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# Blurring Boundaries

## The Limits of “White Town” in Colonial Calcutta

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One of the enduring assumptions about colonial cities of the modern era is that they worked on the basis of separation—they were “dual cities” divided into “black” and “white” towns.<sup>1</sup> Obviously, the degree of separation between black and white inhabitants varied according to the particularities of the context.<sup>2</sup> However, by emphasizing the duality of black and white one misses the idea that the critical aspect of colonial cities resided not in the clarity of this duality, but in the tension of blurred boundaries between the two.<sup>3</sup> In the case of Calcutta, the idea of black and white towns is seemingly based on the perception that European residents of the town inhabited an area that, in terms of layout, density, architecture, and everyday life, was fundamentally different and divorced from that of the native inhabitants. Scholars have emphasized the distinctiveness of the architecture of the white town—the European neoclassicism brought by the colonizers. From such a perspective, the emergence of a neoclassical vocabulary in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century India is seen as a rather straightforward transplantation of English ideas on Indian soil, attenuated or disfigured (depending on one’s point of view) by vagaries of local labor and availability of building materials.<sup>4</sup> In this essay I examine the so-called white town to argue that such racial divisions were neither complete nor static. The black and white towns were far from being autonomous entities; the economic, political, and social conditions of colonial

culture penetrated the insularity of both towns, although at different levels and to varying degrees. As an examination of the residential pattern of the white town will demonstrate, the story is more complicated.<sup>5</sup>

The description of colonial Calcutta as a city divided into black and white rests on scant evidence, on a static reading of urban plans (a reluctance to move between the city scale and the architectural scale), and on a lack of critical attention in reading the change in density over time.<sup>6</sup> The notion that these building ideas were completely imported from England, for example, is based on the neoclassical “look” of the buildings, with no attempt to document and examine plans and sections. The only published plan of Calcutta’s colonial architecture is the plan of Government House. In other words, the existing scholarship is remarkably nonspatial. I address this lacuna here by explaining the organization of house plans as a means to supply a speculative market in which the functions of buildings changed frequently and residences were used for nonresidential purposes and vice versa. The blurring of boundaries lies in the heterogeneous use as well as the heterogeneous population who inhabited the buildings. If the terms *black town* and *white town* were used frequently in the nineteenth century, we need to understand why they were used and the nature of the inclusions and exclusions they implied in order to sustain an imperial narrative of difference and European superiority.

