley, cited in Losty, *Calcutta*, p. 38.

⁵⁰ The Zoffany painting is in the collection of the Victoria Memorial Hall, Calcutta, catalogue C1310/R1436. The house was sold on after Mrs Hastings returned to England, in 1785, and in the particulars of its sale it was described as 'an upper-roomed house ... consisting of

also owned a second inland garden house at Alipur called Belvedere.⁵¹ Other country houses had sprung up on the estates in the lush and verdant Bengal countryside after 1758, and several examples in estates, especially from the area around Murshidabad, were depicted in country house portraits by both by Indian and British artists.⁵²

Unlike the garden houses of the Company's upper echelon in Calcutta, houses in Shahjahanabad occupied by junior officials at this early stage in Company occupation, and also some of the smaller Shalimar houses, were shared accommodation. A letter from William Fraser to Aleck his brother prior to his first arrival in Delhi briefed him on what to expect and also advised against building when he might share with his brother in the kind of arrangement known as a chummery. He wrote, 'It will be altogether useless to build [in Delhi] as my mansion is quite large enough, in my opinion ... certainly for an occasional residence, as yours is more likely to be, particularly if Gardner does not return.'⁵³

When William Fraser and Edward Gardner, two of Charles Metcalfe's valued Assistants in the Residency, were temporarily transferred to Moradabad in 1814, Metcalfe was able to enjoy far greater seclusion when he went periodically to his Shalimar house. This was important to him because of his retiring personality and also for personal reasons that will be discussed below. But his peace and seclusion did not last for long. After Fraser's return to Delhi in 1816, an acrimonious struggle arose over the ownership of the land at Shalimar, stemming in large part from Metcalfe's almost obsessive desire for privacy. This is fully documented in correspondence found in the Fraser of Reelig papers. Aleck Fraser died tragically near Delhi in 1816 and his brother William then took sole possession of their jointly owned Shalimar house. By 1817 the quarrel between Metcalfe and William Fraser was raging over the ownership of this house and it lasted for more than a year. Previous writers have tended to gloss over the uneasy relationship between these two men. The Fraser of Reelig correspondence makes it impossible to ignore. Though Metcalfe's opinion of William Fraser would improve a little later in his career, when Fraser was under consideration for the post of Delhi Resident, he would never wholeheartedly endorse him.⁵⁴ An attempt to settle the quarrel

a hall and rooms on each floor, with a handsome stone staircase and a back stairs, all highly finished with Madras *chunam* and the very best materials'. The house still stands, though now altered in proportion by the addition of wings and a *porte-cochere*.

⁵¹ The house, after serving as residence to several lieutenant-governors, became the National Library of India in 1948.

⁵² See, for example, the engraving after Thomas Daniell, *Felicity Hall, late the Residence of the Honble. David Anstruther, near Moorshedabad, Bengal* (1804), IOR X/768/2(23), British Library.

⁵³ Letter, volume 29, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁵⁴ 'I think that your Lordship will like William Fraser better when you know him personally. He is apt at discussion, mild and engaging in his manner, & much more remarkable than would be supposed from his strange style of writing.' But Metcalfe went on, 'He has more

was conducted through an exasperated intermediary, James Fergusson, who clearly wished both men would hurry up and resolve their difficulties and let him get on with other, more pressing business.

The quarrel ostensibly originated in a rift in their administration and public service which, in the correspondence over the house, the stoic Metcalfe tried repeatedly and without success to keep as a separate matter. Fraser, the subject of Chapter Five of this book, had already been angered by Metcalfe's interference in a judgement he had made in his official capacity in what is referred to in the letters as the 'Channa-Uggaanpoor business' (perhaps a settlement), so angered that he was then seriously considering quitting the Company's service and joining the militia of his friend James Skinner (1778–1841) as a full-time soldier.⁵⁵ Fraser, who had a tendency in Metcalfe's eyes to over-assess taxable valuations, was prepared to act outside the law if it suited his purposes. The so-called Metcalfe Doctrine advocated a clear and transparent chain of command in the British administration of the Delhi Territory. The steadier Metcalfe had already remonstrated with Fraser on the short-sightedness of quick returns. According to Metcalfe, Fraser had a disposition that was inclined to be fierce and dictatorial, and so he at first had refused to reply to letters that he claimed were angry or even 'violent'. When Metcalfe then endorsed the promotion of James Wilder to an appointment in Rajasthan that Fraser had been hoping for – to remove himself from proximity to Metcalfe, perhaps – Fraser was even further enraged.⁵⁶ In addition, in their characters the two men differed radically: Fraser with an impetuous self-indulgence and Metcalfe with a pious sense of duty.

Though the letters in the Fraser or Reelig papers dealing with the ownership of the Shalimar land are extensive, they unfortunately tell us more about the protagonists than the property itself. Fergusson, the intermediary, wrote to Fraser on Metcalfe's behalf, telling him that Metcalfe wished Fraser would accommodate him by selling him the 'bungalow' at Shalimar built on land owned by Metcalfe and leased to Fraser.⁵⁷ Metcalfe even suggested that if there were difficulties in reaching an agreement, the issue could be referred to the arbitration of friends. Fraser was apparently not using the house: he was asked by Fergusson, 'How much have you been able to live in it, and why be so anxious to keep it?'⁵⁸ Metcalfe explained quite frankly to Fergusson that his object in wishing to possess Fraser's house was to ensure even greater

information, I believe, in the important subjects of landed tenures than any man in the country, and capable of great good, if waywardness did not spoil all'. Metcalfe to Bentinck, Calcutta, 13 March 1831, Bentinck papers, Nottingham University Library.

⁵⁵ For Skinner, see Chapter Five below.

⁵⁶ Letter from Metcalfe, 14 October 1818, bundle 326, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁵⁷ Letter to Fraser from Fergusson, bundle 326, Fraser of Reelig papers. 'Metcalfe's ground' is the phrase used, confirming Metcalfe's ownership of the land.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

seclusion, and he said that he would be prepared to explain this directly to Fraser.⁵⁹ Fergusson then began to chastise Fraser for his stubbornness: 'I do not know from what date exactly your friendly intercourse with Metcalfe was given up, and for which I feel concerned, but this I know – that it is sometime since he wished to get your house at Shalimar, it being of little or no consequence to you. Indeed, I have understood from him that he never supposed you had taken it for yourself.'⁶⁰ The matter dragged on for a year, but in March of 1818 Fraser finally capitulated and agreed to sell his house.⁶¹ Metcalfe was obviously very grateful and now wrote frankly to Fraser, thanking him and revealing more of his reasoning. 'My desire to possess the houses at Shalimar proceed from a wish to live generally in the most private and retired manner,' he said. 'The wish has existed from infancy and has been much strengthened by *events which have occurred in the past three years* [my italics]. It is somewhat less than a year since I determined to indulge it as far as my situation would allow me.' He went on, 'If I were in a situation that would admit of my consulting my own disposition solely, I should adopt a life of entire solitude and seclusion, except in as much as intercourse might be required for purposes of business and duty.'⁶²

What were these events? It is generally assumed, though it cannot be directly demonstrated, that it was in the house at Shalimar that Charles Metcalfe attempted to live in seclusion with an Indian woman, whose name we do not know, and with the sons that she bore him. Unlike David Ochterlony, he wanted a private family life away from prying eyes.⁶³ Because information is sparse, and because Metcalfe was such a shy man, several suppositions have grown up around this idea. It was suggested by Percival Spear, for example, that the unnamed Indian companion was a Sikh woman from Lahore whom Metcalfe had met when negotiating the Treaty of Amritsar. Genealogical research has confirmed that Metcalfe did have three sons and that the first of them, Studholme Henry, had indeed been born shortly after the time of Metcalfe's mission to the court of Ranjit Singh.⁶⁴ As a very young boy, perhaps even before the time of the completion of the Shalimar house, this child was sent to England for his education, as was common practice among the British. A letter, undated but from before 1815, from Metcalfe's younger

⁵⁹ Letter from Metcalfe to Fergusson, bundle 327, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ This might have been because he was already thinking of building himself the new house elsewhere in Delhi, to be discussed in Chapter Five of this book.

⁶² Letter from Metcalfe to Fraser, bundle 327, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁶³ Spear, *Twilight*, p. 156.

⁶⁴ IOR L/MIL/9/386, British Library. Studholme Henry Metcalfe (1809–39) went into the British Army (9th Regiment of Foot) as Ensign in 1828 and had risen to the rank of Captain by 1838, but died 'of atrophy' in 1839, aged just twenty-nine. Percival Spear surmised that he shot himself when he found how invidious his position was as an illegitimate son, though this cannot be verified.

sister Emily relates how she and her mother had been to see his 'little boy Henry', then living in Putney in the care of an unnamed young woman.⁶⁵

In March 1814, after the completion of the house at Shalimar, Charles Metcalfe was continuing to grumble about living a 'vexatious and joyless life', but his mood would gradually lighten, perhaps because of new events that were now occurring in private.⁶⁶ A second son, Francis Ralph, would be born to him in August 1814.⁶⁷ And in August of 1816, in spite of an offer to be moved back to the Presidency in Calcutta, Metcalfe unexpectedly opted to stay in Delhi, saying in a letter, 'I have discovered that I am more attached to Delhi and the inhabitants of the territory under me than I formerly supposed myself to be.'⁶⁸ It is probable that he had now settled his Indian family at Shalimar. A third son, James, would be born in December 1817.⁶⁹ James was the only one of the three children to outlive his father. In 1819, shortly after Metcalfe did leave Delhi for Calcutta, the two younger children were also sent to England, boarded out and privately educated.⁷⁰ They were at first put under the guardianship of Charles's unmarried sister Georgiana, who was then living in the family house, Fernhill. The late marriage of Georgiana in 1823 to a Church of England clergyman, Thomas Scott Smyth, who had a living in Cornwall, and the subsequent birth of a son and a daughter to the couple now apparently made the arrangement of caring for Charles's illegitimate sons untenable. By 1825 the boys had been given instead to the supervision of John Studholme Brownrigg (1791–1858), the close personal friend whom Metcalfe referred to as his alter ego. Brownrigg, now retired from service in India, took care of Metcalfe's personal finances. As the legal guardian of James Metcalfe, he would later sponsor his application as a cadet at Addiscomb College.

While discreet about his sons, Charles Metcalfe never denied their existence to his family. He also corresponded with them about their education and their hopes for the future. Henry, for example, wrote when he was

⁶⁵ MON 28/B/23/16, Monson Papers, Lincolnshire Archives. Emily was by this time married herself and living in London.

⁶⁶ Kaye, *Life and Correspondence*, vol. 1, p. 341.

⁶⁷ Francis Ralph Metcalfe (1814–42) was born in Delhi and baptised in 1820 in London at the age of six. Later, as a graduate of Glasgow University's School of Medicine and a promising surgeon, he was appointed Assistant Surgeon to the Company in 1838. He served in the Afghan War and was killed during the retreat from Kabul in 1842. D.G. Crawford, *Roll of the Indian Medical Service, 1815–1930* (London, 1930), p. 114.

⁶⁸ Kaye, *Life and Correspondence*, vol. 1, p. 302.

⁶⁹ James Metcalfe (1817–88), the youngest son, was also baptised in London in 1820. He later went into the army and rose through the ranks to become a colonel. He was one of the executors of his father's will and inherited, though not the barony, both money and significant and meaningful personal property from his father. He left his own large family more than £60,000 on his death in 1888.

⁷⁰ The names of Mrs Butler, Miss Thrickburgh and Miss de Roach are mentioned in correspondence in the Monson papers, but I have not identified them further.

fourteen to tell his father that he would like to go into the army and this was then arranged for him. It was also arranged that Francis would attend Glasgow University and become a surgeon. James would become a successful soldier. Metcalfe obviously missed his sons after they left India. 'I should like to have likenesses of the three boys,' he wrote to Brownrigg in May 1823, 'Not expensive paintings but sketches, full length, either in pencils, crayons or watercolours, conveying good likeness ...'.⁷¹ But we have no information at all about the mother of these boys or about her feelings when she was parted from them for the years until they could return to India as adults and pursue their various careers. There are no descriptions of Charles Metcalfe's private life at Shalimar or any other references – apart from it being said that he preferred an elephant to a horse as it enabled him to read and work while travelling – that suggest a hybrid life in private like that of David Ochterlony. The existence of his three sons, however, is testimony to an informal marriage in which the life of his Indian companion must surely have somehow been accommodated. Yet Charles Metcalfe seems to have been ashamed of the relationship, and his drift towards Anglicist views would soon cause him to move towards a public stance of racial separation. In this Metcalfe was a conflicted man. The very little that remains of his personal correspondence gives a tantalising glimpse of the struggles between his sense of duty and the sacrifice of his personal life. When he wrote to Georgiana in 1825 about his 'hard struggle against Vice and Corruption', it is a letter in which his public stance seems somehow to resonate with his personal life.⁷²

Charles Metcalfe must have found it difficult to raise the money to build his house at Shalimar, but when he left Delhi for Calcutta late in 1818 and was succeeded as Resident by David Ochterlony, he was able to sell the property on to Ochterlony for the sum of 60,000 rupees. We learn from the Gardner letters that Ochterlony paid this sum and then spent an additional 40,000 rupees on ruining (in Gardner's opinion) its garden.⁷³ But by this date the buildings and especially the significance of ownership of land at Shalimar had taken on a rather different value. In the intervening years, since the time when the Mughal part of the garden and its surviving pavilions had first been used by Ochterlony (when he had lived there 'in great state'), a significant change had been wrought in the countryside surrounding Delhi. There had been some organisational changes and for ease of administration the expanding Delhi Territory had now been divided into five divisions or

⁷¹ MON 28/B/23/16, Monson Papers, Lincolnshire Archives.

⁷² Letter from Metcalfe to his sister Georgiana, MSS Eur.F656/1, British Library. The two volumes of original letters were donated to the British Library in 2012 by Peter J.C. Troughton, a descendant. Copies of many of the letters are also found in the Templehouse Papers, Co. Sligo.

⁷³ Letter 100, William Linnaeus Gardner to Edward Gardner, September 1821, Gardner Papers, NAM.

districts.⁷⁴ Property in the hinterland around the city, especially to the north and west, as well as in the Panipat district was now a great deal more valuable than before because of moves afoot for the restoration of the main Delhi canal system. This would be reopened in 1820. It was the canal that made all the difference to the value of the land at Shalimar. While increased stability and enforced control in the countryside around Delhi enabled Company officials to move into houses outside the city walls, projects undertaken by British engineers to improve the water supply now made the often neglected arable land around the city ever more valuable.

In and among the ruins of the older cities of Delhi there were the remains of many ancient watercourses. The availability of water had been a determining factor in the siting of the earlier cities, most of which did not abut the river but relied instead on a variety of irrigation systems: catching monsoon rains (in *hauz* or reservoirs), accessing the water lens using Persian wells, combining these sources in *baoli* (stepwells), or diverting water from the river in canals. The endowment by rulers of water sources in parts of the country where rainfall was irregular by these and other means had a long history in India and was an important symbol of authority.⁷⁵ An elaborate and sophisticated network of canals had been built in north India during the reign of Firoz Shah Tughluq, Sultan of Delhi from 1351 to 1388. One, which the British would later refer to as the Western Doab Canal, originated above Karnal near Faizabad and ran 180 miles to the south. Some of Firoz Shah's canal system had continued in use into the early Mughal period, its waterways widened and deepened during the reign of Akbar (r.1556–1605). A Delhi tributary of the Western Doab Canal had been routed into the city, perhaps by Ali Mardan Khan, the *vazīr*, when Shahjahanabad was built in the seventeenth century. Water for Delhi was also supplied by the run-off from the Aravalli Ridge in the form of two tributaries, the Barapallah River with its twelve-arched, seventeenth-century Persianate bridge and the Najafgarh *nullah*, a continuation of the seasonal Sahibi River and an elongation of the Najafgarh *jhil*, which ran in from the south-west. There were many additional small waterways for irrigation, and *bundhs* or small dams with sluices functioned seasonally to divert water run-off onto agricultural land, augmenting the complex system. The canal of Firoz Shah ran through Hissar, north-west of Delhi, where the Sultan's favourite hunting ground had been located. The pathway of a branch of the canal created by Ali Mardan Khan was split off from the parent canal near Khizrabad and passed close

⁷⁴ Spear Papers, Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge University. The districts were the north or Panipat; Rohtak; the city of Delhi; the south or Gurgaon; and the west or Hurai.

⁷⁵ Particularly useful in understanding the historical intersections of Delhi's water supply is James L. Wescoat Jr., 'Conserving Urban Water Heritage in Multi-centered Regions: An Historic-Geographic Approach to Early Modern Delhi', *Change Over Time* 4:1 (2014), pp. 142–66.

to Panipat and Sonipat to the south. When it reached swampy low ground near Delhi it was routed across a large masonry aqueduct. The canal then ran along the base on the western side of the northern end of the Ridge and from here through a deep tunnel towards Shahjahanabad, entering the city near the Kabul Gate. It ran into several branching streams and channels to supply the city with water. One outlet from the canal passed through the central street of the city, Chandni Chowk, feeding the Negumbod aqueduct which directed water into the numerous palace gardens. Surplus and grey water, which ran out south of the palace, was then used by waterside mills and tanneries in the area before spilling back into the Yamuna River. This elaborate system had stopped working properly in 1754, during Safdar Jang's civil war. In the late eighteenth century, William Franklin had reported that '... some remains of the aqueduct are still to be seen; but it is choked up in most parts with rubbish'.⁷⁶

In the area to the north and west of the city, the main canal had once served in lieu of the erratic river as a location for the garden houses of the Mughal elite. Pavilions and gardens had flanked its banks. William Franklin's late-eighteenth-century description of Delhi gives us more information about the area, which he said was still 'crowded with the remains of spacious gardens and country houses' along the 'noble' canal.⁷⁷ At one 3-mile stretch, through the suburb of Mughal Parah, the canal was 25 feet deep and equally wide. Here it was quarried from solid stone, from which palaces in the area were built. Small bridges spanned the canal, connecting the gardens of the nobility on either side. This information is depicted in a Mughal-period map of the canal in the Andhra Pradesh State Archives in Hyderabad and published by Susan Gole.⁷⁸ Gole dates the map of the canal to the first half of the eighteenth century, before the waters of the canal ceased to flow due to Delhi's turbulent politics. In a letter from the Swiss engineer Antoine Polier (1741–95) there is mention of an unsuccessful attempt to repair the canal in about 1750 by Ahmed Shah Durrani, so the map may also have been part of a survey done at that time.⁷⁹

Though the restoration of Delhi's irrigation system was a priority for the British, work on the canal was not ordered until 1815. A young Company lieutenant, Francis Sellon White, had been appointed to carry out a survey of the canal in October 1807 and his sketch map shows some of the vagaries of the Yamuna River, which then branched into many seasonal outlets. Later British repairs and alterations to the canal system would curb this trend. On his winter tour of the surrounding countryside in 1815, Francis Rawdon-Hastings, the

⁷⁶ Franklin, 'Account', p. 442.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Susan Gole, *Indian Maps and Plans* (Manohar, 1989), plate 44.

⁷⁹ The letter was reprinted in the *Asiatic Annual Register* 2 (1800), pp. 29ff.

Governor General, saw vestiges of the canal and ordered its repair. He may well have been aware of the significance of the endowment of water sources, a practice that stretched back to India's pre-Islamic history, but it is equally likely that he was being practical. A more detailed survey was undertaken in 1817 by George Rodney Blane of the Bengal Engineers, appointed by Hastings, and this resulted in the allocation of funds for the repair of the canal, which Blane supervised until his death. The larger canal system from which the Delhi branch originated was also repaired, from 1823. At the same time, the irrigation system was expanded. Work on what was called the Eastern Doab Canal was undertaken by Henry De Bude in 1822, assisted by Robert Smith, who completed the job in 1830. The engineer Proby Thomas Cautley was sent in 1825 specifically to assist in the reconstruction of the Doab Canal, working as an assistant to Robert Smith and also becoming Smith's close friend. He would remember Smith in his will. (See Chapter Four.)

When the waters flowed back into the city again at the end of May 1820 it was, according to one account, '... amidst the acclamations and rejoicings of the inhabitants of Delhi ... A great concourse of people, hearing of their approach, went out some miles to greet them, throwing flowers and sweetmeats into the stream in token of their gratitude.'⁸⁰ Improvements and building projects were now begun at all levels of society in the city. The canal was a boon, not just to the city but to agriculture in the countryside to the north of Delhi, which began to flourish again. Henry Lawrence, during his term as a Collector and Settlement Officer in the Delhi District, would later comment that you could ride for miles and see nothing but the most splendid cultivation.

During the British occupation of Delhi the repair of the ancient canal system was intended as a way to improve conditions in the city and in its hinterland. By increasing agricultural yield it was clearly also a way to increase profit for the Company. This idea was not a new one. In his later publication on the Ganges Canal, Proby Cautley reported that as early as 1807 attention had been drawn to the financial advantages of repairing the canals by a man named Mercer, who had offered to reopen the Delhi branch as a business venture at his own expense.⁸¹ In return Mercer expected to secure all of the proceeds from its use for twenty years. As the proceeds would have amounted to the equivalent of 12,000 horse, this would have made Mercer a rich and powerful man had his scheme gone forward. Some ten years later it had become clear to British officials that successful irrigation would make the land

⁸⁰ Ochterlony to Metcalfe, 3 June 1820. Reprinted in Narendra Krishna Sinha and Arun Kumar Dasgupta, *Selections from Ochterlony Papers, 1818–1825* (Calcutta, 1964). The original papers are in the National Archives in Delhi. For another reference to the event, see Letter 14, William Linnaeus Gardner to Edward Gardner, 6 June 1820, Gardner papers, NAM.

⁸¹ John Colvin, 'On the Restoration of the Ancient Canals in the Delhi Territory', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2:15 (1833), pp. 105ff.

to the north-west of Delhi very desirable and add considerably to its value. Although the Delhi branch canal was not reopened until 1820, British officials who had been participants in public decisions to repair it are known to have acquired land in its vicinity prior to the time of its repair. Among these sites was land for the buildings at Shalimar.

We have only fragmentary information about the ownership of the Shalimar property after Charles Metcalfe left Delhi in 1818 and sold it back to David Ochterlony. The papers of William Linnaeus Gardner, which include a number of references to the changes in David Ochterlony's public behaviour as well as a repertoire of performative activities designed to evoke kingship adopted by him and by the Mubarak Begum, contain a reference to alterations made to part of its Mughal structure. 'Do you remember the fine Khazana near the House in Shalimar?' Gardner asked his cousin Edward Gardner, who was then being considered for the post of Resident. 'A large pukka reservoir for supplying the fountains supported on numerous arches. This he has made the foundations for his Banqueting House, and now the canal has come, destroyed the reservoir for holding ornamental water!!'⁸² Ochterlony subsequently attempted to attract a buyer for the house after he was ordered by the Company to move his official establishment to Neemuch, which he did in 1822. He was not successful, and Gardner had warned his cousin of the inadvisability of ownership: 'Again Sir David wants about 1 lac of rupees for his buildings! And would take 60,000, but supposing you gave this sum, how very improbable it is that your successor would take them off your hands on the same terms. I understand Metcalfe made this objection when there was some idea of his returning.'⁸³ He continued in a second letter to point out the pitfalls: 'I hope my dear Edward that you will not allow your natural delicacy to involve you in ruin by purchasing Sir David's buildings. I say ruin and I mean it in its full appreciation, as bearing on your future prospect of independency. Rather tis 50 to 1 that your successor may refuse the purchase. Again, Sir David is a man who has no delicacy in getting every farthing he possibly can exhort for his property, and therefore is easier to refuse such a man as one more open and liberal. At the lowest the purchase would be upwards of 60,000 Rs.'⁸⁴

Charles Metcalfe did return to Delhi, in 1825. Whether he lived in Shalimar again during his second term we do not know, although David Ochterlony wrote to him on 25 June 1825, very shortly before his death, offering to share the use of the property: 'This arrangement, of occupying a place we are both so fond of, will not I hope be the more disagreeable to you

⁸² Letter 100, William Linnaeus Gardner to Edward Gardner, September 1821, Gardner papers, NAM.

⁸³ Ibid., Letter 87. Edward Gardner was Resident in Nepal from 1816 to 1829. See also Narindar Saroop, *Gardner of Gardner's Horse* (New Delhi, 1983).

⁸⁴ Letter 94, Gardner papers, NAM.

that it will admit of our being as much together, when you rusticate, as your business will admit of; and I promise to retire whenever I interfere with your hours of study or business. Or rather, we will so settle it that I shall never have to retire, by settling some regular system. The plan pleases me so much and I shall be glad to hear that it is acceptable to you.⁸⁵

During his time in Hyderabad immediately before his 1825 return to Delhi, the frugal Metcalfe is known to have strongly criticised the scale of the Residency establishment there, calling it a 'magnificent and uncomfortable pile on which immense sums have unconscionably been squandered by my predecessors'.⁸⁶ Being sent back to Delhi would cost him yet more money, and his letters complain of the expenses incurred in moving all his effects from one side of the country to the other and of having to fit out the Residency house in Delhi all over again. In Hyderabad Metcalfe had been made acutely conscious of the stresses put upon others to engage in corrupt activities outside the Company's regulations. He had battled against this on more than one occasion, tackling the Governor General directly over the affairs of House of Palmer, which he described as '... one of those fictitious mercantile establishments common in India, in which the presence of commerce is assumed only to veil the most rapacious and consuming usury'.⁸⁷ He embarked on a kind of crusade driven by the tensions arising between his personal morality and his awareness of his own financial circumstances. It was a costly business to be a Resident, and to live up to the public displays of wealth and status that the office required, and Metcalfe complained:

Every farthing I possess in addition to my patrimony has been made [from salaries from the Company] and I have never had any other source of endowment whatsoever. My allowances for the last 13 or 14 years have been on the largest scale, equalling if not exceeding those members of Council. The offices I have held, however, have exacted great expenses, and on this account the allowances have been so large. I have lately discovered that my expenditure has exceeded my income by a large sum. My income has been 9,663 p.a. and my expenditure 12,264 p.a. [Sees no way out.] I am not sensible of any extravagant expenditure beyond what is required to maintain the office I hold.⁸⁸

When Charles Metcalfe left Delhi for Calcutta late in 1827 to become a member of the Supreme Council of India, to serve as Vice-President of the

⁸⁵ Kaye, *Life and Correspondence*, vol. 1, p. 133. The letter is dated 25 June 1825.

⁸⁶ Letter from Hyderabad, 10 December 1824, Templehouse Papers. Metcalfe continued, 'The chairs of the State Room cost 50 pounds each and the apartments are superb beyond anything I ever saw; but it is a most uncomfortable habitation and perfectly unsuited to me. I often wish it swallowed up that I might procure a more modest and snugger dwelling.'

⁸⁷ Ibid. Metcalfe also reported to Hastings on the behaviour in Hyderabad of Hastings's personal friend Sir William Rumbold, which Hastings refused to believe or to act on.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Council and Deputy-Governor of Bengal (1833–34) and then to be acting or provisional Governor General (in 1835), he would live in a different Shalimar. The name seems to have become his Indian metaphor. This house sat on the far bank on a bend in the Hooghly River at Sibpur, near Howrah. An exception to the generally flat-roofed villas at Garden Reach, it had been built by Robert Kyd, who had established the Company's botanic garden in 1786.⁸⁹ From 1827 he also retired to a summer house in the foothills of the Himalayas (in Kasauli), though this one he called Fernhill.

There was a substantial change in Metcalfe's attitude by the time he returned to his second appointment in Delhi in 1825. In a sense, it was representative of a wider change that had begun to take place as a new British moral authority was revealed. Of his perceptions of relationships with the Indians whose lives he administered, he now declared that '... there is necessarily a wide separation between them and us, arising out of our being foreigners and conquerors, and the difference in colour, country, religion, language, dress, manners, habits, tastes and ideas'.⁹⁰ Metcalfe also spoke out against the Minto plan and pensionary courtesies during this second term, renouncing his former allegiance to the Mughal court. The gradual subjugation of the court is clearly described in both official documents and in the secondary literature. Changes had already begun at the time of Governor General Lord Moira's tour in 1813. Moira had refused to visit the Emperor on terms of ritual subservience and refused to present the seven annual *nazrs* of the Governor General. Three tributes of the Commander-In-Chief were informally allowed. A gradual restructuring and simplification by the British of their participation in all aspects of court ceremonial was well underway. On his visit to Delhi in 1826, in a simplified, newly devised protocol, the Governor General Lord Amherst even insisted on sitting while attending an audience with the Emperor. The occasional visitor – Reginald Heber in 1825, for example – would continue to give *nazrs* to the Emperor as an unofficial courtesy. The acceptance of Mughal titles was now discouraged, although as late as 1837 Sir Henry Fane allowed himself to be given one.

Late in his Indian career Charles Metcalfe began to be perceived as something of a zealot by the Court of Directors, and when in 1832 he was nominated to be Governor of the Madras Presidency, the appointment was turned down in London. Putting on a brave face, he wrote, 'I have such reliance on the good ordering of all things by Providence that no worldly matter concerning myself could ever bring disappointment.'⁹¹ Under the reorganised charter of the East India Company in 1833, a new Presidency

⁸⁹ The houses on this part of Garden Reach were depicted in James Baillie Fraser's aquatint *A View of the Botanic Garden, House and Reach* (1826), IOR X/644(4), British Library.

⁹⁰ Kaye, cited in Spear, *Twilight*, p. 97.

⁹¹ Templehouse Papers.

was now constituted at Agra, which had previously formed part of the Bengal Presidency. Metcalfe was appointed Governor of this newly formed North-Western Province, but even this office had been reduced to a Lieutenant Governorship by the time he took up the position in 1836. Again, he accepted the subordinate position with good grace: 'Life being given for the performing of duties, I had no ground for refusing the offer made. I accepted it and am happy in performing my function.'⁹² Shortly afterwards Charles Metcalfe resigned from the East India Company and returned to Britain.

Delhi's Shalimar Bagh was left to its fate. The reference to the condition of the gardens from the pen of Reginald Heber, who said in early 1825 that they were '... completely gone to decay', is not reliable as Heber wrote about them from the ramparts of the city.⁹³ By 1838 the estate had been released to a purchaser approved by Thomas Metcalfe, Charles's younger brother, then the Agent and Commissioner in Delhi. Thomas Metcalfe neither owned nor used the property, but built instead a different kind of garden house in another part of the hinterland, the subject of Chapter Six of this book. Leopold von Orlich, a German soldier, visited the garden in 1843 and described it as 'uninhabited ... rather neglected'.⁹⁴ The decline continued. When garden historian Constance Villiers-Stuart visited Shalimar in 1913, the depressions of the three principal tanks were still visible and the long water channel that connected the tanks could be traced. A half-ruined *baradari* stood at the south-west corner of the garden. She cited the Archaeological Survey of India report by Jean Philippe Vogel: 'It will take hardly a century more and the little that remains of the Shalimar Bagh of Delhi will have disappeared without leaving a trace.'⁹⁵ Though it has taken a little longer, that is exactly what is happening today.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Reginald Heber, *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India* (London, 1828), vol. 1, p. 455.

⁹⁴ Leopold von Orlich, *Travels in India, Including the Sinde and the Punjab* (London, 1845), vol. 2, p. 16.

⁹⁵ Villiers-Stuart, *Gardens*, p. 107

Four

TRULY FAIRY PALACES: ROBERT SMITH IN DELHI AND IN EUROPE

In Chapter Two I described how, at its inception in 1803, British settlement in Delhi was mainly concentrated in the elite area inside the Kashmir Gate of the walled city, to the north of the great Mughal fort/palace or Lal Qil'a, where the remains of the two most prestigious seventeenth-century Mughal riverine palaces were located. The Kashmir Gate area led out to rough open country beyond, where new British Civil and Military Lines would later be built. In this area stood the Residency house, as well as principal administrative offices including those of the judiciary, soon to be followed by a school, a printing press and a variety of new commercial establishments. The Residency itself had grown from a Mughal garden pavilion into an assertive hybrid structure, its new, colonnaded façade hiding a Mughal interior and proclaiming growing British authority over the city.

There was another large and visually arresting house in the Kashmir Gate area, this one built in the 1820s on top of older Mughal foundations (see Plate 6). Solidly constructed and still in use at the time of writing, the house occupied part of the remains of the second palace north of the fort, originally that of Ali Mardan Khan, the *vazīr* or principal minister of Shah Jahan. This chapter will focus on the activities of the man who built and lived in that house, Robert Smith (1787–1873), an officer in the Bengal Engineers, and on Smith's later and related building activities in Europe. The design of the house can be attributed on stylistic, documentary and circumstantial evidence to Smith, who was its occupant in the 1820s, the decade during which he served as Delhi's Garrison Engineer. Robert Smith is one of only two of my five subjects who did not die in India, returning to live a sumptuous if isolated life in hybrid houses he would design and build in Europe. It is the houses that Smith built after he left the Company's service that reinforce attribution to him of the Delhi house, as well as other Gothicising buildings in Delhi and elsewhere in north India.

Investigation of Robert Smith's house in Delhi has been hampered by two misconceptions in the secondary literature over the identity of its occupier.



Plate 6 Robert Smith's Delhi House, 2017.

Until recently the house was referred to by local historians as Gubbins' House after a later occupant, John Gubbins, a magistrate from the better-documented time at mid-century.¹ More recently it was given a plaque identifying it as the house of 'Sir William Fraser' based on a chain of misunderstandings that derive from an early book by William Dalrymple.² The mistake is reinforced by translation of the inscription in vernacular Persian text on the large Shahjahanabad map of c.1845, when *Kothi* (house of) Smith Sahib was rendered *Kothi* Resident Sahib, an attribution unquestioned by later scholars.³ Confusion is further compounded because there were two Robert Smiths, almost exact contemporaries, working in India. Each one was a draughtsman, and each left us with sketchbooks.⁴ One Robert Smith was in Her Majesty's 44th (East Essex) Regiment of Foot and in India from 1825 till 1833, and again in the 1840s. The other, the man under discussion here who lived in Delhi between 1822 and 1830, had a successful career with the East India Company, rising through the ranks of the Bengal Engineers to become an honorary colonel. Our knowledge about Smith is still incomplete but is greatly helped by the fact that he left uncommon architectural traces both of his time in India and of a long cosmopolitan life after retiring from the Company's service in 1832.

In this chapter I will look at three houses designed and built by Smith, as well as at additions to a fourth that it is tempting, though probably incorrect, to attribute to him as builder, but which he purchased and lived in for several years, and which must have deeply influenced his architectural ideas.⁵ Two houses that Smith built, one in the south of France and one in south Devon, have well-established provenance. Though they were begun in the 1850s, it is these houses that reinforce attribution to Smith of the earlier house in Delhi, as well as of several public building projects in that city and elsewhere in India.⁶ Each is an example of the assimilation of both the home and Indian cultures that Smith encountered, and each highlights a growing global intelligence in mid-nineteenth-century architectural style, when a builder not only

¹ M.M. Kaye, ed., *The Golden Calm: An English Lady's Life in Moghul Delhi* (Exeter, 1980), p. 142.

² See William Dalrymple, *City of Djinns* (London, 1993).

³ Eckart Ehlers and Thomas Krafft, eds, *Shahjahanabad, Old Delhi: Tradition and Colonial Change* (Stuttgart, 1993); Jeremiah Losty, ed., *Delhi: Red Fort to Raisina* (New Delhi, 2012).

⁴ The sketchbooks are 'Pictorial Journal of Travels in Hindustan' (1828–33), Victoria and Albert Museum, IM.15:1-65: 1915; and 'Sketchbooks of Robert Smith' (1812–15), India Office Prints, Drawings and Paintings, WD 309–313, British Library. See also Jeremiah Losty's blog, 'Disentangling the Robert Smiths', retrieved from <http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/asian-and-african/2013/12/>.

⁵ The Villa Stati-Mattei, on the Palatine Hill in Rome (see below). Smith was the owner/occupier of this Renaissance villa for five years.

