

# Review Essay: Architecture and Empire

by

GRAHAM KENT

Bremner, G. A. (ed), *Architecture and Urbanism in the British Empire*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2016), 465 + xxvi pp., 198 ills, £55. ISBN 978-0-19-871332-6.

Bryant, Julius and Weber, Susan (ed), *John Lockwood Kipling: Arts and Crafts in the Punjab and London*, New York: Bard Graduate Center Gallery and New Haven and London: Yale University Press (2017), 579 + xx pp., massively illustrated, £50. ISBN 978-0-300-221596.

Nelson, Louis P., *Architecture and Empire in Jamaica*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press (2016), 313 + x pp., massively illustrated, £65. ISBN 978-0-300-21100-9.

Three publications, the latest volume in the Oxford History of the British Empire Companion series (OHBE:C) *Architecture and Urbanism in the British Empire*, edited by G.A. Bremner, the *John Lockwood Kipling: Arts and Crafts in the Punjab and London* exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), with its accompanying lavish, eponymous catalogue, edited by Julius Bryant and Susan Weber, and the somewhat earlier (2016) publication of Louis P. Nelson's *Architecture and Empire in Jamaica* (he also contributes to two chapters in the OHBE:C volume), provide an opportunity of reviewing those books and the exhibition within the context of a wider look at imperialism and the built environment. In recent years there has been much academic interest in the whole question of empires and imperialism, unsurprisingly concentrating, in the English-speaking world, on the British Empire, with which those books and this article equally concern themselves. As a result interest in empires has moved on, along with historical studies generally (sometimes described as 'the Cultural Turn'), from accounts of conquest, administration, economic development and independence to consider wider cultural questions, including not only the impact of empire on the colonized, but its impact on the colonizers. Migration within the Empire has also been a question of much academic interest. Now, the cities, buildings and engineering works of an empire might tell us much about these cultural issues. Is there a style of building that clearly illustrates imperialism or, indeed, indicates the imperialism of any particular imperial state? If so, was this imposed by some central imperial authority or left to 'the man on the spot'? Equally, do the buildings constructed

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Graham Kent is Reviews Editor of the Transactions and a retired barrister, civil servant and lecturer.

by the commercial networks of an empire and its migrants reflect some imperial style or rather the usual kinds of variation due to personal taste, fashion and commercial imperatives? Conversely, what of the influence of the colonies on 'Home'? Works such as these can help us to address this kind of question.

Of course, many approaches are possible, not least because, given its extent in both space and time, the British Empire displayed great variation both temporally and geographically. To the historian a significant feature of architecture or the wider built environment is that, despite such variety, there is the chance of remaining durable and dateable evidence that may give us some answers to these questions. This edifice-centred approach is now often recognized as fruitful, but the truth of the matter is that there was not that much work in this field, though it has grown apace in recent years, which is why volumes such as these are so important.

The British Empire was, to state the obvious, briefly history's largest, both in terms of geographical extent and proportion of the world's population. However, too often overlooked, especially by those with an axe to grind is that, for much of its history, it was far less extensive and generally not long lasting. Outside the Metropolis – the term used here, as in Bremner and Nelson, to describe what could otherwise be referred to as the British Isles or Home – the Empire generally did not last for anything like its nearly 400 years span in any particular area. As we all know, thirteen North American colonies broke away in the later 18th century, while later dominion status meant that other settler colonies were then not under any kind of control from Whitehall, which is not to deny influence in both directions. Other areas were acquired at a late stage; most of the African colonies were held for significantly less than a century and the mandates, or at least those ruled from Whitehall, lasted less than fifty years. There are, of course, exceptions, such as Barbados and some of the other West Indian Islands, which were indeed part of the British Empire for over 300 years, but that is very much an outlying example. The Indian Empire lies between these poles, with any significant territorial dominion lasting less than 200 years. The relevance of this is that shorter periods of time and widely differing environmental conditions will tend towards the development of a more diversified built environment, reducing any potential imperial imprint.

As Bremner remarks in his Introduction to the multi-authored OHBE:C volume, we could have 'a history of architecture in the British empire' or alternatively an 'architectural history of British imperialism'. The first would simply be descriptive, though still of great interest, the latter is obviously, if achievable, potentially more valuable. However, was there such a thing as a British Imperial Architecture? That question and Bremner's alternatives are issues which this article will seek to address. Obviously, dramatically different climatic conditions make a difference to architectural design and construction, as does differing geology - not only building materials, but other features such as a propensity to earthquakes, which could act together or in opposing directions, for example in the West Indies a stone house would better resist a hurricane, but might kill you in an earthquake. Architectural styles may express imperial themes, but even there some serious questions arise. The classical style is sometimes seen as archetypally expressing a uniform imperial impulse, but this is not necessarily the case. The obvious example would be Roman; certainly both the education and the historical tastes of imperial

administrators might make them incline in that direction, but classical style could equally well be Greek. Indeed, the tension between the concepts of a Roman-style Empire and an Athenian-style elite democratic thalassocracy reflects an ideological tension about imperialism that was always present in the minds of the British and could manifest itself in architecture and design.