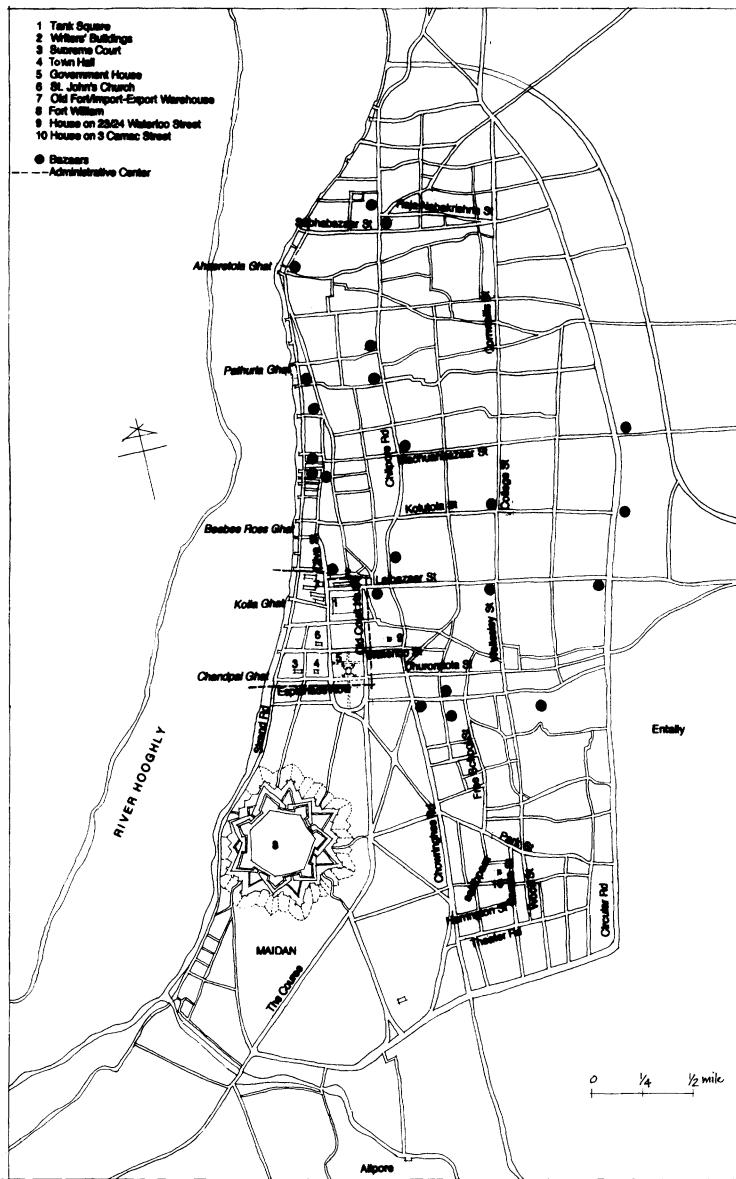
## The “White” Town

In 1794 the Governor General of Calcutta issued a proclamation fixing the limits of the town between the Hooghly River to the west and the inner side of the Mahratta Ditch to the east, and between Dihee Birjee to the south and the Chitpur *nullah* (creek) to the north.<sup>7</sup> Even before such boundaries were drawn, Indian and European investors bought large tracts of land and built on them, anticipating a wide range of uses and renters.<sup>8</sup> They invested in bazaars, warehouses, residential buildings, shops, *bustees* (tenanted land), godowns (large storage spaces), and garden houses.<sup>9</sup> The commercial and administrative activity in the city had attracted approximately 200,000 inhabitants by 1820, by which time landed property had become a lucrative business.<sup>10</sup> Building costs were high, as basic building materials like brick, stone, and durable wood had to be imported from outside the city. Consequently rents were exorbitant and *pucka* (masonry) buildings could be fruitful investments. Only a few wealthy inhabitants could afford the luxury of a large house in a spacious garden; many more settled for smaller apartments and cheaper dwellings. The majority lived in single-room dwellings and huts. Property changed hands frequently, and it was common for Indians to rent property to Europeans and vice versa.<sup>11</sup> In the early days of colonial rule, it mattered little with whom the owners were dealing, as long as there was money to be made.

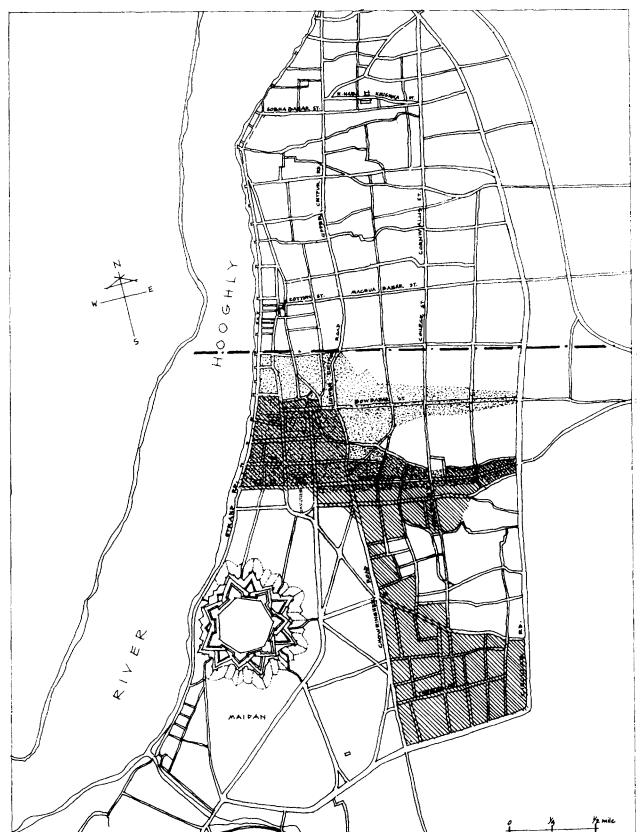
By the 1830s the salient features of nineteenth-century Calcutta’s morphology had been established. They included: ribbon development along main arteries, with a preponderance of narrow rectangular lots, demonstrating the importance of having streetfront property; the numerous *ghats* (steps for landing) along the edge of the Hooghly River, indicating the importance of the river for commerce and communication; the network of bazaars; and the administrative center between Esplanade Row and the Old Fort. The older north-south arteries such as Chitpur Road and Chowinghee Road were reinforced by new ones such as Strand Road and Wood-Wellesley-College-Cornwallis Street, intersected by a host of east-west streets that connected the wholesale bazaars and warehouses located in convenient proximity to the *ghats*, with the retail outlets in the city’s interior (Figure 1). The three-tiered commercial network of import-export, wholesale bazaars, and retail markets created a mutually supportive geography. The administrative center of the city was defined by the Mint, the Customs House and warehouses along the river’s edge, the Writers’ Building on the north, and Government House and the Supreme Court on the south (*maidan*) edge. Because of its proximity to the port and the offices of the