⁶ These include The Abbey in Mussoorie. Smith was wounded at the siege of Bharatpur in 1826 and recuperated in Mussoorie. The building later became part of a preparatory boarding school, Junior Mussoorie School. See F. Bodycot, *Guide to Mussoorie* (Mussoorie, 1847), p. 155.

celebrated the hegemonic ‘foreignness’ he brought with him but also exercised a variety of options for linking to the local. In Smith’s later European houses – invaluable tools for the biographic exploration of his life after he left India – this process is inverted. They are evidence of the almost frenetic activities of a very wealthy latter-day nabob attempting, apparently without very much success, to use whatever social capital he could muster, linking his identity to India as a way of trying to fit in at the level in society he felt was now warranted by his newly acquired wealth.

When he saw the interior of Robert Smith’s Delhi house in 1828, Edward Archer, an aide to the Commander-in-Chief, was spellbound and he gave a lengthy description. ‘Long corridors lead to different apartments, embellished with coloured walls and other decorations, all by the owner’s hands,’ he wrote. ‘And it should not be omitted, that many exquisite drawings of the places of celebrity in Delhi and its neighbourhood, add to the appearance of this truly fairy palace.’⁷ For Smith’s material legacy is not just to be found in his architecture but also in his paintings – and he had painted the walls of his house with images of the buildings of Delhi. If the documentary trail of Smith’s building is still a little sketchy in parts, his life in India and later in Europe can be pieced together with the help of his paintings. As both an engineer/architect and a landscape painter, he is therefore a distinctive and particularly valuable subject.

Robert Smith was born in France and baptised in Nancy, Lorraine, on 13 September 1787 (see Table 3).⁸ He was the third son of the long-lived James Smith (1740–1839), who had studied law in Edinburgh and had worked in Calcutta, perhaps briefly as a private secretary to Warren Hastings.⁹ His mother was Mary Smith (1760–1838), and his two older brothers James (1781–1804) and John (1783–1846) had both been born in Bengal and later returned to serve in the Company’s army.¹⁰ It seems probable that Robert Smith was born during the family’s journey back from India. Why they were then in France is not known, but Smith would return to the country repeatedly. There was also a younger brother, Edward (1797–1846), and two sisters, one also named Mary (1789–1872), Robert’s closest sibling and his companion in late life. The Smith family claimed to

⁷ Edward Caulfield Archer, *Tours in Upper India and in Parts of the Himalaya Mountains* (London, 1833), vol. 1 p. 108.

⁸ Bideford Parish Register, North Devon Records Office.

⁹ Earlier scholarship on Smith includes Mildred Archer’s entries in *Company Drawings in the India Office Library* (London, 1972) and Raymond Head, ‘From Obsession to Obscurity: Colonel Robert Smith, Artist, Architect and Engineer’, *Country Life* (21 May 1981), pp. 1432ff. and (28 May 1981), pp. 1524ff. See also the recent case study by Dianne James, ‘Robert Smith and Redcliffe Towers’, *East India Company at Home* (2014), retrieved from <http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/eicah/colonel-robert-smith-and-redcliffe-towers-case-study/>.

¹⁰ Edward Dodwell and James Samuel Miles, *Alphabetical List of the Officers of the Bengal Army* (London, 1838).

have come originally from Perth, Scotland, and could trace their origins three generations earlier to the Smiths of Braco and Methven through a paternal grandmother, Jane Smollett.¹¹ Raised in London and then in Bideford, North Devon, Robert Smith was evidently a sturdy and promising child, as from the age of nine he was named as one of the 'three lives' on the feoffment or conveyance for the renewal of the leasehold of part of a merchant house at 10b (now 12) Bridgeland Street. This well-documented house dates back to the beginning of the eighteenth century and had been built by a John Smith who was perhaps the great uncle of Robert.¹² It was in Bideford that Robert Smith spent much of his childhood. His father James leased half of the Bridgeland Street property in 1792, not selling his lease on until 1825 when, aged eighty-seven, he moved permanently with his wife and surviving unmarried daughter Mary to Northumberland Place in Teignmouth, South Devon.¹³

Robert Smith was a talented painter from childhood. By age twelve he was producing watercolours of the landscape around Bideford, and in 1800 a group of them of the village and hall of nearby Weare Gifford was presented by his father to the local landowner, the Earl of Fortescue. This gesture and the slightly obsequious document that accompanied it are perhaps revealing of the Smith family's social insecurity on their return to England.¹⁴ Among the watercolours are some that already show Smith's keen eye for architectural detail: a cut-away of the fine hammer-beam construction at fifteenth-century Weare Gifford Hall, for example, or its crenellated medieval gate-tower. Smith seems to have been exposed to and clearly on familiar terms with local traditions of both medieval and Gothic revival building from his childhood. The main seat of the Fortescue family, Castle Hill, had a simple, early-eighteenth-century sham castle standing on elevated land behind the house, popularly attributed to John Vanbrugh, and the historicising details of such towers and follies would have a strong influence on Smith's later military-Gothic architecture.¹⁵ Three years after this, in 1803, Smith's painting skills had advanced considerably, as evidenced by watercolours today in the collection of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter, one of which is both signed and

¹¹ This information, recorded in documents in the Court of the Lord Lyon in Edinburgh, was provided at the time that Robert Claude, Smith's only surviving son, applied for Scottish arms in 1876.

¹² The house of John Smith and the detailed specifications for its construction including materials and dimensions are written into an agreement signed with the trustees of the Long Bridge of Bideford. Bideford Bridge Trust, A/1/6, bundle 10, North Devon Records Office.

¹³ The lease was sold for £500. This information is in one of four codicils to James Smith's will. Bank of England Wills Extracts 1717–1845, PROB 11/1914/132, TNA.

¹⁴ The paintings and the letter are located at Castle Hill House, near Barnstaple. I would like to thank Keith Hughes, local historian from Weare Gifford, for this information.

¹⁵ The folly dates from about 1746. See Nikolaus Pevsner and Bridget Cherry, *The Buildings of England: Devon*, revised edn (New Haven, 1989), p. 249.

dated. The other, a conventional picturesque landscape of the mouth of the river at Bideford, was made perhaps to remind himself of home as he set off on his later career travels.¹⁶

For in that same year, at age sixteen, Smith was accepted as a cadet in the East India Company's new Royal Military College at Marlow. His two older brothers had already gone into the Company's service and his younger brother, Edward, would follow in 1815.¹⁷ Marlow, the first of the colleges founded especially to train young soldiers for service, had opened just a year earlier, in 1802. Its premises, a late-eighteenth-century conversion of a medieval house on Marlow's West Street known as Remnantz, served the junior section of the college until 1812. As part of his infantry training at Marlow, along with mathematics and fortifications Smith would have been carefully instructed in draughtsmanship. Drawing and watercolour sketching of details of natural and man-made topography were a critically important skill for naval and military personnel before the invention of photography. Smith, who may well have been a pupil of the academician William Alexander who taught at Marlow between 1803 and 1808, had a talent for quick sketching that would later be described as masterly.

In 1805 Robert Smith was sent to Calcutta and shortly after his arrival he was transferred from the infantry to begin a career in the Bengal Engineers, which would continue until his formal retirement in 1832. In India he produced mainly utilitarian buildings: fortifications, bridges, semaphore towers, canals and roads, and a lighthouse. He was also responsible for surveying the south-western frontiers of Bundelkhand, on the southern borders of today's Uttar Pradesh. By 1810 he had become a field engineer and had gained a real reputation for his draughtsmanship. He accompanied the then Commander-in-Chief, George Nugent, and his wife, Maria, as an aide-de-camp on their tour of Upper India in the winter of 1812/13. Because Smith had been trained in the art of making topographical panoramas, Maria Nugent, outspoken champion of Smith's skills, asked him to go with her on her elephant, commissioning him to capture an impression of the vast entourage that travelled with the Commander-in-Chief. She wrote in her journal, 'I took the engineer officer, Mr Smith, with me and we projected a drawing of the line-of-march, which will be a treasure to me, if he executes it according to my plan, and I have little doubt of its being quite perfect, by what I have seen of his drawings.'¹⁸ Smith had already impressed Lady Nugent with a gift of his drawings. 'Received a present ... from Mr Smith, an

¹⁶ The paintings are *Bideford Bridge* and *View in the Parish of Northam near Bideford*. Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, catalogue 14/1942 and 57/1917/12.

¹⁷ See Dodwell and Miles, *Alphabetical List*.

¹⁸ Ashley L. Cohen, ed., *Lady Nugent's East India Journal: A Critical Edition* (Oxford and Delhi, 2014), p. 178.

engineer ADC,' she had written earlier in the journal. 'He draws beautifully, and his sketches are all so correct that I know every place immediately.'¹⁹

Panoramic views were a manifestation of optical and cognitive changes that were taking place in the West from the later eighteenth century. As well as their military function, examples had now become a popular entertainment with a public already hungry for expanded landscapes and *vedute* of unfamiliar places, a minor obsession that culminated in print series such as Luigi Rossini's late engravings, *I sette colli di Roma antica e moderna* (1827).²⁰ Taken from the hills of Rome, on the principal one of which Robert Smith would later live, these prints captured the experience of the distant urban vistas beyond Rome's elevated formal gardens. It has been argued that by the nineteenth century the panorama was the paradigmatic viewing experience of modernity, unmooring visual representation from the restraints of the frame.²¹ Expansiveness, perhaps, was its link to colonisation. The panorama has also been associated with earlier hybrid architectural representations made during the later eighteenth century, sometimes by European officers in the service of the Mughal successor states.²² Robert Smith was closely tied to these artistic currents.

Another finished watercolour panorama, of the line-of-march immediately before Haridwar, was made when Smith accompanied Governor General Lord Moira's winter tour two years later. This was exhibited to great acclaim at Government House, Calcutta, where it was seen and admired by James Baillie Fraser, the older brother of William Fraser. Fraser wrote in his journal in August 1819 that after a fretful morning of trying to pull together his own sketches of the Hooghly River, he went to meet the painter George Chinnery at Government House especially to see Smith's picture. 'I acknowledge', he wrote, 'that I never was in my life so much confounded and surprised as I was at the sight of this most extraordinary performance. The picture is 17 or 18 feet long by 2½ or 3 feet high and represents the whole line of hills above and below Haridwar for a great extent. It takes in the camp which His Lordship had in the morning quitted on the right and goes as I have already said far beyond Haridwar on the left ...'.²³

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 126.

²⁰ Luigi Rossini, *I sette colli di Roma antica e moderna* (Rome, 1828–29). The volume includes several double-page views and one folding panorama of Rome on four joined sheets that extends to more than 11 feet.

²¹ See Tim Barringer, 'The World for a Shilling: The Early Panorama as Global Landscape, 1787–1830', in T. Barringer, R. Maxwell and K. Trumpener, eds, *Viewing Platform: Perspectives on the Panorama* (forthcoming, 2018).

²² Chanchal Dadlani, 'The "Palais Indiens" Collection of 1774: Representing Mughal Architecture in Late Eighteenth-Century India', *Ars Orientalis* 39 (2010), pp. 175–97. See also Denise Blake Oleksijczuk, *The First Panoramas: Visions of British Imperialism* (Minneapolis, 2011).

²³ Letter from James Baillie Fraser, 5 August 1819, bundle 297, Fraser of Reelig papers.

Some of Smith's sketches are preserved, though his painted panoramas are now lost to us (as are those that were made in India by the other Robert Smith and which would be used commercially after the Revolt by Burford's Panorama on Leicester Square).²⁴ The growing skill of his drawing is preserved in five preparatory sketchbooks dated 1812 to 1815. The sketchbooks are held by the British Library, two dating from the time spent with the Nugents and the others from his later tour with Lord Moira, from his stay in the country around Benares in 1814 and from his time in Nepal in 1815. Included in them are depictions of a catholic variety of buildings: the new *navvābs'* palaces in and around Lucknow, Mughal forts and British bungalows. The architectural details Smith recorded here are invaluable in attributing to him later undocumented building, as well as providing a record of the wide variety of styles that caught his architectural eye. They also help clarify any confusion that sometimes still arises with the life and work of the other Robert Smith. The British Library sketchbooks are inscribed 'Drawn by Col. Smith. R.E. Owner of the extensive round house at Paignton, Devon. Book of Sketches sold by auction at the above house – 4 of the books purchased by me. J. Pethwick.' Pethwick went on to note that, in his opinion, '... the Colonel was splendid as a draftsman, but the worst possible as a painter'.²⁵ This comment might well have held true of Smith's oil painting early in his time in India, as evidenced by three rather roughly drawn oils now in the collection of the British Library and the National Army Museum, or perhaps of his voluminous late-life wall paintings in England and France which now, like the panoramas, are lost to us almost entirely (of which more below).²⁶ But it was certainly not so during his time in Delhi. The oil-on-canvas landscapes he made when he lived there in the 1820s are of a high quality and, contemporary artistic conventions taken into account, are valuable evidence of a way of thinking about the historic landscapes and monuments in the city at a time when its new architecture was reflecting hybrid modes of representation.

Fine watercolours by Robert Smith of the Indian countryside are known from as early as 1810, the first securely dated one being *Bridge over the River Barna at Benares*, though it can be safely assumed that Smith was always painting and that there are other examples that have still to come to light.²⁷ Between the years 1810 and 1819, Smith served the Company in several parts of India. He

²⁴ Robert Burford and others, *Description of a View of the City of Delhi, with an Action between Her Majesty's Troops and the Revolted Sepoys, now exhibiting at the Panorama, Leicester Square* (1858), Yale Center for British Art, Rare Book Collection, DS486.D3 B87.

²⁵ 'Sketchbooks of Robert Smith', India Office Prints, Drawings and Paintings, WD 309–313, British Library. The auction referred to in the inscription was held in 1878.

²⁶ The oil paintings are *Barrackpore House from Upriver* (oil on canvas) and *A Scene in Eastern India* (oil on canvas), Indian Office Prints, Drawings and Paintings F864 and F865, British Library; *The Yumna Canal near Meerut, with Soldiers and Fortifications* (oil on paper), NAM, 1971-08-16-1.

²⁷ The watercolour was sold at Christies in London in 2006. It is signed and dated 'Robert Smith at Calcutta/R. Smith 1810' on the back.

accompanied Lord Minto's expedition to capture Isle de France (Mauritius) from the French in 1810, and he was sent to survey the frontier of the Upper Provinces in the winters, with 'bad weather' spent in Benares. In the collection of the British Library there is a fine group of watercolours from this period of his life that help us track his movements.²⁸ In 1814 Smith became Superintending Engineer and Executive Officer at Penang, Prince of Wales Island, but he was recalled to India because of the Nepal War, returning to Penang in 1818 and remaining there until 1819. It is probable that his second trip there was in part to recuperate from war injuries. There are ten known canvases by him from this period, eight in the Penang State Museum and Art Gallery and two in private collections; and one of them is a carefully studied view from the convalescent bungalow. Smith had now had the time to refine his skills as a painter in oils.

It was suggested by the scholar of British Indian art Mildred Archer that Robert Smith was introduced to the painter William Havell while he was in Penang in 1818. This is unlikely, as Havell was there only briefly and in 1817.²⁹ Any link that did exist between Smith and the Havell family is more likely to have been as a result of an introduction through James Baillie Fraser, who had praised Smith's panorama in August 1819, and some of whose watercolours were soon to be engraved by the younger Robert Havell and published as *Views of the Himala Mountains*.³⁰ We know that Robert Havell met James Fraser in Calcutta in 1819. We also know that later in 1819, while on long leave in London, Smith met William Daniell. He admired Smith's views of Penang, which became the basis for Daniell's splendid elephant folio series, *Ten Views of Prince of Wales Island*, published in 1821.³¹ The series is a sort of coda to the Daniell brothers' earlier *Oriental Scenery* and originally included a long panoramic key explaining the topography of Paulo Fenang (Penang).

After an extended leave in England, in October 1822 Robert Smith went back to India as Delhi's Garrison Engineer and Executive Officer and as Superintendent of the Doab Canal construction, posts he occupied until February 1830. Although he had begun his career as a conventional engineer with the Company, his activities both as an architect and as a painter were by now tinged with assimilation of the cultures he had encountered in India and elsewhere. His growing complexity can be seen in both the buildings he now constructed in Delhi and in his oil paintings of Delhi's historic architecture. To begin to understand this stage of his career, it is useful to consider Smith's

²⁸ Indian Office Prints, Drawings and Paintings, WD 2087–2094, British Library. Other known examples in private collections include *Crossing the River Son with the Hill Fort at Rhotasgarh*, sold at Christies in London on 30 October 2014.

²⁹ Mildred Archer, *British Drawings in the India Office Library* (London, 1969), Vol. I, pp. 317–23. Havell was in India from 1817 until 1825 but in Penang only briefly, and in 1817.

³⁰ The series was engraved by Robert Havell and published by Rodwell & Martin of Bond Street in 1820.

³¹ Abbey Travel #525, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven.

concurrent involvement in the preservation of historic buildings in Delhi. Investigation and preservation of local archaeological sites was a politically inflected interest of the British that had begun almost as soon as they arrived in Delhi and which quickly became part of a colonial narrative of rescue.³² Robert Smith was simultaneously involved in the practical work of reinforcing the defensive walls of the city and with the restoration of several of the city's historic monuments deemed worthy of an engineer's intervention to protect them from structural failure. He would repair one wobbly minaret of Shah Jahan's *Jama Masjid*, as well as the late-twelfth-century Qutb Minar at Mehrauli.³³ Smith's restoration of the Qutb Minar in 1828, weakened by earlier earthquake damage, included structural work at its base that probably saved the monument from total collapse. He was also responsible for the design of a red sandstone cupola to replace an earlier harp-shaped one that had fallen in the earthquake.³⁴ Looking through his sketchbooks, it is clear that the cupola design was directly influenced by the corner pavilions of a house he had drawn on his tour with the Nugents, Musa Bagh (also known as Barowen) in Lucknow.³⁵ This, along with the turrets of riverfront houses in Benares, furnished Smith with ideas for the new resolution for the top of the Qutb Minar. He designed it to also include a Gothicising viewing platform, linking the early Sultanate minaret and the concept of European medieval viewing towers to the growing contemporary interest in the panoramic vista. But by turning the monument into a sightseer's attraction, his architectural judgement was felt to have failed him. The addition was roundly condemned as 'a silly ornament like a parachute, which adds nothing to the beauty of the structure', and it was removed altogether a few years after Smith left Delhi.³⁶ It still stands, upside down, in the archaeological park near the *minar*. However, the design of this cupola is helpful in attributing on stylistic grounds Robert Smith's other architectural work, as well as in dating

³² Apart from ongoing repairs to fortifications of the city, the earliest example was the restoration of the well of the *Jama Masjid* in 1809. IOR F/4/312/7126, British Library.

³³ *Journal of the Archaeological Society of Delhi* (1850) reprints the original proceedings concerning this restoration. See also J.D. Beglar and Alexander Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India Reports, 1862–1863, Delhi*, vol. 1 (Calcutta, 1874), p. 199. The Qutb restorations cost 17,000 rupees.

³⁴ The Qutb had been surveyed by James Blunt and its earlier surmounting ornament was depicted in his accompanying illustration. James Blunt, 'A Description of the Cuttob Minar by Ensign James T. Blunt of the Engineers', *Asiatick Researches* 3 (1794), pp. 323ff.

³⁵ India Office Prints, Drawings and Paintings, WD 312, f. 12, British Library. The drawing is inscribed 'Baronne, nr. Lucknow'. Musa Bagh was also mentioned by Edward Archer in December 1828: 'Sunday. Rode to the Moosah Baugh, distant three miles from the Residency to the north; a very handsome house and gardens, and, as it is on high ground, it has a commanding prospect over the country ...': Archer, *Tours in Upper India*, vol. 1, p. 38.

³⁶ 'Pictorial Journal of Travels in Hindustan from 1828–1833', Victoria and Albert Museum, IM. 15-1915, vol. 2, p. 483. This comment is from the unpublished journals of the other Robert Smith.

some fine oil paintings of the early Sultanate monuments in the area, surely executed at the time he was working on the restoration of the Qutb.³⁷

Records of some of Delhi's earliest archaeological restoration from Robert Smith's time were to be published by the active but short-lived Delhi Archaeological Society.³⁸ The discussions of the members of this dilettante group were one strand of influence in the production of the important architectural compilation by Sayyad Ahmad Khan, the *Athar us-Sanadid*, of which more in Chapter Six. But as several scholars have recently shown, British intervention in Indian restoration was highly problematic, driven as much by political expediency as by a genuine care for history, and with little or no understanding that heritage might comprise anything other than a very limited selection of grand monumental buildings.³⁹ At a local level in Delhi there were men who appreciated and were genuinely interested in the protection of structures of architectural merit, but for every well-meant step forward taken at the local level at least two were taken backwards by the Government of India. Under Lord Moira, for example, the marble bath at Shah Jahan's Agra palace was dismantled to be sent as a gift to King George IV. This was later sold at public auction under Lord Bentinck's orders. During Bentinck's administration (1828–35), a move was even made to demolish the Taj itself for the value of its marbles. There were many more violations. While Bengal Regulation #XIX of 1810 and Madras Regulation #VII of 1817/18 had given the Executive the power to intervene if significant public edifices were exposed to the risk of misuse by private individuals, this power did not extend to monuments in private ownership, and the law was in any event powerless if a governor general was the vandal.

In Delhi, Robert Smith's name has been associated with the building of the large house with crenellations in a simplified military/Gothic style, no longer standing, known as Ludlow Castle (built after 1821). What we know of Ludlow Castle is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five. Smith's name is also associated with several neo-Gothic military structures including the circular Flagstaff Tower (1828) and the two new sets of gates for the Magazine. It is probable in both the latter cases that Smith built over pre-existing structures, encasing examples of Sultanate and Mughal building and allowing these to influence his plans. A building had been on the site of Flagstaff Tower, which now looks like something halfway between an Iranian pigeon tower and a Martello tower, from the time of Firoz Shah Tughluq; whilst one of the Magazine Gates was undoubtedly on the footprint of the main entry into Dara Shukoh's palace complex. (See Plate 1)

³⁷ At the time of writing, two of these paintings were being offered for sale by Amir Mohtashemi in London.

³⁸ The Delhi Archaeological Society's journal was published by the Delhi Gazette Press from 1849 to 1852.

³⁹ See in particular the work of Mrinalini Rajagopalan.

It is Robert Smith's work on the Kashmir Gate itself, securing the British settlement now established inside the northern city walls, which most plainly demonstrates his engagement with the forms of Mughal building. The work of repairing and modernising the defensive walls of Shahjahanabad began in 1804 and took many years to complete. Under the superintendence of George Hutchinson, Smith's predecessor as Garrison Engineer, and then of Smith himself, the city's fortifications – its breached and crumbling walls, bastions and ditches – were methodically reinforced, and Martello towers were added to the system of fortification. Because the road running through the city to the Kashmir Gate linked the city to the new Civil Lines and to the new cantonments beyond the Ridge, and because it extended the ceremonial route that ran past the first Residency, this gate was much used by the British. The gates of Shahjahanabad, like those of other Mughal cities, normally had single, defensible openings. The Kashmir Gate has a symmetrical, double opening. Historic photographs taken immediately after the Revolt, when the gate was damaged in the storming of the city, show plaster blown away and exposed brickwork, revealing how its single arch had been duplicated, the single opening turned into a double one. British-made brick sizes were thicker than indigenous *lakhauri* bricks, the slender design of which had developed for stability in seismic zones. Using British technology, Smith nevertheless very precisely copied the style of the existing Mughal arched opening, with its surrounding blind niches and surmounting embrasures. Near contemporary (if imprecise) accounts corroborate the fact that Smith was the architect of this change. Fanny Parkes Parlbay, a resourceful independent traveller who lived in India with her husband from 1822, praised Smith's efforts when she visited Delhi in the early 1830s: 'Colonel Edward [sic] Smith, of the Engineers, deserves great credit for the style and good taste he has displayed in the architecture of this gate, and for several other buildings which were pointed out to me as of his design in other parts of the city.'⁴⁰ Smith's alterations included a circular extension to the bastion inside the gate. On the British Library map of c.1845 this design element is also found in a nearby garden of similar shape. Both stand out as idiosyncratic and highly unusual in the Mughal urban fabric. The garden is that of the house that I also attribute to Smith.

While in Delhi, Robert Smith is known to have lived in a house on the city wall near the Kashmir Gate, to the north of the Residency and overlooking the Yamuna.⁴¹ Like the Residency, Smith's house stood on the site of part of a pre-existing Mughal palace complex, in this case part of the palace of Ali

⁴⁰ Fanny Parkes Parlbay, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque* (London, 1850), pp. 197, 205. Her mistake is easily explained as Edward Smith, Robert Smith's younger brother, also in the Engineers, was at this time stationed in Allahabad where Fanny Parkes' husband was based.

⁴¹ Archer, *Tours in Upper India*, vol. 2, p. 108.

Mardan Khan, who had once been the *vazīr* of Shah Jahan. Like other elite palaces of its age, it had long since been cut up into smaller units, its pavilions reused for a variety of new functions. Part of the property was developed as a church for the European community, St James's, begun in 1826 and consecrated in 1836. The church, octagonal and with four shallow projecting porticoes, also stood in a circular lot, and it had been funded by James Skinner, commander of the brigade of irregular horse known as the Yellow Boys and an important figure in Delhi society.⁴² Designs for St James's Church can also be attributed to Smith, not because of any official documents – if these did exist they must have been lost in the Revolt – but because of the inscription on a near contemporary engraving of the church. Drawn by a younger member of the Bengal Engineers, George Borlase Tremeneere, and printed in 1839 by R.G. Reeve of London, the print is inscribed: 'Designed and executed as high as the cornice of the entablature by Col. R. Smith of Bengal Engineers – the remainder by Capt. De Bude of the same Corps.'⁴³ De Bude apparently bore the brunt of the work between Smith's departure from Delhi early in 1830 and the consecration of the church in 1836. Not surprisingly, there is also physical evidence in the fabric of the church that, as with many buildings in the area, there was earlier Mughal construction in its foundations, which may have helped determine its octagonal plan. The land on which the church stood and land immediately opposite it, which in the early eighteenth century had been granted to Lutfullah Khan, a *vazīr* of Muhammed Shah, had been purchased by Skinner.⁴⁴ Here he also built a residential complex that included a classicising main block with high colonnades for himself, a separate marble bath, a *zanāna* for the women of his household and a mosque for his Muslim family members. These were completed before 1835.⁴⁵ The British *kutcheri* or court of law and the treasury were also located on the site of Ali Mardan Khan's palace, close to the Kashmir Gate, as was the office of the *Delhi Gazette*, now known as the house of the Ravi Brothers.⁴⁶

⁴² James Skinner was the son of Hercules Skinner, a Scotsman in the East India Company's army, and a Rajput woman. He was a close friend of William Fraser, whose family would later receive his children when they were sent to Britain. The Wak Kani letters document this.

⁴³ See Indian Office Prints, Drawings and Paintings, P126 and P127, British Library.

⁴⁴ For Lutfullah Khan, see Stephen P. Blake, *Shahjahanabad, the Sovereign City in Mughal India, 1639–1739* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 76.

⁴⁵ Watercolour views from Skinner's house by William Clerihew dated to 1843, in the drawings collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA 20085 and 20090) show the juxtaposition of mosque and church. A small part of the complex still existed in the 1990s. For more recent illustrations, see Parvan K. Varma and Shankar Sandeep, *Manstions at Dusk: The Havelis of Old Delhi* (New Delhi, 1992), pp. 93–102.

⁴⁶ For the house of the Ravi Brothers see Sonali Bhagwati, 'An Enquiry into Urban Metamorphosis: Kashmir Gate' (MA thesis, CEPT, Ahmedabad 1985); and Amitabh Barthakur, 'The Architectural Evolution of the Kashmiri Gate Area during the Colonial Period' (MA thesis, School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi, 1992).

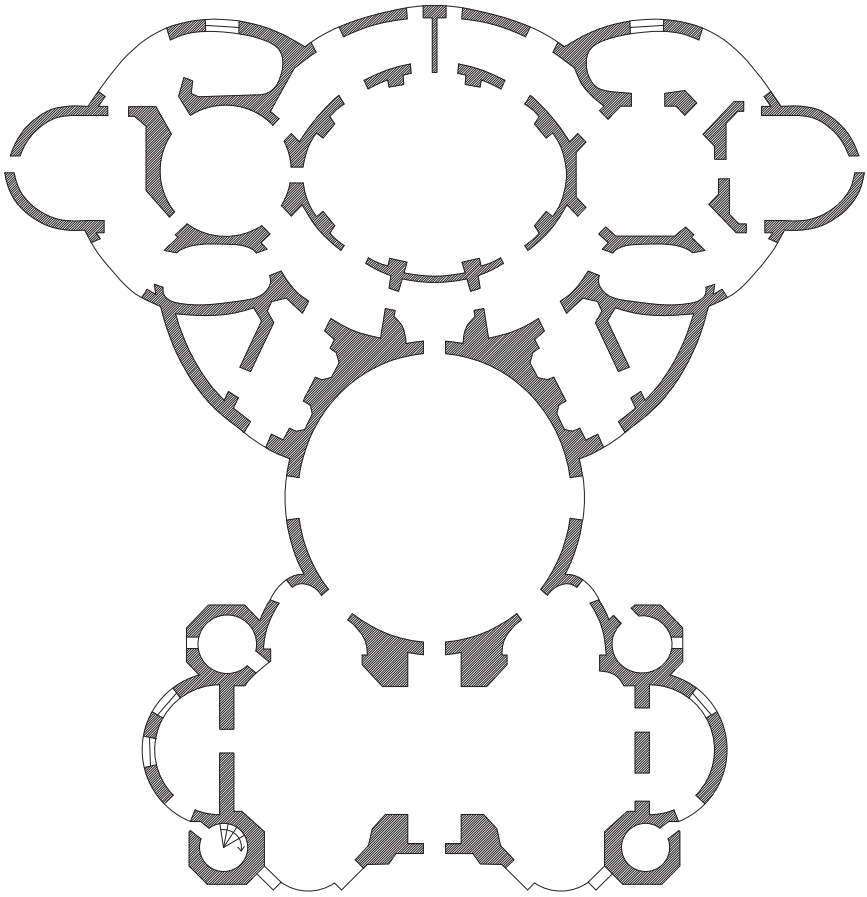


Figure 2 Robert Smith's House.

Robert Smith's solidly built house is used today as offices by the Northern Railways Construction Department. It sits back from the road and abuts the old city wall on what was once the river's edge. Both the house and its grounds have a distinctive plan, classically symmetrical yet based on fluid circular and oval forms, more Baroque than Palladian (Figure 2). Unexpectedly deep in relation to its width, the house has an arched portico flanked by octagonal turrets that leads via an anteroom to a high central hall, circular in plan. An ornamental hemispheric dome sits atop the central hall. Behind this are wings with elliptical rooms surmounted by smaller domes. As with the Delhi Residency discussed in Chapter Two, the footprint of the house on the British Library map of c.1845 corresponds with a recently drawn plan of the house.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Redrawn from the plan reproduced by Barthakur, provided to her by the Northern Railway Construction Department office.

However, there is confusion over the translation of the vernacular Persian inscription on the map, which Anthony King correctly read as 'Kothi Smith Sahib' but which Ehlers and Krafft in their redrawing (and others following them) have translated as 'Kothi Resident Sahib'.⁴⁸ I do not believe, as has been claimed, that this was ever the house of William Fraser, the subject of Chapter Five of this book. That claim is based on a letter in the Fraser of Reelig papers from Edward Fraser describing the view from the Delhi bungalow where his brother William was living in 1812, a description that could have applied to the view from a number of structures on the long stretch of the river to the north of the fort.⁴⁹ Nowhere is there a description of subterranean rooms or of a house on the scale of the one the Delhi Garrison Engineer would later build and live in in the 1820s. And in 1812 William Fraser was still a junior assistant.

Architects who built for British India in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, frequently artillery or engineering officers, are often assumed to have built on English gentry models, copying from prior experiential knowledge or adapting from pattern books. Not so Robert Smith. While he certainly worked using a mixed repertoire of the English Gothic details that he knew from experience, he was not shy about breaking away from them and incorporating what he had locally observed. The prominent turrets on the façade of Smith's house are immediately identifiable with the failed cupola of the Qutb Minar, and that is reason enough for attributing its design to him. Both took their compound style from the turrets of early-nineteenth-century houses in both Benares and Lucknow that Smith had seen and sketched on his tour with the Nugents in 1812/13.⁵⁰ Façade details of Smith's house in Delhi were heavily influenced by one particular Lucknow palace, the Indo-European Musa Bagh (Barowen) 4 miles west of the city. The ruins of Musa Bagh are now inland on a fertile alluvial plain, the Gomti River on which it was built having shifted course. Constructed in 1803/4 for the *navvāb* Sadat Ali Khan, the palace was an inventive synthesis of a European house in the grand classical tradition with innovative adaptations for both the hot north Indian summers and the *navvāb's* way of life.⁵¹ A drawing of the details of the Musa Bagh is to be found in one of Smith's sketchbooks in the British

⁴⁸ The middle word is definitely Smith. The characters are *sin*, *mim* and *ta*.

⁴⁹ Letter dated 23 August 1812, bundle 65, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁵⁰ For a similarly styled turret in a photograph, see *View of Varanasi*, Alkazi Collection of Photography, New York, box 037, 96.26.0010, #1168.

⁵¹ Rosie Llewelyn-Jones, *A Fatal Friendship: The Nawabs, the British and the City of Lucknow* (Oxford and Delhi, 1985), p. 44. Barowen had a sunken courtyard providing a microclimate for the hot season. Llewelyn-Jones includes a sketch plan of this interesting house. See also Neeta Das, 'The Country Houses of Lucknow', in R. Llewelyn-Jones, ed., *Lucknow, City of Illusion* (Prestel, 2006). Das has studied the house in detail, and I thank her for taking me to visit it several years ago.

