

Parliament renovation

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Source: *The Hindu*

Manifest pedagogy: Modern Indian Art and Architecture is an unexplored dimension in UPSC syllabus. This section of UPSC syllabus has been included in 2013 revamp. But this section was not picked up by UPSC till date. As UPSC tends to carry a surprise element with it we never know when it will pull this rabbit out of its hat. As Manifest aims to target areas usually neglected by aspirants and picked by UPSC we have selected this topic for this week.

In news: The Central government is considering either redeveloping Parliament House or building a new structure.

Placing it in syllabus: Modern Indian architecture

Dimensions:

- Indian parliament foundation and stylistic features
- Influences of composite culture of India on parliament building
- Features of Delhi architecture of Herbert baker and Lutyens
- Other prominent examples of Delhi architecture
- Why is renovation required now?

Content:

Honourable PM Narendra Modi has said that the **government is considering suggestions to build a new Parliament House or renovate** the existing one with improved facilities **by 2022**, to celebrate 75 years of Independence.

Indian Parliament foundation and stylistic features:

- The Indian Parliament building was **designed by Sir Edwin**

Lutyens and Sir Herbert Baker.

- The foundation stone of the Parliament House was laid on **February 12, 1921** by the Duke of Connaught.
- Construction of the building was **completed in 1927** and was inaugurated by the then Governor-General of India, Lord Irwin.
- The **shape of the building is circular**, which is based on the **Chausath Yogini temple of Morena**, Madhya Pradesh.
- The building has a **Central Chamber** which is **surrounded by the semicircular halls** that were constructed for the sessions of the Chamber of Princes (now used as the Library Hall), the State Council (now used for the Rajya Sabha), and the Central Legislative Assembly (now used for the Lok Sabha).
- The architectural design of the building is a **perfect mix of ancient Indian tradition and modern amenities**.
- The building **hosts the Parliament House, the Reception Office Building, the Library Building, the Parliament House Annexe** along with huge lawns and artificial ponds.
- The structure is enclosed by an **ornamental red sandstone walls and 12 iron gates**.
- The building was declared a **Grade-I heritage property in 2009**.

Influences of composite culture of India on parliament building:

- The Parliament House has a **hybrid of Hindu, Saracenic and Roman architectural** styles.
- It has drawn stylistic and decorative elements from native **Indo-Islamic architecture**.
- The **layout of fountains** both inside and outside the building, use of Indian symbols, the "**Chhajjas**", and the varied forms of "**Jali**" in marble remind the craftsmanship of ancient monuments.
- The Parliament corridor is adorned with **58 panels by renowned artists** from across the country depicting the

mystic, mythological, cultural and political history of India.

- There are as many as **30 statues and busts** including the sculptures of Chandragupta Maurya, Motilal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla etc...
- The **Central Hall has 23 portraits.**
- **Inscriptions from Upanishadas, Mahabharata, Manu Smriti,** etc, are inscribed which indicate the spirit with which Parliamentarians should conduct their business.
- These **serve as the guiding principles for deliberations.**
- A **dome over the passage to the Central Hall** also has an **Arabic inscription** which means "God will not change the condition of the people unless they bring about a change themselves".
- Thus, the building represents the composite culture and social pluralism of India.

Features of Delhi architecture of Herbert baker and Lutyens:

- According to **Lutyens, Indian architectural interventions** reflected a **childish ignorance** of even the basic principle of architecture.
- **Baker was of the view that the Delhi architecture** was neither going to be Indian nor Roman or English but **purely imperial.**
- The then viceroy, **Lord Hardinge,** finally decided upon **western-style classical architecture** with details being filled up by Indian motifs.
- Baker's **twin secretariat buildings combine European-style columns and Renaissance-like dome with Indian architectural elements** like the use of red sandstone, jalis (perforated screens), chajja (eaves), chhatris (canopies) carved brackets as well as elephant-heads on pillar capitals.
- **Lutyens's Viceroy House looks more classical** with not so much of a conscious blending of the West and the East.
- **He insisted on a 'circular Colosseum design'.**

- The **plan of Lutyens Delhi is purely geometrical.**



- **Tree lined streets** radiate from the Central Vista and **converge into hexagonal nodes.**
- His plan is also remarkable in the sense that **there are generous green spaces, lawns, watercourses, trees and their integration with the parks** developed around the monuments.
- The **road network consisted of diagonals and radials** at 30/60 degree angles to the main axis, **forming triangles and hexagons.**

Other prominent examples of Delhi architecture:

India Gate:

- The India Gate is a **war memorial** located astride the Rajpath, on the eastern edge of the “ceremonial axis” of New Delhi.
- It was designed by **Sir Edwin Lutyens.**
- It evokes the **architectural style of the triumphal arch** such as the Arch of Constantine, in Rome, and is often compared to the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, and the Gateway of India in Mumbai.
- The 42-metre tall India gate, stands on a **low base of red Bharatpur stone** and rises in stages to a huge moulding.

Rashtrapati Bhavan:

- It is the **official residence of the President of India** designed by **Sir Edwin Lutyens, located on Raisina Hill** in New Delhi.
- It has Indian elements including several **circular stone basins** on top of the building, **chhajjas, several chuttris** on the roofline.
- The front of the palace, on the east side, has **twelve**

unevenly spaced massive columns with the Delhi Order capitals, which Lutyens invented for this building, with Ashokan details.

- In the **main dome**, where the **drum below** has **decoration recalling the railings around early Buddhist stupas** such as Sanchi.

The Secretariat:

- It was **designed by Herbert Baker** in **Indo-Saracenic Revival architecture**.
- It has incorporated **Mughal and Rajasthani architecture style and motifs**.
- These are visible in the **use of Jali**.



- Another feature is a dome-like structure known as **Chatri**.
- In front of the main gates on the buildings are the four **"dominion columns"**, given by Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

Why is renovation required now?

- There is a shortage of working and parking space, amenities and services.
- The building no longer supports added demands of space and security.
- There are no chambers for MPs and situation would further worsen if there is an increase in the number of seats.
- The buildings constructed over 100 years ago, such as the North and South blocks are not earthquake-resistant.
- The Parliament House building has remarkable symbolic value. It embodies the spirit of Indian democracy. Hence, it would be advisable to reshape the Parliament building by imbibing the composite culture and rich architectural legacy of India.