colonial government, this area became the sought-after locale for European entrepreneurs. Large auction houses and taverns commanded substantial spaces and chose prime spots on the main thoroughfares to attract customers with the latest arrival of “Europe goods.” These large commercial enterprises were interspersed with petty shops and dwellings of various sizes occupied by Indians and Europeans alike. From streets bearing names of distinctly indigenous origin, such as Cossitola Street (derived from *kassai-tola*, or butcher’s neighborhood) and Nuncoo Jemadar’s Lane, European wigmakers, milliners, carriage makers, and undertakers offered the best services money could buy.<sup>12</sup> While many of the entrepreneurs lived above the shops, smaller entrepreneurs, such as oyster sellers and hairdressers, worked from their own houses. European business spilled from this area eastward and northward, replicating the pattern of gradual accretion of retailers and petty entrepreneurs around the bazaars and wholesale markets. Beyond the administrative center, the major arteries formed a series of superblocks, the outside edges of which developed mixed use, with commercial activities predominating, while the interior of the blocks became primarily residential.

English visitors to late-eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century Calcutta asserted that there was a white town as well as a black town.<sup>13</sup> The former was represented by the fine rows of houses surrounding the *maidan*, while its counterpart, the black town, was seemingly situated somewhere beyond. But while most agreed about the existence of these entities, few could concur on the boundaries between the two domains (Figure 2). The population distribution of the different ethnic groups in the various localities undoubtedly shifted between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but any strict demarcation was arbitrary. Such boundaries were actually quite fluid; at no time did the white town form a homogeneous space of European inhabitants. Historians have frequently pointed out that the most significant distinguishing feature of these two “towns” was the density of the urban fabric—the sparsely distributed buildings of the white town as opposed to the close-knit fabric of the black town.<sup>14</sup> This characterization, however, does not withstand close investigation. The area of sparsely distributed single detached dwellings around Chowinghee Road, typically seen as representative of the white town, was an exception, not the rule. Much of the so-called white town had a higher density and a closely knit urban fabric that embraced the street. In fact, well into the 1830s the area around Tank Square, the administrative center of the city, was regarded as the fashionable European district and Chowinghee was



**Figure 1** Map of nineteenth-century Calcutta



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|--|---|
|  | Boundaries as indicated by William Baillie, 1792.                 |
|  | Boundaries as indicated by Leopold von Orlich and Edward Thornton |
|  | Boundaries as indicated by Lieutenant R. G. Wallace               |

**Figure 2** Map of Calcutta showing the boundaries of white town

considered a suburb.<sup>15</sup> Chowringhee became the most desirable locale for the wealthy, who wished to have the ambience of country living and yet be close enough to the heart of administration and European shopping. For those who could afford a garden estate, the suburbs of Russapugla, Ballygunge, the area close to the Circular Road, and Entally offered plenty of choices for large plots of land. Yet many preferred to live near Tank Square, next to the shops, taverns, and smaller houses occupied by the less privileged. When both Chowringhee Road and Park Street became prime locales for commercial real estate in the mid nineteenth century, the wealthy residential area retreated farther inward and to the south around Alipore.

It is worth noting here that in Bengali parlance there was no equivalent of the white town/black town duality. From the Bengali point of view, the city was divided into a host of *paras*, *tolas*, and *tulis*, all terms used to distinguish localities. The *paras* extended over an area approximately one-quarter by one-half mile, a space that was easy to cover on foot and cognitively constituted a territory.<sup>16</sup> Although these localities did not have fixed boundaries or legal bearing, they formed a block that residents could identify with. The area between Chowringhee Road, Park Street, Theater Road, and Wood Street, with its preponderance of well-off European residents, was known popularly as *sabibpara*, one among the approximately eighteen *paras* that constituted nineteenth-century Calcutta.