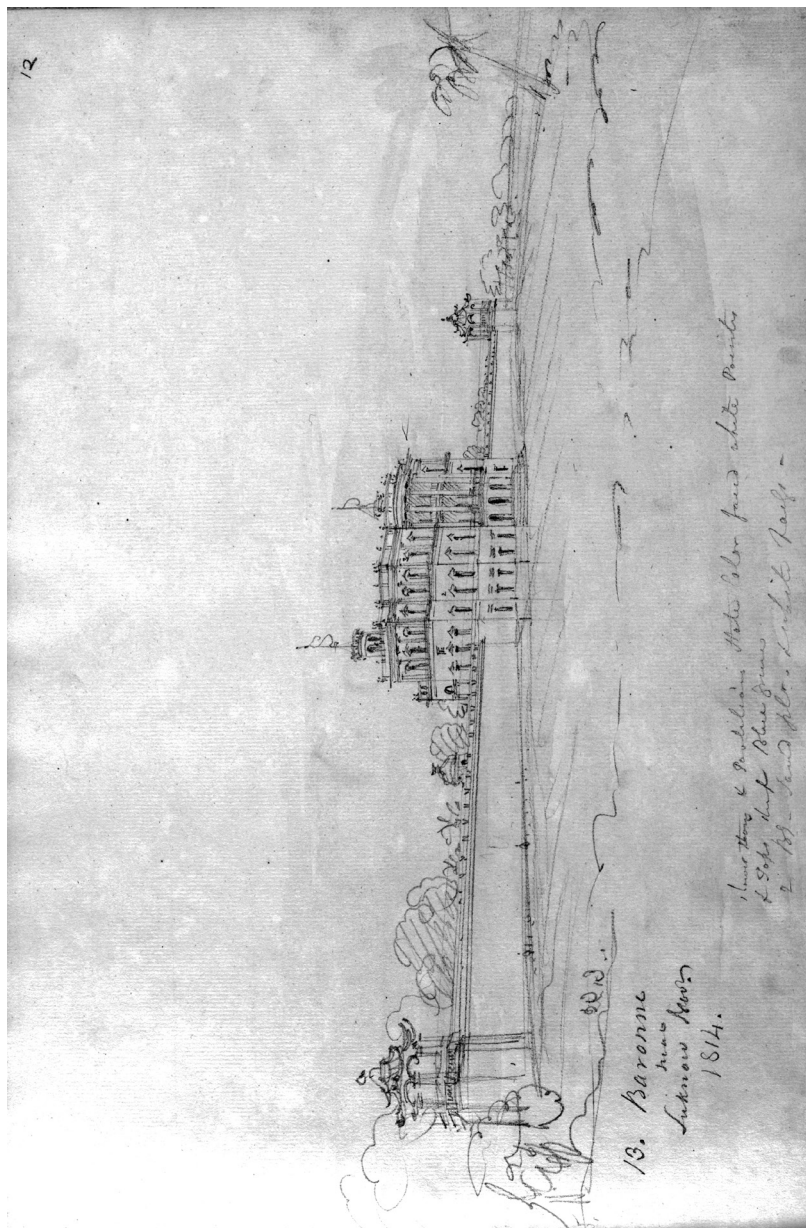


Plate 7 Robert Smith (1787–1873), *Baronne near Luknau, Nov. 1814*. Pencil drawing from Robert Smith's sketchbook, WD312, f.12' 13' © The British Library Board

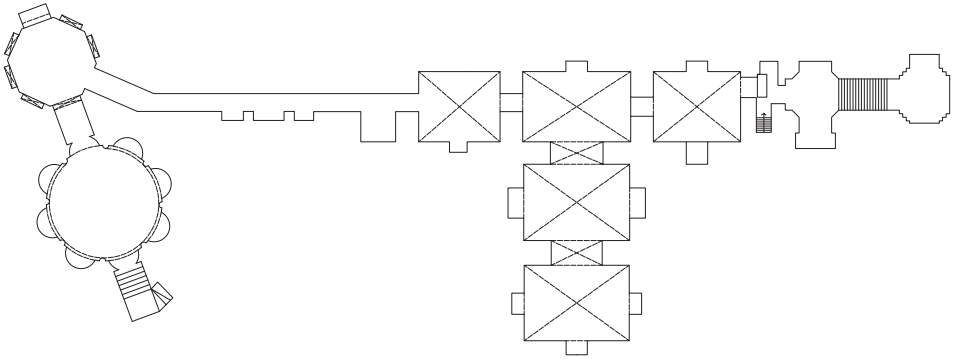


Figure 3 Robert Smith's Taikhana.

Library (Plate 7).⁵² Its corner pavilions were clearly the model for those of the Delhi house and for the failed cupola of the Qutb Minar.

We have no documentary information on Robert Smith's life in Delhi. All of his personal papers are lost. We do not know if he had an Indian family, as some of his senior colleagues did, whether he thrived in the country or longed to return home. But evidence from his buildings, his landscape paintings and his sketchbooks indicates he embraced India and its architectural conventions. These were incorporated into his self-representation, both when he lived in Delhi and later when he returned to Europe. Perhaps the most striking feature of Smith's Delhi house to contemporary European visitors, though less surprising to us, knowing of his skill as an artist, was its suite of painted subterranean rooms or *taikhāna*, an Indo-Persian building tradition for use in the sweltering heat of early summer. In 1828, Edward Archer described these rooms in detail:

We went to see the Ty-Kounahs, or under-ground houses, forming part of Major Smith's residence. The usual description of this sort of habitation is a deep excavation in the earth, having outlets for light above and ingress at one place only. Major Smith's are formed with less trouble, and are possessed equally of all the advantages of this kind of house; they are formed in the walls of the ramparts, which being of great solidity completely exclude all heat; indeed, so much is the temperature decreased, that twelve and even fourteen degrees have been discovered to be between the Ty-Kounah and the atmosphere of the room above ground, and seldom less than ten degrees. The one now under mention doubtless belonged at some past time to a man of great station or wealth: the descent to the apartment was about thirty feet, and the surprise and pleasure were equal, to find such beautiful rooms and so elegantly

⁵² 'Sketchbooks of Robert Smith', India Office Prints, Drawings and Paintings, WD 312, f. 12, British Library.

arranged and furnished. Coloured to resemble marble, the eye is first deceived by the likeness; the deception is countenanced by the coolness, so different from that oppressive sensation always felt above.⁵³

Smith's *taikhāna*, formed of pre-existing Mughal rooms, still exists and as Major Archer describes, some of these rooms are set against the ramparts on the river side of the city. There are blind niches and what may have been an opening to an earlier *jharoka* in the thick city wall. His *taikhāna* consisted of a suite of at least six principal rectangular rooms at one level and another, square chamber a half-storey deeper still (Figure 3). Additional smaller rooms can be seen filled with rubble and debris, some of these undoubtedly service spaces in the Mughal period. It was popularly believed that a series of underground tunnels ran from these rooms as far as the palace. At least one room, with a coved *bangla* ceiling and a deep *iwān*, retains traces of a painted marble finish on its surface. But in Smith's *taikhāna* there are also two very differently shaped, circular rooms, echoing the form that characterised the plan of his new building above. Smith must have added these two new rooms himself. Today, the whole *taikhāna* suite can only be reached by a narrow back stair. When I first visited, in 1996, there was a larger entry that led first into these two circular chambers. This entry, shown on the plan, is now closed off by inappropriate modern alteration. Until recently, British-period, metal-framed lanterns at ground level in the service court of the house admitted light to these newer subterranean rooms: surely Archer's 'outlets for light above'. When the *taikhāna* was excavated by the Delhi Development Authority, the metal lanterns were removed and the court rather brutally cemented over: as with the alterations to the library of Dara Shukoh, described in Chapter Two, a move to restore the Mughal layer at the expense of later history.

The description of Robert Smith's house tells us that its rooms were filled with wall paintings. There was a tradition of such painting in north Indian domestic architecture that extended through the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth, and which was associated with the rich influence of Safavid Persian painting in interiors that had been introduced by the Mughals.⁵⁴ Later Mughal palace architecture like the riverine Qudsia Bagh and princely architecture in other parts of north India, often built of brick and plaster, sometimes had mural painting on exterior as well as interior walls. Robert Smith had drawn an example in his sketchbooks.⁵⁵ It is a tradition that seems to have continually revived itself, continuing into the early colonial

⁵³ Archer, *Tours in Upper India*, vol. 1, pp. 107f.

⁵⁴ The tradition was particularly strong in Western Indian Rajput palaces. For Persian precedents, for example the exquisite murals in the Chihil Sutun, see Susann Babaie, *Isfahan and its Palaces: Statecraft, Shi'ism and the Architecture of Conviviality in Early Modern Iran* (Edinburgh, 2008).

⁵⁵ Hermann Goetz, 'The Qudsia Bagh at Delhi: Key to Late Mughal Architecture', *Islamic Culture* 26:1 (1952), pp. 132ff.

period. There are several travellers' descriptions of a residence in Lahore, for example, shared by the French mercenary generals Jean-Baptiste Ventura and Jean-François Allard. The French botanist Victor Jacquemont described a house 'half European and half Persian' in style, with magnificent decorations.⁵⁶ It had three principal public rooms, one of which stretched the length of the house. Another was a *shish mahal*, the walls '... of glass pieces set in brilliant gilding'. Yet another was '... adorned with paintings, arabesques, etc. Everywhere Persian and Kashmiri carpets of great beauty, furniture of velvet, hangings of silk and brocade, etc. ...'.⁵⁷ When, after 1849, the British moved into the buildings previously associated with the mercenary soldiers of the Sikhs in Lahore, they whitewashed over these paintings.

Robert Smith painted the interior walls of his *taikhāna* in Delhi (and later some of the rooms in his lavish and eccentric European mansions) in a similar way. His subjects were specific: landscapes of 'the places of celebrity in Delhi and its neighbourhood'.⁵⁸ Though they sadly no longer survive in his house (I like to think they are still there, behind the whitewash) we might think of their architectural iconography in relation to the albums of miniature paintings being produced from this decade, as well as to the illustrations and description in the slightly later *Athar us-Sanadid*. Enlarged and in mural form, they depicted the ruins and material traces of Delhi's past. We know that in the same decade Robert Smith also executed landscapes in oil of some of Delhi's important early monuments. In addition to the early Sultanate monuments painted in 1828, two fine romantic paintings meticulously detail the view inside the main entrance, and the mosque, in the Purana Qil'a, Sher Shah's fortified city (Plate 8).⁵⁹ Following a convention of the early nineteenth century, he inserted small observant figures in these scenes, spectators – as was he – of past architectural splendour.

After working on the additions to the canal system, Robert Smith left India early in 1830, probably because of continued failing health. Although his movements between that year and 1840 have proved hard to pinpoint, we

⁵⁶ This was a new house erroneously thought by Victor Jacquemont, travelling in 1830, to have been built on the ruins of a Mughal palace. Some accounts suggest that the two generals lived on the same property, with Ventura (and/or his legendary harem) occupying the Anarkali tomb; others, that they shared the same house. See Sylvia Shorto, 'A Tomb of One's Own: Governor's House, Lahore', in Peter Scriver and Vikram Prakash, eds, *Colonial Modernities: Building, Dwelling and Architecture in British India and Ceylon* (London, 2004), pp. 151–69.

⁵⁷ Jacquemont, quoted in Jean-Marie Lafont, *Indika: Essays in Indo-French Relations, 1630–1976* (New Delhi, 2000), p. 252. The mural paintings were also described by William Barr in 1839: '[it] may in truth be termed the "Painted Chamber" as it is adorned with pictures of battles in which the two generals were engaged, and executed on the *chunam* walls by native artists'. William Barr, *Journal of a March from Delhi to Peshawar and from thence to Cābul, including Travels in the Punjab* (London, 1844), pp. 77–80.

⁵⁸ Archer, *Tours in Upper India*, vol. 1, p. 108.

⁵⁹ Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon collection, B1976.7.73 and B1976.7.74.



Plate 8 Robert Smith (1787–1873), *The Kila Kona Masjid, Purana Qila, Delhi*, c.1825. Oil on canvas, 74.9 × 106 cm.

know that from Delhi he travelled to Europe via Bombay and stopped in the Cape for eight months, probably to convalesce once again. He then travelled on to England via Paris. In September 1831 he was made Companion of the Order of Bath.⁶⁰ He formally retired from the Company's service in July 1832, at age forty-five, and was granted the honorary rank of Colonel. At the time of his much later death in 1873, Smith was a rich man, leaving an estate in England valued at about £80,000, with additional property abroad. Whether this money came from Indian investments or the fortunate marriage he made, or a combination of both, is not yet clear.

It was early in 1840 that Robert Smith married Giulia Adelaide Vitton, a daughter of Claude Vitton, in Savoy. The couple settled first in Venice, living in a house immediately behind the Ca' Rezzonico on the San Barnaba Canal, by then in separate ownership from the main estate. Four children were born to them while they lived there, three of whom died tragically in early infancy.⁶¹ The fourth child, Robert Claude, who was born on 9 March 1843, was a very sickly baby.⁶² There are strong indications that Smith was an unsettled and restless man, and by early 1846 the family had moved from Venice to Rome. It is probable that a second daughter, who would survive infancy but whose name is not yet known, was born shortly after this move.⁶³

Robert Smith did not come from a titled family, he did not have a classical education and as far as we can tell he was not connected with the world of academicians and painters who still visited the city in the middle of the nineteenth century. Therefore it has proved hard to draw a picture of him within Rome's expatriate society.⁶⁴ But we know that he lived an astonishing life there. Never ones to settle for a poor address, he and his wife rented apartments on the Via della Fontanella di Borghese, near the Piazza di Spagna, when they arrived. One of their neighbours was an eccentric and elderly expatriate Scotsman, Charles Andrew Mills (1760–1846), who had moved to Rome in

⁶⁰ *Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register* 6 (1831), p. 98.

⁶¹ The first child, Giovanni (John) Smith, was born in December 1840. He died on 31 October 1841, after a short illness, aged 11 months. On 26 January 1842 Giulia Smith gave birth to twins, a son, Eduardo Claudio, and a daughter, Maria Giulia. They lived for only four months: Maria Giulia died on 10 May 1842 and her brother on 25 May 1842. They were buried in the communal cemetery on Isola San Michele. Baptismal and death information is to be found in the records of the Church of Santa Maria del Carmine, Archivio Storico dei Patriarcale di Venezia.

⁶² *Ibid.* Robert Claude was given a hurried baptism on 26 March in the parish house of the Carmine order because of his own poor health.

⁶³ The exact birth and death dates of this daughter are not yet known. The statement in Raymond Head's two-part article 'From Obsession to Obscurity' that Smith's daughter died in Florence in 1846 is not correct. There are references to Smith's daughter travelling with him in Europe in 1851.

⁶⁴ He was never mentioned, for example, in *The Roman Advertiser's* lists of English painters resident in the city.

1817 with an inherited fortune from a plantation in St Kitts. Since 1823, Mills had been the owner of a villa in a truly exceptional location, on the very summit of the Palatine Hill. The Villa Stati-Mattei, known also as Villa Mills, rather improbably stood on top of the then unexcavated ruins of the imperial palace or Domus Augustana, the private residence of the later Flavian emperors, begun in Domitian's reign at the end of the first century AD.⁶⁵ Mills and his companion, the antiquarian William ('Topographical') Gell (1777–1836), had lived there together. Gell had published extensively on antiquities, including an 1834 volume on the topography of Rome, inspired no doubt by the panoramic views he enjoyed from the Palatine Hill. After the death of Gell in 1836, Mills lived on in the villa for some years before moving into more manageable accommodation on the Piazza di Spagna. By April of 1846 Robert Smith had met Mills, and shortly before Mills' death in October 1846 he purchased the villa with all its furnishings from him. Because Mills and Gell had entertained lavishly, there are several accounts of the villa from the time that they lived there. It was mentioned in both positive terms – for its cosiness, its glorious views and its publicly accessible gardens – but also in very negative ones because of some incongruous new additions, which were said to be painted a lively red. One visitor reported that Mills had given his house and its gardens 'an air of comfort, which makes our English habits and taste contrast in a striking manner with the ruins of the Imperial Palace'.⁶⁶ Others were not so complimentary.

At the start of the Renaissance, the Palatine Hill had reverted almost to a state of nature and was divided up into vineyards and gardens (*hortii*) containing small summer houses.⁶⁷ The rustic Villa Stati-Mattei had grown incrementally from the fifteenth century over the top of the Flavian ruins, then neither excavated nor well-understood, passing through the ownership of several eminent Roman families.⁶⁸ By 1776 it was in the possession of Abbé Rancoueil, who had begun amateur excavations that revealed parts of the palace deep underneath it, down 30 feet or more and with hindsight eerily reminiscent of a north Indian *taikhāna*.⁶⁹ Then came Mills, who made additions to the property.

⁶⁵ Simonetta Baroni, 'The Monumental Complex of Villa Mattei', in S. Baroni and E. Paparatti, eds, *Palatine: Loggia Mattei* (Milano, 1997).

⁶⁶ Octavian Blewitt, *A Hand-book for Travellers in Central Italy; Including the Papal States, Rome, and the Cities of Etruria* (London, 1843). Fanny Mendelssohn (1805–47) also visited and wrote a musical tribute to this garden. See Larry R. Todd, *Fanny Hensel: The Other Mendelssohn* (New York, 2010), p. 247 and footnote.

⁶⁷ The Farnese gardens, the first private botanical garden in Europe, were created in 1550 on the side of the Palatine that sloped down towards the Forum.

⁶⁸ It was owned by Cristoforo Stati in the fourteenth century, then in 1561 by Paolo Mattei. It was sold on to Spadi family in 1689 and after about 100 years to the family of Pietro Magnani. In 1776, it passed to Abbot Racoueil who began amateur excavations and revealed parts of the palace of Augustus under the villa. The villa is also notable for its recently restored Renaissance frescos. See Baroni, 'The Monumental Complex'.

⁶⁹ These excavations were published by Giuseppe Antonio Guattani, *Monumenti antichi inediti ovvero notizie sulla antichità e belle arti di Roma* (Rome, 1785).

These consisted of a double-sided loggia with lobed arches in an Indian style, with two bays on each side at ground level and a storeyed octagonal tower. These additions are so rare an example – perhaps even the only example – of Indian-inspired building from the first half of the nineteenth century in Rome that their architectural links to Robert Smith merit closer scrutiny. The rustic parts of the Villa Mills had been pulled together with the new loggia of Indian appearance in a style that emerged at the time of the construction of Sezincote in Gloucestershire (1804) or the near contemporary Royal Pavilion in Brighton (from 1815). This so-called Indian Style, embracing many details of architecture from the subcontinent and grafting it onto classical plans, emerged as an alternative style repertoire in early-nineteenth-century Britain. What we know about the plan of the additions to Villa Mills comes from a later project, a drawing dated 1868 by the architect Francesco Vespigniani, who was hired to draw up proposals for an addition to the property, which was by then in the ownership of an enclosed women's order, the Sisters of the Visitation.⁷⁰ We know what it looked like in elevation from the several sets of photographs made by archaeologists when the villa was being demolished to conduct more serious excavations of the imperial Roman palace at the start of the twentieth century (Plate 9).⁷¹ The archaeologists' photographs reveal orientalist copying, with details that recall the Sultanate façades which Robert Smith had painted while he was in Delhi and upper-storey windows with cusped Mughal arches. So, of course, there is an immediate temptation to want to attribute the additions to the time of Smith's ownership. However, the cadastral records and sales transactions for the house and its land suggest that Smith purchased the house because it reminded him of Delhi, not that he altered it to look more like Delhi.

Smith and his wife, Giulia, had paid 8,000 scudi to Mills for his house, including its contents – furniture, appointments and fittings – and its many hectares of land. Smith then added to his acreage in 1849 (apparently so that he could cut a new driveway up to the property from the Via dei Cerchi). He also improved the water supply and drains, destroying some ancient Roman substructure in the process.⁷² But a comparison between purchase and sales prices does not suggest that he invested any money in major additions; neither are there any requests on record for permission to alter the house itself. And although there are certainly stylistic affinities, the additions to the Palatine villa had a refinement that is not seen in Smith's other work. Rather, the villa is important in providing clues to Smith's building intentions after leaving Rome for good, which he would do in 1851. It was more likely a source of

⁷⁰ The plan is published in Baroni and Paparatti, *Palatine*.

⁷¹ The American archaeologist Esther Boise van Deman conducted excavations in Rome from 1901, and her comprehensive photographs of the Palatine Hill in the collection of the American Academy in Rome date from this time.

⁷² The transaction for purchase of additional land in 1849 is recorded in the cadastral records in the Archivio di Stato di Roma.



Plate 9 Esther Boise van Deman (1862–1937), *Villa Mills on top of the Domus Augustana*, 1907. Photographed at the time of its demolition.

inspiration for the houses he would go on to build in England and in France, both of which help us better understand his earlier house in Delhi.

Robert Smith and his wife did not live for long in their extraordinary villa. The process of selling the accumulated property began early in 1851.⁷³ It

⁷³ The notary's records for the house sale in 1851 are held in the Archivio Storico Capitolino di Roma.

has previously been assumed that Giulia Smith was dead by November 1850 when Smith, then visiting Paris, drew up a will leaving everything he owned not to his wife or their two children but to his unmarried sister Mary, who was now living in Torquay, South Devon. But the documents relating to the sale of the Rome house belie this. It was Giulia Smith who first petitioned to sell the property, in 1851, indicating either that there was a breakdown in the marriage or that Giulia Smith knew that she did not have long to live – though this does not fully explain the omission of their son and daughter from Robert Smith's will. By November 1851 the property had been purchased as an investment by Messrs Plowdon and Cholmeley, a firm of British bankers in Rome. They paid 8,618 scudi for the accumulated land and the house on it, but this did not include its contents, valued at a further 600 scudi. It is quite possible that all or part of the contents were sent to England to furnish the new house that Smith was now planning to build in South Devon, close to his sister Mary.

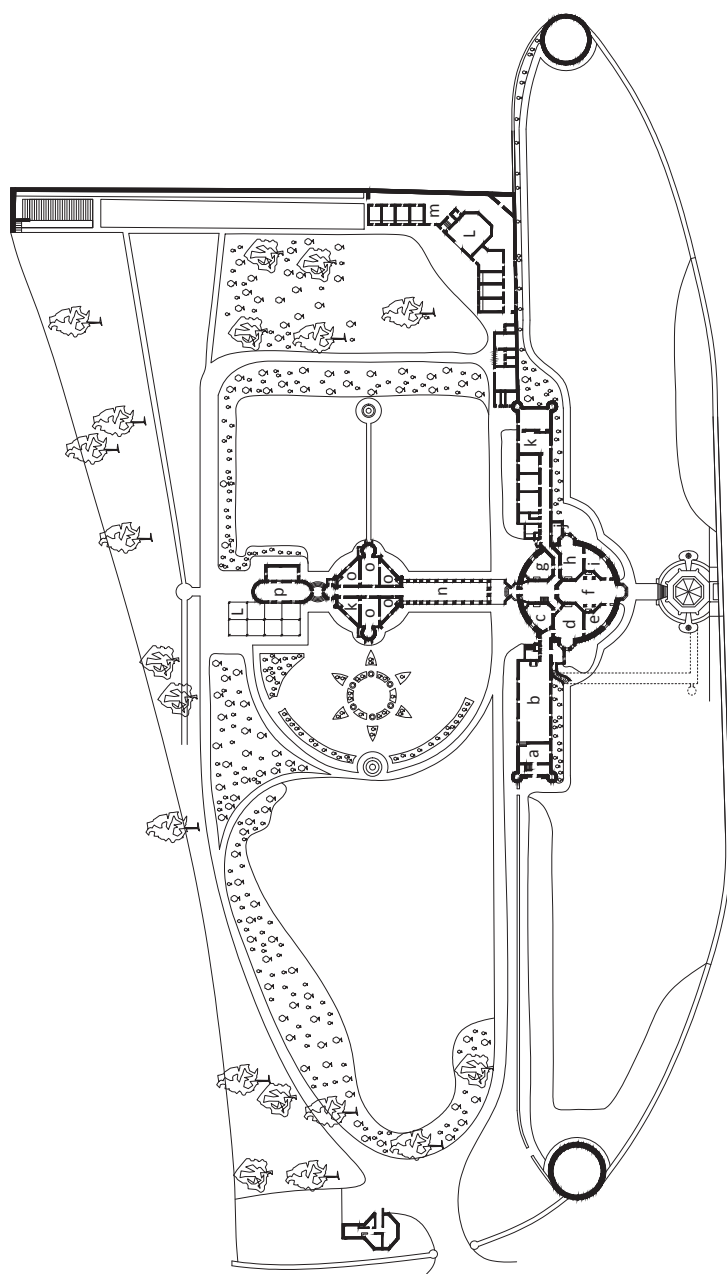
Robert Smith would now direct his energies to designing houses for himself, building two stylistically eccentric and spatially innovative houses, Redcliffe Tower in Paignton, South Devon, (begun in 1855) and the Château de l'Anglais in Nice (begun in 1858), on the English and the French riviéras respectively. South Devon and the south of France had in common mild climates and red sandstone, like that of Dholpur, and in each Smith attempted to replicate architectural features in Victorian versions of the Indian Style. Both houses still stand, though in altered form (one is now used as a hotel, the other has been turned into condominiums), but Smith's grandiose identity is still strongly felt in each of them.

In the late summer of 1851 Smith arrived in Torquay from Paris with his daughter, staying in the old Royal Hotel.⁷⁴ After their deaths, in 1838 and 1839, Smith's unmarried sister Mary had inherited the estates of both her parents and had purchased a house in Torquay, on Warren Road.⁷⁵ Smith clearly wanted to be close to her and stayed sporadically in her house from then until his death. The designs for Redcliffe in Paignton, on 5½ acres of land, were drawn in 1852 and construction continued for about ten years.⁷⁶ The house, on a low cliff at the edge of the shore, was approached through 'handsome gates' along a curving driveway which led past a turreted, polylobed doorway that gave onto a studio and a long gallery for pictures that

⁷⁴ '... Amongst the recent arrivals the Royal Hotel, up to last night, were Colonel Robert Smith, C.B., and Miss Smith ...', *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 30 August 1851.

⁷⁵ Will of Mary Smith of East Teignmouth, Devon, 17 July 1839, PROB 11/1914/152; will of James Smith of East Teignmouth, Devon, 15 July 1839, PROB 11/1914/132, TNA.

⁷⁶ Head, 'From Obsession to Obscurity', has dated the house based on original drawings that were discovered in a local estate agent's office, now unfortunately lost. Construction was executed by the local firm of Tozer.



Redcliffe Towers, Paignton

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| a. Studio | i. Service Room |
| b. Picture Gallery | j. Knife Room |
| c. Morning Room | k. Kitchen |
| d. Breakfast Room | l. Greenhouse |
| e. Library | m. Changing Room |
| f. Dining Room | n. Conservatory |
| g. Smoking Room | o. Bedroom |
| h. Butler's Pantry | p. Billiard Room |

Figure 4 Redcliffe Towers.

took up one entire wing of the house.⁷⁷ Like the Delhi house, the main block of Smith's Paignton house made use of circular forms. The ground floor included a serpentine dining room, breakfast room, smoking room and library which fit into its plan like pieces of a jigsaw (Figure 4). Service spaces, a carriage house and stable block were in a wing to the north, while to the west a long conservatory led to an octagonal pavilion containing bedrooms and beyond that to an elliptical billiard room. There was also an octagonal gatehouse, and there was a plunge-bath on the shore, reached by well-engineered underground tunnels. It has been suggested that the central block incorporated a pre-existing Martello tower from the defensive chain that had been built along the south and east coasts of England in response to the threat of invasion during the Napoleonic Wars, though tithe maps held by Devon Archives and Local Studies dating from 1840 do not indicate any such construction.⁷⁸

At the time that he was building Redcliffe, Robert Smith was at work on a second grandiose project with an even more eccentric hybrid design on the Côte d'Azur. Nice, then still part of the Kingdom of Sardinia, was already growing as a polite resort for wealthy English visitors seeking winter sunshine. Smith, however, did not settle in the Quartier Anglais. In 1856, the Municipal Council sold him 22,000 square metres of land on the (then) isolated Mont Boron peninsula overlooking Nice harbour, where he built his second large house. Still known locally as the Château de l'Anglais, this house was started in 1858 and constructed by Italian workmen over a four-year period. In both 1860 and 1861 Smith is recorded as being in residence in a full floor of the Hôtel Le Royal on the Nice seafront promenade, overseeing construction with a telescope from his window. The large, symmetrically planned house was again based on circular forms, with a central block and two wings terminating in turrets. There were belvederes and kiosks in the landscape, and the house was linked to circular pavilions containing guest rooms and down to the sea by steep pathways and tunnels, with walls that followed the rocky contours of the land like those of a Mughal hill fortress (Plate 10). It defied the architectural vocabulary even of the mid-nineteenth century. Critics included the writer Stéphen Liégeard, who described it as '... an agglomeration of buildings resembling neither a villa or a tower

⁷⁷ The auction catalogue from 1878, when Smith's estate was being settled, listed three hundred paintings in the house, though whether these were all by his hand is highly unlikely as it was a composite sale.

⁷⁸ DEX/4/a/TM/Paignton tithe map, 1841, Devon Archives and Local Studies. Redcliffe is listed by English Heritage (NGR: SX8948761333) and the listing notes suggest an earlier core to the house. There was little threat of invasion of Britain after 1815 and the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and the records of land ownership on the tithe map make it clear that there was no pre-existing building on the principal site, plot 180 (Red Cliff) in 1840. There were some cottages on the additional lots of land purchased to make up Smith's 5½-acre estate.



Plate 10 Unknown photographer; *Le 'Château de l'Anglais' en construction au Mont-Boron, c. 1860 (detail).*

nor a “pièce montée”, nor a Savoie cake’. There was no name for it in any language, he said. Another critic called it a mixture ‘of marvels and horrors, of richness and vulgarity’.⁷⁹ As in his Delhi and Paignton houses, Smith made provision for his paintings. These included a panoramic procession of the Mughal emperor on an elephant, reportedly 20 metres long and 0.7 metres high, which we might imagine as a monumental companion piece to the processional scrolls made by late Mughal painters for British patrons.⁸⁰ Smith was also reported to have painted an even longer detailed panoramic vista of Rome – undoubtedly inspired by his eyrie on the Palatine Hill – that was said to have taken six years to complete. This was destined for his new house in Nice.⁸¹ The large circular structure below the main house, linked to it by underground tunnels, is thought to have been a ballroom or a music room but I think it likely that it was also intended as a private panorama to house murals such as these. Some of Smith’s paintings were also publicly exhibited in Nice, but he lived a solitary life there and few people visited his house with its dozen or more bedrooms and its elaborate Gothic interiors. After Smith’s death in 1873, when Robert Claude, his son, attempted to rid himself of all the traces of his past the house was sold on to Count Melchior Gurowski de Wczele, a Polish diplomat.⁸²

The eccentric Mughal/Gothic house in Devon, spinning out from its central axis like a latter-day Fonthill, proved more difficult to sell after Smith’s death. Despite an 1877 sale advertisement in which it was rather broadly described as ‘picturesque and unique in elevation, being designed after the Taj at Agra’ and suitable for a gentleman or a yacht club, it found no buyer. There was then a week-long public auction of its ‘elegant and costly’ contents and, now empty, it was offered for sale again, this time as being ‘suitable for a nobleman, a convalescent home, a school, or a lunatic asylum’.⁸³ This was both sad and ironic. Robert Smith had himself been certified insane in 1872, shortly before his death, thanks to the interventions of Julia, the young widow of his old friend Proby Thomas Cautley.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Cited by Didier Gayraud, *Demeures d’Azur: Nice* (Cabri, 1998), pp. 168–70.

⁸⁰ Several of these scrolls are known, a fine example being the one in the collection of Cynthia Hazen Polsky and published in the exhibition catalogue, W. Dalrymple and Y. Sharma, eds, *Princes and Painters in Late Mughal Delhi, 1707–1857* (New York, 2012).

⁸¹ A. Burnel, in *Revue de Nice*, 1860.

⁸² The house and some of its interior features are now listed on the Base Merimee. See http://www.culture.gouv.fr/public/mistral/merimee_fr?ACTION=CHERCHER&FIELD_1=REF&VALUE_1=PA06000011.

⁸³ *London Standard*, Saturday 23 June 1877; and *London Standard*, Saturday 12 April 1879. The contents of the house were advertised in the *Western Times*, Friday 11 and Friday 18 January 1878.

⁸⁴ C 211/40/92, Commissions and Inquisitions of Lunacy, March 1872, TNA.

Five

THE WORLD DISPLAYED: WILLIAM FRASER AND HIS HOUSE ON THE HILL

This chapter presents new information on British suburban expansion in Delhi, shown through the life and building activities of another East India Company official, William Fraser (1784–1835). In the chapter, I compare two newly built houses in expanding British suburban enclaves to the north and west of the walls of Shahjahanabad: the Gothicising Ludlow Castle in the Civil Lines, built a decade earlier but used after 1832 by Fraser and his successors as the Residency building; and the strategically located hilltop house that Fraser built for himself on the Northern Ridge which, through its symbolic location, linked India's resonant pre-Mughal past with a British present. Though they were stylistically quite different and situated several miles apart, these houses and the dates of their construction have been muddled in the secondary literature. I will try to disentangle the evidence for their histories. At first glance, each house seems to reflect an adaptation, in Delhi, of the two currently competing historic style vocabularies in European architecture: the classical and the Gothic. But when more closely examined they tell us about the disorderly layers of transculturation in Delhi. British builders now commonly drew on the functional aspects of north Indian architecture to help deal with the searing heat of the early summers. Yet the exterior style of a British house did not necessarily reflect its interior configuration and certainly not its contents. The objects contained within the households of William Fraser had multiple meanings, and his collections are a clue to his contradictory personality.

Within a very few years of their arrival in Delhi, the British had begun to erect new dwellings outside the fortified walls of Shahjahanabad. The Maratha invasions and periodic raids by displaced Gujjar tribesmen who had lost lands to the north of the city had been quelled, and the hinterland was becoming safer. The environment inside the city walls had always presented paradoxes that some British officials could not reconcile with what they knew of life on large estates in the Indian countryside. As the Company's attitude to the status of the reigning Mughal changed, and as participation in court life and ritual began to

be subjected to a process of erosion, many officials, however comfortably they were settled inside the walled city, began to aspire to estates like those remembered from home in England or in Scotland, or those they knew of in the rich Bengal countryside. The hybrid buildings that incorporated parts of earlier sub-imperial palaces inside the Mughal city would now be gradually abandoned as residences, given over instead to commercial and administrative functions and exchanged for new houses in a spacious suburban setting. The attractions of the adjacent countryside, as the buildings at Shalimar had already proved, as well as the growing possibility of speculative and lucrative land transactions, were an incentive for many to now move into the land surrounding the city.

Which part of the fringe of Shahjahanabad did the British choose for their suburban building, and why? At the start of the nineteenth century the city was ringed with ruins, but these ruins of earlier Delhis were far from dead. Often still inhabited, some had become vibrant, small service settlements or urban villages that dotted the routes that ran out towards other cities. Close at hand, just south of the city walls, stood Firozabad and Purana Qil'a, still with a large population and with what Maria Nugent had described as 'good streets' in 1812. The spaces between settlements outside the city walls were interspersed with gardens, both imperial and sub-imperial funerary gardens as well as private pleasure gardens. Among those to the south of the Delhi Gate was the one described in detail by James Forbes at the end of the eighteenth century.¹ But by the 1820s the southerly part of the suburban fringe close to the Delhi Gate of the city was already being used for primarily utilitarian functions – ice pits, and a gaol and an insane asylum in two old *serais*.² Grey water from the newly restored canal system ran back into the river south of the city, which since Shah Jahan's time had supported tanneries and similar occupations. Further south still were the sprawling ruins of the cities of the pre-Mughal Delhi Sultanates, an area that would soon play an important part in the competitive manipulation of historical space as manifestation of power, to be discussed further in Chapter Six. To the north and east the land was bounded by the river. To the west was the Ridge, running north to south with a narrow dividing break. Beyond the Ridge were more extramural gardens and small hunting boxes along the canal, from the Mughal and earlier periods, as well as *serais* along the roads that led out to other cities.

For the location of their new Civil Lines, the British chose a small, naturally circumscribed and easily defensible area to the north-west of the Kashmir Gate, bounded by the Yamuna River, the Ridge and the curving northern wall of the city. This more regularly planned, tree-lined residential

¹ James Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs: A Narrative of Seventeen Years Residence in India*, vol. 4 (London, 1834). The garden is discussed in the introductory chapter of this book.

² See the large survey map sheets, 'Cantonment, City and Environs of Delhi, 1867–1868', British Library, Map Division, O/V/1. Analysis of the maps shows land distribution and use.

settlement with bungalows on large discrete lots of land spoke of a growing cultural separation. Bungalows would later be ordered on the kind of grid common to colonising powers since Hellenistic times, and they echoed the plans of already established British Presidency towns, marking a further stage in the separation of the rulers from the ruled which would characterise the later-nineteenth-century Raj. Yet here there was still a little more flexibility. A newly built fixed cantonment had been sited on the far side of the narrow northern end of the Ridge, and the cantonment enabled further expansion into the land beyond this natural boundary. It was adjacent to an important area of Mughal gardens from Shah Jahan's period and later, drawing water from the nearby Ali Mardan Khan Canal. Following the pioneering work of Delhi's historian Percival Spear, Anthony King and later scholars took the year 1828 as a kind of watershed to mark the changed British attitudes to living outside the walls of Shahjahanabad.³ It was in this year that troops were moved to their new fixed cantonment lines. Security was the reason given for the British not having built outside the city walls before this time. But there had been some rather aggressive property speculation and some substantial new residential building outside the city for at least fifteen years, linked at least in part to advantages that could be foreseen from the restoration of the water system. In fact, some new extramural houses were being built at the same time as alterations were being made to existing Mughal structures inside the walls. With the exception of the houses at Shalimar, the beginnings of serious extramural land speculation can be dated to about 1815, to the time of the proposed restoration of the Mughal canal system. The canal, as Henry Miers Elliot said, would work a revolution, and there was '... a great increase of revenue anticipated from the villages'.⁴ With better irrigation, the countryside also became a viable place for British settlement, and a large suburban development with individual estates was now carved out of the surrounding territory in a wide arc to the north and west of Shahjahanabad's wall.