A fundamental element in shaping the British Empire is that it was a seaborne empire, as opposed to land-based empires, such as Russia, China or indeed Rome. However large individual elements of the Empire, such as India, Canada or Australia, were and however great their need for internal land-based communications, to get between them and the Metropolis, or indeed each other, required use of the sea. If that usage was to be unfettered, seapower was required. This seems very basic, but it made a difference to everything. As Nelson shows in the case of Jamaica, not only did people arrive by sea, voluntarily or otherwise, the sea was vital for exports and importing all the products of the Metropolis and Empire, right down to building materials and decorative materials for the houses of the elite. Over the seas came and went not only goods, including pattern books, and people, including architects or those seeking architectural inspiration or training, but above all ideas. Most of the great cities of the Empire were ports. Then too, in considering the Empire and its buildings, we have to deal with not only its vast geographical extent, scattered among the several continents, and considerable temporal extent, with its climatic and geological differences, but also the differences in human political geography. Should we categorize it by type of colony? There were colonies of settlement; areas where much or even most of the population was either from or was descended from those born in the Metropolis or elsewhere in Europe. A second category, sometimes overlapping with the first, is the plantation colony, where much of the workforce was involuntary labour brought in from outside – Nelson's *Jamaica* explores a classic case of just such a colony, based on slavery. There were convict settlements as well as slave settlements, but we should also include indentured labour in this category of involuntary labour. Indeed, the American colonies featured all three, often simultaneously. In addition, methods of administration varied. There might be a protectorate or some other means of indirect rule; there could be direct rule from Westminster, usually termed a Crown Colony; even rule from Whitehall had its variations – the Colonial Office was quite separate from the India Office, to say nothing of the deference given to 'the man on the spot' and the very real possibility that one governor might take a very different view from that of his predecessor. Equally, especially in white settler colonies, you found various forms of self-government, rising to responsible government and eventually to dominion status. There is also, of course, independence, but let us leave that post-colonial element aside. All these elements have significant consequences for buildings and who designed and built and, perhaps most important of all, financed them. Finally, all colonies differ from each other. Is Jamaica a paradigm case of a West Indian colony or more widely of a slave colony? Or do we point out its identity as a larger West Indian island – perhaps more akin to other islands of the Greater Antilles, such as Cuba – with a very high proportion of the population being black slaves and treat it as a unique case. Historians, like naturalists, can be 'lumpers' or 'splitters'. Still there is one fact we can 'lump'; it all came and went, before the last few decades (when a little could go by air) by sea.

Turning first to the Bremner to address these questions, it is a well bound, well-illustrated hardback. The work is profusely footnoted and is an admirable historiographical survey of the theme and an ideal starting point for the issues discussed here, but it is, of course, a portrait of work in progress. Still what it reveals is that progress, in the sense above all of expanding fields of publication, is going on. Even if this OHBE:C volume must inevitably be overtaken by future research and publication as time passes, it remains a badly needed survey. The sheer size of the British Empire is mentioned above; this book looks at most of it, including those first two centuries of western building and architecture in what became the United States. This inevitably means the coverage of any particular time or place is fleeting.

The Nelson is a most welcome volume, providing a survey of the classic plantation colony, where the white settler element was massively outnumbered, about 13 to 1, more than in any other British colony, by enslaved Negroes and some free descendants, a proportion of them of mixed race. At least outside the colonies of settlement, this kind of single colony architectural study is generally lacking. Happily it was published in time to be recognized and cited in the Bremner and, indeed, its author is one of Bremner's contributors, but alas the *John Lockwood Kipling* - referred to here as Kipling, references to his son will be to Rudyard - exhibition and book (Bryant and Weber) came thereafter. This is a shame, because, as is explored below, they provide valuable insights into the question of the influence of British design on Empire and *vice versa*. Sadly, Kipling gets no mention in the Bremner, his contribution to the Victoria Terminal in Bombay for example being credited to others. Let us trust that, after the exhibition and catalogue, future surveys will not ignore Kipling's contribution.

Looking more specifically at the Bremner, he writes the Introduction and chapters on Monuments etc., the Metropolis and, with Nelson, on Religious and Educational Architecture. Daniel Maudlin writes on Early Colonial Architecture, Robert Home and Anthony D. King on Urbanism and Planning and Mark Crinson on Imperial Modernism. Harold Kalman and Nelson write on British North America and the West Indies, Preeti Chopra on South and South-East Asia, Stuart King and Julie Willis on the Australian Colonies, Ian Lochhead and Paul Walker on New Zealand and the Pacific, with Iain Jackson and Ola Uduku on Sub-Saharan Africa and Samuel B. Albert on Egypt and Mandatory Palestine and Iraq. All are valuable, well informed and helpful surveys, identifying and discussing the literature on the topic, even if coming, at times, from rather different angles. The book is well illustrated, with effective cross-referencing to illustrations and plates, both within the relevant chapters and outside them, with good cross-referencing to the other chapters. If Bremner does not force his contributors into a common mould, he does at least seem to have kept them informed of each other's work and tried to get these thirteen disparate elements into some sort of whole - if not seamless, at least well connected. Readers will be well able to think of many an edited, learned volume where far less coherence has been achieved.