The landscape of colonial Calcutta was too complex to be usefully described in terms of the duality of black and white towns. The city consisted of overlapping geographies and conceptions of space and territory, both indigenous and foreign, that were constantly negotiated. Not surprisingly, the line of demarcation between the white and black towns shifted depending on the context and the perception of the observer. In the absence of clearly defined separation, the colonizers created discrete containments for both public and private sociability. The spatial choices oscillated between a theatrical display of open plans and a proliferation of confining elements—elaborate compound walls and railings that spoke a calculated language of exclusion.

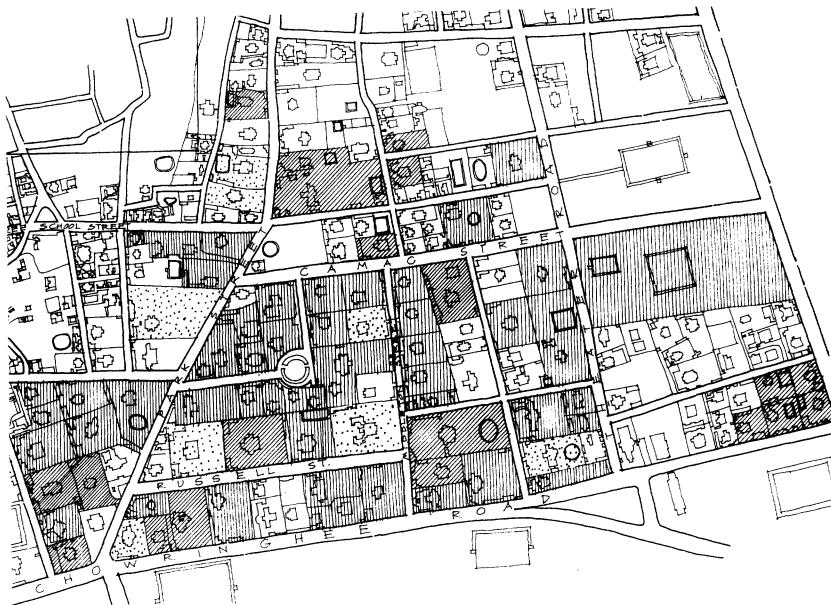
The desire for strict boundaries was rooted in an eighteenth-century British obsession with classification, division, and separation, exaggerated in the colonial context by the need to distinguish between black and white. Such proclivities gained impetus through incidents such as the Black Hole, reminding the British residents of the constant native threat to their existence in the city.<sup>17</sup> In their zeal to protect islands of sociability and symbols of imperialism, the colonizers resorted to building elaborate artifices of delimitation—wrought-iron railings, masonry walls, and gates—



**Figure 3** Southeast gate of Government House, Calcutta, *Views of Calcutta and Its Environs*, by Sir Charles D'Oyly, 1835, from Jeremy Losty, *Calcutta: City of Palaces* (London, 1990)

often designed after European pattern books. Since the buildings in the large lots were sited far away from the road, the architecture of the boundary wall and gate, as an extension of the architecture of the building, displayed to the outside world the quality of the artifact thus delimited. They functioned as preparatory devices for what was to be found inside. The boundaries themselves became symbols of the ruling class, as was amply illustrated by the drawing of the gate of Government House on the frontispiece of Charles D'Oyly's *Views of Calcutta and Its Environs* (Figure 3).<sup>18</sup> The gate itself was a representation of imperial power. As territorial markers, these protective devices that secluded the world of British inhabitants also worked to create a fractured public space that could never be gathered within a single imperial gesture. If the symbols and spaces of imperialism had to be carefully bounded to prevent native intrusion, it also meant that the native threat had to be placed at the center of colonial life, disfiguring and delimiting the colonizers' desire for unbounded and unpeopled territory.

Wherever we look, the city was heterogeneous. Exclusionary measures, intended to organize this heterogeneity, were defeated by the inherent contradictions of colonial life. Even within the colonizers' own domain, the realization of a homogeneous enclave proved difficult.