The first permanent British cantonment for infantry across the Northern Ridge formed a line of defence for the developing Civil Lines, which lay in an area between two main roads that ran out from the Kashmir Gate, extending the route known by the British as Lothian Road which passed in front of the Residency. Immediately outside the Kashmir Gate, on the banks of an offshoot of the river, sat the structure used as the customs house, and beyond this was the Qudsia Bagh, a well-documented early-eighteenth-century palace still in the Emperor's possession.⁵ A little way inland, the new suburban enclave of

³ See T.G. Percival Spear, *Twilight of the Mughuls: Studies in Late Mughul Delhi* (Cambridge, 1951); Anthony D. King, *Colonial Urban Development: Culture, Social Power and Environment* (London and New York, 1976).

⁴ Henry Miers Elliot had then been an Assistant to Charles Metcalfe.

⁵ This was rented in 1811 by the Maharaja of Jaipur for his periodic visits to the city at a fixed

British houses grew up. In Delhi's Civil Lines, which followed the pattern of colonial urban development described by King, even smaller houses were sited on large, airy lots of land. Outward-facing and surrounded by gardens, it was common for houses to take up a tenth or less of the land upon which they stood.⁶ In her journal Fanny Parkes Parlby described her winter visit in 1838: 'We came to stay with a friend who has a fine house in beautiful grounds, with a garden filled to profusion with the gayest flowers, situated just beyond the Cashmere Gate.'⁷ This was in stark contrast to the Indian way of urban building, with smaller houses surrounding an internal courtyard, and larger mansions or palaces comprising an enclosed complex of discrete pavilions and gardens. Settlement in the Civil Lines was very well established by 1835, when an observer noted: 'The modern capital of the Muslim Kings ... surrounded on every side with the ruins of Old Delhi, [is] curiously contrasted with a new suburb, the villas belonging to Europeans attached to the Residency ...'.⁸ A visiting Irish journalist described this imbalance in what remained of Delhi's urban fabric immediately after the Revolt of 1857. He contrasted the large rectangular lots set in wide straight streets, each with its single detached house in a manicured garden, with what he described as an aggregate of houses reached by tortuous paths in the city's *mahallas*, where he saw people living packed into tenements, which were kept from falling to pieces, he speculated, only by mutual pressure. 'The handful of Europeans', he observed, occupied 'four times the space of the city which contains tens of thousands of Hindoos and Mussulmen.'⁹

When the new Civil Lines was sufficiently well developed, the Residency itself was transferred out of Shahjahanabad and into a building there. It was relocated in a large, Gothicising house known (half ironically) as Ludlow Castle, not because of its central turret or medieval crenellations but after its builder, Samuel Ludlow (d.1853) of the Bengal Medical Department, for many years the Delhi Residency Surgeon.¹⁰ Ludlow left Delhi in 1831 to join the Neemuch Division of the Indian Army, and his house was purchased by the government, soon to replace as Residency the extended structure that encased Dara Shukoh's pavilion. Ludlow Castle is well documented, both in miniature paintings and in photographs. Unassailable visual evidence for its use as the Residency is to be found in Thomas Metcalfe's *Delhi Book* and in Metcalfe's annotation in this album of miniatures, dating to about 1844.¹¹ In

rate of 15 rupees a month. Haldiya papers, 106/444, SR #27, NAI.

⁶ King, *Colonial Urban Development*, chapter eight.

⁷ Fanny Parks Parlby, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque* (London, 1850), p. 196.

⁸ 'Delhi in 1835', reprinted in Anon., *The Tourist's Guide to Delhi* (Karachi, 1866), p. 5.

⁹ William Howard Russell, *My Diary in India, in the Year 1858-9* (London, 1860), vol. 1, p. 140.

¹⁰ That was his position in June 1828 at the time of the wedding of his daughter, who married from the house. IOR N India Office Ecclesiastical Returns, British Library.

¹¹ 'Reminiscences of Imperial Delhi'. The 'Delhi Book' of Sir Thomas Theophilus Metcalfe

the painting, a clearly identifiable military Gothic building shows soldiers on parade while the Resident's carriage waits in its (then) square forecourt.

But when was Ludlow Castle built, and when was the Residency transferred there? The removal of the Residency from its earlier premises had taken place more than a decade before the inscription in Metcalfe's Delhi Book and immediately before the tenure of William Fraser (in office as the senior British official from 1832 to 1835). After David Ochterlony's death in 1825, there are sporadic references in the papers of the Government of India to the problems of upkeep of the old Residency building, which was gradually becoming a money-wasting venture. It was also becoming superfluous to the changing needs of Delhi's Residents. The critical year was 1831. In that year, Fraser, still an Assistant, began lengthy correspondence about the condition of the old building, informing government that it would soon need extensive (and expensive) repairs, which we have seen the authorities almost always resisted sanctioning.¹² The correspondence also tells us that offices and accommodations in the nearby Magazine to the south were full to overflowing. As government was now proposing consolidation of its functions, Fraser suggested that instead of spending money on the Residency (referred to in this correspondence as the Agency Building), it be given over to the Military Department for use as an extension of the Magazine or, if it was not wanted by them for that purpose, that it be put up for sale. His correspondence also makes it clear that Residents were now customarily living in (as opposed to working from) their own houses and the building was being used primarily for business and for official ceremonial functions that were felt to be becoming increasingly irrelevant. 'To keep up this expensive establishment for the purpose of holding a weekly *darbar*', Fraser wrote, 'appears to me to be unnecessary.'¹³ He argued that it was too large for mere offices and went on to propose a whole new arrangement for the public buildings. The Judge's Court or *kutcheri*, then held in a building to the north of the Residency and at the edge of the city wall (probably what was once Robert Smith's house, later known after Judge Gubbins), should now be held at the house presently used by the judge outside the Kashmir Gate, he suggested; and the Magistrate and Collector's Court should move into the house adjoining the Treasury. The Residency Treasury could be given to the care of the General Treasury of the Collector. Fraser also suggested that the records of the Agency Office or Residency might alternatively be brought to the house where the Court of Appeal sat. If not, he suggested, the records could

(1842–44), India Office Prints, Drawings and Paintings, Add.Or.5475, f. 60v, British Library. The text reads, '... having been built by J. [sic] Ludlow, Esquire, many years the civil Surgeon of Dehlie, the proper Residency [i.e., the old one] hitherto in the occupancy of the Chief authority at Dehlie has lately been appropriated to the purpose of an Anglo-Indian College ...'.

¹² IOR F/4/1455/57340, British Library.

¹³ Fraser to Government of India, 18 June 1832, IOR E/4/742, p. 787, British Library.

be transferred to the house where his office, the office of the Assistants, was now being held, 'which is amply large'. This otherwise useful correspondence unfortunately does not tell us exactly where that house was, although it is almost certain to have been Ludlow Castle. An alternative recommendation in the Fraser correspondence was that if the existing Residency were to be made over to the Military Department, James Edward Colebrooke's house might be purchased for use as the depository for records and for offices for the Resident. That house, Fraser thought, could be obtained for two-thirds the amount that Colebrooke had paid for it – the implication here being that Colebrooke had purchased a house already built.¹⁴ There is much confusion in the secondary literature about the actual location of Colebrooke's house and about whether Colebrooke once owned Ludlow Castle.¹⁵ What is certain is that the old Residency with its Mughal garden had outlived its usefulness. It would be turned into a college for the education of Anglo-Indians, and within twenty years its splendid *chārbāgh* would be quartered in size.¹⁶

The Residency or Agency House was now transferred into Ludlow Castle. This was now to be used for offices, official functions and for guest accommodation, but was no longer the home of the Residents. This fact is confirmed by the public sale shortly afterwards, in 1833, of much of the furniture and furnishings from the old Residency. Plate and plated cutlery, furniture, glass, porcelain and cooking utensils fetched a little more than 5,800 rupees.¹⁷ Housekeeping standards at Ludlow Castle still needed to be maintained, however. In one official exchange dating from late 1835, the year that Thomas Metcalfe succeeded Fraser, there was the now customary tussle with the Company over expenses. Metcalfe insisted that the '*chicks*, *purdahs* and *punkahs*' in the building be replaced and its floor cloths repaired. In requesting sanction for these expenses, he wrote:

The Residency is occupied not as a private dwelling, but for public purposes connected to my situation as Agent and Commissioner, and I can conscientiously assert that I was most particular in incurring no unnecessary expense, and compared with disbursements I know to have been made formerly for Residency Repairs, I can safely pronounce the present to be very trivial.¹⁸

¹⁴ Colebrooke had been forced out of office in Delhi in 1829 after various charges of corruption and embezzlement of public property were brought against him, including the selling of public gifts. See *Asiatic Journal* 9 (1832), pp. 41ff. for a summary of the charges. He had also borrowed money from David Ochterlony's wife, Mubarak Begum. Spear papers, Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge University.

¹⁵ Spear, *Twilight*, p. 146. He also devoted an appendix to the problem, but was writing without having seen the Fraser or Reelig papers.

¹⁶ Thomas Metcalfe noted that this somewhat discredited the 'Ruling Power' in the eyes of Indians. Delhi Book, Add.Or.5475, f. 60v; British Library. For the shrinking garden, compare the maps of c.1845 and 1867/8.

¹⁷ IOR P Cons 25 Jul 1833, #25, British Library.

¹⁸ Exchange of memos, July–October 1835. Punjab Government, *Delhi Residency and Agency*

Samuel Ludlow, the builder of Ludlow Castle, had entered the Bengal Medical Department in 1803 and had been transferred to Delhi from Benares in 1813, where he worked for nearly twenty years. He was among the group of British officials acquiring land to the north-west of Delhi in the years bracketing the reopening of the canal in 1820. In the Fraser of Reelig papers there is a letter dated 1821 from an irate Ludlow to William Fraser in his role as Collector concerning the purchase of some land that he (Ludlow) had been renting. Like the correspondence between David Ochterlony and Fraser, discussed in Chapter Two, it gives us a glimpse into the private land transactions that took place just behind the scenes of public business. In the letter, Ludlow referred to an earlier transaction in which he had sold land to Ochterlony – very possibly part of the land that would become the Mubarak Bagh estate. Ludlow was now bargaining for some land he claimed was less productive and at a distance from the main canal, comprising a walled garden with some ruined pavilions, which he found to be far too expensive at ‘4 Rs a Beegah, 30 years purchase’.¹⁹ There were thirty-five *bighas* in total. Ludlow had anticipated paying only about 2,000 or 2,500 rupees for the long lease on the land, which he feared by Fraser’s calculations would cost him 6,000. He wrote that he could not afford this, and that unless Fraser, acting for the government, reduced the price he would either lose the money he had already laid out or have to settle for continuing to rent it. Another, slightly earlier, document in the Punjabi Provincial Archives in Lahore, dated 6 March 1820, records the Commissioner’s formal sanction of the transfer of a plot of land not exceeding twenty *bighas*, rent free or *mu’āf*, to Ludlow to enable him to build his house. In the document, Ludlow was instructed to take care of any proprietary rights established by the local landowners. Taken together, these documents give us a *terminus a quo* of 1821 for the building of Ludlow Castle, which has previously been published as dating to between 1830 and 1844.²⁰ The house was well established before 1831 when Ludlow left Delhi and Fraser is known to have been negotiating the future of the old Residency.

The external appearance of Ludlow Castle, a sturdy building that was in use until the time of its demolition in the 1960s, is well documented. It was extensively photographed by the Tytlers, Felix Beato and others in the aftermath of the Revolt. Though damaged in the fighting that had taken place around it, it was repaired almost immediately, both its main block and the two wings that post-date the central structure. The grounds were now landscaped with a driveway around a circular lawn replacing the earlier rectangular parade ground. It was in this period, probably in the early 1860s,

Records, 1807–1857, vol. 1 (Lahore, 1911).

¹⁹ Letter from Samuel Ludlow, 22 August 1820, bundle 430, Fraser of Reelig papers. I am grateful to Kathy Fraser for her help in transcribing this letter, which is in a particularly unruly hand.

²⁰ King, *Colonial Urban Development*, p. 196.

that Ludlow Castle was depicted in a miniature painting which is today in the collection of the British Museum. Though in the spirit of earlier miniatures, this image, which I would date to that decade or a little later, was almost certainly copied from a photograph (Plate 11).²¹ At this time, its location and increased size (now five reception rooms according to the Murray Guide) made Ludlow Castle ideal for use as the Delhi Club. It became the heart of social life in the growing Civil Station after the Revolt, though one visitor would sniff that it was simply 'a cockneyfied and very uninspiring bungalow'.²² Later, in the 1890s, it became part of a boys' school; and though it was eventually demolished to make room for a modern structure, the area and the new school on the site still bear Ludlow's name.²³

There is no known plan of Ludlow Castle, but it seems likely it was symmetrically planned inside as out. Because of its crenellations and the central octagonal tower, there is a temptation to link it to the building of Robert Smith, and the date I suggest for its construction makes this possible. But although the battlements and crenellations of the main block resemble both the gate of the Magazine and Flagstaff Tower, which were probably also Smith's work, I have not yet found documentary evidence to link Smith to the house. But with its classicising plan and military Gothic exterior details, it strongly echoed Smith's later houses in England and in France. Ironically, the house was described, in 1860, as looking a little like a French château.²⁴

The Scotsman William Fraser would use Ludlow Castle as his official Residency when he was finally appointed to the office of Resident in 1832. Fraser was the second son of a close-knit but financially strapped landowning family from the Highlands (see Table 4). Thanks to the patronage of Charles Grant (1746–1823), a family friend, Member of Parliament for Inverness and long-serving director of the East India Company, four of the five Fraser brothers, the sons of Edward Satchwell Fraser and his wife, Jane, would go into the service of the East India Company in the early nineteenth century, and a fifth would travel in India on private business and as a painter. They all went to try to make money to redeem the family estate, Moniack near Inverness, also known as Reelig, which had been heavily mortgaged to support an unstable investment in a sugar plantation in Berbice.²⁵ Of the five brothers, James Baillie (1783–1856), William, Edward (1786–1813),

²¹ 'Ludlow Castle, Delhi', British Museum, 1920.0917.0.252.

²² Alexander H. Hallam Murray, *The High Road of Empire: Water-colour and Pen-and-ink Sketches in India* (New York, 1905), p. 221.

²³ Jim Masselos and Narayani Gupta, *Beato's Delhi, 1857, 1997* (New Delhi, 2000), p. 48.

²⁴ Russell, *My Diary*, vol. 1, pp. 54f.

²⁵ Seton papers, MS 19208, National Library of Scotland. Edward Satchwell Fraser continued planting unprofitable estates for several years after the price of sugar fell to prevent his land from reverting to an uncultivated state. The land would eventually be sold in 1817. For the Fraser brothers, see Mildred Archer and Toby Falk, *India Revealed: The Art and Adventures of James and William Fraser* (London, 1989); and Toby Falk, 'The Fraser Company Drawings',

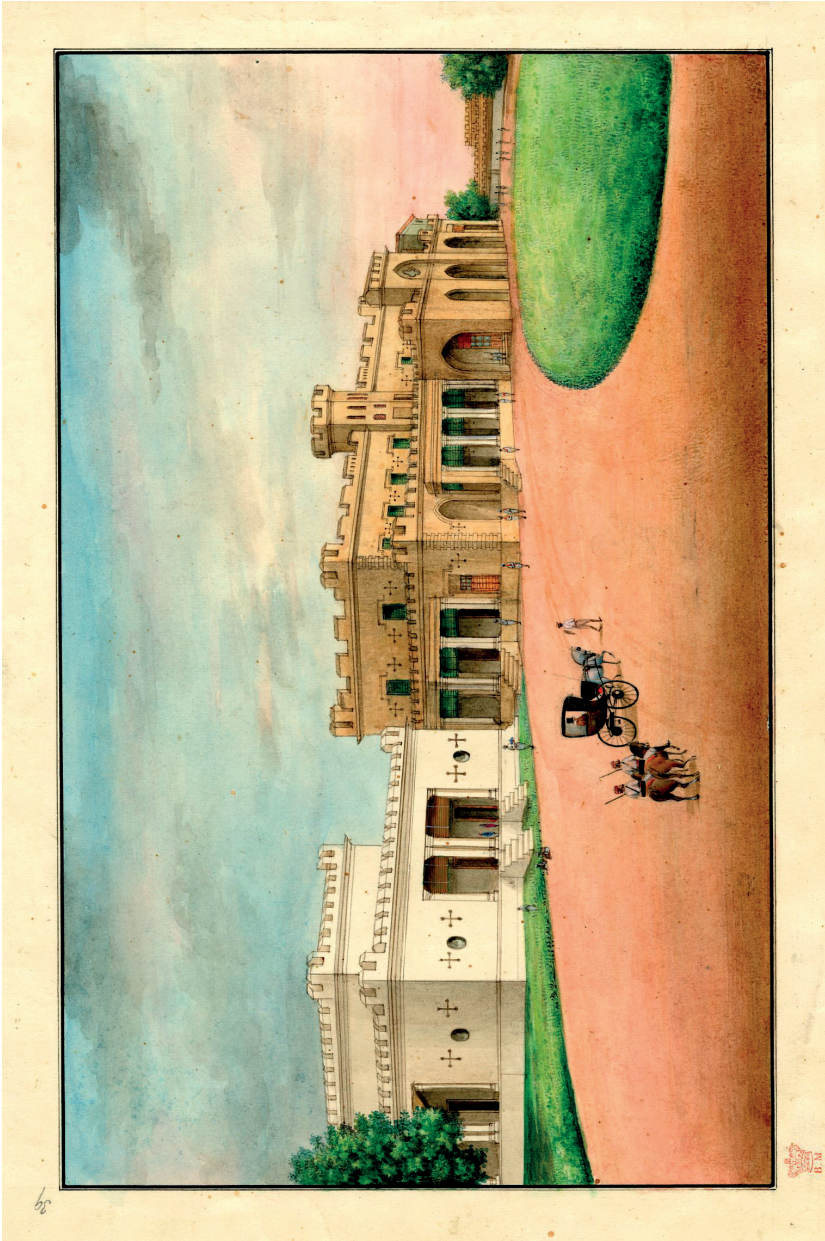


Plate 11 Company School, Ludlow Castle, Delhi. Mid nineteenth century. Watercolour on paper, 91 × 422 mm.

Alexander or Aleck (1789–1816) and George (1800–42), only the oldest, James, would return home.

The family had earlier Indian connections. The paternal grandfather of these five brothers, James Fraser (1713–54), once an invaluable employee of the Company because of his knowledge of Sanskrit and Persian, had been a Member of Council at Surat. He was also a scholar of the life of the Persian invader Nadir Shah.²⁶ Among the collection that Fraser brought back to Scotland on quitting India were more than 200 manuscripts in Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic.²⁷ William Fraser would follow in his grandfather's footsteps. The miniature paintings of Indian people that he and his brother James commissioned and collected after 1815 are now widely regarded as the very finest of their kind.²⁸

It was a common practice for Highland gentry to send a younger son to India from the later eighteenth century, but it was unusual to send an entire family of sons. An important private archive, the Fraser of Reelig papers, documents the lives in India of the five Fraser brothers in a large number of personal letters and journals.²⁹ The archive shows the extent to which family hopes were particularly invested in the activities of William, the second son. It documents the transformation of a sensuous and bright-eyed adolescent boy, as painted by Raeburn on the eve of his departure in 1801, into a complex and eccentric man, admired by some, criticised by others, and eventually murdered for high-handed actions that caused deep local resentment.³⁰ The Fraser of Reelig papers are weighted with William's letters home to his family, but they also contain some of his received correspondence and other personal documents returned to the family after his death.³¹ For this study the

Royal Society of Arts Journal 137:5389 (1988), pp. 27ff; and also the recent, privately published biography by Kathy Fraser, *For the Love of a Highland Home* (St Kilda, 2016).

²⁶ See his *The History of Nadir Shah, formerly called Thamas Kuli Khan, the Present Emperor of Persia, to which is prefixed a Short History of the Moghal Emperors* (London, 1742).

²⁷ These were sold by his widow to the Radcliffe Trustees in Oxford and later entrusted to the Bodleian Library, in 1872. For a contextual account of the collections of James Fraser, see Beatrice Teissier, 'Asia in Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh Institutions: Seen or Unseen?', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquarians of Scotland* 134 (2004), pp. 499–556.

²⁸ See Archer and Falk, *India Revealed*. The paintings were dispersed at two auctions in the 1980s.

²⁹ The Fraser of Reelig papers are still in the family's possession, and are accessible through the National Register of Archives for Scotland. The papers were brought to the attention of scholars in 1979 and subsequently catalogued by staff from the British Library.

³⁰ Robert Lehman Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975.1.234. For an analysis of Raeburn's portraits of the five Fraser brothers, see Vicky Colman, 'Henry Raeburn's Portraits of Distant Sons in the Global British Empire', *Art Bulletin* 95 (2013), pp. 294–311. Additional portraits of Fraser include a watercolour from the collection at Reelig House in which he wears a hybrid Indian and Scottish costume. See the exhibition catalogue, *Princes and Painters in Late Mughal Delhi, 1707–1857* (New York, 2012), plate 39.

³¹ Though some effects were sent to Scotland by his brother George in 1837, after William's death, the bulk of the papers were most probably returned to Reelig by Fraser's sister-in-law,

papers are particularly important because they both clarify and contradict previously published assumptions about the sequence of building by the British in Delhi. They make clear the dates and ownership of several Delhi properties, including Ludlow Castle as well as the private house that Fraser would build for himself on the highest point on the Ridge. In addition, the letters of William and the letters and journals of James Baillie Fraser are full of rich incidental information about the day-to-day life of single men in the Company's service.

William Fraser was taken into the service of the East India Company in 1801 and sailed for Calcutta in 1802. A near contemporary of Charles Metcalfe, he also distinguished himself as a student of Indian languages at Fort William College. By 1806 he too had been posted as an assistant to the then Resident in Delhi, Archibald Seton, a fellow Scot, and the two became friends. Seton, in fact, would perform an extraordinary act of disinterested generosity by staying in India longer than he needed to in order to provide money for the Fraser family at a time of particularly dire need: in 1811, Seton loaned Edward Satchwell Fraser £6,000 to help consolidate a mortgage.³² In Scotland, Edward Fraser was worried almost as much by the loss of a sense of family, with so many sons away from home, as he was by his debt. He was concerned that William in particular had removed himself too far from the possibility of stabilising the social position of the family through a suitable marriage – which William, as a youth in India, had thought he probably ought to do to save himself from bad company. While his father fretted in Scotland, William Fraser was quickly becoming immersed in the manners and mores of Indian society in Delhi. But despite his growing detailed knowledge of the countryside and his fluency in languages, and despite his being appointed as Acting Resident twice, in 1811 and again in 1829, he did not progress smoothly in the service of the Company and the post of Resident was long withheld from him. It was not until late in his career, from 1832 until his murder in March 1835, that he finally achieved the office. The documents make it clear that his irascible and unconventional personality was the reason.

In an early letter home, William Fraser had written that he was not impressed by Delhi. 'In truth,' he told his father on arrival in 1806, 'there

Wilhelmina (Mina), widow of George, after his death in 1842. William had settled the affairs of his brother Aleck in 1816, and George had done the same for William in 1836. See below for more details.

³² Seton papers, MS 19208, National Library of Scotland. '[In] my desire to save Relek [Reelig] the estate of the Fraser family, from alienation ... I again formed the plan of sacrificing another year in India, for the purpose of enabling myself to make a salutary exertion in favour of this worthy family, the pecuniary distresses of which affected me almost as much as if they related to my own family.' Seton goes on to talk of his 'heartfelt desire to become ... the instrument of relieving from embarrassment the worthy parents of my young friends in this country'.

is little ... that is worthy of remark.'³³ By the time Maria Nugent described Fraser six years later, he had acculturated sufficiently well to cause her minor outrage. In his role as 'one of the gentlemen attached to the Residency' both he and another Assistant, Edward Gardner, accompanied the Nugent party on part of their tour of the northern plains in 1812. Nugent was scandalised by the degree to which they had allowed themselves to assimilate into the ways of the country, and she offered unsolicited advice:

I shall now say a few words of Messrs. Gardner and Fraser, who are still of our party; they both wear immense whiskers and neither will eat beef or pork, being as much Hindoos as Christians, if not more; they are both of them clever and intelligent, but eccentric; and having come to this country early, they have formed opinions and prejudices that make them almost natives. In our conversations together, I endeavour to insinuate everything that I think will have any weight with them. I talk of the religion they were brought up in, and of their friends, who would be astonished and shocked at their whiskers and beards, etc., etc. All this is generally debated between us, in a good natured manner and I still hope they will think of it.'³⁴

Her comments, and those of other contemporaries, confirm Fraser's empathy for India, for he had not only grown a long, forked beard but had thrown himself wholeheartedly into his new life.³⁵ His brother James described this engagement, as well as the bustling household from which Fraser worked: '[I am writing this letter] in a room like a thoroughfare; a dozen people and half a dozen languages resounding in my ear all the time ... Willie has not since my arrival been one hour free from the interruptions of natives ...'.³⁶

Fraser's principal task was land settlement in the outlying territories of the Delhi District as well as in the hill states to the north, the establishment of rights to land ownership and their subsequent assessment for revenue purposes to fund the Company's coffers. Although later he would be accused of over-assessment in favour of the Company, Fraser seems to have believed himself to be helping solve problems rather than creating new ones, and in his own words performed 'duties ... giving relief to daily petitioners and unfortunates, craving redress of the British from former oppressions and nuisances'.³⁷ In addition, there were occasional bouts of military service for which he

³³ Letter from William dated 20 March 1806, transcribed by his father, vol. 29, Fraser of Reelig papers.

³⁴ A.L. Cohen, ed., *Lady Nugent's East India Journal: A Critical Edition* (Oxford and Delhi, 2014), p. 197.

³⁵ Fraser's appearance drew many contemporary comments, one of which (from William Gardner) was that the canal gave great satisfaction, but of all the sights of Delhi, Fraser was the greatest.

³⁶ Letter from James to his father, bundle 303, Fraser of Reelig papers.

³⁷ Letter from William to his father, bundle 5, Fraser of Reelig papers.

readily volunteered with the small irregular corps he had raised to serve with him or with the army of Yellow Boys raised by his friend, James Skinner.

There are very different accounts of the personality of William Fraser, but common to all of them is the fact that he was not really much of a team player. His intimates described him as larger than life, robust and healthy, generous and warm-hearted. But he was also said to be unbending and ruthless, with a hard edge to his character. 'Fraser is just the man – a *sukhtbanchod* – to carry the measures I lately wrote to you into execution,' wrote William Linnaeus Gardner in 1821, 'but he is such an obstinate fellow that I make no doubt he will kick.'³⁸ Percival Spear was rather more polite in describing 'a certain angularity of character'.³⁹ Fraser's family in Scotland, sensing this hardening personality from a distance, often feared the worst, and they also feared that he would never return home. Fraser's superior in Delhi for many years, Charles Metcalfe, with whom, as we have seen, he had quarrelled badly over the Shalimar property, wrote that he was '... masterly and self-willed to so great a degree that no power can be entrusted to him without some risk of its being abused ...'.⁴⁰ And Fraser's own brother James echoed this sentiment. William was generous and warm-hearted, he wrote to their father, but he was also '... almost an uncontrolled master of his own actions, never stinted in anything that he wished to do or possess, his passions and desires, always evident, have been misused instead of being brought under proper regulation ... He feels any check to them as one upon his liberty.'⁴¹ Of himself, Fraser simply said, 'I seize the moments as swallows catch flies in the air.'⁴² And this he certainly seems to have done.

The French botanist Victor Jacquemont, travelling in India between 1828 and 1832, had noticed discrepancies between British attitudes in established Presidency towns and in towns 'up-country'. He met William Fraser in Delhi in 1830 and they became friends. Attuned to the nuances of social standing, the Frenchman described Fraser then as a man of fifty, who '... but for some eccentricities of character, would hold a higher office than the one he occupies: he would be Resident, with two hundred and fifty thousand francs a year instead of one hundred and fifty, the salary of his present appointment'. Fraser was, he went on, '... as plain as myself in his habits ... possessed of great qualities and talents, to which everybody in India does justice, but

³⁸ Letter 90, William Linnaeus Gardner to Edward Gardner, 16 August 1821, Gardner papers, NAM. The word translates as 'sister-fucker'.

³⁹ Percival Spear in *Bengal Past and Present*, vol. 106 (1987), p. 142.

⁴⁰ Bentinck papers, Charles Metcalfe to William Bentinck, 20 February 1832. Quoted by Spear, *Twilight*, p. 163.

⁴¹ James Fraser, diary entry 5 October 1820, B 304, Fraser of Reelig papers. The entry was written on leaving William in Delhi.

⁴² Vol. 29, p. 236, Fraser of Reelig papers.

who is generally considered a misanthrope'.⁴³ Jacquemont contrasted Fraser favourably to members of British Indian society he had met in Calcutta: 'How many good and amiable men you find among the British of Northern India; I do not know why, but at Bengal it is not exactly the same thing. There is less cordiality and less intellect. This difference is proverbial in India and not the less true because it is proverbial.'⁴⁴ He also confirmed that Fraser was 'half Asiatic' in his habits. Jacquemont's accounts, though often subjective, are important because he was Fraser's guest for six weeks from mid-December 1831 and described his house. His time in Delhi in that year enabled him: '... to live with Mr William Fraser during my third stay in the old Mogul capital', and he referred to Fraser's house as 'Fraser's fortress'.⁴⁵ This was almost certainly the house that Fraser built on the Ridge, often referred to in the literature as Hindu Rao's House after a later occupant.

William Fraser had lived in more than one house in Delhi. The first was inside the walled city. His brother James, following William to India, arrived in Calcutta in 1813 with the intention of joining a business establishment there. Unsuccessful in this venture, he turned instead to landscape painting. In March 1815 he travelled to Delhi to visit his brother, staying for a while in the Residency as the guest of Charles Metcalfe and then travelling to meet William on his return from the campaign at Jaithak. William was then sharing accommodation in a house with his younger brother Aleck and others in the arrangement known as a chummary. James wrote home describing this house, which was already crammed with the miscellany that William had started to collect:

I went to see his bungalow which is at present occupied by another person – but in which Aleck and William each have a wing room for their things. I went to see in what order they were – and certainly William's room was a curiosity. Tygers skins, cases of tyger heads, saddle cloths of Do. – quantities of saddlery – matchlocks, bows and arrows, quivers, belts, armour. Gun cases – all his guns and swords had gone ... for him being with the army – Persian books and Indian accounts of all sorts filled up the place. I shall certainly seize hold of some of these things and convey them from India to Inverness.⁴⁶

This particular house has not been identified, and probably never will be, but a second reference confirms that it was inside the walls of Shahjahanabad overlooking the river and to the north of the palace: a contemporary letter from Aleck in the Fraser of Reelig papers refers to their house on a branch of the Jumna:

⁴³ Victor Jacquemont, *Letters from India during the Years 1828, 1829, 1830, 1831* (London, 1834), vol. 1, p. 344.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 248.

⁴⁶ Letter from James to his sister Jane-Ann, 1815, bundle 3, Fraser of Reelig papers.

The main branch is within sight of the windows; and beyond it stretch the plains of the doab. A little down the river, or rather this little branch of it, lies the grand palace of Shah Jehan, and across the stream, connected by a bridge (a very fine one) the frowning Bastille of Delhi, called Selim Gurh.⁴⁷

Their brother Edward described the same view. James also wrote in his journal in 1815, when he travelled back with William from the Himalayas, that after staying at Fraser's Shalimar house the night before, the brothers rode into the city like Mughal princelings with a ceremonial escort, and '... at length ... got home to our own Bungalow and within the walls of the Royal City'.⁴⁸ Based on examination of the map of c.1845, the house may have been located on part of the Ali Mardan Khan palace complex to the north of the Residency compound, in which case it might have been the building known today as the house of the Ravi brothers, which also sits on the Delhi wall.⁴⁹ It might also have been located inside or adjacent to the large Magazine compound. Now, local tradition and a recent plaque in the garden assert that Robert Smith's house was Fraser's house, but I have seen no documentary evidence for this. That house as it stands was certainly not built in 1815.

Because charges for an employee's house in Delhi were not paid for by the Company, even junior officials had to rent, purchase or build a house of their own, as Charles Metcalfe had done in 1807. William and Aleck Fraser are known to have been involved in personal property transactions from their early days in the city. We have seen in a previous chapter that they were two of the original group of officials – including Metcalfe, Lawtie, Fergusson and Wilder – to build houses on land at Shalimar after 1811. Fraser's ownership of part of that land, his and that of his brother Aleck which reverted to him after Aleck's death in June 1816, was one of the causes of bad blood with Metcalfe.

Life in India was repeatedly described as expensive by the cash-poor Fraser brothers when they wrote home, though they all apparently lived in a degree of comfort. William would later claim that it was almost impossible to save money in India, but their internalised expectations of how life should be lived must have contributed to this. On his arrival in Calcutta in August 1808, Aleck received a letter of advice from William in Delhi telling him, in some detail, what he would need to equip his household. The most costly articles, William said, would be furniture, a riding horse and a buggy. He then sent his brother the gift of a set of silver for his breakfast table. 'These are expensive articles, my dearest Aleck, but ... I wish to see you live up to the rank you bear

⁴⁷ Letter from Aleck, 16 August 1812, vol. 33, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁴⁸ James Fraser's diary, 19 August 1815, vol. 8, Fraser of Reelig papers. James later published his set of engravings from drawings made on this journey.

⁴⁹ This building was later used by the Delhi Gazette Press. See Sonali Bhagwati, 'An Enquiry into Urban Metamorphosis: The Kashmiri Gate, Shahjahanabad' (MA thesis, CEPT, Ahmedabad, 1985).

in this community, rather above it with respectability than below it. I put into your hands the power of doing so; and without inconvenience to yourself or obligation to others.⁵⁰ Breakfast in British India was an important ritual, one of the two principal meals when unexpected company might be entertained. It is also from Aleck, who perhaps had been prompted by his father to keep careful records in his early years in India, that we have a wonderfully detailed account of his miscellaneous household expenses in the years 1810/11.⁵¹ These included mutton for his dogs and more animal feed (for elephants, horses and a cat), *hukkah* supplies, boots, tents, cloth for the servants, wages for the *mahout*, buxees [tips], the hire of hackeries and camels, oil and wax candles, firewood, cakes, milk for cream (for the cat?), wages for the bearers, the *dhobi* and the dog man, and new *tattis* for the windows and doors of his house in the hot weather.⁵² As early as 1808 William himself was already in debt, though we do not know exactly why, and he was paying this back at a rate equal to £100 a month. He later wrote to his brother James that he hoped soon to be able to send £1,000 a year home to help their father, but thought it wiser to get himself in the clear first.⁵³ William's salary by 1813, as an Assistant, would have been between 3,000 and 4,000 rupees a month, plus more for tent and travelling allowances.⁵⁴ He lived in tents much of the time, and James described what these were like: 'We have not much of the hardships of a camp ... for in an Indian army there are thousands of canvas ones which Lord Wellington's troops never dreamt of. The servants and attendants at a camp here are three times the fighting men ...'.⁵⁵ In times of war William would have been able to make an additional 1,500 rupees a month, which perhaps accounts for his eagerness to join in various expansionist campaigns such as the Nepal War in 1814/15, though he was also described as having had a 'monomania' for fighting.⁵⁶

The year 1819 was a watershed in the life of William Fraser. Always larger than life, he now appeared to be out of control. It was in March of this year that a first attempt on his life was made. Attacked by a would-be assassin, he received a sword blow to the head and a bad cut to his right hand; he was left with a permanent speech impediment from the blow. His handwriting became large and erratic while his wounds were healing. To regain his health, he mentioned to his father that he had given up meat, tobacco and wine,

⁵⁰ Letter from William to Aleck, 12 August 1808, vol. 34, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁵¹ His father also worried about Aleck, whom he felt had a tendency to go into debt.