One aspect of the Bremner to be applauded is an emphasis on ecclesiastical architecture, not just in Chapter 5, specifically on this topic, its co-authors having an admirable publications record in this field, but throughout the work. It shows the importance of church building and their associated educational institutions throughout

the Empire and portrays it as a significant imperial development: ‘church architecture was once a highly significant and symbolically powerful building typology in the British colonial world’ (p.159) and ‘The Anglican Church was inextricably linked with the project of empire’ (p.162). The first is certainly true, though note that the gothicism increasingly favoured by Anglicans appealed less to other denominations, the second more questionable (Fig. 1). Apart from anything else, much of the church building, missionary activity and associated schools and colleges were not Anglican, as Bremner’s contributors demonstrate in both the text and many illustrations. The contributors do expressly recognize, but do not sufficiently emphasize, that though the Church of England was established in England and, throughout most of the period addressed, also in Wales and Ireland, while the Church of Scotland formed a separate establishment, this establishment was not carried over into the Empire. Though for some time this question of the Established Church was a grey area, that was established by judicial decision. Ironically, one area where the Church of England was established was in the American colonies, for example in Maryland and the Carolinas by colonial assemblies, in all three cases in the early years of the 18th century. However, the Assembly of some of the New England colonies established the Congregational Church. Establishment certainly had its attractions for the established body, for example in Virginia Anglican Churches – and good brick buildings, not log

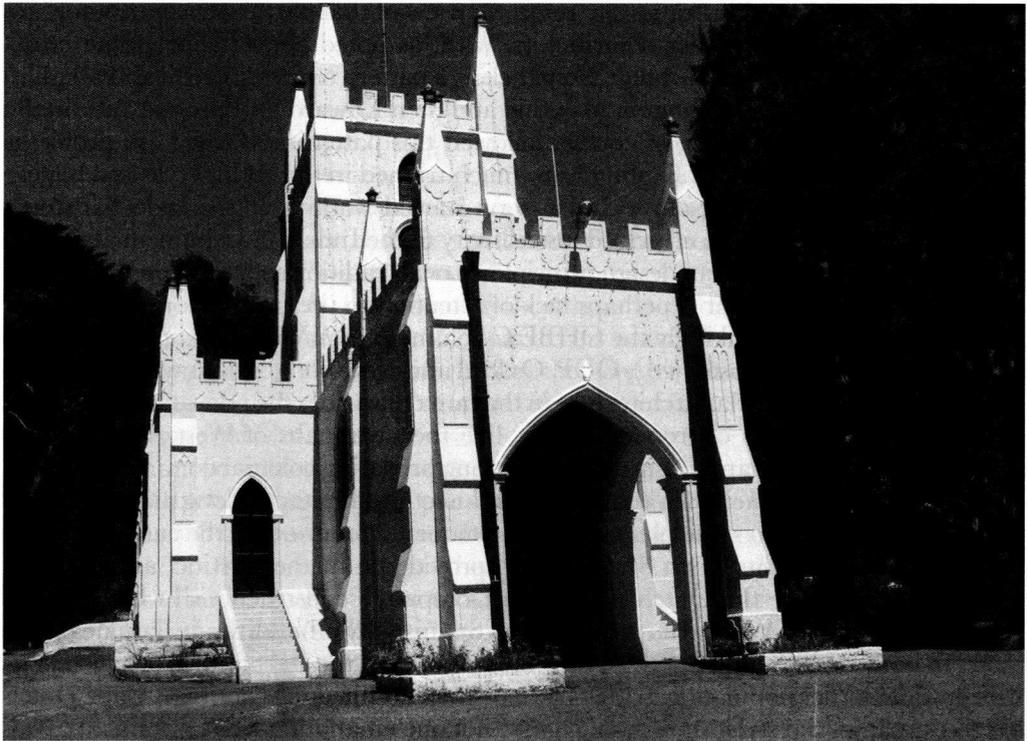


Fig. 1

St Stephen's (Anglican, now Church of South India) Church, Ooty, Tamil Nadu, India, (1830).

Captain John James Underwood. Gothic.

*Photograph: author*

cabins – rose from thirty-five to sixty-one between 1680 and 1724. The public revenue footed the bill for that. Something of which the contributors seem to be unaware, as they comment on the lateness of the establishment of bishoprics within the Empire and the date at which it occurred, is that, in the reaction to American independence, it was felt that the absence of a colonial episcopate had contributed to this, not least because those American colonists, even in those colonies where the Church of England was established, had resisted the establishment of an American Episcopate. (The current American Episcopalian Church hierarchy is a post-independence phenomenon, initially via the Episcopal Church of Scotland, that provided a non-established episcopal church to act as a precedent and source of ordination and the first US see predates the first colonial see. Later the Consecration of Bishops Abroad Act 1786 made it possible for the Church of England to ordain bishops outside British colonies). There was, briefly, a feeling within Britain that the establishment of a church hierarchy in the colonies might help prevent further unfortunate events such as American Independence. However, soon the establishment of an overseas hierarchy was left to the Church itself. Interestingly, in his *Jamaica* Nelson, co-author of those remarks, ignores ecclesiastical architecture. Perhaps he does not accept that second quote? If so, it is submitted that he is right.

