

## The Architectural Legacy of British Raj at Sehore All Saint Church, Sehore

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**Abstract-** Church buildings in India are an important pedigree of social identity and continue to have a consort presence in public life. Concurrently religious practices have evolved, and it has become ostensible that church buildings represent a religious heritage and, equally importantly, a historical heritage. church buildings play an indispensable role in the urban and social structure of the town and surrounding landscape. These church buildings are provenance of great pride not only for the fellowships but also for the wider local community. The church building in India possesses rich culture, and built heritage, and includes many magnificent churches, monuments, and temples. Most of these churches are world-famous and constructed way back in the 17th century and are the best examples of Manueline and Gothic architecture. These churches have very intricate detailing and ornamentation reflecting the past and playing an important role in shaping the community to know about the ancient culture, way of life, architecture, level of development, building techniques, and use of material, art, and other aspects of the society of a particular period. The rich heritage structures are on the verge of deterioration and alarms for effective management.

**Keywords-** Cantonment, Gothic, Diocese, Tablet, Cemeteries.

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### Need to conserve

- The old architecture has an intrinsic value that is abstract in nature and cannot be compared to any other architecture, their upraise is a must.
- Architectural preservation of these church buildings and cemeteries should always be the first port of call before the possibility of demolition is even considered. This is because once this architecture is gone it can never come back in its original form and it's only when looking closely that the unique features of the building can be appreciated.
- Church Buildings and cemeteries of Malwa and the Bundelkhand region are untouched areas of research and they need to be lifted up. The cemeteries of MP reveal much about the fashion and practices of the time. They are rich in architecture and sculptures.

## All Saint Church, Sehore



This church building is situated at Sehore cantonment<sup>2</sup>, 36 km away from the state capital of Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal. This church is among the oldest historical buildings of Madhya Pradesh and is considered the second most beautiful church in the entire Asia<sup>3</sup>. It was built in 1868 by Colonel Osborne<sup>4</sup>, the political agent<sup>5</sup> for 16 years of the Bhopal state. According to the Indian church act of 1927, this church marvelous church building comes under the category of part B civil churches<sup>6</sup> before independence it comes under the possession of the Diocese of Nagpur<sup>7</sup> but at present, it comes under the possession of the Diocese of Bhopal<sup>8</sup>. According to the record available this church building is exactly the replica of a Scottish church impacted by Indo-gothic architecture.

This church building is situated geographically in the south direction of the Sehore district. All Saint church belongs to the Church of North India, diocese Of Bhopal is a Christian prayer place that is adorned in the wooden yard which was the old church ground during the colonial period.

The church is still standing the same way as built many years exhibiting the legacy of British architecture in the Malwa region. Mr. J.A.W William Dairi was an employee of the Madras staff army. He was a political agent of Bhopal for 16 years. This church and inscription were built by Colonel's brother, an officer in the Central Indian agency.

The east wall of the church was framed by beautiful glass. Many glasses painting was well made by putting a beautiful net around the church, whose shed was mesmerizing. Now, this glass is broken. The furniture of that time is still present which is made of perhaps Rosewood's wood and it is still the same today. This church is among the most important buildings of the British ruling period showing a bewildering combination of architecture, and landscape taking us into a valuable window into the past.

In this church, Military officers of the British era used to gather for prayers. The Church is a part of the archaeological list of Madhya Pradesh tourism. This church is made up of stone with arch-shaped doors exhibiting

an amazing style of architecture. There are pictures of Lord Jesus' birth and cruxification in colored glass which look very grand in the rays of the sun.

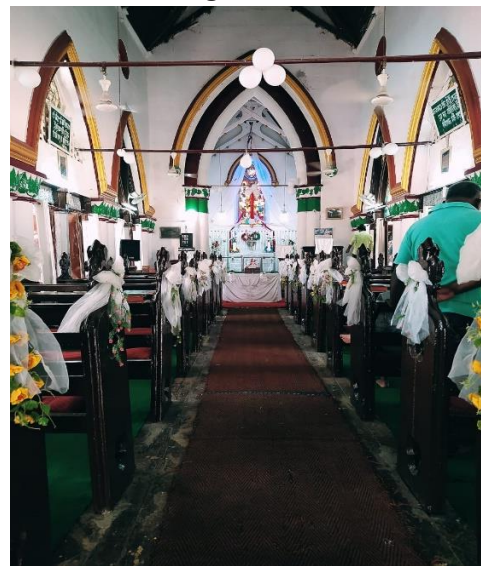
The graveyard of the British is known as Jungle Hata Cemetery<sup>9</sup> which houses the graves of distinguished English people and is located behind the church building.