**Figure 4** Ownership of land in the Chowringhee area

## Built for Speculation

If the touch of neoclassicism introduced to simulate a sense of grandeur gave the buildings in the white town a note of familiarity from the outside, for British residents the familiarity disappeared on the inside. On closer inspection, the interior of the houses functioned according to different rules. Mrs. Fenton, wife of a captain in the East India Company's service, observed in 1821 that even within the walls of these large houses she felt exposed to curious eyes:

Your idea of a bedroom—and it was mine also—is that of retirement, a sanctuary where none can or will intrude! . . . ‘who could sleep in a room where four doors and four windows all stand open?’<sup>19</sup>

There were no locks or bolts in the doors, indicating too plainly that Indian doors were not supposed to be shut. Without the possibility of closing off rooms, the boundary between the house and the outside world became ineffective. This blurring of boundaries, and the consequent lack of interiority, became one of the more disturbing aspects of colonial life, reminding the colonizers that the locus of a hybrid culture was in their midst.

Most British residents disapproved of the way the houses were built. Among them was Ranald Martin, a surgeon and medical topographer who noted in 1836 that the buildings were raised by “natives and other speculators on their own plans at the cheapest rates and for the mere purpose of letting to the highest profit.”<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Indians as well as Europeans invested in building for speculation in the white town, and deftly combined local planning practices with ideas from European pattern books to generate designs that were quite unique.

From the Schlach plan of 1826 we know that several plots in the area around Park Street, Chowringhee, and Wood Street were owned by Indians.<sup>21</sup> However, since many plots were unnamed we cannot be certain of the exact distribution (Figure 4). Only the names of those who were considered prominent were included. The plots were exceptionally large, and a few individuals owned several lots in the area. In 1801 William Camac put up for sale five such houses and a bazaar worth 131,500 *sicca* rupees.<sup>22</sup> Property value depended largely on the location and the “roominess” of the house. The buildings, with rare exceptions, were oriented with their long axes running north-south, allowing for carriage ports to the north and verandahs on their south sides to catch the summer

breeze. Inside, the layouts differed, depending on the total area of the house, but typically they consisted of three sets of rooms—one set on axis with the carriage port and the south verandah, and two sets of rooms on either side, thus creating a three-bay pattern. In the late eighteenth century it was customary to have the ground floor devoted to storage and services, as it was considered contaminated by rising miasma. If not adequately damp-proofed, the ground floor could be unlivable. There were many substantial single-story houses that differed from that pattern, however, obliging their owners to emphasize that such accommodations were dry and perfectly habitable. When Aaron Upjohn's "villa" in Sealdah was put up for sale in 1800, Dring and Company's advertisement noted that the lower-story house was "well-raised," "flued throughout, and perfectly dry at all seasons." The house consisted of seven rooms, two halls, and an open verandah to the east, west, and south; it was located on a garden "well stocked with choice fruit trees, exotics," and was a mere twenty minutes' ride to the Black Hole Monument.<sup>23</sup>

Turn-of-the-nineteenth-century advertisements emphasized the size and beauty of the "compound" over descriptions of the house, and sought to entice renters and buyers by intimating the nearness of the property to respectable houses and estates.<sup>24</sup> An advertisement for a new upper-roomed masonry house on the Burial Ground Road (later renamed Park Street), to be rented in May 1803, noted its proximity to Captain Anthony Greene's house and its commanding view of the Salt Water Lake and the country for several miles from the third floor. The house consisted of "four rooms, a hall, and three verandahs below, the same above stairs, with two verandahs, and a large room over the hall in the third story, with front, and a large winding back stairs" and suitable outhouses.<sup>25</sup> Advertisements suggested the pleasures of country living—rooms with generous dimensions, orchards, and well-stocked ponds, as well as the possibility of using the fertile land for agricultural purposes.<sup>26</sup> Except for the extensiveness of the adjoining grounds, the description of rural property did not differ significantly from descriptions of those located in the city.