Detailed analysis of every chapter of the Bremner would be inappropriate, not least for reasons of space, but each contains a review of the literature, even if necessarily somewhat potted, with illustrations to make the view of that particular contributor, not necessarily that held by other contributors, with, as noted above, appropriate cross-referencing to elsewhere in the book. Nonetheless, a pattern emerges: classical/Palladian work in earlier periods, moving on to gothic and then Edwardian Baroque and finally modernism. Not all builders, of course, followed this pattern and there are problems even with this simple model. Kipling, very much trained in the gothic style and having worked in it before coming out to India, soon started working in the Indo-Saracenic style and, in his journalism, criticized insensitivity to the Indian environment and slavish following of European design principles. Local traditions play an important part; a weakness of the Bremner is perhaps lack of attention to the vernacular, possibly due to shortage of space – strikingly the OHBE:C volume *British North America in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Stephen Foster (ed.), OUP, Oxford and New York, 2013) says more (if still not much) about vernacular architecture in that area than does the relevant contribution in Bremner. Even parts of tropical Africa, like the savannahs of West Africa, had a substantial and lengthy architectural heritage long predating colonial dominance, whilst India, Egypt or Palestine's own continuous architectural heritage(s) long precede any in the Metropolis. Also, in some places, Britain conquered or absorbed the earlier colonial possessions of other European States, which provided a further distinct architectural heritage, for example the Dutch East India Company's constructions in Galle in Sri Lanka (a UNESCO World Heritage site), or Spanish-style buildings in Jamaica. Still more, in both Canada and South Africa, there was from the start of British rule a non-British white settler population, with its own distinct architectural heritage. Cape Dutch is a distinct imperial style, though, of course, not one emanating from Britain.

Equally distinctive, and equally not coming from the Metropolis, is the Indo-Saracenic style. This illustrates an important point about the British Empire, which is

that in many ways it had two capitals - London and Calcutta (after 1911, New Delhi). Bryant and Weber show how important Kipling was to the development of this distinctive style; imperial certainly and, initially at least, designed by Britons, but consciously rooted in the local vernacular. The considerable financial independence of the Indian Government, after its tax base was reorganized following the Crown's takeover of the East India Company (dissolved on 1st November 1858), also meant that the Viceroy's Government, albeit ultimately subject to the Secretary of State for India, had more freedom about what to build and how lavish it should be, while the semi-independent Indian Princes had still more scope to express themselves – even if many in fact chose the Indo-Saracenic. Indeed, any consideration of anything to do with the British Empire will always be defective unless it considers the effect of the decisions of HM Treasury. Its pressure for economy, which was and is the driving ideological, one might almost say religious, force, behind that august body, is a continuing feature which must be borne in mind in any analysis of the British Empire. Indeed, it may have impinged more on public architecture than on other features, partly because monumental building is always expensive and partly because it is a form of expenditure to which HMT could, indeed can, be particularly resistant.

One key feature of the architecture of empires, which Bremner acknowledges in his Introduction, is largely ignored in his volume, military architecture. It is true that Britain, as a seaborne empire, relied heavily on the dominance of the Royal Navy to assert its power and influence – indeed British Somaliland in 1940 would seem to be the sole example of a British colony lost in circumstances other than a local loss of control of the sea. However, in the early years of Empire this dominance was less certain; 17th and early 18th century colonies tended to shelter round a fortified point. Indeed, early colonial charters often required the building of such forts, partly no doubt for the obvious reason, but also because the law of nations, as then understood, required it as evidence of title. Nelson discusses the defensive architecture in Jamaica, but also describes how it owes much to its social circumstances in that period. However, though military architecture may be significant in the original founding of colonies and in their defence, given that it must necessarily, apart from decorative flourishes, be governed by the military function it is to perform and the ways in which it can be defended or attacked, it is a very functional form of architecture, which could probably not tell us much about imperial ideology anyway.

Moving to the second of our illustrative books, Nelson's *Architecture and Empire in Jamaica* is both less and so much more than its title indicates. The Introduction states that it is 'Generally spanning from the Port Royal earthquake of 1692 to emancipation in 1838...', so it addresses only about half of Jamaica's period as a British colony and only around a third of its total colonial history. That time period is addressed with the aid of much research on buildings still standing – some only just – in Jamaica, as well as much study and use of the literature and the archives and some archaeology. It is a social as well as an architectural history, with the account of the architecture integrated into the history of the island and the history, central to the story of Jamaica then, of slavery and the slave trade. Moreover, as Nelson writes, 'this book reaches beyond Jamaica', casting the island very much as an integral part of the British Empire. It looks at the

castles on the Gold Coast, operating as centres for slaving, and also contrasts Jamaica both with other British frontier environments such as North America or 16th and 17th Century Ireland and then later with other West Indian islands and with the American South – the latter both before and after independence. The many links, but especially the architectural and financial connections, back to the Metropolis are also well explored.