⁵² Bundle 321, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁵³ Letters home from William transcribed by his father, vol. 30, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁵⁴ Bundle 34, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁵⁵ Bundle 3, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁵⁶ Jacquemont, *Letters from India*, vol. 2, p. 259: 'The only singularity which I can find in him is a complete monomania for strife. When there is a war anywhere he forsakes his tribunal and goes to it ...'.

saying he was too heavy.⁵⁷ Financial pressures were mounting, and at this time there is extensive correspondence about his father's still largely unsolved money problems. In late 1819 the family debt still stood at £32,000 despite the earlier consolidation and the subsequent sale of the Berbice estates. But by now William was even more deeply in debt himself, and he was finally obliged to let his father know this. He wrote that he could be clear of this within five years and then he really would send home the £1,000 a year. Pressure was now put on him not to stay in India.⁵⁸ His family seemed to feel that he was reaching a point of no return. His brother James suggested that William, who owned a number of horses and made a subsidiary income through breeding and trading them at Hansi with his friend James Skinner, should sell off his stock and leave the country altogether.⁵⁹ But William refused to leave, or even to consider changing his posting at Delhi for a more lucrative promotion at Sagar, in central Madhya Pradesh:

... as to your fears of an attachment to Dehlee of a nature formed of what you call desperate ties, I believe you may be truly assured that those ties are limited to a good many years acquaintance with stone walls and stone hills, ruins, trees, climate, and loving of northern people. With respect to the remark you make of the state of society at Dihlee and Saugor, there is certainly this difference – that Saugor is one of the most remote, uncivilised stations in the country; and Dehlee one of the liveliest and most frequented and most civilised stations, having a large society within its own limits, and being within a morning's ride of one of the most agreeable stations in the country – Meeruth [sic].⁶⁰

This may not have been an entirely straightforward response to his father, for the next year, he wrote something to the contrary:

With respect to my attachment to Dihlee, I must state that I have tried every means to get myself removed ... and have failed. With a view to money matters, my salary is now as good as I could expect, and if money was alone to be considered, I might say, I am placed in a situation where I must keep open house to a large military cantonment, one of the most expensive duties in India. I cannot exactly tell what period you conceived would have been sufficient to amass a fortune ...⁶¹

⁵⁷ Vol. 56, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁵⁸ Letter dated 5 August 1819, bundle 297, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁵⁹ Horses, which were not native to India, were a valuable commodity and territories with rich pasture, such as the land surrounding Hansi, north of Delhi, were sought after for their grazing. William bred and sold horses with the help of an Indian friend, *navvāb* Ahmed Bakhsh Khan. See Archer and Falk, *India Revealed*, p. 30.

⁶⁰ Letter from William to his father, Hansi, 23 September 1819, vol. 29, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁶¹ Letter from William to his father, Hansi, 14 April 1820, vol. 29, Fraser of Reelig papers.

The truth of the matter was that William chose to stay in Delhi rather than make more and spend less money elsewhere. And as if to underscore this choice, at the same time he had begun to undertake the building of a large new house for himself, with panoramic views of the city. He had mentioned this to his father almost in passing in September of 1819: 'I go back to Dehlee where I have built a large white house on top of a hill, from the top of which I am getting a large view of Dehlee for James to improve upon.'⁶² (Plate 12)

As with other houses built in this period of Delhi's history, the documentary record for construction of William Fraser's house on the hill is fragmentary at best. We must jump forward to the time after William's death to know more about this 'large white house'. A useful article by Upendra Nath Sarkar, formerly of the National Archives of India in Delhi, draws on unpublished and now inaccessible correspondence in that repository to document the litigation that followed the sale of William Fraser's house after his sudden death in 1835 to the wealthy Maratha noble Jai Singh Rao Ghatge, better known as Hindu Rao.⁶³ In 1837, Hindu Rao, who had left Maratha-governed Gwalior to go into voluntary exile under the protection of the British government, purchased the entire estate in a private transaction from George Fraser, William's younger brother and executor, for the sum of 20,000 rupees.⁶⁴ But he then had difficulty securing proper title to his new estate. The documents that Sarkar refers to tell us that Fraser's estate as sold to Hindu Rao consisted of a total of 323 *bighas* including the house and its outbuildings, which were set in a masonry-walled compound of a just under 170 *bighas*. There were several pre-existing structures on the estate including Tughluq-period ruins and water systems – 'a well, a Baolee, a Pucka Tank'. Some of the land had been purchased piecemeal by Fraser in 1823/4, after his house was finished, from the local *zamīndār* of the adjoining village of Chandrawal in five different lots, expanding the original estate.⁶⁵ After taking possession of the property, Hindu Rao first had to settle an existing claim against the estate of Fraser by the firm of Jugurnath and Kulkadass. There were then further disputes about the legality of Fraser's (and consequently Hindu Rao's) proprietary rights: land that had a stepwell on it should have been *mu'āf* or rent-free, but this was called into question. Despite Hindu Rao's now paying a quit-rent to ensure freehold tenure, the legal proceedings – appeals and counter-appeals – became so horribly tangled that

⁶² Letter from William to his father, 23 September 1819, vol. 29, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁶³ Upendra Nath Sarkar, 'Hindu Rao's Estate in Delhi', *Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission*, Silver Jubilee Session (1948), pp. 138–42.

⁶⁴ G.G.'s Cons. Rev. B. 1812, no. 40, NAI. The settlement of William's estate is also documented in letters home from George Fraser, now in the ownership of Wak Kani. The house 'less expenses of remittance & *bhatta* and those of conveyance' fetched 19,085 rupees for Fraser's estate.

⁶⁵ Between January 1823 and May 1824 Fraser had purchased five lots valued at a total of 3,450 rupees from five different owners. Letter from Metcalfe, Commissioner to Elliot, Secretary, Sadar Board of Revenue, Allahabad, dated 31 January 1840, no. 24, NAI.



Plate 12 Robert Tytler (1818–72) and Harriet Tytler (1828–58), *Hindu Rao's House*, 1858. Albumen print, 508 × 370 mm.

at one stage he would attempt to back out altogether and reclaim the purchase price from the Fraser heirs.⁶⁶ The legitimacy of Fraser's arrangement with the local landlords had earlier caused three separate disputes over ownership. Though Fraser was said to have clarified its status with them, Hindu Rao had to jump through several hoops to secure the same rights. 'This land though said to be as rent-free [*mu'āf*] and considered as such by the late Mr Fraser, was not to the best of my belief held under a valid grant during Mr Fraser's life time,' wrote the then Resident Thomas Theophilus Metcalfe when the matter was sent for his adjudication. In 1839 Metcalfe finally recommended the release of the estate to Hindu Rao, in the same way the Shalimar estate had been released to a new (as yet unknown) purchaser in 1838.⁶⁷ But because of the complexity of changing proprietary law, one has the sense that George Fraser was lucky to sell his brother's property at all.

Victor Jacquemont, who stayed in William Fraser's house in December 1831, mentioned its Gothic style, but he also said that the house was on an historic site. 'I am alone in Mr Fraser's immense house,' he wrote '... a kind of Gothic fortress, built by himself at immense expense upon the very place where Timur Lenggue pitched his tent when he laid siege to Delhi.'⁶⁸ Some confusion has resulted in the secondary literature because of this description, in which Jacquemont seems to be conflating Fraser's private house with Ludlow Castle. He noted Fraser had indeed situated his house beside the Jahanuma (World Displayed) referred to in the account of Timur, who had sacked Firoz Shah Tughluq's city, Firozabad, in 1398 and then had camped up on the Ridge near that palace. Jahanuma was part of the (then) wooded grounds for hunting (*shikār*) of Firoz Shah.⁶⁹ Many of the Sultanate ruins on the property were in an unaltered state in October 1820 when James Fraser, on his final visit to Delhi before leaving India for good, went to see his brother's new house and wrote home to his parents: '[William] is in his usual morning dress of the country – a pair of loose drawers and a sort of morning gown cut in the native fashion ... nothing on his neck, a purple cap on his head – large whiskers ... a picture of health but too fat.' 'William's

⁶⁶ Letters from George to James Fraser, 10 and 16 May 1840, Wak Kani letters. The letters give an alternative description of the proceedings. I would like to thank William Dalrymple for providing transcripts of these letters, which I have not had the opportunity to see in the original, and Wak Kani for sharing information about his collection.

⁶⁷ Sarkar, 'Hindu Rao's Estate in Delhi', p. 140.

⁶⁸ Jacquemont, *Letters from India*, vol. 2, p. 240. The letter is dated December 1831. One photograph shows that there were pointed arches on one elevation, though this was probably reconstructed after the damage the house sustained in the Revolt. Alkazi Collection of Photography, New York, box 132, 99.100.0015: The Ridge from Hindu Rao's House.

⁶⁹ The remains of the hunting pavilion or *kushk-i shikār* there have variously been referred to as an observatory, a hunting lodge or a palace, later known as the shrine of *Ṣīr* Ghaib, a vanishing saint. It would be later used as a survey station by the Trigonometrical Survey. Carr Stephen, *The Archaeology and Monumental Remains of Delhi* (Ludhiana, 1876), pp. 140ff.

house', he went on, 'is a fine one in an extraordinary situation – like himself, rough about and pleasant and comfortable inside. It commands a noble view, but he has and means to leave it nearly in a state of nature, even close to the doors.'⁷⁰ The location of the house on the Ridge resonated with the longer history of conquest in north India. In putting his house on this site, Fraser took advantage of more than the vista of the surrounding countryside. The world, or at least the greater part of Delhi, was here displayed for William Fraser as it had been for Delhi's Sultanate rulers (Plate 13).

Although he had no intention of formally landscaping his property, shortly after James's visit in 1820 William Fraser was proposing additions to the exterior of his house. In the Fraser of Reelig papers there is a sketched plan and elevation for projected alterations in what is perhaps the only architectural drawing of a pre-Revolt British house in Delhi (Plate 14). It is found in a letter to William, then in nearby Hansi, from George Hutchinson, the Garrison Engineer in Delhi – the same George Hutchinson who had painted the house-portrait of Shalimar. On 12 April 1821, Hutchinson wrote to Fraser:

I went up to your house yesterday with your letter in my hand and endeavoured to make out all that you require, but until you were here or could give me some kind of sketch it would be difficult to execute your wishes. At first I thought it was a staircase to the top of your castle that you wished, but now that you have mentioned a portico I suppose it is a grand entrance that you require. Would something of this kind do? The double lines show the present building and single ones the new portico.⁷¹

Following the Calcutta convention, Hutchinson was now proposing a ceremonial entryway with a portico, 17 feet high and 12 feet deep, approached by a flaring staircase, and with storage or a *godown* beneath. He continued:

Could you perhaps give me an idea of the plan upon which you would like to have the private apartments – and also the size of the room you wish to the north – and although my duty constantly takes me to Meerut yet I think I might manage to superintend it for you. At least I would do my best to please – and I affirm I should be happy in being able to execute it for you.⁷²

In the event, the alterations were never built as projected in Hutchinson's sketch. Instead the house, as it appears in photographs from the time of the Revolt, was given a bowed front like Metcalfe House (see Chapter Six, below).

William Fraser spent quite lavishly on this house. As a result he had needed to pay 'his constant building expenses by the sale of his property', his brother George wrote in a letter to James in 1836, after William's death. George was

⁷⁰ Letter from James to his father, October 1820, vol. 58, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁷¹ Letter from Hutchinson to William Fraser, B 430, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁷² Ibid.



Plate 13 Attributed to Mazhar 'Ali Khan (fl.1840s), *A View from the Rocky Heights above the Military Cantonment Looking Toward the city of Delhi, c. 1845.* Watercolour and body-colour on ivory, 105 × 210 mm.

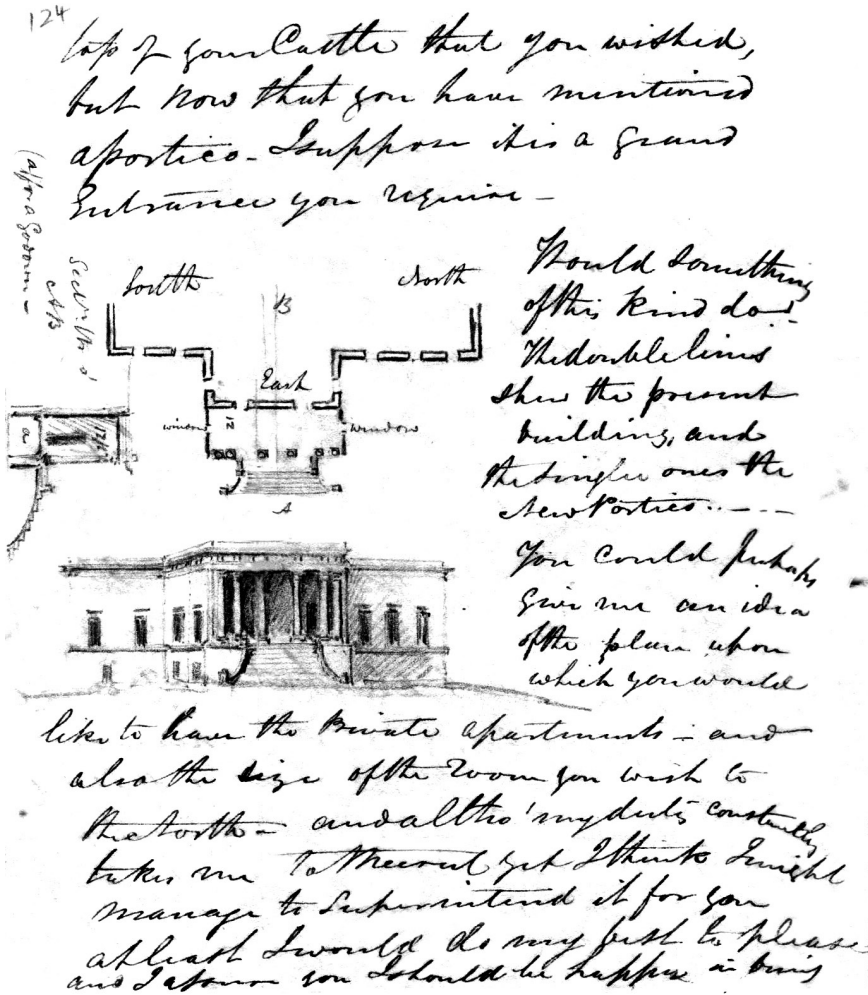


Plate 14 Sketch of proposed alterations to William Fraser's house, 1821. In a letter from George Hutchinson to William Fraser.

referring to the collections of objects that William had been accumulating since his arrival in Delhi. These, George was surprised to find, had decreased considerably since he had first taken charge of his brother's effects. George noticed '... many things gone which [William] had refused to have sold in 27, 28, 29' and assumed that William had been giving away articles of value to '... persons who certainly were adventurers, tho' they came to him as travellers, amateurs and men wandering in pursuit of scientific objects'.⁷³

⁷³ Letter from George to James Fraser, 22 April 1837, Wak Kani letters.

He specified a missing half-set of silver medals of the Duke of Wellington's victories, presented by William to the mercenary Jean-Baptiste Ventura. The contents of William's Delhi house had been inventoried by George Fraser in 1827, at a time when despite some reluctance William was being encouraged to sell off possessions to try to control his debt. George had managed to sell for him in 1829 '... property which was going to ruin of the strangest and most multifarious description, which produced him a handsome sum and the sale of which broke through his aversion to parting with anything he had once purchased'.⁷⁴

We can conclude from the accounts in the Fraser of Reelig papers that William Fraser's house was constructed in the main between 1819 and 1821. The parts of it that are still extant conform to the Revolt-period photographs. From the photographs we know that it was originally of one storey on a basement which comprised storage space and extended to provide a viewing platform that took advantage of the panoramic vista of Delhi.⁷⁵ The house had a flat roof, accessible by a ladder, a north Indian convention to provide open-air sleeping space in the hot weather, though one seldom used by the British. It was built of brick, plastered with *chunam* and embellished with classical mouldings and window heads. Percival Spear had speculated that this house was built by Sir Edward Colebrooke, the Resident discredited in 1829, and that the house was sold on by Colebrooke to Fraser after his dismissal.⁷⁶ Fraser had been sympathetic to Colebrooke's case. The subsequent discovery of the documents in the Fraser of Reelig archive makes it clear that the house was built earlier and by Fraser himself. Additional confusion arises because both Spear and Anthony King (following Spear) say that Fraser's house was used as the Residency from 1828.⁷⁷ There is no evidence that the Residency ever was in the house on the hill. This was William Fraser's private home, as evidenced by its sale after his death, and it needs to be distinguished from the house known as Ludlow Castle, which was used as the official Residency from 1832. Victor Jacquemont was in Delhi in March 1830 and wrote that he was '... the sole inhabitant of a sumptuous house surrounded by magnificent gardens'. This was clearly not the house on the hill.⁷⁸ Later, Jacquemont did

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Photographs by Robert and Harriet Tytler taken in 1858 that depicted buildings and sites in the aftermath of the Revolt in the British Library include 193/(8): Front of Hindoo Rao's House, [Delhi]; and 193/(9) Back of Hindoo Rao's House, [Delhi].

⁷⁶ Spear, *Twilight*, appendix B, pp. 191ff. This belief is confirmed in Spear's notes in his archives in Cambridge. For additional information on Colebrooke in Delhi, see Katherine Prior, 'Bad Language: The Role of English, Persian and other Esoteric Tongues in the Dismissal of Sir Edward Colebrooke as Resident of Delhi in 1829', *Modern Asian Studies* 35:1 (2001), pp. 75–112. Colebrooke is known to have had a house of his own, though this has not yet been identified.

⁷⁷ King, *Colonial Urban Development*, p. 194.

⁷⁸ Jacquemont, *Letters from India*, vol. 1, p. 204.

stay in the house on the hill in Fraser's absence, in December 1831, when Mr W.B. Martin, Fraser's predecessor, was in office, and he wrote that it was his habit in the evenings, if the weather was fair, to '... mount my horse, and if rainy take my palanquin, and repair to the town where I always dine with the Resident', who was then still living in the old Residency.⁷⁹

Because of his house-building and collecting activities, by 1823 William Fraser's debts had ballooned, and George, the youngest Fraser brother, then newly arrived in India, wrote home to his father: 'William will have to make three fortunes, one to pay his debts, one to rescue Moniak and the least and last one for his own sustenance.'⁸⁰ But this was not to happen. When Fraser was murdered in 1835, ostensibly by a man acting for Shams-ud-din Khan, *navvāb* of Firozpur, who bore him a grudge over settlement of a disputed inheritance, the financial hardships of his family had not improved.⁸¹ The Fraser family now invested their energies with limited success in the settlement of William's estate, the task falling to George, and there began a protracted struggle for compensation from the East India Company.⁸² After the crash of the Palmer firm in 1832/3, William Fraser had converted whatever he could of his assets into investments in the Company, but he was still paying dearly for this house. At the time of his death, he owned at least two more houses. As well as the property sold to Hindi Rao there was a 'native house' at Rohtak (today in Haryana), on the road to Hansi.

Fraser was reputed to have had many mistresses who lived together near Delhi, and in local folklore his sexual potency came to rival that of David Ochterlony. However, only three children from one or more relationships have been identified: two sons, Charles born in 1820 and William born later, and their sister, possibly a little older, who was sent to Scotland under the name Amy Young.⁸³ These children almost disappeared into obscurity. They were

⁷⁹ Jacquemont also gave the usual character sketch: 'This gentleman has a cultivated mind and an acute understanding: his habits are retiring, but his conversation more varied and pleasing than that of most of his countrymen.' *Letters from India*, vol. 2, p. 241.

⁸⁰ Letter from George Fraser, 15 September 1823, bundle 24, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁸¹ The *Asiatic Journal* (1836) contains an account of the trial following William's death: '... the miserable Nawab Shams-ud-din suffered the penalty of death, being hung on the same spot where his instrument Kureem Khan was executed'. Server-ul-Mulk, *My Life: The Autobiography of Nawab Server-ul-Mulk Bahadur* (London, 1932), went as far as to suggest the reason for the murder was that Fraser 'had an eye on' the sister of Shamsuddun Khan, but this may say more about the writer than the facts of the situation.

⁸² Bundle 16, Fraser of Reelig papers, deals with the implications of the settlement for this family in Scotland. The records show that James and George were never successful in claiming compensation from the Company.

⁸³ Charles was born in Delhi late in 1820 and William was either born the following year or perhaps as late as 1824. The record is unclear. Both were baptised in 1837 in Allahabad when they entered the Company's service. See the India Office baptismal record, British Library. There is a letter from Charles Fraser to his uncle in Scotland written in 1839 that mentions his sister. Charles Fraser to James, Hansi, 8 December 1839, Wak Kani letters.

kept hidden from Fraser's parents though revealed to his brother James. The children are confirmed in a letter from James in the Fraser of Reelig papers in which he begs William to acknowledge them and send them to Scotland.⁸⁴ A sudden death means that there is no time to consider hiding records, and at the time of William's death his sons were living in a third house he owned in Mussoorie and being educated by a Mr Mackinnon.⁸⁵ They were then sent to Allahabad and for a time went into the Company's service. Their fate is not yet known.

There was an auction of the contents of the house on the hill in 1835. William Fraser's household effects were sold on 11 July, just two months after his death; British estates in India were generally cleared with speed and brutality. Household objects, which themselves have lives with multiple meanings, do not necessarily conform to house styles. William Fraser's fascinating probate inventory includes utilitarian household items such as kitchen and pantry supplies, old iron, livestock including horses, mules, sheep, goats and draught bullocks and camels, and feed for them. Furniture included some that was for the use of women, as well as camp furniture. There were many weapons including *tulwars* or curved swords. There were carriages and a buggy. Minor collections included tiger and other skins and spears for killing the animals. There were also collections of minerals and bones. The most costly items in the sale were what remained of his Napoleonic memorabilia. There were three marble busts of the French emperor, and the one in imperial robes sold for 1,600 rupees. William's identification with Napoleon had earlier been noted by his brother Aleck: 'He lived like a Nawab being as absolute in his domain as Bonaparte in France.'⁸⁶ Other items of interest included gilt-framed 'portraits of natives', surely companions to those in the Fraser album.⁸⁷ They have been impossible to trace. George then had the unenviable task of letting his brother James know there was not the value in William's estate that the family had been banking on. 'Now as to William's personal property,' he wrote. 'You I have no doubt look back and think of the man you very probably saw with a large establishment of horses, camels, elephants and servants, an amateur in and a collector of the various curiosities of the country, with a good library and altogether a large store of whatever was useful, expensive and rare.'⁸⁸ But there was much less than had been hoped

⁸⁴ Bundle 303, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁸⁵ This information is to be found in William's expense accounts, settled by George. Letter dated 1841, Wak Kani letters. In 1834, Mr Mackinnon purchased an estate on which an unsuccessful brewery had operated and opened the first of Mussoorie's schools, calling it the Mussoorie Seminary. It was not a long-lived enterprise.

⁸⁶ Letter from Aleck to his mother, December 1808, vol. 33, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁸⁷ The estate settlement documents indicate William Fraser was still hiring artists at the time of his death.

⁸⁸ Letter from George to James Fraser, 22 April 1837, Wak Kani letters.

for. The household goods fetched in total just over 10,000 rupees. After the estate was settled, James Fraser sought recompense from the Government of India for property to the value of £60,000, but was only awarded £5,000, and not until 1838.

By the time of Hindu Rao's death in 1855 the house on the hill had already been sold back to the British administration for use by the district Treasurer. It was a picket for the British forces in 1858 when they recaptured Delhi during the Revolt, and like Ludlow Castle it was extensively photographed after the fighting was over, by John Murray as well as the Tytlers and Felix Beato, as a heroic 'Mutiny' site. In 1866 the Military Division acquired the house for use as a sanatorium for the British troops who were now billeted in the Fort. That deed of sale is dated October 1866, and the land with it included a considerable acreage extending down the slope of the Ridge towards the Grand Trunk Road. By October 1912, after the announcement of the move of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi, the house was being adapted for use as a hospital for the wealthier European population in the now expanded Civil Lines.⁸⁹ Parts of William Fraser's house are still standing, though extensively rebuilt, encased by the later construction of what is now known as the Hindu Rao Hospital.

⁸⁹ King, *Colonial Urban Development*, p. 194.

A TOMB WITH VIEW: THOMAS THEOPHILUS METCALFE'S *DILKUSHA*

Despite the aftershock that resulted from the murder of William Fraser in 1835, the British East India Company had now entered into a period in which its supremacy in Delhi, on the surface at least, seemed unruffled. It appeared to be on a secure and prosperous footing. But was this really the case and, if so, to what degree was this apparent stability maintained by fine-tuning the continuing links between the public behaviour of British officials and the conventions of the Mughal nobility? Did these behaviours change at all? To attempt an answer, I examine the houses of the long-serving Company official Thomas Theophilus Metcalfe (1795–1853), William Fraser's successor in the office of Agent and Commissioner at Delhi, as the post of Resident had come to be known. Metcalfe, operating just behind the façade of Mughal sovereignty, occupied the post from 1835 until his death, for such a long time that he was popularly known as the 'King of Delhi'. His building activities can be understood as the manifestation of the hegemonic position he now held over both Delhi's British and its Indian society.

The British had settled themselves on top of extant Mughal urban fabric in many parts of north India, and we have seen in previous chapters how parts of prominently sited princely palaces, *baradari* and other elite indigenous domestic building types inside the walls of Shahjahanabad had been reused. So had Shahjahani and later Mughal pleasure gardens, both imperial and sub-imperial, in the well-irrigated areas outside the walls to the north and west of Delhi. We have also seen how the local conventions of building for the hot climate of the northern plains had been adapted in variations of the competing classical and Gothic styles of the home culture. There are also a number of well-documented examples of the appropriation of sacred monumental structures for domestic use, occasionally mosques but more frequently the tombs of the lesser Mughal nobility – tombs that were compact in size and generally set in open, formally planned, enclosed gardens.

In this chapter I analyse the meanings of Thomas Metcalfe's appropriation of the octagonal tomb of an early-seventeenth-century Mughal nobleman,

Muhammad Quli Khan, near the urban village of Mehrauli, which, by 1844, Metcalfe had begun to convert into a small country retreat. I compare the tomb/house to his principal residence, Metcalfe House, in the British enclave to the north of the Kashmir Gate. The use of a tomb as a house highlights dualities in the narrative of Metcalfe's life. It shows Metcalfe's connection to the calculated enforcement of change to the structure of late Mughal power by the Company during his long tenure. And its location in the landscape reveals the outcome of policies of indirect control that, in contradiction to Metcalfe's well-illustrated and well-documented love of privacy, home and domesticity, were driving forces when he constructed his public image as Agent. Mehrauli, south of Shahjahanabad, in an area continuously inhabited since the eleventh century and probably for a lot longer than that, was a site of both political potency and historical significance. The tomb/house, which Metcalfe called *Dilkusha*, helps us explore the subliminal tensions in the British relationship with the Mughal court in the years leading up to the Revolt, showing ways that policies of indirect control were played out through the manipulation of historic architecture as a manifestation of power. This, in turn, was met by a statement of architectural resistance when the last Emperor, Bahadur Shah II, attempting to uphold his authority, built a monumental new gateway in a Mughal revival style for his nearby summer palace, the Zafar Mahal.

Thomas Theophilus or T.T. Metcalfe was the younger brother of Charles Metcalfe and heir to the baronetcy on Charles's death in 1846 (see Table 2). James, Charles's sole surviving son with an Indian woman, while acknowledged in his father's will, remained an illegitimate child to the family. Thomas Metcalfe, born in his father's London house on Portland Place, had gone to India as a youth in 1813. He would live in Delhi for forty uninterrupted years, and by all accounts it became his home. After working his way through the ranks as a collector and a magistrate, Metcalfe became Agent to the Governor General in 1835, and he held this position for eighteen years, until his own sudden death in 1853. Unlike the reclusive and shy Charles, the more sociable Thomas was better equipped for the public duties of the post. His large-scale, carefully calculated domestic building activities in Delhi show how seriously he took his role as both leader of the small British community and putative administrator of the activities of the Mughal court. He ruled in parallel with the Emperor in a superficially comfortable relationship, though deep down the parallel was far from benign. Metcalfe's monthly allowance from the Company, his inherited wealth and other less evident sources of income allowed him to keep what amounted to a small court of his own and to support a life of 'becoming splendour'.¹ As Agent, he maintained four establishments, the official Residency (which from 1832 had been moved into

¹ M.M. Kaye, ed., *The Golden Calm: An English Lady's Life in Moghul Delhi* (Exeter, 1980), p. 22.

the building known as Ludlow Castle) and two private estates of his own, as well as a rented house in the hill town of Simla for occasional use in the hot weather. But the lines between his public and private life were sometimes blurred.

Thomas Metcalfe's principal house in Delhi was Metcalfe House, and he regarded it and not his inherited properties in England as his permanent family home. The house was located on the west bank of the Yamuna about a mile to the north of the Kashmir Gate, outside the city walls, occupying a site of about 1,000 acres. Like British officials before him, Metcalfe had been able to advantageously purchase land for himself, land that was said to have been taken somewhat arbitrarily from the Gujjars of Chandrawal. The remembered grievances this caused, as well as its strategic location, would later account for the partial destruction of the house in the Revolt of 1857.² The site of Metcalfe House was selected because of its location, which was then close to the bank of the Yamuna, about a mile north of the eighteenth-century Mughal palace complex, the Qudsia Bagh, and close to the growing British Civil Lines. From the 1820s it had gradually become possible to build north of the ravines above the Qudsia Bagh because of the more stable habit of the river now that the canal systems were functioning again. The landscape is quite different today, but then Metcalfe House looked down the river towards the Selimgarh end of the Lal Qil'a. In its location, we might think of it as mimicking the very last of Delhi's princely riverine palaces.

On his land Thomas Metcalfe erected a large house which nodded to the social expectations of both Indian and British society in Delhi. It was perhaps the closest to a permanent country house of any built by the British in Delhi and a close cousin of the architecture that had sprung up on the estates in the lush and productive Bengal countryside after 1758. But being built later, Metcalfe House, with a heavy rectangular plan, had lost any semblance of Georgian grace and appeared at first glance to be little more than a very large bungalow. It did, though, still incorporate both overt and hidden references to local building practices. Sprawling over a single main floor and measuring about 100 by 160 feet, the house looked outwards, its west façade, like that of a bungalow, with a single curving bay that gave onto a domestic garden with ornamental trellises and orange groves. The main entry was on the eastern side, facing the river, and this façade had a glancing resemblance to the many-pillared Mughal pavilions in the Delhi Palace, though with this important difference: its internal space was protected not by impermanent shade awnings, but by solid walls for seclusion. A wide, pillared veranda ran all around the house, its paired classical columns functioning as a permeable screen that clearly defined a semi-private zone between exterior and interior. Metcalfe House had many external doors – it was more a palace of a thousand

² See Narayani Gupta, *Delhi between Two Empires* (New Delhi, 1981), chapter one.

doors than of a thousand columns – but no more than a glimpse was possible of what went on inside. With its high core and encircling veranda, the house incorporated elements deriving directly from the north Indian building tradition. We have seen how elevations of British houses in the northern plains were in part determined by a system of thermal ventilation adapted from local building types. Very high ceilings with clerestory windows in a central core were part of a typology that offered a cool interior in summer, though little snugness in winter. Indeed, such houses were sometimes said to be much too cold. ‘This great house has more rooms than I could count, but not one that is thoroughly comfortable,’ grumbled Honoria Lawrence during her stay in the near contemporary Government House in Agra, built by Charles Metcalfe in 1836. ‘Here, where everything is arranged with reference to the scorching season, the cold weather has many discomforts.’³

Underneath the southern end of Thomas Metcalfe’s Delhi house there was another Mughal feature, an unlikely suite of *taikhānas* for use in the hottest months of summer (in Delhi from April to July, when the rains begin). But while a Mughal *taikhāna* often had vaulted or coved ceilings supported on graceful pillars, sometimes incorporating fountains and pools, Thomas Metcalfe’s underground suite was not conceived of in this way, or even in the way of the reused and augmented painted chambers in Robert Smith’s house, discussed in Chapter Four. Instead Metcalfe’s were supported by rather republican-looking Corinthian columns covered in *chunam* plaster and had walls with raised moulded decoration and arched ornamental niches. Similar decorative treatment can still be seen at the ruinous Lucknow Residency, where the suite of underground rooms has windows high up in the walls, fireplaces and the kind of applied mouldings that would often be adopted by Knightsbridge hotels in the twentieth century. There were two or more *taikhāna* rooms at Metcalfe House, apparently intended for both summer and winter use. We know about their appearance from miniature paintings in the Delhi Book or Metcalfe Album (Plate 15).⁴ The first, a dining room, combined both *pankajs* and a fireplace, with a panoramic framed painting of Delhi’s historic monumental buildings and a garniture on the mantel. Metcalfe had had sent for his use in Delhi the plate and china he inherited from the estate in England, including dinner services of Worcester, Derby and Chinese export.⁵ The second *taikhāna* was used as a billiard room, the game part of Metcalfe’s strict, year-round daily routine: a masculine space. Out of doors, Metcalfe also built a detached, raised *chabutra* or viewing platform on the edge of the river, conceived of as an open-air room, where he would sit

³ John Lawrence and Audrey Woodiwiss, eds, *The Journals of Honoria Lawrence: India Observed, 1837–1854* (London, 1980), p. 129.

⁴ India Office Prints, Drawings and Paintings, Add.Or.5475, f. 85r, British Library.

⁵ Kaye, *The Golden Calm*, p. 126; Campbell/Metcalfe papers, Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge University.

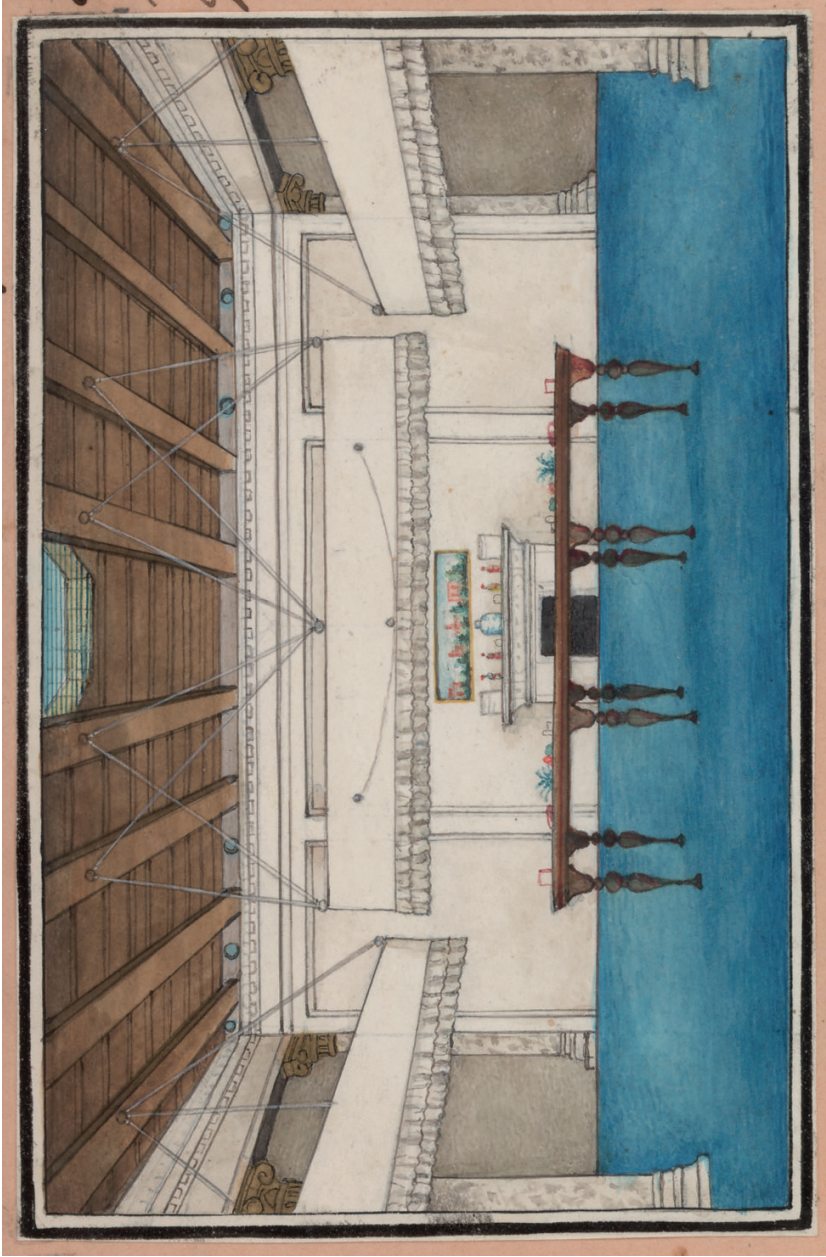


Plate 15 Mazhar 'Ali Khan (fl.1840s) and studio, *The Principal Taihama of Metcalfe House*, c.1844. Opaque watercolour.

in the early evenings and receive guests. The picturesque southerly view from his *chabutra* towards the Qudsia Bagh and the Selimgarh side of the Emperor's palace was painted for inclusion in Metcalfe's album of miniatures, the Delhi Book, signifying proprietary pleasure in the historical landscape of the city that he essentially now ruled.