The hall was the principal entrance and gathering space in the house, and typically was of the largest dimensions. The rooms surrounding the hall were seldom differentiated by function and were often referred to as bedrooms or chambers, irrespective of their actual use. House plans, however, sometimes designated a billiards room, which was considered a necessary amenity in wealthy households, and less frequently a drawing room was featured in the advertisements. Bathrooms and water closets (sometimes called "necessities") were situated in close proximity to sleeping rooms. The most fashionable houses had marble-lined hot and cold baths.<sup>27</sup> In 1793 Dring, Cleland and Co.

announced the sale of a prominently located house on Old Court House Street:

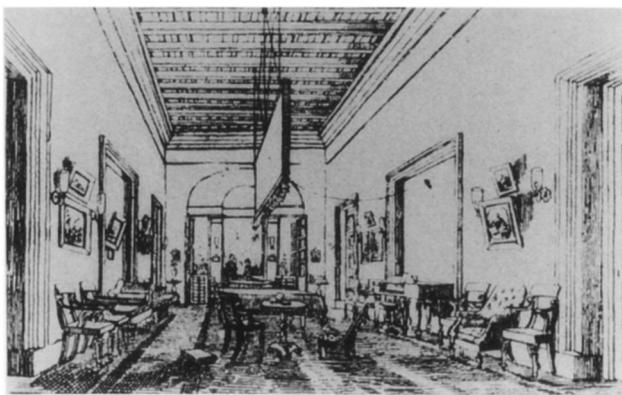
[T]hat commodious, elegant, and well built upper-roomed house with extensive premises, at present rented for Sicca Rupees 500 per month by the Marquis of Cornwallis for the residence of His Lordship's Aide-de-camps, situated immediately to the northward of Sir William Jones on the great road leading from the old Court House to the Esplanade, consisting above stairs of a large hall, and a room to the southward, a drawing-room, and a bed-room to the westward, with a private stair-case, to the east, and the same number of rooms, &c., below, with a verandah to the north. The lower storey is raised upon arches, the rooms under appropriated to Abdarkhannahs, godowns, &c., &c.

There are two coach-houses, stabling for ten horses, a cook-room, a bottlekhanna, a palankeen house, and a well, &c. and upon the same premises to the westward a small upper-roomed house consisting of a room eighteen feet square, venetianed, &c., the whole standing on one bigha and 10 cottahs of ground.<sup>28</sup>

Such a conveniently located building with extensive outhouses formed the high end of the market, and yet we are not sure that all the outhouses were of masonry construction. If they were, the advertisers usually did not fail to point that out. Outhouses or the servants' wings were built as separate structures; beyond that there was little distinction between service and served spaces. In houses of more than one story, the "private stair," sometimes the only stair, provided access for both servants and masters.

The city dwellings, despite their smaller lots (small compared to the suburbs, but large by today's urban standards), commanded significantly higher rents. A two-story house in Moorgyhatta, consisting of two bedrooms, a hall, and a verandah on each floor, with cook rooms, bathrooms, and storage, yielded 150 *sicca* rupees in rent in 1784.<sup>29</sup> Larger establishments were predictably more expensive, and if advantageously located could earn between 500 to 900 *sicca* rupees per month.<sup>30</sup>

If we compare these with an advertisement for a large country house in England that was to be sold by lottery among the residents of Calcutta, we find some clear points of distinction. The house, located in Walton on the Thames, boasted extensive farmhouses and a formal garden, "seven bed chambers, drawing room, dining and breakfast parlours, a hall, wainscotted, and neatly fitted up with marble chimney pieces and convenient closets; two staircases, a passage, and large China closet," and a distinctly articulated array of servant spaces including "five servant's bed rooms, a most convenient kitchen, scullery, Butler's pantry, larder, dairy, brew-house, tool house, and com-



**Figure 5** Colesworthey Grant, View of Hall, from Grant, *Anglo-Indian Domestic Sketch* (Calcutta, 1862)

modious cellars, with a variety of connected offices, a detached laundry, Fruit-room, Coach-house, stabling for four horses, with loft over, and various useful buildings.”<sup>31</sup>

This description conveys the image of a reasonably elaborate late-eighteenth-century English country house. In contrast with the Calcutta houses, the functions of the rooms are clearly stated. The unspecificity of the rooms in Calcutta was not related to the spaces being multipurpose (although nothing would prevent such use); rather, it was a method of responding to a changing market, in which there was no assurance that the building would continue in its present use.