The Nelson could be summarised as contrasting the alien environment within which the British settlers found themselves, with the intense Britishness of their response to that (my terminology, not Nelson's) - not it is suggested a reaction only to be found in Jamaica. It was alien in the presence of an overwhelming black majority, largely enslaved and bitterly resenting that, as expressed in often bloody and sometimes well-organised slave risings. It was alien too in its risk of French and Spanish raids on Jamaica, destroying buildings and carrying off slaves, while the physical environment was also alien – tropical heat and rainfall as a norm, with occasional hurricanes and earthquakes to add further physical dangers to life on the island, with inevitable consequences for building design and construction methods. All of these factors and the responses to them, whilst still attempting to realise elements of British life-style, are well set out by Nelson. His thesis is trail-blazed in his Introduction and set out in his closing paragraphs. It is well worth quoting from the latter, as it accurately summarise the book's argument, which is well evidenced and supported:

Jamaicans in Britain left their own indelible and now largely forgotten mark, but whatever the architectural form, what is clear is that Jamaican plantation owners removed the focus of their opulence from the source of their wealth back to the motherland... They consumed Africans by the thousands to clear lowlands of mahogany stands and install sugar fields in their stead; such consumption fuelled the construction of the massive fortifications along the west coast of Africa now collectively called the slave castles. They invested substantial capital in the construction of sugar works... Jamaicans participated in the empire of goods, purchasing fine goods and consumables from Britain and across her empire. But Tacky's Rebellion and other insurrections of the 1760s changed Jamaica forever. That decade saw the rapid increase of actually defensible houses along the north and west coast... the end of grand house construction... and the egress of many of the elite... This departure of the wealthiest landowners also helped to facilitate the generation of a more clearly realised Creole culture in Jamaica... allowing the fluorescence of island culture and architecture. An important component of this new culture was the ever growing free black population.

Perhaps one should add that that creolisation is not a response to be found only in Jamaica; the eventual development of indigenous approaches was common.

Then there is the influence of this West Indian elite in Britain, investing in stately homes and often re-exporting styles popular in Jamaica into the Metropolis. Yet it was not all for show; the West India Docks in London were constructed by the West India interest. Equally, though the biggest planters had their own substantial and often still visible industrial buildings on their plantations, where the sugar was refined, many others did not, exporting muscovado or unrefined brown sugar. The resultant sugar refineries constructed in British ports provide an early example of industrialization, starting as it does in the second half of the 17th century. So Jamaica was a crucial hinge of Empire, as the greatest centre of sugar production; in 1805 it produced 100,000 tons of sugar and the following year exported 6.76 million gallons of rum. That produced enormous

wealth and, because of the Navigation Acts, though vast amounts were consumed within the Metropolis, there was also a great volume of re-exports. This is not as unique as might seem. The Scottish economy in the 18th century was much boosted by the massive imports of tobacco into Glasgow, again much being re-exported. Equally, the 18th century aversion to West Indian planters showing their money off back in the Metropolis is as nothing compared with the complaints about 'Nabobs' bringing their money back from India and seeking to influence the British body politic – indeed, Bryant suggests that 'one reason for the lack of more Indian-style architecture in Britain may have been its association, since the eighteenth century, with the nabobs...' (Bryant and Weber p. 435). Could this have had something to do with the fact that West Indian planters were at least landowners, whose wealth derived from agricultural production, whereas wealth coming back from India derived from trade, a longstanding feature of British upper class prejudice? The greater detestation of slave traders as compared with slave owners may have similar roots; mind you that difference in attitude goes back at least to the Romans and so, of course, does the prejudice against commerce. Still, all of this would only go to show that much of Nelson's thesis has wider application to the British Empire, not just to the particular case of Jamaica.

Mention too should be given to the book's excellent treatment of the role of the vernacular and local traditions in the architecture of Jamaica. It debunks assertions of the influence of Africa, very convincingly showing that this has been exaggerated. However, it equally demonstrates that many slave quarters were built by slaves and that as much as 75% of the slave population of Jamaica, even as late as the 1770s, was African born – sufficient comment on the appalling mortality rates among all groups and classes in Jamaica and showing how African traditions and skills were constantly refreshed within the slave population. However, Nelson also traces the important elements of the Spanish legacy in Jamaica, the links with other West Indian islands and with the North American colonies, as well as with different parts of the Metropolis. These influences pass in many directions to influence the built environment in Jamaica and, by implication, more widely, both in relation to other spheres and other colonies.

The Nelson is a well-bound, handsome, well-illustrated volume, well up to the usual high standards of Yale University Press. However, one usual feature of such works, both missing and missed in this one, is the lack of a Table of Illustrations (absent too from Yale's Bryant and Weber). There are some proofreading errors e.g. 'Eaton' for 'Eton' and, more seriously, Somerset's case, in which Lord Mansfield declared that the air of England was too free for a slave to breathe, thereby effectively abolishing slavery within Great Britain, was a judicial decision and not an Act of Parliament, as is suggested on p. 240. However, these are quibbles; *Jamaica* is a magnificent achievement, well rooted in significant research, both on the ground and in the archives, with an impressive grasp of the secondary literature. It is a major contribution to architectural history and more widely to the history of Jamaica, of slavery and the role of both within the British Empire. One trusts its readership will extend beyond those interested in the history of the built environment.