Metcalfe House was begun before Thomas Metcalfe took office as Agent in Delhi in 1835. Though I have not yet found a document that relates to the land acquisition, the house can be dated by the later recollections of his eldest daughter Emily Bayley, who wrote of having spent 'most of [her] infancy' there.⁶ Emily was born in the summer of 1830 but left India in 1835. Like her siblings and many of her peers, she was sent early to England for her schooling. Thomas Metcalfe had married twice (see Table 2). His young first wife, Grace Clark, died at Karnal in 1824, and neither of the children of their marriage survived. Two years later he married Felicity Anne Brown, and they had two sons and four daughters. Felicity would die at Simla in 1842. After her death, it was in part Metcalfe's affection for his absent children and his yearning for lost marital life that prompted him to record details of his years as Agent and his perceptions of his life in Delhi. These took the form of the highly important annotated album of miniature paintings, mainly of the architecture of the city, *Reminiscences of Imperial Dehlie*, known as the Delhi Book, now in the collection of the British Library.⁷ The album was compiled between 1842 and 1844. We do know, however, that from as early as 1828 Metcalfe, like William Fraser before him, had been commissioning miniatures, not of the people of Delhi but of the monuments, ruins, palaces and shrines of the city.⁸ This date for the collection of images for the album can be directly linked to contemporary British interest in restoration of Mughal monuments by Robert Smith and others in the later 1820s. Metcalfe had the many paintings he accumulated bound into an album, adding structure and annotations to provide an invaluable account of Delhi as he knew it; of its buildings, landscapes, ceremonies, flora and fauna. Some of the images in the Delhi Book have been attributed to Mazhar 'Ali Khan, the principal topographic artist in Delhi in the 1840s, as well as to other artists from his workshop. The book was dedicated to Metcalfe's three surviving daughters in England. It was intended, he said, for their information and education. Later it would be given to his elder daughter Emily on her 1850 marriage in Simla to Edward Clive Bayley.

While the miniatures themselves are documents of primary importance, so is the way the Delhi Book is compiled. Through its organisational strategy,

⁶ Kaye, *The Golden Calm*, p. 27.

⁷ India Office Prints, Drawings and Paintings, Add.Or.5475, British Library. The album was acquired in 2002.

⁸ In a Delhi Diary entry from 1829, we are told: 'On 4 June two painters were sent to the palace by Thomas Metcalfe. They wanted to draw sketches of the Red Fort and the *Jama Masjid*. The Emperor sent a *chobdar* to help them and to show them properly these buildings.'

this glorious scrapbook is revealing of the way that Thomas Metcalfe understood himself in the context of the built environment of the city of Delhi. It has been noted that the book begins with an image of St James's Church. Delhi's historic monuments are then sandwiched between this, the house of God, and Metcalfe's own houses, *Dilkusha* and Metcalfe House, which appear in several images at the end of the album.⁹ Often relying on local accounts for information in his annotations, Metcalfe, who was a member of the Delhi Archaeological Society, also – perhaps unwittingly – produced a narrative that links the album to a then little understood Indian typology of history writing. The Delhi Book is almost contemporary with the best known of this typology, the *Athar us-Sanadid* of Sayyad Ahmad Khan, a fellow member of the Archaeological Society. There were two differing Urdu versions of the *Athar us-Sanadid* but the first edition, published in 1847, was dedicated to Metcalfe. In this edition, Metcalfe House was included as one of the sights of Delhi, in the way a country seat might have been in a contemporary English guide, alongside imperial Mughal palaces, mosques and shrines.

At the time it was published, there was no other book quite like the *Athar*, and yet it existed within an under-explored written tradition: lists of historical monuments organised by the rank of their builders. Several of these lists in the Persian language were commissioned by or presented as gifts to British patrons in Agra and in Delhi, including Lalah Sil Chand's *Tafrih al-ʿimarat* (Delectation of Buildings) and *Aḥwal-i ʿimarat-mustaqir al-khilafa* (Account of the Buildings of the Abode of the Caliphate) written in 1825/6 and dedicated to James Stephen Lushington, Acting Collector and Magistrate at Agra.¹⁰ A later, unfinished example written in English, *The History of Agra*, was compiled by Mahomed Lududooddeen Khan, a Professor of Arabic at Agra College, for C.C. Jackson, the Collector and Magistrate in 1848.¹¹ These manuscripts can themselves be associated with earlier catalogues of crafts, trades and occupations in the city, a literary device deriving from Persian panegyric forms.¹² The hybrid manuscripts combine biography, topography

⁹ India Office Prints, Drawings and Paintings, Add.Or.5475, f. 84v and f. 85r, and Add.Or.5475, f. 82v, British Library. See also Narayani Gupta, 'From Architecture to Archaeology: The "Monumentalizing" of Delhi's History in the Nineteenth Century', in J. Malik, ed., *Perspectives of Mutual Encounters in South Asian History, 1760–1860* (Leiden, 2000), pp. 49–64.

¹⁰ The *Tafrih al-ʿimarat* contains thirteen coloured drawings of Agra's monumental public buildings. A note from the proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1875 mentions another manuscript of the same type, compiled by Munshi Chhitar Mal for Dr James Duncan and called *Imarat al-Akbar*, '... wherein he gives a detailed account of all the buildings that were then to be seen at Agra'. Ebba Koch has used two of the Persian manuscripts in her reconstruction of an urban context for Agra during the time of Shah Jahan. See Ebba Koch and Richard André Barraud, *The Complete Taj Mahal and the Riverfront Gardens of Agra* (London, 2006), p. 34.

¹¹ MSS Eur.C735, *The History of Agra*, British Library.

¹² For an early example, see Ramesh Chandra Sharma, 'The City of Agra in the First Quarter of the 18th Century: A Contemporary Account', *Indologica Brajensia* 3 (2004), pp. 125ff. See

and ethnography, often accompanied by very lavish and poetic descriptions, the emotional resonance of which the British did not understand. William Fraser had earlier complained that the traditional accounts he received from 'natives' were 'generally absurd and contradicting'.¹³ An Archaeological Survey of India official, A.C.L. Carlleyle, scathingly dismissed the books out of hand as 'flatulently fulsome'.¹⁴ Though the majority of known examples relate to Agra, there were similar precursor manuscripts in Delhi, such as the *Sair al-Manzil* by Mirza Sangin Beg, which was written for Charles Metcalfe in 1828.¹⁵ Impassioned metaphor and its resonant meaning would be clipped back to better suit British tastes in the revised edition of the *Athar* of 1852.

The Delhi Book concluded with images of Metcalfe House, to which Thomas Metcalfe had a particular sentimental attachment. Metcalfe House was the home of his second marriage, and several of his children were born and baptised there. Metcalfe was one of very few Englishmen who would transfer his family possessions to India, taken from the houses in London and in Berkshire he inherited in 1846, both of which were now rented out. One of the miniatures in the book is a ground plan of the house, and it includes notes on its room function (Plate 16). Along with the added reminiscences of Emily and some letters she wrote, the plan helps us interpret how life was lived in the house.¹⁶ A complex house, it operated on multiple levels. First of all it was divided laterally into two halves by function, with a public and a private side.¹⁷ Entry was via a wide flight of east-facing stairs into a large open hall with a double colonnade. This then led to the high, central drawing room, used also for breakfast in the summer when the weather was stifflingly hot. In winter breakfast was taken in the bay room which looked onto the westerly garden. There was a second drawing room and a formal dining room where Metcalfe held monthly winter dinners for up to sixteen people. His study, library and the Napoleon Gallery (for Metcalfe, like William Fraser before him, admired the heights to which the now fallen French soldier had risen and also owned an important collection of Napoleonic memorabilia)

also his 'The Decline of Agra in the Early Colonial Period', *Journal of Historical Studies* 2 (1990), pp. 59–70.

¹³ Letter from William to his father, 20 March 1806, vol. 29, Fraser of Reelig papers.

¹⁴ J.D. Beglav and A.C.L. Carlleyle, *Archaeological Survey of India: Report for the Year 1871–2*, (Calcutta, 1874) vol. IV, p. 201.

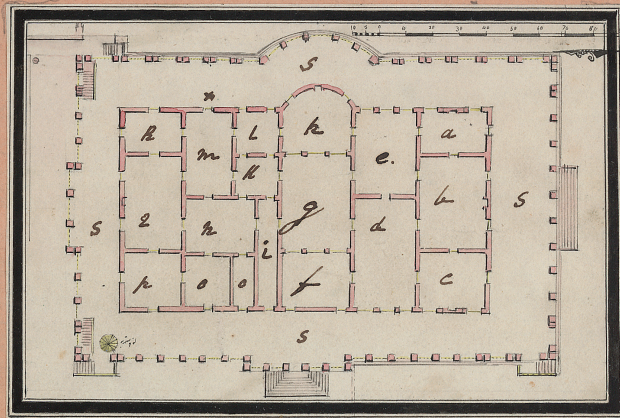
¹⁵ C.M. Naim has pointed out that this Persian example is the one most comparable with the *Athar*. See 'Syed Ahmad and His Two Books Called "Asar-al-Sanadid"', *Modern Asian Studies* 45:3, May 2011, pp. 669–708.

¹⁶ Emily's letters are found in the Campbell/Metcalfe papers, Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge. Writing near the end of her life, Emily added her personal reminiscences to her father's commentary and her perceptions of life in Metcalfe House. These, along with the Delhi Book, were published as *The Golden Calm*.

¹⁷ For a model analysis of the spatial, social and material meanings that can be read from Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson, see Dell Upton, *Architecture in the United States* (Oxford, 1989), Chapter 1: An American Icon.

Plan of the House at Sehlee

- a - Study
- b - Library
- c - Napoleon Gallery
- d - Principal Dining room
- e - Drawing room
- f - Hall



- g - Breakfast & dressing room
- h - Bay room - winter Breakfast room
- i - Passage - k. ante room
- l. Prayer room -
- m - my dressing room * The door by which your mother left the House for the last time at sunset of the Evening of 2nd May 1842.
- n - Strangers room - o - o - Bathing rooms.
- p. Your mother's dressing room & the nursery - and also the Emily's room when she joins me - q your mother's favorite sitting room - R. Bed room - S. S. verandahs.

Plate 16 Mazhar 'Ali Khan (fl.1840s) and studio, *Plan of the House at Dehlee* (Metcalf House). Opaque watercolour.

were also to the northern side of the house. These were the spaces to which visitors would have had access. On the southern side of the house were the bedrooms and bathrooms, private family sitting and dressing rooms, and a room used as a chapel. A passageway led from the front veranda to a room dedicated for guests, 'strangers' in Metcalfe's inscription, many of these 'grass widows' in his daughter's later commentary.¹⁸ This passage was not a service passage in the Palladian sense, but rather gave some privacy to the comings and goings of the stranger. Every room but this one opened directly onto the deep veranda through an arched door. The servants, who cooked and lived in parts of the basement or out of doors in service dependencies, had direct access to all the rooms in the house from the semi-private veranda.

Emily Metcalfe returned to India from her education at Mrs Umphelby's school in Ipswich in 1848, aged eighteen, and resumed her life in Metcalfe House. Though she married Edward Clive Bayley two years later, she would live on in the house until after her father's death in 1853. In addition to the visual representations and notations in the Delhi Book, we have a more detailed record of Metcalfe House thanks to the letters that Emily wrote home to her sister Georgiana (GG) after her return to Delhi. The letters include a detailed description of the two private rooms she now used, a bedroom and a small sitting room that had once belonged to her late mother. They show that in addition to the European furniture and furnishings transferred from Thomas's English estates, Metcalfe House contained treasured objects made in India. In a numbered sketch headed 'plan and furniture of my bedroom and sitting room', Emily explained where many of these pieces were placed and how they were used:

Table one in my bedroom is the one where I write all my letters. It is like the black and gold box I gave Mamma. Table 2 is a mahogany sphere table for odds and ends. Table 3 my dressing table. Glass, a large or rather long glass, 7 feet high! Looking glass. WS means wash stand. CH means chairs. D means door. SH are two stands of shelves ... My bed is beautiful, made of white wood, polished and painted with gold! Quite an elegance. Too good to use.

Sitting room. Tables 1 and 2, round rosewood tables tastefully adorned ... [Books including Milton] lying on the former. Sofa made of ebony, also the 2 chairs by the fireplace. The one with the cross is where papa sat the night I arrived and I sat by him in a little chair that stands between the door and *almirah*. Table 3 is a marble one where my workbox stands, the one which Uncle Charles gave Mamma. It is of Bombay manufacture like Auntie's paper-weight and fitted up with ivory. Table 4 black marble slab on which my desk stands. Table 5 black marble slab on which a beautiful marble clock stands, also my knife box. Knife, stand and stool are between these tables. Table 6 loaded with knickknacks. BS 2 book shelves [and] a console on which sits my

¹⁸ Kaye, *The Golden Calm*, p. 201.

larger drawing book. When my writing cases arrive they are to be on one of the round tables.¹⁹

Emily would later write that some of her father's furniture struck new-comers to India as heavy and old fashioned, '... the style of those days, solid mahogany, rosewood and marble ... [with] many of the tables entirely of marble, tops, pedestals and all ...', but in her description the hybrid quality of this Victorian home is immediately evident.²⁰

Despite his salary from the Company, a patrimony of £10,000 received on the death of his father in 1813 and, after 1846 and the death of his brother Charles, the income from his inherited properties in England, Thomas Metcalfe was constantly in financial difficulties.²¹ His attitude to money seems to have vacillated noticeably. On the one hand, as the representative of the Company in Delhi which had its own financial problems, he was seen by 1838 to be steadily chipping back on the value of imperial *nazrs* and urging frugality on British representation at the Mughal court – and also on the Emperor himself. With his own money, however, he is known to have been extravagant. His more prudent older brother Charles had objected to the lavish building project of Metcalfe House, complaining of 'the folly of the house, which he has built and furnished'. As well as wasting his patrimony, Thomas had had to borrow money from Charles.²² But his tendency for overspending was more problematic. Thomas Metcalfe had once been in trouble with the Government of India because of indebtedness to an Indian moneylender. Numerous incidents were drawn to the attention of the Company in Delhi at this time, as had been the case in Bengal in the later eighteenth century, suggesting that the personal transactions of many British officials were a little too close to their official ones. Metcalfe's were no exception.

At the end of the eighteenth century, Lord Cornwallis had tried to regulate customs that could not be abolished without offence to Indian rulers so that British officials would not exploit their positions. This had included private trading by Company officials. Cornwallis had also tried to stop officials from

¹⁹ Letter from Emily to GG, 26 January 1848, box 7, Campbell/Metcalfe Papers, Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge University.

²⁰ Kaye, *The Golden Calm*, p. 126. Emily also wrote to Georgiana from Simla when plans were being made in 1850 for her wedding there, and she included a sketch of the house her father had leased for the event, The Rookery on Jakko Hill. Near the Mall Bazaar, the church and the post office, and only 10 minutes' drive from Government House, it had four bedrooms, an external kitchen and several servant outhouses, as well as stabling for six or seven horses. Emily also wrote later to her sister describing the split-level house on a Simla hillside where she and Edward Bayley stayed after the April wedding. Box 7, Campbell/Metcalfe papers, Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge University.

²¹ Will of Sir Thomas Theophilus Metcalfe of Fern Hill, Berkshire, PROB 11/1552/170, TNA. On his death Sir Thomas left each of his four children £10,000.

²² Percival Spear papers, box 16, Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge University.

receiving personal presents worth more than 1,000 rupees. Ceremonial *nazrs* were regarded as the property of government and were, literally, recycled: stored in a *toshkhāna* or treasury, to be handed on as gifts on a different occasion. Because of the compromises they could cause, loans from local bankers had been strictly forbidden. This, however, did not prevent the accumulation of secret debts by British officials. After the scandal in Delhi over the affairs of the short-lived Resident Edward Colebrooke, dismissed in 1829 for several corruption offences, it is surprising that Metcalfe should have laid himself open to any hint of impropriety.²³ However, in the Punjabi Provincial Archives in Lahore there is a sequence of documents that relate to charges made against him in 1836/7 by Mr Munroe, a clerk who after being dismissed claimed that Metcalfe had misappropriated government funds.²⁴ Though these charges never resulted in censure, and may simply have been a political echo of the Colebrooke affair, even his own brother 'feared something that will not bear the light', and the government noted that Metcalfe had mixed public and private accounts and thus laid himself open to investigation. In bearing the costs of maintaining his estates, Metcalfe was indeed in debt to Delhi landowners and bankers, and this was revealed at the time of his sudden death when his affairs were being settled.²⁵ Yet, as all families do, the Metcalfes created their own narratives. In their stories, Thomas Metcalfe was simply a generous and hospitable man. His daughter Emily wrote that 'his liberality was of the best kind ... he was bounteous without ostentation, and no man ever left his house without carrying with him a grateful recollection of the kindness and geniality of his host'.²⁶ Some outside of the family, however, were more off-hand in their assessment of his character. 'The Hon Mr M is an easy good tempered gentlemanly man, not much disposed to work ...', wrote his iconoclastic underling James Ralph in 1832.²⁷

Dilkusha, the house at Mehrauli and Thomas Metcalfe's second Delhi house, was built around a Mughal tomb. But though *Dilkusha* was said to have been intended as a 'retreat' from the pressures of life in Metcalfe House and the official Residency at Ludlow Castle, we must question its deeper meaning.²⁸ Tombs from the Mughal and earlier Sultanate periods were a common feature in the countryside around the cities of the northern plains and elsewhere in India. As a consequence of prior imperial residence, on the

²³ See Katherine Prior, 'Bad Language: The Role of English, Persian and Other Esoteric Tongues in the Dismissal of Sir Edward Colebrooke as Resident of Delhi in 1829', *Modern Asian Studies* 35:1 (2001), pp. 75–112.

²⁴ Press list #1, Case 6, 1–2, 23/3/36 to 1/12/38, Punjabi Provincial Archives Lahore.

²⁵ Initial documents relating to the probate of Metcalfe's will, 1855, Inventories & Accounts of Deceased Estates, Bengal 1780–1937, IOR L/AG/34/27/155, British Library.

²⁶ Kaye, *The Golden Calm*, p. 7.

²⁷ Letter from James Ralph, August 1832, bundle 274, Fraser of Reelig papers.

²⁸ Kaye, *The Golden Calm*, p. 141.

periphery of cities like Agra, Delhi, Ajmer or Lahore there were, in addition to the great and well-studied monumental burial complexes (the tomb of the Emperor Humayun or the Taj Mahal, for example), likely to be a large number of sub-imperial mausoleums, isolated or clustered together. There is plentiful evidence for this in the ruinous buildings that still dot the landscape today. These tombs can also often be seen in the detailed backgrounds to Mughal miniature paintings from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Many such tombs were later recorded on British-period Ordnance Survey maps from the middle of the nineteenth century, and those that were considered of ranking importance were further described in the formal reports of the Archaeological Survey of India. Early Mughal-period tombs were often octagonal, less frequently square, in plan and for more wealthy patrons were commonly situated in the centre of an open and geometrically planned *chārbāgh*. The typology of such gardens can be superficially equated with the parterres of seventeenth-century Europe; and perhaps one of the reasons the British were initially attracted to adapting and living in Mughal tombs was because of the ordered formal gardens that often surrounded (and isolated) them. In reaction to the closeness and intimacy of the inner cities of India, newly built British bungalows were now being situated in similar open compounds or gardens in Civil Stations, and the now standardised building type that developed was adapted to the hot climate of north India's plains, as well as to the escalating social expectation of British occupants. In cross-section, a bungalow had a high central core with clerestory windows (for thermal ventilation), surrounded by a register of rooms with lower ceilings, extending outwards to the semi-private space of an encircling veranda. It is very likely that Mughal *hasht bihisht* pavilions and tombs, with high, domed central chambers surrounded by lower rooms, were the typological model for the *pukka* new bungalows of the British. Both were built by the local workmen with a long tradition of understanding the demands of living in northern India's scorching summer climate.

To live in a reused tomb does not seem to have been an undertaking in any way sacrilegious to the predominantly Christian British in India. Among the many documentary accounts of such reuse is that of the missionary Henry Martyn who, on first arriving in Bengal in 1806, was given what he described as a 'pagoda' to live in at Aldeen House. 'My habitation, assigned me by Mr Brown, is ... on the edge of the river,' he wrote. 'Thither I retired at night, and really felt something like superstitious dread at being in a place once inhabited, as it were, by devils, but yet felt disposed to be triumphantly joyful that the temple where they were worshipped was to become Christ's oratory.'²⁹ But for the most part the religious undertones of tomb dwelling went disregarded. Finding themselves in a landscape in which the

²⁹ Henry Martyn, *The Living Age* 86 (1865), p. 56.

reuse of minor religious structures by local people was also commonplace, the British took advantage.³⁰ Such reuse is often still the case today, and unofficial occupation (squatting) can ironically sometimes help to save an historic structure that might otherwise have been demolished by developers or allowed to fall to the ground.³¹

At an institutional level, there were numerous documentary records of adaptive reuse. One example in Surat, the great *musāfirkhāna* built in 1653 by Mohafiz Khan for gatherings of *hajj* pilgrims en route by sea to Mecca, reported to be deserted and ruined in 1780, was sold to the East India Company, who turned it first into a hospital, then municipal offices.³² Reuse of monumental structures by the British was soon seen, and was certainly rationalised, as a means of saving endangered or derelict buildings. This was happening at exactly the time that there were the glimmerings of consciousness of, and awakened conscience about, the historical value of Indian architecture and calls for its preservation.³³ The engineer/architect Robert Smith, the subject of Chapter Four of this book, for example, had been charged in the late 1820s with the restoration of Delhi's *Jama Masjid*, largely as a way of eliciting the good opinion of a section of the local population.³⁴ And although Smith's subsequent attempt at the design resolution of the top of the Qutb Minar with its imitation *chhatra* was not a success, his orders to execute this intervention and the attention he gave to the task in hand show us the importance attached to such fledgling local conservation projects in India. By these means any troubled sensibilities in local Muslim communities over the inappropriate reuse of religious structures as dwellings could be effectively ignored by the British administration.

Attitudes displayed by individual British officers visiting Delhi often trivialised the potential seriousness of their actions, as well as the violation that must certainly have been felt by local Muslims. In 1828 Edward Archer, the admirer of Robert Smith's painted subterranean rooms, was taken to Mehrauli and treated to breakfast and a daytime *nautch* performance in the tomb of a nobleman, in a large single room, square and domed, that was probably in the early Mughal Jamali-Kamali complex. 'If the dead had perception, the spirit of the defunct must have been rather "up" to witness

³⁰ Romantic sketches and watercolours of the Calcutta-based artist George Chinnery (1774–1852) sometimes captured this reuse. They show that in late-eighteenth-century Calcutta, for example, new building often abutted semi-derelict Mughal and other religious structures and that the everyday life of some Bengalis took place in spaces of informal adaptation.

³¹ Examples at the time my research was being conducted included the Muiz-ud Din Mubarak Shah tomb in Delhi's Kotla Market, from the Sayyid period (fifteenth century).

³² T.C. Hope, *Surat, Broach and Other Old Cities of Gojjerat* (Bombay, 1868), p. 2.

³³ Anne-Julie Etter, 'Antiquarian Knowledge and Preservation of Indian Monuments at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century', in I. Sengupta and D. Ali, eds, *Knowledge Production, Pedagogy and Institutions in Colonial India* (New York, 2011), pp. 75ff.

³⁴ IOR F/4/1324/52472, pp. 1–51, British Library.

such unhallowed use of his last lodging,' he noted irreverently in his journal.³⁵ This kind of behaviour would later cause problems when, in 1835, Mr Blake, a former assistant to the Delhi Resident and a serious aficionado of *nautch* performances, was murdered by a mob in Jaipur, ostensibly for desecrating the tomb of Adham Khan at Mehrauli.³⁶ But by that time, high-ranking British officials mistakenly believed themselves to be in a powerful enough position to ignore any underlying reasons for such incidents. They would go on to use selected Mughal tombs in carefully chosen and strategic locations not just as convenient and picturesque places to have a picnic or watch a dance performance, but as a place to put down roots and live. By doing so they were making public what they now regarded as the right to a permanent presence in the historic Indian landscape.

Yet there was really little new about British reuse of standing Mughal religious monuments as houses in the early nineteenth century. At the start of the seventeenth century the English traveller William Finch had enthusiastically described the potential of Mughal tombs for conversion large enough for 'a very good man with his whole household'.³⁷ Reuse of octagonal tomb structures became a sufficiently commonplace practice to be absorbed into architectural drawings from the later eighteenth century. When Robert Mabon, or perhaps Gangaram Chintaman Tambat, the Indian draftsman then working with him, sketched the ground plan of a 'bungalow' in 1798, it was clearly derived from the plan of an octagonal Mughal tomb (Plate 17).³⁸ It was not until the British began to move up and across new territories in the northern plains in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that it became a common, although in most instances transitory, practice to live in a tomb or a mosque. Travellers and troops on the march often stopped to camp in disused structures and regarded them, in army slang, as tents on hard standing. Some, however, would be converted to more permanent residence,

³⁵ Edward Caulfield Archer, *Tours in Upper India and in Parts of the Himalaya Mountains* (London, 1833), vol. 1, p. 123. According to Charles D'Oyly, by 1813 the *nautch* in Calcutta had become 'nearly obsolete among Europeans; a circumstance by no means disagreeable'. This was not the case in Delhi.

³⁶ For the murder of Mr Blake see William Sleeman who noted that, '... Mr Blake, lately of Jeypore, was barbarously murdered ...': *Rambles and Reflections of an Indian Official* (London, 1844), p. 216. William Sleeman's is the only published contemporary reference to Blake's use/abuse of the tomb, and later literature draws on and embellishes Sleeman's account. There are also references in the letters of the gossip James Ralph in the Fraser of Reelig papers that give us a little more information about the character of Blake.

³⁷ William Finch, cited in William Foster, ed., *Early Travels in India, 1583–1619* (Oxford, 1921), p. 166.

³⁸ Yale Center for British Art, B1977.14.22429. For more information on Mabon and his colleague Gangaram Chintaman Tambat see Holly Shaffer, *Adapting the Eye: An Archive of the British in India, 1770–1830* (New Haven, 2011). Shaffer shows how meaning linking British and Indian subjects can be expanded when previously marginalised material is given an unbiased reading.

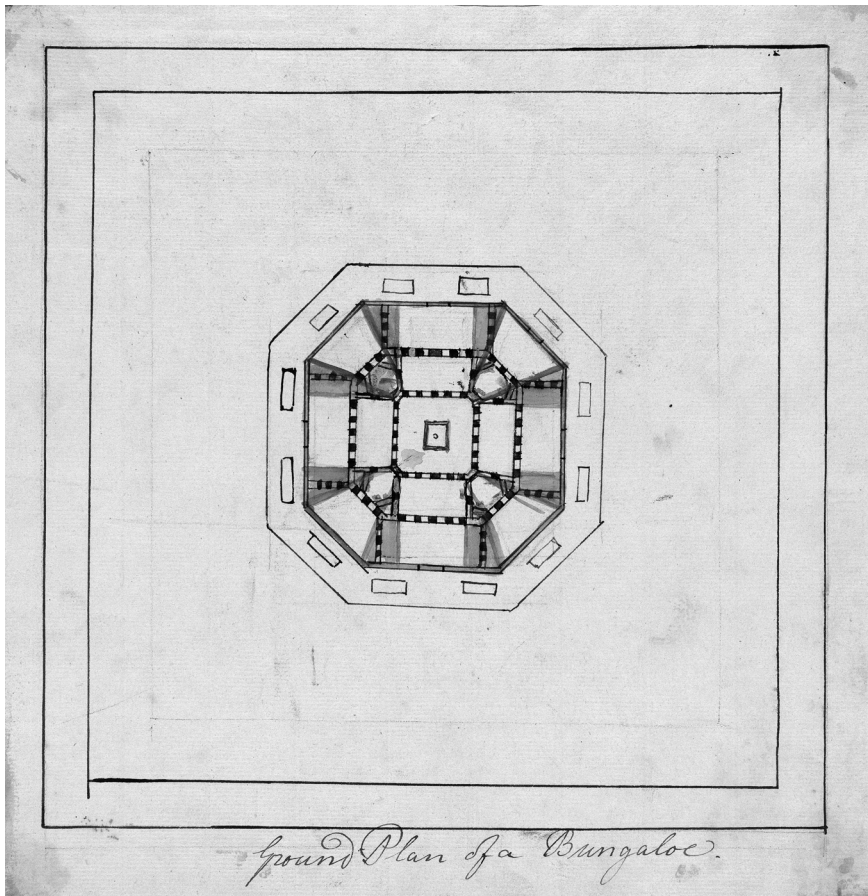


Plate 17 Robert Mabon (d. 1789), *Ground Plan of a Bungalow*. Watercolour and graphite with pen and black ink, sheet 58.4 × 29.8 cm.

a common practice at the turn of the nineteenth century. When George Annesley (Lord Valentia) toured India in 1803, he visited Alexander Kyd, Commanding Officer at the former Mughal provincial capital, Allahabad. He wrote very enthusiastically about Kyd's house above the Fort which '... consisted chiefly of an old mosque, the centre of which, with its dome, forms an excellent room; the sides are all bedchambers'.³⁹ Visiting Agra in 1812, Maria Nugent and her party travelled about a mile from their encampment in the Fort, along a road with some reportedly fine buildings and some

³⁹ Lord Valentia, *Voyages and Travels*, vol. 1 (London, 1809), p. 210. David Ochterlony would later own this converted mosque, living in it sporadically before it was sold to the government in 1811.

ruins, to the home of a Mr Blunt. 'Mr B. has a very good house, formerly a Mussalman's tomb, the decorations of which still remain,' wrote Lady Nugent. 'Some of the sculpture is very good, and the arches form a very good verandah.'⁴⁰ In Agra, this was not an isolated instance. Although to Edward Archer in 1828 the city seemed at first glance to comprise only '... broken arches and dreary ravines ... and the mouldering remains of countless tombs,' some of these tombs, he went on to note a bit more optimistically, had '... been added to, and are thus made the most comfortable houses, particularly for the hot weather'.⁴¹ Suitability to the hot climate seems to have been an important determining factor. A notable example in Agra, still in use today, is the tomb of the Qandahari Begum, a wife of Shah Jahan. This was altered first as a house for occasional use by the ruler of the neighbouring princely state of Bharatpur before becoming part of a women's college. The central tomb building on a raised *pukka* platform was set in an enclosed garden with four octagonal corner towers. By the middle of the nineteenth century, according to records of the local Agra Archaeological Society, it had been 'well repaired in harmony with the European style of architecture and converted into a comfortable and well-furnished dwelling house'. The house, that report continued, was '... one of the coolest in Agra'.⁴²

In addition to the thermal links between Mughal tombs and British bungalows visible in cross-section, there was also a fine dividing line between some types of Mughal funerary and secular architecture that may have helped ease any minor British trepidations about reuse. Tombs were meant at one level to be an earthly replica of one of the houses of paradise, which both tombs and gardens often symbolised. The distinctions between building types were somewhat blurred because there was an imperial Mughal precedent for turning secular *baradari* into tombs. At Sikandra near Agra, for example, a fine Lodi-period *baradari* had been reconstructed to become the tomb of Maryam al-Zamani, a wife of Akbar and mother of the Emperor Jahangir. And on the eastern bank of the Ravi river at Shahdara, the tomb of Jahangir (d.1627), built between 1628 and 1638 by his son Shah Jahan, and the tomb of Jahangir's wife Nur Jahan (d.1645) were both placed on top of earlier pavilions in an area once used as imperial gardens. Some tombs in Delhi, such as that of Roshanara Begum, a flat-roofed square structure with a Persianate *hasht bihisht* plan, had been designed to be used as garden pavilions in the owner's lifetime. The wider convention of building one's own tomb before death and using it as a garden spread amongst some of the lesser nobility.

⁴⁰ Ashley L. Cohen, ed., *Lady Nugent's East India Journal: A Critical Edition* (Oxford and Delhi, 2014), p. 167. This was E.W. Blunt, one of the local company agents. The building still stands.

⁴¹ Archer, *Tours in Upper India*, vol. 1, p. 69.

⁴² *Transactions, Archaeological Society of Agra*, January 1874. A full run of this elusive publication, which was printed from 1874–78, is held by the British Library.

This was supported by the somewhat unstable Mughal pattern of land inheritance: a garden could be enjoyed during life and would not then be lost after death. As we have seen in Chapter Two, the practice was to be continued in an imaginatively hybrid architectural context at David Ochterlony's Mubarak Bagh, if indeed he had intended to be buried there.

The British, expanding their governance and settlement of the countryside surrounding Mughal cities such as Shahjahanabad, were also faced with the practical problems of what to do with pre-existing ruinous structures. One solution was to leave tombs and other monuments standing in the suburban landscape and to build in their vicinity. At first this appealed to Romantic tastes, although that sensibility would quickly take on proprietary dimensions. A writer in the *Bengal and Agra Gazette* in 1842 noted, apparently without any sense of incongruity, 'Every Peer [*pīr*] has his tomb and they are numerous in and about Agra; they are often found in the compounds of our Bungalows.' He added, '... any attempt to remove them would be followed by a remonstrance from the Emaum [*īmām*]'.⁴³ Another solution was to dismantle the structures and reuse their building materials. This was extensively done in Lahore, taken by the British from the Sikh Kingdom in 1849. A third solution, logical to emerging British utilitarian sensibilities, was to repair the more solid of the ruins and to put them to new uses, and several were now turned into dwelling houses. The Governor's House in Lahore is an important example.⁴⁴ The resulting tomb/houses form a hybrid sub-group of complexity in which on the one hand we can contrast a move to valuing usefulness over the fantasies of nineteenth-century British orientalising tastes and on the other we can read at a deeper level a growing ruthlessness as the British claimed both India's physical and its cultural landscapes. The practice might in one sense be regarded as a precursor to the later-nineteenth-century introduction of the invented 'Indo-Saracenic' style for use in British public buildings.⁴⁵

The practice of reusing standing Mughal funerary monuments and their gardens was by no means exclusive only to the British pattern of settlement after conquest. In other parts of north India not yet under British control there had also already been local traditions of such reuse. Jat, Rohilla and Maratha leaders, the rulers of the Sikh Kingdom, their European mercenary generals and their soldiers had all used extant tombs and other Mughal religious structures for their troops and as personal accommodations. There are documentary accounts of the practice, for example, from the late eighteenth century when the Marathas were in control of Agra and Daulat Rao

⁴³ *Bengal and Agra Annual Guide and Gazetteer* (1842), part 3, p. 116.