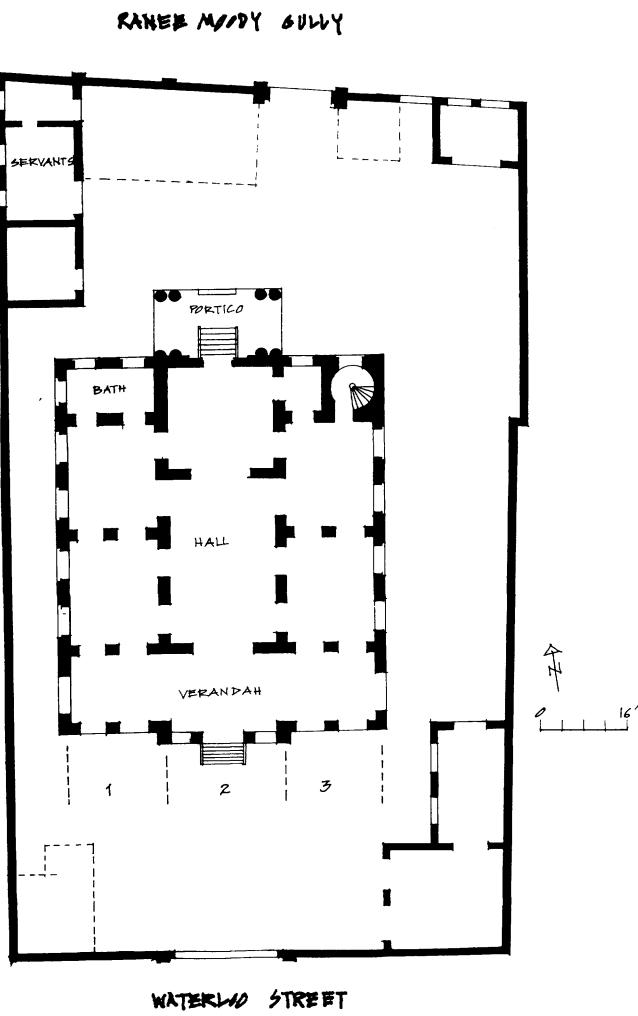
In 1799 proprietors of the Calcutta Exchange, unable to meet their debt for the construction of the building, wished to sell it. In their advertisement they noted that it would be ideal for public offices, shops, or an assembly house.<sup>32</sup> The Theater, which in the late eighteenth century served the amateur dramatic interests of the Europeans and their penchant for lavish balls, was transformed into an auction house by Mr. Roworth and in 1808 was bought by Gopi Mohun Tagore, who transformed it into the New China Bazaar, after he persuaded the shopkeepers of the old China Bazaar to move to the new venue.<sup>33</sup> The transformation of a theater into a bazaar was radical, but because of the arrangement and dimensions of rooms most of the houses in the white town were admirably suited to various uses. Additional profit from the premises was seen as appropriate in country estates as well as urban houses, which often contained large godowns and attached shops.<sup>34</sup> Residences were frequently transformed into offices, boarding-houses, retail shopping space, and clubhouses, with little or no major remodeling. In other words, the building stock was designed for a speculative market in which needs changed frequently. This flexibility came with certain advantages and disadvantages for those who made these buildings their homes.

On the one hand, few other patterns could accommodate the public nature of display and sociability that became a mode of life for the colonizers. On the other hand, the residents could never aspire to the type of privacy that they—the elite, at any rate—had come to expect in houses in England.