The V&A exhibition, *John Lockwood Kipling: Arts and Crafts in the Punjab and London* was held between 14th January and 2nd April 2017, accompanied by Bryant and Weber's

catalogue. It largely refrained from displays of political correctness, as does Bryant and Weber, and, in particular, both resist the temptation to analyse Kipling's life and work through the lens of Said's Orientalism hypothesis, though regrettably that is not true of the weak Preface. Indeed, the Bryant and Weber demonstrates the weaknesses of the hypothesis, at least in its original formulation by Said; Nadhra Shahbaz Khan's piece on 'Industrial Art Education in the Colonial Punjab' plainly shows those weaknesses. Readers should note that Arts and Crafts, at least in the Indian section of the display, very much included architecture and architectural decoration, as did Kipling's own design work. The exhibition drew largely on the substantial quantities of material from South Asia in the V&A's collection; many, indeed, of its exhibits had not been on public view for a century or so.

The exhibition was somewhat cramped - it was free, which was much appreciated, but this inevitably meant that the V&A did not devote to it the amount of space that it does to its larger, more heavily promoted and more commercial exhibitions, although it did have a fair degree of publicity. I visited it twice, on both occasions immediately after it opened in the morning, and was able to wander through, at a leisurely pace, with a largely uninterrupted view of the exhibits, notwithstanding the limited display space. However, by the time luncheon approached, elbow room was much diminished. The intense use of the space was, perhaps, reminiscent in some ways of a 19th century museum, but if so that was not inappropriate. Kipling after all was the curator of a 19th century museum, in Lahore - an aspect explored by Sandra Kemp in Bryant and Weber - and had earlier worked on what was then the South Kensington Museum and, of course, much of what was on display was acquired by 19th Century museums - including the Indian Museum, now incorporated into the V&A (issues which are explored in Bryant and Weber, especially by Bryant in Chapter 1 and Weber in Chapter 9). The Bryant and Weber lists and illustrates each of the exhibits.

The first room was devoted to material from Kipling's early life and to pictures of and exhibits from the Great Exhibition, textiles, including carpeting, vases, boxes, jewellery and armour, long ago acquired and placed in the keeping of what is now the V&A. The captions stressed that Kipling was much influenced by what he saw at the Great Exhibition, but no real link was established between the Indian material from it displayed at this exhibition and that claimed influence on Kipling. He was after all only fourteen when he visited the Great Exhibition; nor indeed was any Indian influence visible in Kipling's early work, which seems classically or Renaissance orientated. Bryant and Weber quotes from Kipling's original job application to prove a pre-existing knowledge and interest in Indian design, but one wonders how many of us would like to be judged on what we wrote in applications for jobs, especially early in our life. However, it certainly did make a case, though the work of others, for an important sub-theme of the exhibition - the influence of Indian design on British design work, both craft and industrially produced.

The exhibition contained a number of videos, generally of material, in particular buildings, not displayed or indeed displayable in the exhibition. The opening video was largely close-ups of material from the Great Exhibition; as it zoomed in and out, the watcher could feel somewhat queasy. Each phase of the exhibition had a video; those

phases were, appropriately, those of Kipling's life: pre India, his work in Bombay (all references to localities or buildings are to how they were named at the relevant time) at the Sir J. & J. School of Art, then at the Mayo college in Lahore (now evolved into Pakistan's National College of Arts - NCA) as Principal and also Chief Curator of the Lahore Museum and, finally, after his return from India and his retirement. The second video was of some of the magnificent buildings of Bombay, very much examples of imperial architecture; Kipling or his students were retained to do much of the sculptural decoration of Sheppard Market, the Sir J. & J. School of Art, the Museum and Victoria Railway Station shown in this video – topics more fully explored by Bryant in Chapters 4 and 5. In the main these are not examples of architecture commissioned by the Sirkar (as the British government of India was known – the term 'the Raj' is anachronistic, having only become a commonly used term in recent years). Rather Bombay was, as it is today, the heart and centre of commercial life in India. The magnificent buildings from this post-Mutiny era of British rule, which grace downtown Bombay, are a delight and, provided you can withstand the heat and humidity, a pleasure to walk around and behold. The video afforded an excellent opportunity to look at some of the carvings and design not readily apparent from ground level. European and Indian influences are both clearly apparent; whether this could be described as a fusion is another issue. Rather there are clearly different elements, which nonetheless separately come together to form an impressive whole; the Victoria Railway Station is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. What is clear, especially in Chapters 4 and 5, is the centrality of Kipling and his students' contribution, under his direction, to these buildings. The exhibition also featured contemporary prints and paintings of buildings of the period, some by students at the school.