⁴⁴ Sylvia Shorto, 'A Tomb of One's Own: Governor's House, Lahore', in P. Scriver and V. Prakash, eds, *Colonial Modernities: Building, Dwelling and Architecture in British India and Ceylon* (London, 2004), pp. 151–69. The house is still used by the Governor of Punjab

⁴⁵ See T.R. Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj* (Berkeley, 1989) chapter 3.

Scindia made personal if temporary use of the iconic Taj Mahal for his camp. Scindia also used the fine tomb of Prince Khusrao (eldest son of Jahangir) in Allahabad to billet a battalion of his sepoys. In the suburbs of Lahore, the so-called Tomb of Anarkali had been used as a pleasure pavilion by the Sikh ruler, Ranjit Singh, and then by one of his sons, Kharak Singh.⁴⁶ Sometime after 1822, when a new domed and colonnaded house was built nearby by the two European mercenary generals Jean-Baptiste Ventura and Jean-François Allard, the tomb would serve as the *zanāna* or women's quarters in their compound.⁴⁷ Exactly the opposite pattern of use was the case with the home of another mercenary, Claude-Auguste Court, who elsewhere in Lahore's suburban fringe adapted the Shahjahani-period tomb of Nusrat Khan as his own house (he called it *L'Ermitage*) while building a new *zanāna* for his Kashmiri wife nearby, carelessly disrupting the symmetry of the *chārbāgh*. Court also fitted its gardens with a small mosque for his wife.⁴⁸ Others of the mercenary brigades serving Ranjit Singh were quartered around Lahore in other Mughal monuments. The octagonal tomb purported to have been that of Qasim Khan Mīr Bahr, occupied by Sikh soldiers, was taken over by the British, added to and built about for use as their new Governor's House. The papers of Honoria Lawrence, wife of Henry Lawrence, describe in detail her family's move into the altered structure.⁴⁹ These few examples were part of a far larger tradition of reuse after conquest that we associate primarily with the occupation of fortifications, cantonments or gardens for encampment, but which in India extended to expedient reuse of religious structures, both those that appeared to be derelict or abandoned but were situated in locations with now changing functions; and those that had better maintained their lustre and would necessarily lend prestige to a conquering user.

Plans for small Mughal tombs were sometimes rectangular or square, though the octagon was the most common form. There was a variation of this: square with its corners canted, known as a *muthamman baghdadi* or Baghdad octagon, with four long and four shorter sides. In India such octagonal tombs had been built from the period of the Delhi Sultanate, drawing upon important precedents in Islamic architecture elsewhere – the earliest use of the form dates back to the late-seventh-century commemorative Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.

⁴⁶ From March 1851 until 1891 the tomb of Anarkali would be used as the Protestant church of the British community. Today it houses the collections of the Punjabi Provincial Archives of Pakistan and a small museum.

⁴⁷ For a description of this interior, see Karl Alexander von Huegel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Panjab, Containing a Particular Account of the Government and Character of the Sikhs* (London, 1845), pp. 283–84.

⁴⁸ Charles Grey and H.L.O. Garrett, *European Adventurers in Northern India, 1785–1849* (Lahore, 1929), p. 154.

⁴⁹ See the letters of Honoria Lawrence, MSS Eur.F85/107, British Library. There are conflicting historical accounts of whose tomb this was. See also Shorto, 'A Tomb of One's Own'.

Early examples of the plan in Delhi include the Sultan Ghari tomb (1231) built for his son Nasri ud-Din by Shams ud-Din Iltutmish (r.1211–36). Later Suri adaptations, such as the tomb of Isa Khan Niyazi (1547), were distinguished by a triple arcade on each of the eight sides. The 1561 tomb of Adham Khan, foster brother of the Emperor Akbar, (and later the unfortunate Mr Blake's house) is a Mughal example that derives from the Sultanate octagon.⁵⁰ More common, and to become the prevalent Mughal sub-imperial form, was an almost formulaic Timurid-derived cross-in-square plan, introduced into India in the reign of Humayun. This would become close to a standard for small mausoleums and garden pavilions, and several examples are to be found in and around Delhi.

Octagonal plans also had a particular resonance with the British in India in the mid nineteenth century because there was then a vogue for octagons in Britain (and elsewhere in the western hemisphere), particularly during the decade 1840 to 1850. There were both classical and Gothic precedents for the European domestic use of this centralised plan, which had first enjoyed a revival in the early eighteenth century in small structures such as banqueting halls, hunting lodges and follies.⁵¹ Noteworthy octagonal follies were built in Ireland during this period, and later in the century there was a growing interest in the form outside continental Europe, triggered perhaps by the publications of the Irish antiquarian architect James Cavanagh-Murphy (1760–1814) – a part of the nascent study of architecture in the Iberian peninsula and of alternate meanings of the origins of the Gothic that began to tentatively link it to the architecture of Islam. The form is also strongly associated with the several different phases of English domestic Gothic revival as it picked up pace in the early nineteenth century. The best example of this is the central tower of William Beckford's Fonthill Abbey (completed in 1813), which itself echoed Ely Cathedral. Octagons were also sometimes built in mid-nineteenth-century North America as part of Utopian schemes; and they were built in other parts of the Western Atlantic where the British were a colonising presence, for example, Octagon Villa in Antigua, residence of Andrew Coltart (1799–1854).⁵² The form, with air circulation from all eight sides, was particularly well suited to buildings in hot and humid climates.

In India, octagons had also long been a common plan for the residential towers that were sometimes built as part of Mughal fortifications. Close at

⁵⁰ Earlier royal prerogative for the form was broken with the building of this monument. Adham Khan, who had been implicated in the murder of Akbar's prime minister, Ataga Khan, and who been thrown from the ramparts of the Agra fort as punishment, was given the dignity of a tomb, but one in an old and outmoded royal form that was associated with the deposed Surs, considered traitorous by the Mughals. A painting of the incident is to be found in an illustrated version of the *Akbarnama* in the Victoria and Albert Museum: IS.2:29-1896.

⁵¹ A good example is James Gibbs' garden pavilion, The Octagon, at Orleans House in Twickenham, completed by 1720.

⁵² See the supplement to *Illustrated London News*, July 6, 1850, p. 33.

hand was the Shah Burj or royal tower in the Fort at Delhi. Fortified Rajput palaces also extensively use the form in elaborate *chhatris*. With the eclectic European-influenced Indian building in Lucknow in the early nineteenth century at least two princely palaces were organised around octagonal plans, including the spectacular eighteenth-century residential *baoli* that is all that now remains of the fortified Macchi Bhawan (after 1775) and the Sat Khande (1838), a seven-storey belvedere. In addition, many Lucknow palaces had classically derived corner turrets related to octagonal *chhatris*, such as those of another *Dilkusha*, the small suburban palace built by Gore Ouseley, aide-de-camp to the *navvāb* Saadat Ali Khan in about 1800.⁵³ This house is an example of an interest among the Lucknawi *navvābs* in European architectural fashions at the time that classicism was yielding to the Gothic as a nationalistically charged style alternative in Britain.

So very many varied precedents for the domestic use of the octagonal plan may help us to contextualise, but do not fully explain, the ease with which British officials moved into pre-existing octagonal Mughal tombs. We must turn as well to their place in the broader landscapes of architecture, religion and politics to better grasp the reason that perhaps the best-known example, the tomb of Muhammad Quli Khan, Thomas Metcalfe's *Dilkusha* in Mehrauli, came to be adapted as a dwelling. For while Metcalfe House informs our understanding of how Thomas Metcalfe's self-image resonated with his status as a landowner in Britain and in Delhi, his tomb/house sharpens our understanding of his protracted struggle for dominance with the last Mughal Emperor through the appropriation of the Delhi's historic landscape.

Mehrauli, about 10 miles south of Shahjahanabad, was an area where ruinous tombs in a hitherto unknown landscape were frequently noted by European travellers, especially women. The landscape caused repeated exclamations of surprise, invoking a sense of awe, of an experience we might think of as the historical sublime; though perhaps to soften any implicit violence, the mediating word 'picturesque' was often used instead. The free-spirited traveller Fanny Parkes Parlbey, who firmly held that a place was spoiled by European residence, expressed the sentiment when she wrote of Mehrauli, 'You cannot turn your head in any direction but you are surrounded by ruins of the most picturesque beauty.'⁵⁴ The area around Mehrauli was a jumble of buildings that stretched back through India's rich architectural history, then only dimly located in British knowledge of the past and so all the more mysterious and attractive to those who allowed themselves to be open to this past. At Mehrauli, on the foundations of earlier cities, were the impressive monumental buildings of India's second wave of Islamic invaders, including

⁵³ See Neeta Das, 'The "Country Houses" of Lucknow', in R. Llewelyn-Jones, ed., *Lucknow w: City of Illusion* (Munich, 2006), pp. 167–92.

⁵⁴ Fanny Parkes Parlbey, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque* (London, 1850), p. 197.

the magnificent Qutb Minar, begun in the late twelfth century. The Qutb excited particular comment. Honoria Lawrence wrote: '... the Kootub stands in the midst of a chaos of ruins, evidently of very different dates and styles ... The dilapidation all round makes it the more marvellous that this one pillar remains absolutely perfect.'⁵⁵ Close to the Qutb were many other significant historic structures that spanned the centuries. They included the Quwwat ul-Islam complex, painted so powerfully by Robert Smith in the late 1820s, as well as an important Slave Dynasty tank, the Hauz-i Shamsi. Nearby was the early Mughal Jamali-Kamali mosque and tomb complex (1528/9), with its rich painted cut-stucco decoration and its central-Asian-derived inlaid tiles.

But for local people, Mehrauli was most importantly the burial site of a venerated thirteenth-century Sufi saint of the Chishti order, Khwaja Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki, known as Qutb Sahib (d.1236). The surrounding landscape was dotted with the tombs of the faithful who had chosen to be buried within the spiritual field of this famous *pīr*. Several of the later Mughals, including the Emperors Bahadur Shah I (d.1712), Shah Alam II (d.1806) and Akbar II (d.1837), were in a funerary enclave attached to the saint's *dargāh*. Bahadur Shah II, the last Mughal, had intended to be buried there, too. For the travelling Englishwomen, this landscape of ruinous tombs combined with its mysterious sweep of monumental history was both touching and beautiful. 'We went ... to Maraolee, to look at the tombs,' wrote Honoria Lawrence, who was soon to live in a tomb of her own in Lahore. 'Tombs indeed! On every side they stand as close as cells in a honeycomb.' She went on, in slightly morbid vein, 'How I should love to raise such a tomb over my children!'⁵⁶

Set in this impressive architectural milieu was the solid and well-preserved tomb of Mohammed Quli Khan, an early-seventeenth-century *mansabdar* commanding 5,000 horse and, as the son of one of the Emperor Akbar's wet nurses, a foster brother of the Emperor himself, as the unlucky Adham Khan had been. Built on a high raised *chabutra*, it followed the now established convention for Mughal tombs described above. An octagon in plan, it had a lofty, arched *iwān* at each of its eight sides. Four of these opened into the domed central chamber, while the other four were blind ornamented niches. Following standard practice, a sarcophagus was placed in this domed chamber, while the body itself was interred in a subterranean vault beneath. In about 1844 the tomb of Mohammed Quli Khan had been purchased from a man named Abdul Ghaffar by Thomas Metcalfe and turned into a small, gem-like country house with an expansive, landscaped garden.⁵⁷ As its conversion into a house had not been noticed by the tomb-conscious Honoria

⁵⁵ Cited in Lawrence and Woodiwiss, *Journals*, p. 126.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁵⁷ Spear papers, box 16, Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge. According to his probate documents, Metcalfe also continued to pay annual ground rent of twenty-seven rupees for the property. Inventories & Accounts of Deceased Estates, Bengal 1780–1937, IOR L/

Lawrence when she visited the area in the previous year, we can assume the work had not yet begun. According to the late-life notes of Emily Bayley, Metcalfe purchased land that had several structures on it, the principal one being this tomb, which she said was under threat of impending demolition: 'The family to whom it belonged had become impoverished, and had handed over this tomb as the only available asset, to the banker to whom they owed a large sum of money. He wished to sell it, and so my father bought it ...'.⁵⁸ In his commentary in the Delhi Book, Metcalfe himself wrote of '... a quiet little residence at the Kootoob, as yet unhonoured by a name, prettily situated and of convenient access whenever retirement or a change of air is desirable'. He mentioned in 1844 a house 'in its infancy [which in] a few months will, I trust, perfect both its comfort and beauty'.⁵⁹

The plan of this country retreat was determined by the octagonal shape of the tomb. Leaving the original structure intact, Metcalfe built around it in two distinct registers, reflective of the planning principles of a bungalow. The tomb stood on a raised hillock, and because of the way the land fell away, he first extended its broad foundational platform, more than doubling the footprint of the building. Drawings of the site show that the parts of the platform that remain today are unusually large in relation to the tomb (Figure 5).⁶⁰ Metcalfe built an arcaded *godown* of rusticated stone under this widened platform, with rooms for service. He now had space to enlarge the octagonal tomb on top, and again he built outwards, adding a number of rooms and galleries. These were recorded by Emily Bayley as six square and wedge-shaped rooms. The exterior was given two classicising entry doors with a fanlight above and lights below, protected from the sun by louvred shutters. Flanked by pillars of an unidentifiable colonial order, the main entry was reached by an external flight of stairs, parts of which remain standing today. Around the extensions was an outer balustraded area. The contrasts between new, British rustication and old, central Asian keel arches resulted in a house more curious than graceful, yet Metcalfe gave this mongrel the courtly Persian name *Dilkusha*, which means heart's delight. *Dilkusha* was included in the Delhi Book, and additional miniature paintings of it were made for other members of the family.⁶¹ A rare photograph of the house, in the Templehouse papers, dating from about 1865 and perhaps the only surviving image from this period, shows the structure as shabby but with its additions still largely intact,

AG/34/27/155, British Library. This may have been to owners of the additional land Metcalfe acquired when laying out his garden.

⁵⁸ Kaye, *The Golden Calm*, p. 146.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

⁶⁰ The drawings are published by Nalini Thakur, 'Mehrauli, Delhi', *A & D* 6:1 (1989), pp. 95–104.

⁶¹ In the Templehouse papers, owned by descendants of one branch of the Metcalfe family, there are photographs of these miniatures, but the location of the originals is not known.

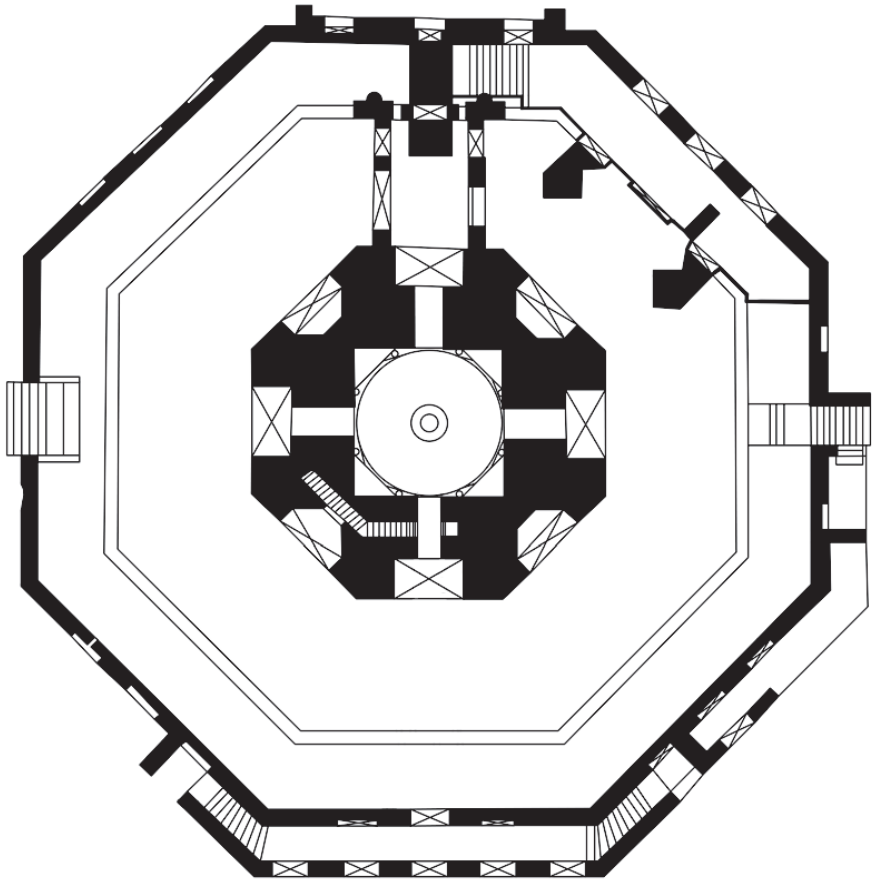


Figure 5 The Tomb of Muhammad Quli Khan (*Dilkusha*).

its new, triple-arcaded veranda echoing that of the tomb of Adham Khan in the distance (Plate 18).

The interior of *Dilkusha* must once have been spectacular. It comprised a drawing room, Metcalfe's bedroom and library, his daughter Emily's bedroom, a spare bedroom and dressing room, a tiny room he called an oratory, plus the two entrance halls, to the east and the west.⁶² Some of these rooms would have incorporated the recessed Mughal keel arches with their surrounding bands of inlay and calligraphic inscription: because the peripheral rooms that Metcalfe built abutted the external walls, these rooms found themselves embellished with decoration once intended for the tomb's exterior. As these exterior walls were roofed in for part of their life,

⁶² Kaye, *The Golden Calm*, p. 146.



Plate 18 Unknown photographer, *Dilkusha*, c.1865. Albumen print.

today there is more detail left of their decoration than might elsewhere be found, including some coloured tile inlay in green, yellow and blue. The high central chamber directly above the burial slab, a square room with a dome supported on squinches – the cool central core of the building – was used as the dining room. That room has recently been partially restored, revealing delicate cut-stucco decoration in blue and white with touches of red. But while the interior of Metcalfe House in north Delhi was well documented by its users, there are unfortunately no corresponding images or detailed letters describing the organisation or furnishings in *Dilkusha* at the time Metcalfe lived there, not even in the letters Emily wrote to her sister in England.

There is, however, one notable written reference to the interior of *Dilkusha*, from shortly after the Revolt, and it is found in the diary of Charlotte Canning, the unhappy wife of Governor General Charles Canning. Charlotte Canning visited the tomb in 1860 with Georgiana (GG) Campbell, the second of Metcalfe's daughters and an heir to the estates which had now been dispersed. Though now falling into disrepair, the tomb had been spared from damage in the Revolt, and Canning wrote:

It is quite sad for her [GG] to see these, her old homes, so ravaged ... The little place at the Kutoob she had not gone to since its prosperous days. I asked [her] to go and spend the day there with me and to 'do' the ruins of the house ... The Campbells have sold their furniture and an elephant or two carried out a few chairs and tables and at luncheon we made use of their house. It was once a tomb and had a high dome in the centre and 6 good odd-shaped rooms all round. It must have been very pretty once ...⁶³

Charlotte Canning would both sketch and photograph the tomb. Her diary continues:

It was in constant request for honeymoons. Every bride was made to contribute a bit of cross stitch and the house was furnished with it. Two forlorn scraps still remained. I made interpreting sketches, for all this kind of thing requires correct detail and does best for photographs.⁶⁴

As late as 1866, Alfred Harcourt in his Delhi travel guide mentioned that the tomb/house was still in use, that people were still staying *dak* there.⁶⁵

Dilkusha was one of a number of structures inside a large walled compound. Adjacent to Muhammed Quli Khan's tomb, Metcalfe built a new suite of rooms to accommodate his guests around a second ruinous Mughal structure,

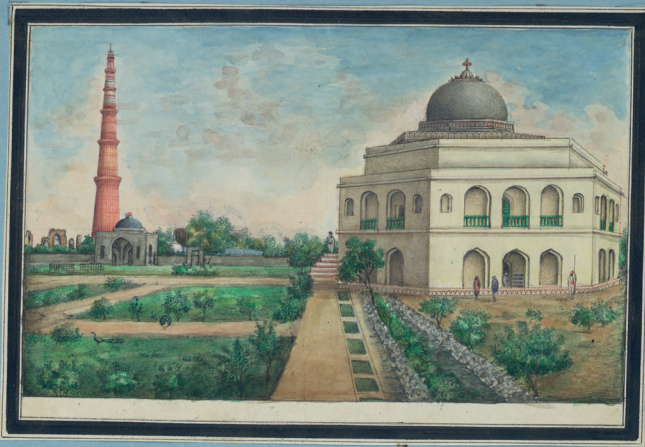
⁶³ Canning papers, diary # 2, West Yorkshire Archives. Charlotte Canning was also a talented amateur photographer, though most of her Indian photographs are lost.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Alfred Frederick Pollock Harcourt, *The New Guide to Delhi* (Allahabad, 1866), p. 133.

The South West View.

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of a quiet little residence, at the Kootob, as yet unhonoured by a name. fruitfully situated, and of convenient access whenever retirement or change of air is desirable. It is but yet in its infancy, a few months will, I trust, perfect both its comfort and Beauty.



The North West View, with the Tomb of Eldhem Khan (vide Page 80) in the Distance.

Plate 19 Mazhar 'Ali Khan (fl.1840s) and studio, *The Tomb of Muhammad Quli Khan ... as Converted to a Residence by Sir Thomas Theophilus Metcalfe* (Dilkusha), c.1844. Opaque watercolour.

adding to this a principal room with a classicising fireplace and moulded details at the top of the walls. Behind the building he put a deep recessed plunge bath. According to the Delhi Book, Metcalfe had also had a bathing pool at his main house; and his brother Charles had recently had one installed in the new Government House he built in Agra in 1836, a large indoor pool in an adjacent building. Frequent bathing was a habit acquired in India. A new cookhouse with accommodation for servants on the opposite side of the property was built around a small enclosed court. There are several other ruins on the *Dilkusha* property that predate the Mughal period, and these can be seen in ever-worsening condition, their precise function still unknown. In his *New Guide to Delhi*, Harcourt mentions the 'mass of dismantled buildings' below Metcalfe's house.⁶⁶ The whole walled estate was linked by a network of formal driveways with tall classical gateposts to the two existing main roads that ran north to the gates of Shahjahanabad.

The Mughal features that Thomas Metcalfe enjoyed inside his tomb/house were echoed in the way he treated the garden in his walled compound. He laid out a new *chārbaḡh* in front of his house, planting it with brightly coloured flowers (Plate 19). At its centre he built a small round *chhatri* as a folly, apparently made from the spolia of Slave Dynasty ruins found in the vicinity. Its dome was embellished with flat painted decoration in imitation of cut stucco. One extant ruin, perhaps once a gateway, was converted into a boathouse. This stood beside a small artificial lake (more precisely a pond) sunk at the foot of a double terrace, partly man-made and partly following the contours of the land. This was used seasonally when it filled with water during the rains. But Metcalfe had even grander designs. The countryside around the Southern Ridge was scrubby, though apparently better planted then than it is today, and it was filled with gardens and fruit orchards. The larger view extended for miles. When his house was completed, Metcalfe went further in constructing a total landscape, modifying the contours of the rocky land. He augmented the landscape with newly created follies, which he designed himself. On high ground were a lighthouse and a building that looked like a small medieval fort with a crenellated wall, known locally as Metcalfe's Battery. Additional punctuation points that still exist today, a small circular temple and a freestanding pillar on rocky outcrops, for example, may also have been Metcalfe's work. There are also two large ziggurat-like structures nearby. Emily Bayley wrote that her father's favourite amusement was 'bricks and mortar' and that the follies 'created diversion from the level monotony of the rocky ground'.⁶⁷

But they did more than that. *Dilkusha* had now become the panoptic centre of a carefully constructed landscape, organised so that it took visual possession of the surrounding countryside. The octagonal tomb/house was the main

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Kaye, *The Golden Calm*, p. 148.

viewing point for panoramic vistas laid out in all directions, incorporating standing historic monuments as well as picturesque new follies referencing past civilisations that asserted optic control over north Indian identity. In this landscape the principal lines of sight terminated with the extant dynastic monuments of South Delhi – the lofty Qutb Minar, built to proclaim the victory of Islam in India; the tombs of Azim Khan and Adham Khan, the latter of which Metcalfe may also have purchased after the murder of Mr Blake to protect his carefully constructed views. These dynastic monuments now functioned like giant follies at the terminal points of Thomas Metcalfe's vista, a vista of India's historical sublime.

Thomas Metcalfe's move to the Mehrauli area and the conversion of the tomb to a house was not the innocent act of Victorian domesticity that his daughter described. The tomb was converted at precisely the same time that the East India Company discontinued an important part of its recognition of the ceremonial of Mughal sovereignty. In 1843 it was finally decided to abolish the official rituals surrounding the presentation of *nazr* and *khil'at* – a gift to the Emperor from his petitioners in return for a robe of honour – at the Mughal court. It was at this moment that Metcalfe chose to build in South Delhi, and he had a well-considered ulterior motive in choosing this particular location for his retreat. The Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah II, had a summer palace near the Sufi *dargāh*, very close to the tomb-turned-into-a-house, as did three of the royal princes. As the Government of India slowly tightened its control on the activities of the court, these palaces were now used increasingly often by the Mughal royal family. Metcalfe now wanted his own presence felt at this secondary site of kingship.

As it stands today, the imperial Mughal palace at Mehrauli, the Zafar Mahal, is a sadly neglected and understudied complex of structures. Much of it had been built during the reign of Akbar II, though parts are much older, dating from the Sultanate period or even earlier. The palace is located just to the west of the Ajmeri Gate of the Sufi *dargāh*; and the *dargāh* was a principal reason for situating a palace at Mehrauli. As with the famous shrine at Nizamuddin just south of Firozabad, Mehrauli had both political and religious potency in the longer history of Islam in north India, not just with Muslims but with all segments of the local population. And as at Nizamuddin, several Mughal rulers and notables had chosen to be interred at this important secondary site of Mughal authority, a 'place where the King has a palace and near which are many of the tombs of the royal family'.⁶⁸ Shah Alam II (d.1806) was buried in the courtyard of the Moti Masjid in the Zafar Mahal, in a pretty enclosure 'all of white marble, with skreens in lattice work elegantly carved, and preserved in fine order'.⁶⁹ The *dargāh*, like the one

⁶⁸ Letter from James Baillie Fraser, bundle 3, Fraser of Reelig papers.

⁶⁹ Anon., 'Description of Delhi and its Environs', *Asiatic Journal* 15 (1823), p. 558.

at Nizamuddin, had also long been a significant site of pilgrimage, and in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in addition to the Mughal rulers, the *navwābs* of independent or vassal states frequented Mehrauli, returning year after year and building gardens and *serais* for lodging. These included the walled gardens of Miboob Ali Khan and Bakhshi Mahmud, and the *serai* of Shaikh Inayatullah – gardens which are marked on a rare nineteenth-century map published by the Delhi Archaeological Society in 1850, a map that helps us to understand in a more general way how the area developed and was used.

Several of the later Mughals had been Sufis, and their links to the order have been related to compensation for loss of power, as well as to a longer tradition attaching pious pilgrimage and the rationalisation of conquest.⁷⁰ It was a long-established royal practice to attend the *urs* or death anniversary of the saint at Nizamuddin in late October. It was also the practice to attend the *urs* of Bahadur Shah I (d.1712) and Shah Alam II (d.1806). The former shrine, held in great veneration, was also visited annually in the month of July. According to contemporary accounts, it was one of the few occasions when the whole imperial cortege left the Delhi palace. For the occasion, the 10-mile route from Delhi was lit with elaborate devices as a huge ceremonial procession wended its way to the palace there. These and other ceremonies at the Mehrauli *dargāh* attracted many people from the city in the nineteenth century.

The seasonal use of Mehrauli was already well established in the early eighteenth century, before alterations were made to the palace. Then the Mughal court also habitually went to the Zafar Mahal during the monsoon season. One source of this information is the *Muraqqa-i Delhi*, the Persian-language diary of Khan Dauran Nawab Zulqadar Dargah Quli Khan, a document that provides a substantial and colourful commentary on Mughal social life in Delhi in the first half of the eighteenth century.⁷¹ Dargah Quli Khan, a court follower, gave his observations while on a visit to the city in the years 1738 to 1741, late in the reign of Muhammed Shah (r.1719–48). His document describes life in the wake of the destructive invasion of the Persian Nadir Shah. Commentators on the *Muraqqa-i Delhi* have suggested that escapism because of the wretchedness of the post-Nadir Shah period accounted for the flagrant excesses of the court at this time. They argue that it was a period of mysticism and religious fanaticism, and the shrines of Delhi's great Sufi saints, always revered, took on a particular significance. The *Muraqqa-i Delhi* gives a particular account of religious practices and voluptuous revelry at the shrine of Qutb Sahib at the celebration of the *urs*

⁷⁰ Catherine B. Asher, *The Architecture of Mughal India* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 293ff.

⁷¹ Hakim Sayyid Muzaflar Husain, ed., *Muraqqa-i Delhi* (Hyderabad, 1938). See also Mohammed Ummar, 'Glimpses of a Dying Culture from a Personal Diary', *Journal of Indian History* 43:2 (1965), p. 467.

of Bahadur Shah I. The Delhi Book contains paintings and descriptions of the associated buildings, including the nearby Jharna, a complex of buildings around a 30 by 60 foot waterfall that materialised in the nearby landscape during the rains and channelled the overflow from the Hauz-i Shamsi of Iltumish. This was described by an anonymous writer of c.1818: 'The water is received into a large stone basin, and afterwards flows into a small rivulet, which runs through a deep but narrow and romantic valley, formed by the ranges of abrupt hills. The ruins of a Hindoo temple on a projecting rock near the fall add great interest to the scenery, the beauty of which is much increased by clumps of fine trees happily disposed.'⁷² Part of this seasonal run-off flowed below Metcalfe's *Dilkusha*.

As well as the *urs* commemorations of Bahadur Shah I and the other emperors, there was a more recently established and populist festival at Mehrauli, the Phool Walon-ki Sair or flower-sellers' festival, held in late September or early October.⁷³ In addition to attending the *urs* of his forebears, Bahadur Shah II processed annually to Mehrauli with a large entourage for this festival, which happened after the rains, 'the king on his elephant, his followers waving large fans'.⁷⁴ The Phool Walon-ki Sair had a particular resonance as an act of resistance to British control. It had been inaugurated in 1812 during the reign of Akbar Shah II by his wife Mumtaz Mahal, who had covered the grave of the saint with flowers when her imprisoned son, Mirza Jahangir, was released from British custody in Allahabad. At its height, as many as 150,000 people attended the festival each year.

The Zafar Mahal at Mehrauli and the palaces of the princes, some parts of which stand today, accommodated the Emperor and some members of his court on their annual visits to these significant religious festivals in Mehrauli. Because of many substantial losses to the fabric of the palace, and because of encroachments from the rapidly growing urban village of Mehrauli, their linkages and functions are not and may never be fully understood. We do know that the main palace was rather small and had to be augmented by tents. Encampment sites, including a large garden to the east of the palace, had to serve for many of the court entourage. The standing structures of the palace have recently been surveyed, revealing that its spatial sequence was organised around courts or *dalans* similar to those in earlier Mughal palaces. The inner palace was located beside the outer west gate of the *dargāh* itself and clustered around the royal tomb enclosure next to the little mosque. It also incorporated

⁷² Anon., 'Description of Delhi and its Environs', p. 558.

⁷³ Transcending sectarian or religious boundaries, the festival also known as the *pankah* or fan festival is still celebrated annually with week-long festivities that include kite flying, *qawwali* performances and wrestling matches at Qutb Sahib's *dargāh* and at the Yogmaya temple.

⁷⁴ T.G. Percival Spear, *Twilight of the Mughuls: Studies in Late Mughul Delhi* (Cambridge, 1951), p. 74; S.M. Burke and S. Quraishi, *Bahadur Shah, the Last Mogul Emperor of India* (Lahore, 1995), p. 118.

earlier structures including tombs, although their relationship to day-to-day palace life is not understood. The larger Mehrauli area included several princely palaces, mosques and gardens, including the house of Mirza Salim (1799–1836), a favourite son of Akbar II, some 50 yards to the north, and the house of Mirza Babur (1796–1835), second son of Akbar II, about 50 yards to the south of the main palace. The complex also included the house of Mirza Nili, a son of Bahadur Shah II. There were also nearby *baolis*, including one that had been endowed by the pious Emperor Aurangzeb.

As it stood in the 1830s, in the time of Akbar II, the palace was already a hybrid structure, reflecting the assimilation of elements of the classicising British architecture that was now being erected in Delhi. Such building had also been constructed inside the Lal Qil'a. Mirza Babur, a man who liked European clothes and manners, had built a small pavilion located in a courtyard behind the Rang Mahal in the neoclassical style, with Corinthian columns and white *chunam* walls. The Mehrauli palace was given similar classicising elements. It was once brightly embellished on the outside and in a way that was not understood by the British. Maria Nugent had reported in 1812: 'The King's palace is intended to be in the English style, but the lions, tigers, flowers, etc. painted in gaudy colours on the outside take away every appearance of the kind.'⁷⁵ Like other Mughal palaces, it was inward-turning, private and veiled from the curious gaze of outsiders. Robert Smith of Her Majesty's 44th Regiment of Foot, hoping for a glimpse of the exotic, saw little and was disappointed at not being able to go inside to look more closely because the court was in residence when he visited Mehrauli in 1832. 'What I saw of the exterior did not promise much within, and the gardens are sadly out of order,' he wrote disparagingly. 'The buildings are quite in the European style, and being much neglected have a miserable and dilapidated appearance, very much in character indeed with all about the Court.'⁷⁶

But there was also a revival of an earlier Mughal architectural style at this time, both in the Lal Qil'a and at the Mehrauli palace, and this, like the associations with Sufism, can be interpreted as a statement of resistance and an attempt to reinvigorate cultural traditions that were now under ever-increasing threat. Revival styles are apparent in some of the additions and improvements to the Delhi palace, begun late in the reign of the last emperors. After the second tenure of Charles Metcalfe, Akbar II had made an attempt to improve his physical surroundings, in spite of having been rebuffed by the frugal Metcalfe when he requested an increased stipend from

⁷⁵ Maria, Lady Nugent, *A Journal from the Year 1811 Till the Year 1815...* (London, 1839) vol. 2, p. 5. A palace with similar exterior decoration had been drawn by the other Robert Smith. See 'Sketchbooks of Robert Smith', India Office Prints, Drawings and Paintings, WD 309–313, British Library.

⁷⁶ 'Pictorial Journal of Travels in Hindustan from 1828–1833', Victoria and Albert Museum, I.M. 15-1915, vol. 2, p. 490.

the British in order to do so. 'I am very sorry to see such mischievous nonsense as this,' wrote Metcalfe from Calcutta in an 1832 memorandum to Lord Bentinck, then Governor General:

If we waste our revenue in such ways, we shall not long have India on our hands. What is to be understood by the repairs to the Palace? The inhabited part is in sufficiently good repair. The ruinous part of the Palace would take immense sums to repair, and cannot with any reason be thought of. If any increase be made to the King's stipend, care ought to be taken to distribute it among those who really want it. For his personal expenditure he has plenty.⁷⁷

Changes in the palace nevertheless began with the accession of Bahadur Shah II after 1838. Thomas Metcalfe reported that 'considerable improvements have been made of late, both with respect to the appearance and cleanliness of the palace'.⁷⁸ A pavilion overlooking the Yamuna and a *jharoka* were built by Akbar II, and in 1842 a red sandstone water pavilion, the Zafar Mahal, was erected in the centre of the Hazzuri Bagh. The latter, reached by boat, followed the formal design of earlier *baradari*. But these additions to the palace were intimate, private structures.