### **CHURCH BUILDING**

**Façade of Building**



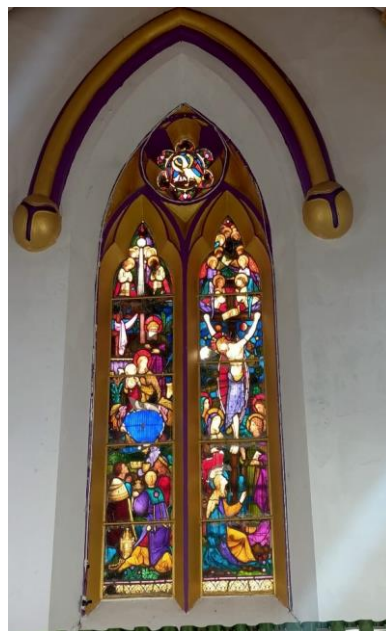
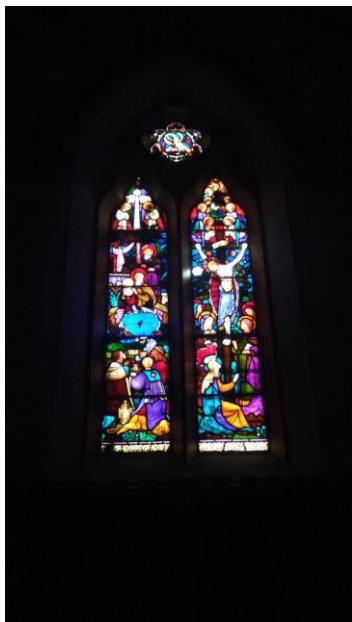
**Interior of Building**



The church is designed in an Indo-gothic style of architecture. This building has an excellent form of planning construction that is unique in its own way. It reveals the beauty of gothic architecture in every corner of construction including the entrance door, stained glasses, windows, furniture, etc. as this church was built in the year 1868<sup>10</sup>, it becomes one of the ancient churches of Malwa region and the most spectacular among the church of Madhya Pradesh. The church building has single spires that enhance the height of the church building altogether. The following is the dimension of the Church building-

- Length of the building – approx. 50 feet
- The breadth of the building – approx. 40 feet
- Internal height from floor to ceiling – approx. 46 feet

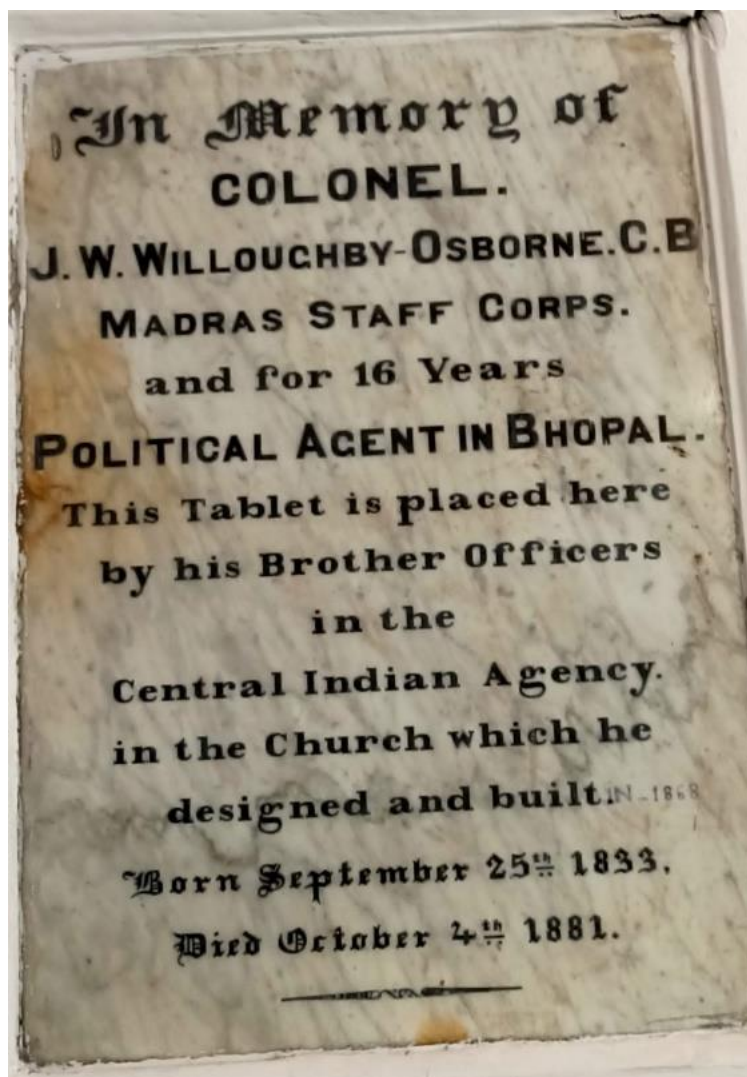
### **Stained Belgium Glasses**



An excellent feature of the building is stained Belgium glass which adds value to the Church building. It allows a view of the outside and admits light into a building. It frills to beautify buildings, control light and offer excellence in telling a story related to the life of Jesus Christ especially the phase of cruxification of Jesus Christ.

At All Saints Church Sehore, the shape of stained-glass window has a curved pointed arch. The window is in pairs, illustrating the story of Jesus Christ's life. Above the paired window is the round skyline window which is also made up of Belgium-stained glass. This facet supplement grace to the building of the church.

#### **Historical Marble Tablet**



This marble board is stationed near the altar in the Northern direction. This board acquaints about an officer who was posted as Colonel at Madras staff corps. His name was J. W. Willoughby- Osborne C. B. This tablet was erected in remembrance of his service. The length and breadth of the tablet are 3 feet and 1 foot 11 inches respectively.

Besides this, the tablet also mentions the year of construction of the All Saints Church building as 1868, hence it demonstrates the year of design and construction of the Church building which was somewhere around 1868.

#### **Conclusion-**

The development of India's conservation movement has largely been fueled by this architecture and by a handful of homegrown initiatives but in the sustentation of this colonial Architecture.

Taken as a whole, India's cultural heritage may be the richest in the world, but the realization especially in Madhya Pradesh that it is a massive asset that requires management has yet to be fully appreciated.

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