When Kipling went out to India, it was to teach and encourage students to copy European designs, but he speedily began to incorporate local architecture, craft and design based on traditional practices into his teaching. Examples of this and of Kipling's own work, particularly sketches and drawings of native crafts and craftsmen in what were then termed the North Western provinces, which he was commissioned to produce by the Government of India, displayed in the exhibition, showed this trend. With this were examples of textiles and examples of carvings for the station. An album of photographs by Kipling, on display, showed his personal interests. Kipling himself, like his son, could express appalling imperialistic and racist views – even by the standards of the time – but both rise above this in their work; Kipling's passionate advocacy of traditional Indian crafts and skills being strangely at odds with his views of Indians. As also was true of Rudyard, the heart of the artist can see more clearly than the eyes of the man.

In 1875, after some ten years in Bombay, Kipling moved to his new and more senior post in Lahore and this was the focus of the third phase. Its video was different again; made by NCA students, it showed Lahore today, including much traditional Islamic architecture visible in Kipling's time. The cannon, still standing in front of the museum, which many will remember from the opening passages of Rudyard's *Kim*, is glimpsed in it. A further video showed the work of Noor Ali Chagar; his theme is bricks, especially miniatures of bricks. However, apart from being a possible, though not established, heritage of Kipling's time as Principal, it is difficult to see how this related to the theme

of the exhibition, though in Bryant and Weber the point is made that brickmaking was seen as a low caste activity, whereas Kipling was trying to encourage all building and design crafts. Is Chagar making a point? If so the exhibition did not bring it out. This section also featured many paintings and sketches of buildings and their decoration and examples of Punjab crafts, largely the work of students at the school and photographs and copies of older Indian art, including Gandharan sculpture, for the museum.

During the time Kipling was in India, the Government of India's policy changed to seeing the indigenous design tradition as important both in its own right and in terms of developing internationally tradeable items to support the developing Indian economy. How far that was due to Kipling's influence or whether it was just part of the *zeitgeist* was not explored in the Exhibition, though in fact he clearly worked at and for these developments. That point is well developed in Bryant and Weber, showing he was consulted by the Government of India on that policy and its legal implementation. In contrast, references to that development in Chopra's chapter in Bremner contain no mention of Kipling.

The final phase was on Kipling's post-India life. He illustrated many of his son's works and Rudyard's books and his father's illustrative and design work in them feature prominently in this section of the exhibition. Also in this section are examples of work by Kipling's immediate pupils and successors, aided by a video and some photographs and furniture and fittings showing internal decor at Osborne (Isle of Wight) and Bagshot Park (Surrey), though Kipling's role in this is not adequately emphasised – in contrast to Bryant's chapter on this. Finally, in a nice touch, the V&A took further advantage of its collection, the exit from the exhibition leading directly into its South Asia gallery (additional material can be seen at [vam.ac.uk/kipling](http://vam.ac.uk/kipling)).

The book obviously has similar concerns, but deals with them in greater depth – not least the architectural elements. Superb illustrations and photographs crowd the volume, but an especial word must be given to the architectural photographs – of whole buildings, decorative detail and internal décor – that were obviously taken, in India, Pakistan and England specifically for this book. There is some overlap between the chapters and indeed there are one or two cases where there is an error or over simplification in one chapter which is not to be found in another. Sadly a note on page xix informs us that 'American spellings and conventions of punctuation have been used throughout'. However, generally this is a work of high quality, in presentation, the profuse illustrations and the text, which is footnoted in great detail. If it does not read altogether happily in all places and if the contributions come together less harmoniously than Bremner's, that is probably unimportant; this is a work to be consulted, probably for many years to come, rather than sat down and read from cover to cover, not least because of the wide range of subjects. Bryant on Kipling as sculptor, as architect and his royal commissions at Bagshot Park and Osborne are probably the most important from the point of view of architecture and of buildings, but much else is of at least tangential relevance. It does provide, a key point from the perspective of this article, an in-depth look at the whole issue of design in the context of the Empire in India. One hopes that the exhibition and book will do much to revive the memory of Kipling's work. Maybe, like Rudyard, he is now more remembered and treasured in India and Pakistan than he is in the Metropolis. The weakest element is

undoubtedly the Preface, ideologically driven and containing significant factual errors. Listing all of them would be tedious, so let us just take an obvious example, from page xv: 'at the heart of the reformist group were the India Office bureaucrats Jeremy Bentham and James and John Stuart Mill...'. Now the India Office did not exist until after the Government of India Act 1858 (accurately and properly referred to elsewhere in the book) and Bentham, who never held such office, died in 1832. It is true that both James Mill and his son worked for the East India Company, but the former died in 1836 and John Stuart Mill resigned on the abolition of the Company, despite all attempts to persuade him otherwise, because he refused to work for the British Government.

Bryant builds a powerful case for the centrality of Kipling's contribution to the development of the Indo-Saracenic style, not only personally, but through his pupils Bhai Ram Singh and Rai Bahadur Kanhaiya Lal. Kipling and the former of those also worked with Colonel Swinton, one of those most responsible for the establishment of the Indo-Saracenic, on Aitchison College in Lahore. One problem is that Kipling himself never claimed personal credit for much of this, even though the research that forms such a noteworthy and praiseworthy feature of Bryant and Weber clearly establishes that as his personal responsibility. Mention has already been made of the many high quality photographs taken in 2016 with which the architecture and its details are illustrated in this book; they show the quality of Kipling's work.