Not so the new construction that would now take place at Mehrauli. The high new ceremonial gateway to the palace in a revival Mughal style was also to be known as the Zafar (Victory) Mahal. The gateway was built in 1847/8 and was constructed to draw a focus on the ceremonial entry of the Emperor, who would have passed through Mehrauli and past the *dargāh* to reach the palace. Made of red sandstone ashlar with white marble veneers, it was of three storeys in height and embellished with many carefully coded details. Over the wide entrance was a viewing loggia and on the piers at either side were small projecting windows with curved *bangla* (Bengali) window heads, symbolic of Mughal imperial power in the time of Shahjahan. A broad projecting *chhaja* was its crowning feature. As a publicly visible symbol of defiance, the new gate was inscribed, 'May the door of Zafar remain standing'.⁷⁹ Inside the gate was a spacious arcade with arched chambers on either side, resembling the vaulted arcade of the Lahore Gate of the Delhi fort, running south and turning to the east. Upper rooms and a roof platform were reached by a wide stair at the back of the building.

Zafar was also the *takhallus* or literary pen name of Bahadur Shah II, who was a noted poet. The 'monsoon' *qasīda* of the poet laureate Muhammad Ibrahim Zauq celebrated the court's move to Mehrauli every summer, and

⁷⁷ Bentinck papers, Metcalfe to Bentinck, April 1832. Cited by Spear, *Twilight*, p. 52.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 61

⁷⁹ The inscription in full reads, 'When this high gate was strongly built as desired, the heart gave the date of its erection "May the door of Zafar remain standing". The year 11 [of the accession of Bahadur Shah II]. The year 1264' [1847/8 CE].

competitive poetry-writing and *mushā‘ara* were included in the court’s pursuits while it was there.⁸⁰ Zauq and his contemporaries were consciously working with reference to the great poets of the past, and in this sense there is a parallel to be found between poetry and the architectural settings in which it was now being composed and performed. There was a corresponding, conscious attempt at the revival of Mughal splendour in the architecture of the last Emperor through the use of materials and style elements like the Shahjahani *bangla* and baluster, and these revivals were contemporary with the British appropriation of Mughal tombs in the Mehrauli area.

Thomas Metcalfe’s country house and Bahadur Shah’s proud echo in the gateway of his summer palace stood as competing representations of power in the South Delhi landscape. The converted tomb/house, *Dilkusha*, and the new ceremonial gateway to the Zafar Mahal in a revival style brought Mehrauli and the area surrounding the earliest cities of Delhi back to historical prominence as an arena for political struggle in the middle of the nineteenth century. Metcalfe’s use of the all-seeing tomb of Quli Khan was a very visible challenge to the authority of the Mughal Emperor and was evidently seen as such by Bahadur Shah II, who fought the erosion of his power when he responded with the ceremonial gateway to the Zafar Mahal only three years later. In the late 1840s the East India Company was highly alert to the political ramifications of any remaining power that might attach to the aging Mughal, who was a ruler now in little more than name. Throughout Bahadur Shah’s reign it waged a protracted struggle to reduce the pension that was given to the Emperor. Simultaneously, the Company distanced itself from participation in the ceremonial customs of the court such as the presentation of *nazrs* as formal tribute. And while the Mughal court still enacted the ritual and etiquette of the days of Shah Jahan, the British increasingly came to regard this as a charade. Little by little Bahadur Shah’s status was diminished in interactions with the British Governor General and his representative in Delhi.

As part of the accelerating process of dismantling any remaining Mughal power, the British now also involved themselves in negotiations over the naming of the Emperor’s successor, a matter in which Governor General Lord Dalhousie (in office 1848–1856) showed particular interest. Dalhousie wished, on the next succession, to move the court out of the Shahjahanabad palace altogether and into the Zafar Mahal. He intended that the palace would be used for British munitions and offices, as had been the case in Agra. The hereditary positions that the British had termed the ‘Kings of Delhi’ now seemed destined for oblivion. It was this interference in the Mughal succession

⁸⁰ Christopher Shackle, ‘Settings of Panegyric: The Secular *Qaṣīda* in Mughal and British India’, in S. Sperl and C. Shackle, eds, *Qaṣīda Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa* (Leiden and New York, 1996), p. 229.

that has been suggested as a reason for the sudden death of Thomas Metcalfe in 1853. Metcalfe had refused to recognise the claim of Jiwan Bakht, a son of Zinat Mahal, the Emperor's youngest wife, as the heir apparent. By 1850 Dalhousie was refusing to deal with Bahadur Shah II under any conditions of etiquette that suggested the inferior status of the Governor General. And he now absolutely forbade the conferral of Mughal titles on Britons. 'Covering the English with the Mughal ceremonial mantle' was now derided as part of a 'solemn farce'.⁸¹

The occasional presence of the Emperor in the city customarily involved public pomp and display. In travelling to and from Mehrauli with his carriage and outriders, Metcalfe also publicly presented the spectacle of himself and his rank to the people, subliminally challenging the Mughal. Bahadur Shah II grappled to retain the last shreds of the Timurid splendour that was his heritage by also continuing the tradition of conspicuous public procession. Until the end of his life he would pass through the streets of the city on his state elephant, dressed in cloth of gold, to attend important religious ceremonies. The royal princes would ride with him on caparisoned horses. The people of Delhi were reported as having clung to the evidence of his supremacy that this procession represented. When the last emperors with their entourage removed from the Red Fort to the Zafar Mahal every year in the monsoon season it was in an elaborate cortege. Such a procession was described in lively detail by the other Robert Smith, and I quote him in full:

At the hour appointed the report of a cannon announced that the cavalcade had issued from the gate; it passed along the esplanade in front of the palace and through the Delhi streets, preceded by a crowd of *hurkarus* and *chobdars* bearing maces; then followed two of the ministers of state on horseback attended by servants with *punkahs* and cowries; – after these came another troop of *hurkaurs* and guards on foot with swords and long lances with penons [sic] of green and gold. The royal *palankeen* now followed, called *Takht-i-Duwan* or moving throne, resembling much the body of a coach with green blinds and ornamented with gold studs and fringe; it was supported on double poles and carried in the usual way by eight bearers in scarlet and gold liveries and crimson turbands; around were a crowd of other bearers, guards, and attendants bearing rich embroidered *punkahs* of silk or *kinco*, and *chowries* of peacock feathers. The King is a fine looking old man with a tartar countenance, and very fair for an Asiatic; with long white beard; he was dressed in a rich *kinco* tunic and turband of cloth of gold, and repeatedly smiled when the people made their salaams as he passed. Behind the *palankeen* followed the state elephant with gorgeous trappings and a splendid howdah covered with scarlet cloth embroidered with gold; on one elephant were two men beating large drums, an essential sign of royalty in India; another had a curious rich saddle of gold and silver in the form of a peacock; – after these came horsemen with spears and shields, and lastly

⁸¹ See Spear, *Twilight*, p. 58.

followed ruts or native carriages with crimson and gold canopies and curtains, drawn by white bullocks attired in dark red housings with white van Dyke borders. These carriages contained the females of the household and were strictly guarded by men carrying *tubwars* and shields; – a promiscuous crowd of *khidmutgars*, *banga-walas* and *koolees* brought up the rear of the procession.’

And Smith concluded, with a perfectly straight pen, ‘I cannot say I was disappointed in what I had just witnessed ...’.⁸² Smith’s description is, perhaps, the counterpart in words of the late Mughal scroll paintings that show Mughal ceremonial processions.

The private and the public are often Janus-faced. According to the Metcalfe family papers, *Dilkusha* was simply a pleasant place for family rest and relaxation. The true story was rather different. By incorporating standing dynastic monuments into the construction of his sweeping vistas, Thomas Metcalfe was exercising control and claiming visual rights over an ancient landscape that embodied India’s long history. He was challenging a second and now increasingly significant site of Mughal kingship. And this was reinforced through a now hidden dimension, the pattern of human use. Bahadur Shah II, despite his diminishing power, still invested great effort in displaying himself in public, as if his dynasty and succession depended on it. He was ultimately powerless to succeed.

⁸² ‘Pictorial Journal of Travels in Hindustan’, vol. 2, pp. 451–3. Other contemporary references are to be found in Reginald Heber, *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India, from Calcutta to Bombay, 1824–1825* (London, 1828), vol. 2, p. 308 and Charles J. French, *Journal of a Tour in Upper India with the Camp of Lord Auckland* (Simla, 1872).

Seven

DREAMING OF HOME

In Henry Yule's glossary of Anglo-India terms, *Hobson-Jobson*, there is a telling entry under the word home: 'Home always means England. Nobody calls India *home* – not even those who have been here thirty years or more, and are never likely to return to Europe.'¹ Victor Jacquemont had made a similar observation: 'People do not come here to live and enjoy life; they come – and this is the case in all states of society here – in order to gain something to enjoy life elsewhere.'² In this concluding chapter, I focus not on property speculation and house building in urban and suburban Delhi, or on ways of ruling through oblique methods of control, or on trying to get rich quickly or improve one's social standing, but rather on a deep-seated feeling that was present in the conscious minds of all my subjects: the desire to return to live in Britain. All five, at one time or another and regardless of their degree of Indian assimilation, harboured this desire, although only one of them would properly achieve it and then, apparently, without any real happiness. Through the records of their dreams of home, I now explore meaning in the establishment of a pedigree for the descendants of David Ochterlony; William Fraser's unfulfilled desire to build in Scotland; the family responsibilities of Charles Metcalfe; and the architecturally energetic but personally tragic later life of Robert Smith.

'Who can wonder that he clings to the only country in the world where he can feel himself at home?' mused Reginald Heber after one of his with encounters with David Ochterlony shortly before the latter died in the summer of 1825.³ Heber's accounts have played a major role in the construction of an orientalist narrative of Ochterlony's long life in India, with his oft-repeated

¹ *Letters from Madras* 1837, cited in Henry Yule, *Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases, and of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive*, reprint (Calcutta, 1889), p. 421.

² Victor Jacquemont, *Letters from India during the Years 1828, 1829, 1830* (London, 1834), vol. 1, p. 84.

³ Reginald Heber, *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India* (London, 1828), vol. 2, p. 393.

descriptions of elephants, red tent encampments and other examples of 'eastern habits'. These, however, deflect us from a deeper and more rounded understanding of the man who had, just a few years earlier, thought seriously about returning to live in Scotland and who in his will made arrangements for his grandson and only male heir, Charles Metcalfe Ochterlony (1817–91), to do just that, providing him with an income-producing estate on land with historic family associations. By 1816 David Ochterlony had become a rich man, and he was busy cementing his social connections in Britain and investing his money on behalf of his children.⁴ His long tenure, his avowed fondness for his Indian family and his eventual death in India are generally held as indications that he intended to die and be buried there. But because his family was a very complex one – and would become even more so with the late-life relationship with the Mubarak Begum and the birth of his two youngest daughters – Ochterlony needed to provide more than one direction for their future. The will he wrote in 1824 spells out his intentions.⁵

The received idea that David Ochterlony had 'vowed never to leave' India is belied by documents in the College of Arms in London.⁶ Ochterlony's stepfather, the childless Isaac Heard, was a long-serving Garter King of Arms. It was therefore inevitable that he would interest himself in his wife's connections, and he had recorded the genealogical details of her first husband's family, the Ochterlonys of Pitforth. In the College of Arms there is a letter to the herald, George Frederick Beltz from Susan Carnegie, dated May 1817, which further demonstrates Ochterlony's connections to Scotland, his intent to buy property and to move there.⁷ The letter tells us that Ochterlony had been corresponding with Carnegie about the possibility of rejoining the freeholders and landed gentry of Forfarshire (now Angus) where his family had originated. He had asked her to look out for a suitable estate for him to buy. Carnegie acknowledged receipt of Heard's genealogical tables of the Ochterlony family, which she said she had passed on to the local chieftain in Angus for his endorsement. She expressed excitement at the prospect of Ochterlony's return: 'coming forth from the dusk' and taking back a place in society 'after being long in the land of forgetfulness' is how she put it.⁸ And she reported to Beltz that she had already asked for particulars about

⁴ MS Beltz-Pulman A. VII, f. 250, College of Arms. Ochterlony had written, 'I have been told I am now turning wealthy.'

⁵ Bengal Wills, IOR L/AG/34/29/37, 185–205, British Library.

⁶ See Clive Cheesman, 'The Heraldic Legacy of Sir Isaac Heard', *The Coat of Arms* series 3, 1:1 (spring 2005), pp. 22–37.

⁷ The genealogist Georg Frederick Beltz, also named as a trustee in Ochterlony's will, was then a Herald at the College of Arms and the successor to Heard. Susan Scott Carnegie of Charleton and Pitarrow (1744–1821), an independent charitable benefactor, took an interest in India as two of her husband's brothers had fought in the Maratha Wars. Her personal papers are held by Aberdeen University.

⁸ MS Beltz-Pulman A. VII, f. 250, College of Arms.

two estates then known to be for sale. One of these, Kincaldrum (sometimes spelled Kingoldrum), had historical Ochterlony associations as it incorporated Kenny, the oldest known of the family's properties, dating back to the thirteenth century. But this exchange had happened before David Ochterlony's second term as Delhi Resident. In the event, he would not now buy this estate, and never did return to Scotland. His decision was almost certainly influenced by his relationship with the Mubarak Begum: the idea of a Scottish estate seems to have been subsumed by the building of the hybrid Gothic revival Mubarak Bagh in 1821. In this light, we might even see that extraordinary house, with its turrets and pinnacles, as a link to the style of building Ochterlony had dreamt about living in had he ever returned home.⁹

David Ochterlony would, however, continue to make careful provision for his male heirs to live in Scotland. After the death of Ochterlony's only son Roderick Peregrine in 1822 and shortly before his own death, Isaac Heard in London was busy helping him ensure the transference of his title and his arms to his grandson, Charles Metcalfe Ochterlony. Ochterlony was continuing to make arrangements for an estate in Forfarshire to go with the inherited title. In his 1824 will he left all of his Delhi properties and one half of the income from his invested money to the Mubarak Begum and her daughters. For his grandson Charles, then a young boy of seven, he set up a lineage of reinvented tradition, leaving instructions for the estate to be purchased and settled in strict entail through the male line of this grandson.¹⁰ He also left as a permanent part of the estate personal possessions he deemed to have hereditary value, including the sword with a damascene blade and gold-mounted scabbard presented to him when he left his post in Delhi in June 1806 and the pieces of plate presented by officers he later successfully commanded in the Ghurkha Wars in 1815.¹¹ Among these was a silver butter cooler (less useful perhaps in Scotland than in Delhi) with an inscription and an engraving of the valley of Makwanpur in Nepal and its surrounding fort and heights.¹²

David Ochterlony wanted his name to live on in Scotland and not just in India. Though arrangements for the purchase of Balmadies, the estate in

⁹ The region of Angus contains a number of medieval Gothic buildings that Ochterlony would have known from his youth there, the most notable being Glamis Castle and Arbroath Abbey.

¹⁰ This was in addition to other real property in Britain, which is unfortunately nowhere specified.

¹¹ The sword was inscribed 'Voted to Lt-Colonel Sir David Ochterlony by the British residents of Delhi as a testimony of high respect entertained by them for his distinguished abilities and exertions in his public character and for those private exertions in his public character, virtues which endeared him to all as a friend. Delhi, 27th June 1806'.

¹² Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge University, manuscript of David Fergusson Ochterlony, appendix E. David Ochterlony was working from the personal papers of his father, Charles, who had left '... copious notes as to the antecedents of [himself] and the family Ochterlony'.

Forfarshire, had been instigated before his death, its closure was entrusted to the executors of his will, and when the purchase was finalised in 1830, Balmadies was renamed Ochterlony House in accordance with the wishes in his deed of trust. The Ochterlony estate comprised 1,025 acres of productive farm and woodland. Its house was a neat, compact and rather conventional two-storey Palladian villa of local ashlar, with a pedimented central bay with a couple-columned Doric porch. There was nothing of the Gothic about it. The house had been built in about 1820 by Henry Stephen, then the estate proprietor, on the site of an older house that had also once been in the ownership of members of the Ochterlony clan.¹³ Set on an elevated site with lawn around it and a good garden to the south, the house had vistas that were 'very pleasing and in some parts picturesque'.¹⁴ In scale and detail, it more than a little resembled the house at Shalimar David Ochterlony had shared with Charles Metcalfe.

The kind and generous Archibald Seton, Delhi's second Resident and friend of the Fraser family, also wrote a revealing letter about the idea of home. He had been told by a young colleague that he supposed he (Seton) had forgotten all about Scotland, as he never heard him 'swear at India or abuse the climate'. Seton was astonished, and replied that his longing to return was 'feverish', growing stronger with every year he was away, and that part of each day was passed '... in fond anticipation of the happy time when I shall be restored to my family and home'. All that remained for him to do, he said, was '... to make up a little sum to carry with me, sufficient to make us all cosy and comfortable when setting round a fireside of a winter's evening'.¹⁵

The Fraser family were also very deeply attached to their home, Reelig, near Inverness, which the intervention of Archibald Seton had helped them to save. And despite his identification with Delhi and his house-building activities on the Ridge, William Fraser – like Ochterlony – had once harboured dreams of returning to Scotland, perhaps of marrying and of building himself a home. In 1814, when he was thirty, Fraser wrote a tender, almost poetic description to his family of how he remembered a corner of the family property at Knockbain. The house that this second son imagined for himself was to have been situated '... about the, or in the, field, we used to go and see the hares, and sometimes a roe, sporting in, in the beautiful summer evenings, and where so much bog myrtle and cotton grass grew. ... I think it is the

¹³ A stone with a welcoming Latin inscription from the old house was transferred to the new building. The inscription reads, 'My foes keep out, O House; to friends and strangers open be, and may such ever be the mind of him that holdeth thee.' John Grant Michie, *Epitaphs & Inscriptions from Burial Grounds & Old Buildings in the North-East of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1875), p. 384.

¹⁴ Alexander Warden, *Angus or Forfarshire, the Land and People* (Dundee, 1880), p. 89.

¹⁵ MS 19208, Seton papers, National Library of Scotland.

most beautiful [spot] on the estate ... I think we called it the Brewer's Field. It is enclosed by a beautiful little range of hills in front; and on the left, and behind, sheltered by the wood of Firs.'¹⁶ William imagined a smallholding, with '... just enough for the House, offices, a Garden, and a small paddock for Horses' all to be contained in the field. The kind of house he visualised building was also compact and Palladian in style. It was to be comfortable and of two storeys, '... very much in the Italian fashion; the lower story having the dining room, and Breakfast Parlour, Drawing Room, Library, Hall, and a Billiard room: the upper story all for Bedchambers; and the Kitchen &c either in Ornamental Wings, or in a sunk story'. He concluded the letter wistfully: 'Although many people think me too fond of India, and even intent upon life here, almost all my leisure thoughts are spent upon such plans.'¹⁷ The Fraser family's attachment to their property is made clear everywhere in their letters to each other. 'The old house will never be without someone of the family in it,' maintained Fraser's youngest brother, George, reflecting the sense of place and continuity in the family home, always strong but now becoming almost impassioned as the brothers strove to redeem it from debt.¹⁸ William had once complained that '... to make a fortune in India one must virtually steal, and to save a fortune ... is almost impossible'.¹⁹ In 1838, James Baillie Fraser was finally able to afford a newly oriented Palladian extension and façade to Reelig House, but by this time Edward, Aleck and William were all in their graves; and George would shortly follow. (Plate 20)

A private collection is part of social capital. At all societal levels, the value of the objects we collect and the interiors we put them in runs deeper than survival or comfort and becomes an integral part of self-identity. Thomas Metcalfe, as we have seen, had felt an illusion of permanence in Delhi and had transferred all his personal possessions there. He came to regard it as his home. After his sudden death in 1853 the contents of his houses were inherited by his son, Theophilus John, and after the Revolt what little remained of his personal property was dispersed.²⁰ Charles Metcalfe and Robert Smith, however, differed from Thomas Metcalfe, David Ochterlony and William Fraser in that they did leave India and returned to Britain, attempting in dissimilar ways to find a level of comfort there. Charles Metcalfe, who despite his country house at Shalimar continued to experience a sense of perpetual banishment, always felt that it was 'only the hope of getting home at last' that

¹⁶ Letter from William Fraser, bundle 14, Fraser of Reelig papers.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Letter from George Fraser, bundle 50, Fraser of Reelig papers.

¹⁹ Quoted in Mildred Archer and Toby Falk, *India Revealed: The Art and Adventures of James and William Fraser* (London, 1989).

²⁰ Letter from Eliza to GG, box 7, Campbell/Metcalfe papers, Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge.



Plate 20 Reelig House, 2015.

kept him 'alive and merry'.²¹ Making a fortune had never been his objective, he wrote to his Aunt Monson from the Governor's House in Agra in 1837, saying that he had enough money to suit his tastes, and would anyway be happier living in a cottage than in a palace.

The idea of a small and secure home was a refrain wherever Charles Metcalfe went. He had inherited large family properties, both Fernhill and the town house on Portland Place, on the death of his older brother in 1822, but apart from a few months in the winter of 1838/9, these were properties he would never be able to afford to live in. Though he had a fondness for them because of family associations, the upkeep of these large houses while he was in India had been a burden. When, after the marriage of his sister Georgiana who had been living in the house, Fernhill was rented out, Metcalfe was helped in this by his younger sister, Emily Ashbrook, who rather briskly organised the necessary improvements to the structure and its furnishings. The Monson papers document her attempts to make Fernhill more presentable.²² The property was also a going concern as a farm, but this would now be wound down, with a public auction of its valuable farming stock in September 1824.²³ Fernhill really never suited Charles Metcalfe. When he returned to England from India in 1838, after an absence of nearly thirty-eight uninterrupted years, he stayed briefly with each of his sisters (at Clifton and Richmond respectively) and then moved back into the house. But he was unhappy there, not liking life in that scale of establishment, which he felt was wasteful and which he worried he could not really afford. By February of 1839 he was even considering selling the property. In the event, Metcalfe was soon to be sent by the British government to be Governor of Jamaica, where from its Government House he would continue to dream of compact houses, always imagining there to be 'more happiness in a small establishment than in a large one'.²⁴ In 1842 Metcalfe briefly returned to Fernhill as a guest when its tenant was his old friend John Studholme Brownrigg. On his return to Britain from his final post in Canada in 1846 Charles Metcalfe would die in a rented house, Malshanger, near the village of Church Oakley in Hampshire. In his will he remembered his one living son, James, who was also one of his executors.²⁵

²¹ John William Kaye, ed., *The Life and Correspondence of Charles, Lord Metcalfe* (London, 1854), vol. 1, p. 247.

²² The Lincolnshire Archives, Monson papers, contain cost books for surveying the house and putting it in order in 1824, including interesting details of its re-furnishing. The eventual tenant, William Wellesley-Pole, was a brother of the Metcalfe's patron, Richard Wellesley.

²³ The catalogue of the sale is also in the Monson papers, with Charles's notes on prices realised.

²⁴ Kaye, *Life and Correspondence*, vol. 2, p. 432.

²⁵ After his father's death, in 1852, James Metcalfe married Jose Eliza Gordon and also retired in England. The couple had seven children. When James died in 1888 he left his widow an estate in excess of £68,000.

Small Palladian houses in the countryside of Britain were what David Ochterlony, Charles Metcalfe and William Fraser all longed to return to. Not so Robert Smith, who came from a different background. Smith's engagement with Sultanate and Mughal architecture, so evident in his oil paintings, in his early attempts at restoration and in his reuse and adaptation of Indian domestic space, shows the degree to which he had internalised some of the grander aspects of Indian culture. As a latter-day nabob, his interaction with the Indian Style in architecture would, as part of his projected identity, continue in the grand buildings in a hybrid and eclectic design vocabulary that he designed and lived in after he left the country. Yet in thinking about Robert Smith's eccentric life after he left Delhi and about his houses in England and France, it is clear that we are dealing with a perpetual outsider, a personality that seems fated always to have been on the periphery wherever he lived and whose later life, when viewed through the lens of his building activities, demonstrates clearly the old adage that you can never go home again. Smith, we have seen, had married in 1840 and had lived in Venice and then on the Palatine Hill in Rome. He then went on to build two extraordinary hybrid houses, Redcliffe in Paignton and a 'château' in Nice; and it is these houses that securely link him to the earlier house in Delhi. The spear-shaped merlons and ogival Mughal arches of the towers at Redcliffe and the fortress-like walls and military Gothic crenellations in the house in Nice are all residual elements of mixed ideas assimilated in India.

Robert Smith's end was a tragic one. He died alone in 1873, having been certified insane a year earlier, thanks to the interventions of Julia, the young widow of Proby Thomas Cautley. Cautley had willed to Smith, his 'valued Friend', his own house in Nice on his death in 1871.²⁶ In Smith's own will, written late in 1850 in Paris and never amended, he left his entire estate to his unmarried sister Mary, with whom he lived in Torquay at the end of his life. But Mary died shortly before her brother did, so on Smith's death his real property and all his money, and that of Mary Smith as well, passed by default to his estranged son and only surviving child, Robert Claude Smith. What happened to this substantial fortune is still not clear, but a pattern of behaviour in Smith that had unsuccessfully sought social acceptance through lavish spending seems to have continued into the next generation.

Robert Claude Smith seems always to have been on poor terms with his father. Born in Venice in 1843, he was sent away to be educated in Exmouth and then at Captain Target's school in Bath. He was then sponsored by his father into military service in India, where he was commissioned into the Bombay Light Cavalry in 1860.²⁷ But he resigned in 1865; and four years

²⁶ Probate calendars of England and Wales, will of Proby Thomas Cautley, probate 1 March 1871, principal registry. Further details of the Nice property have yet to be discovered.

²⁷ IOR L/MIL/153, cadet nomination papers of Robert Claude Smith, 1859, British Library.

later, at the time of his 1869 marriage in Calcutta (at the age of twenty-one) to Caroline Casey, a woman considerably older than he was, already twice widowed and with a young son, he was working for the Indian railways. Granted probate after the death of his father, Robert Claude lived for a short time at Redcliffe, but he soon began ridding himself of all his father's properties with their panoramic vistas and their eclectic contents – and apparently negative associations – and buying new ones for himself. The Nice house was sold in 1875 to the Austro-Hungarian Consul to Nice, the Paignton house late in 1878.²⁸

Apparently feeling themselves, though very wealthy, to be outsiders in England, Robert Claude and Caroline Smith each decided at this time that it was necessary to have their pedigrees formally recognised and each made application for arms, Robert Claude at the Court of the Lord Lyon in 1876 and Caroline in Ulster in 1878.²⁹ As a means to this end, Robert Claude had purchased in his own name an additional estate, Hawkmoor, near Bovey Tracey in Devon, a working farm with 350 acres of land, which he mortgaged and then sold shortly after the arms were granted.³⁰ It is the application documents for his claim that provide our information about the origins of the Smith family, who were from Perth in Scotland and had come to England in the late seventeenth century. While Robert Smith's identity in the second half of his life, a rich but restless outsider, had had the possibility of being anchored by his painting and building activities, this was not so for his son. Robert Claude first lived in London off the interest of his inherited fortune and then disappeared from the record, only to reappear at the time of his death of senile decay in Bareilly in 1908.³¹ The inherited houses built by his father fell through a crack in the paving stones of the common country-house narrative. Though the houses were large, their acreage was not large enough, and by the time they passed to Robert Claude they were already obsolete.³² The houses and their contents, as material forms of capital accumulated in a single generation, had the potential to produce profits and to reproduce themselves in identical or expanded form. This was not to be the case in this unhappy family, and in Robert Claude Smith's generation the entire fortune seems to have evaporated.

²⁸ Redcliffe was sold first to John Prendergast and then briefly to Paris Singer, a son of Isaac Merritt Singer, who owned nearby Oldway Mansion, before being turned into a hotel after 1902.

²⁹ James Paul Balfour, *An Ordinary of Arms Contained in the Public Registry of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1893), p. 117; Bernard Burke, *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales* (London, 1884), supplement.

³⁰ The sale records are in the Devon Archives and Local Studies.

³¹ Census returns for England and Wales, 1881, TNA; IOR N Ecclesiastical Returns of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials 1698–1969, British Library.

³² Clive Aslet, *The Last Country Houses* (New Haven, 1982), discusses the social meaning of acreage in later-built houses.

The houses and the 'lives in building' of the five men in this book help us understand more fully the part that individual lives played in the history of Delhi under East India Company administration between 1803 and 1853. They provide evidence of fluctuating British attitudes towards India that occurred in the first half of the nineteenth century, when the fortunes of the Company were also changing. During this period, different responses to Delhi and differing house typologies emerged. The use of new archival documents and the re-reading of old ones with new questions in mind have shown that rather than a straightforward and linear continuity in their development, British houses in Delhi were complex, both the synergistic product of elements from different cultures and a result of hardening mentalities. The five men under study made use of existing Mughal structures, both domestic and monumental religious typologies. Some of their buildings were encapsulations of pre-existing Mughal residential structures, chosen because of their location and their past or present associations with ruling power. There was early reuse of sub-imperial Mughal palaces in Delhi, which, as in other Mughal riverine cities, were on the choicest land beside the palace. In the absence of the possibility of taking over the imperial palace in the fort, use of the most prestigious sub-imperial palace was intended to impress the status of the new rulers on the people of Delhi. Both residential pavilions and tombs were encapsulated behind new classicising façades. The façade given to the pavilion that became the first Residency proclaimed new occupants, though some of its interiors retained earlier Mughal decoration. The Residency kept an original four-part garden, 'in the Hindoostani style'. Later, when the grandiose imperial British city, New Delhi, was constructed by Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker, the relationship of palace and *chār-bāgh* would be replicated in an almost identical sequence with the building of its new Mughal Garden.

The adaptation of monumental religious structures such as tombs for domestic use had a more volatile significance in the exertion of power and control. A Mughal tomb at Mehrauli, chosen for its panoptic position in the landscape, was turned into a kind of shadow Residency. Nearby was the second, summer palace of the failing Mughal dynasty, and in what can be interpreted as an act of resistance, the last Emperor would retaliate against the appropriation of the historic vista by the Agent and Commissioner with Mughal revival architecture in the form of a monumental victory gate for his nearby palace.

What we might regard today as the indiscriminate reuse of historic structures, whether for pleasure, expediency or control, is an arena that reflects the changing state of knowledge in India in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. This book has alluded to historic preservation as a related topic, although there has not here been the opportunity to expand on a subject that is of significance for future reconstructions of the past. The preservation movement had begun to take shape in the late eighteenth century, when

Europeans came to regard the repair and maintenance of their buildings as a manifestation of healthy civic life. Monuments were seen then as part of the history of time rather than the history of art, and to pause before a ruined structure and lament on its condition was to romanticise an unknowable past. In early-nineteenth-century India, at the time of British expansion, romantic and picturesque sensibilities were one factor that helped to shift perceptions of India's former glory into an antiquarian vision. The selective restoration of monuments was undertaken locally in Delhi and elsewhere as early as the 1820s, and provincial antiquarian societies were formed soon after this, influenced by the scholarly attention given to history and monuments by the English Orientalists in Calcutta.

But there is, of course, a relationship between reuse and preservation. The sharp-eyed Robert Smith, who was engaged both in new building and in utilitarian work on Delhi's fortifications and canals in the 1820s, also undertook early local historic preservation projects, a reflection of the changing state of British knowledge of India's past. Smith's own house was on the site of a sub-imperial palace complex and incorporated part of its foundation. It can be argued that there was a dark political underbelly to this expansion of knowledge, its growth in India a political tool. There was clearly an advantage in gaining the goodwill of local people through intervention in the preservation of historic structures, especially those that had religious significance. Documents at the Government of India level from about 1840 on are full of overt references to these advantages as a method of control. The Governor General Lord Dalhousie observed in 1850 that '... a great deal may be done at small expense by a little care and interest, and all will tend to gratify the inhabitants of the province over which British rule has been established'.³³

New houses built in the suburbs around Delhi drew from, and reinterpreted, useful features of Indian architecture that were climate specific, retaining functional elements that had long been proven useful in north India. Some houses took advantage of sites that still resonated with the history of prior conquest. Some also expressed a now internalised image of British rural aristocracy transplanted into a colonial context: newly built British houses in Delhi were influenced by both Indian building and that of the already established 'third culture' in Calcutta. New houses were built on large estates in Delhi's suburban fringe, both in the area to the north-west of the city beyond the Ridge, the site of imperial and sub-imperial Mughal gardens, and in the area between the Kashmir Gate and the Ridge where the Civil Lines would be established. British officials who had been participants in public decisions to repair the Delhi canal are known to have

³³ Secretary of the Government of India to Secretary to the Board of Administration, Punjab, Ser. 772, Proceedings, Week of 26 April 1851, Punjabi Provincial Archives of Pakistan.

acquired land in the canal's vicinity prior to the time of its repair, building new houses in hybrid Gothic and classical styles. But the typologies I have identified are not clear-cut and do not always follow a neat chronological progression. While their evolution during the fifty-year span of this book sometimes hints at the possibility of cultural assimilation, it can equally well be read as evidence of a growing cultural divide and of wider changes that reveal a gradual hardening of attitudes in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The lives of the five individuals re-enforced, through the physical and spatial choices that were made, the important accumulation of social capital, both in their public lives as officials of the East India Company and in their differing private lives. In Delhi it is clear that through their house-building activities, individual characters influenced the way of life of the British community. The acquisition of large-enough estates and fine-enough houses to make a statement of power in the hybrid cultural context of Delhi could create problems for men who had sometimes been sent to India to earn money to fill empty family coffers at home. Their private estates, though not on the scale of earlier ones in Bengal, required expenditures that were hard to provide in a legitimate manner. This had long created problems for the Company in other parts of India. Entertaining the Emperor in kind and keeping up appearances as Resident always necessitated more resources than the Company was prepared or able to pay by the early nineteenth century. Documents show that money was often a difficulty, that there was never enough of it to live in a way that was sufficiently visibly opulent to impress the officials of the Indian court and the growing hierarchical British establishment. Delhi in the early nineteenth century still seemed to hold the promise of easy riches as earlier Bengal had done, despite prohibitions now by the Company on private trade by officials, on the acceptance of costly gifts and on private loans from bankers. This did not prevent the attempted accumulation of personal fortunes or of secret debts by officials in Delhi in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The location of British houses in late Mughal Delhi initially related directly to prior settlement patterns and was part of an overall strategy of control in manipulation of now hidden dimensions through the use of the Mughal (and pre-Mughal) built environment. Participation in the ceremonial of the court, including processions, was actively manipulated at a public level. It was also emulated in private, and sometimes the distinctions are blurred. A telling phrase, the architecture 'of former dynasties', often occurs in official documents. More and more, it was becoming evident that the British saw themselves as the heirs to dynastic territory on the scale of the Mughal Empire. In 1859, shortly after the Revolt, the newly appointed Governor General and Viceroy of India, Charles Canning, toured north India with a huge entourage. 'I believe at this time that 20,000 souls are on the move with

us,' confided his wife Charlotte, a little overwhelmed, to her journal.³⁴ The British had now learned well how to mimic the ways by which the Mughal elite had represented power to the public as they moved into this, the imperial, phase of their rule: the Raj. They knew the deep importance of ceremonial hierarchy as part of the role they wished to project as they moved to control all of India, and this was achieved in part through visual control in the landscape. Charlotte Canning understood the significance of all of this quite clearly when, on the eve of this post-revolt tour in 1859, she wrote home to Queen Victoria, 'It is thought necessary to move with a camp on a very large scale, for in this country, it is very necessary to speak to the eye.'³⁵

³⁴ Correspondence of Charlotte Canning, West Yorkshire Archives.

³⁵ Charlotte Canning to Queen Victoria, August 1859. Cited in Charles Allan, *A Glimpse of the Burning Plain* (London, 1987), p. 120.

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IOR L/AG Accountant-General's Records c.1601–1974

IOR L/MIL Military Department Records 1708–1959

IOR N Ecclesiastical Records

IOR P Proceedings and Consultations 1702–1945

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An imprint of Boydell & Brewer Ltd
PO Box 9, Woodbridge IP12 3DF (GB) and
668 Mt Hope Ave, Rochester NY 14620-2731 (US)

ISBN 978-1-78327-208-2



www.boydellandbrewer.com