In conclusion, it cannot be seriously contended that there was an architectural form that expressed the British Empire; it and its buildings varied too much both in time and space. However, we can see that, once formal buildings began to be erected, there was a preference in early years for the classical style, generally giving way, in the middle years of the 19th century, to the gothic and then to the Edwardian Baroque and then, in the final days of Empire, modernism. But were these Imperial styles of architecture? It is suggested that they were not. Rather they were the dominant style of architecture prevailing in the Metropolis, indeed perhaps in western culture, at that time, simply exported to the Empire, possibly, as is often the case with fashions, continuing rather later the further you got from Metropolitan influence. They certainly all mark architecture within the Empire, one could argue imposed upon the Empire, but far less are they Imperial Architecture. There were certainly men who would have liked there to be an imperial style of architecture. Baker is perhaps the most obvious of them among architects, but a clear desire for it was certainly to be found among major advocates of empire such as Cecil Rhodes or Curzon, but they did not command the support of the majority of their countrymen and, perhaps more important still, did not have the support of HM Treasury. An arguable exception is the Indo-Saracenic; if there was a consciously imperial style that was it (Fig. 2). Yet it certainly never extended over the whole of the Empire and nor was it the dominant style even in India – Lutyens and Baker consciously rejected it when designing New Delhi - though it was very important in India and exported from it to some other Asian colonies –

Indeed, in contrast to other styles, it did not reach back towards the Metropolis, save perhaps in a few, very Indian orientated, examples. Interestingly, though undoubtedly influenced and first practised by British architects and designers living in India, such as Kipling, it has its roots in the vernacular traditions and crafts of India. Finally, the



Fig. 2

Lalitha Mahal Palace, Mysore, Karnataka, India, (1930), now an hotel. E.W.Fritchley for the Maharaja of Mysore. Indo-Saracenic, morphing back to Baroque.

*Photograph: author*

influence of government, certainly Whitehall's influence (probably the only possible source and driving point for an Imperial Architecture) on architecture was limited. The Public Works Departments (PWD) of colonies across the Empire built much and built cheaply; Kipling robustly criticised how, at least in India, PWD buildings were designed by those trained as engineers, not in any craft tradition. However, commercial enterprise always, after the very early days, built more.

In areas of settlement or where there was a strong pre-colonial architectural heritage, the vernacular/local style, be it a local style such as Cape Dutch or distinctive styles of British regions exported to the colonies – this was especially important in the early years – such taste would always override any imperial architectural ideology or, as in the case of the Indo-Saracenic, co-opt it. For, of course, the British do not really do ideology; short pockets, common sense and a distaste for central direction tend to be overriding factors. Indeed, Jackson and Uduku put it well in the OHBE:C volume: 'The British empire was an interconnected, if disparate and disorganized, network'(p. 413). Though expressed, of course, in the context of architecture and planning, nonetheless it may well be as good a one-line description of the whole enterprise as one could hope for. Or to put it another way, we should look at the adjective, not the noun -what is distinctive

about the architecture of the British Empire is in essence its *Britishness*, rather than its Imperialism; a thought that may well have application more widely than architecture. The Indo-Saracenic again emerges as an exception. So to again pose Bremner's question, can we write an 'architectural history of British imperialism'? It would seem we can, though would it amount to more than a description of the British exporting their architecture, as well as themselves and their goods? Perhaps an unsurprising conclusion, but one that underlines the fact that studies need to concentrate on the individual colonies, though the comparative element will obviously remain important. Perhaps the key feature is the centrality of the Metropolis and the relationship between the Metropolis and Empire, all in truth given full weight in the three works considered here.

Still, a final thought, if there is one distinctive architectural feature of the British Empire it is perhaps the humble bungalow, especially if defined as living on one storey. It was often called the homestead in Australia and was almost universal as a home for imperial officers and others living out in the empire. Its attraction and export to the Metropolis came early: India House, 11 Hawley Street, Margate (Fig. 3), according to John Newman (*Kent: North East and East, Buildings of England*, YUP New Haven and London, 2013) the 'best house in Margate', was built by a retired tea planter, Captain John



Fig. 3  
India House, 11 Hawley Street, Margate.  
*Photograph: author*

Gould, c.1767. It is interesting too to quote some of Kipling's praise for the bungalow, in a posthumously published article in *Country Life in America* ('The origin of the Bungalow', 19, 8, February 1911, 306-10): 'A bungalow is a little country-house – a homely, cosy little place, with verandas and balconies, and the plan so arranged as to ensure complete comfort, with a feeling of rusticity and ease.', which nicely illustrates the attractions of the bungalow to the Anglo-Saxon world. Stripped of its veranda, it is to be found even in temperate climes, ending, in the Metropolis, as first a constant imperial reminder, frequently built for retired colonial officers, and then simply as a retirement home. Moreover, it is a style which originates out in the Empire before being imported into the Metropolis - perhaps not so poor a symbol of the Empire after all.