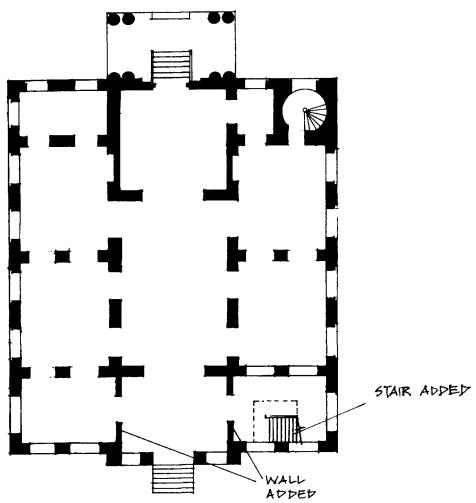
Visiting Calcutta in the mid nineteenth century, Colesworthey Grant observed the remarkable similarity of internal arrangement in the houses in Calcutta.<sup>35</sup> The main difference was between upper- and lower-roomed houses, the former enjoying a cooler breeze. In the typical lower-roomed house you entered directly into the hall from a verandah or a door that was always kept open. The hall opened on to four rooms that answered the purpose of “parlour, dining, drawing and sitting rooms,—titles, not generally—the first never—heard in these latitudes” (Figure 5).<sup>36</sup> The bathrooms, one for the master and one for the mistress, were located on opposite ends of the house. All of these rooms opened directly on to the grounds. In other words, they could be entered from outside, necessitating that “the premises be enclosed.”<sup>37</sup> The terrace or rooftop accessed by a stair from within and without, he noted, was “the greatest extent of ground trodden, in a way of exercise, by the European foot.”<sup>38</sup> Upper-roomed houses would contain at least two halls, one used for dining and the other for breakfast. The large Chowringhee mansions sometimes contained sixteen or twenty apartments for the convenience of friends and visitors. The residents were not lacking in hospitality “in a land where inhabitants seem to shift with the monthly steamers and passenger ships.”<sup>39</sup> Clearly, Grant was struck by the novelty of the arrangement. Few of these late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century houses survive, but by reading the surviving plans in conjunction with the urban plans, we learn much about the spatial arrangements that suited the changing market needs of Calcutta while contradicting contemporary practices in England.

In his discussion of European residential design, Robin Evans persuasively argued that house plans embody social relations; they highlight the desirable kinds of interaction within the household and exclude undesirable possibilities.<sup>40</sup> In such a view, passages, the arrangement of rooms, and the location of doors and windows appear as poignant clues to social relations. They set the parameters of interpretative possibilities for using the space. Studying the plans of nineteenth-century colonial houses in Calcutta, one could not be more aware of how different these houses are from their European counterparts.

The three buildings I examine at length were constructed between 1800 and 1860. Two of these are ordinary buildings located in two different areas of the white town, and the third is the grand mansion in the presidency—Gov-



**Figure 6a** House on 23/24 Waterloo Street, original ground floor plan

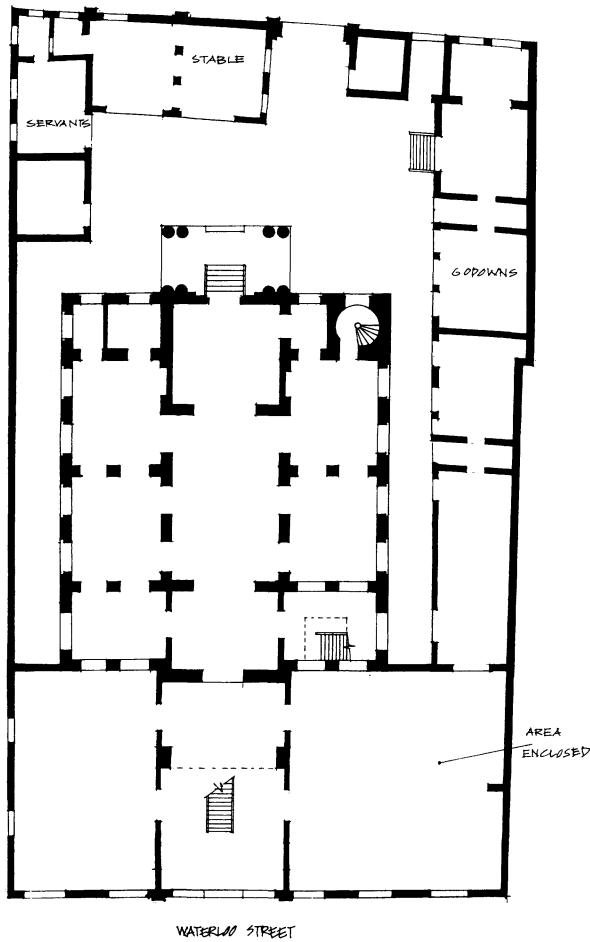


**Figure 6b** House on 23/24 Waterloo Street, ground floor plan showing first set of changes

ernment House, the residence of the Governor General (later Viceroy) of British India.<sup>41</sup> By examining the structural changes made in the blueprints, I attempt to trace the genealogy of house form; then, to understand the logic of their spatial organization, I compare the house plans in terms of their site emplacement, the dimensional arrangement of rooms, the types of access between spaces, and the location of primary spaces in relation to service spaces.

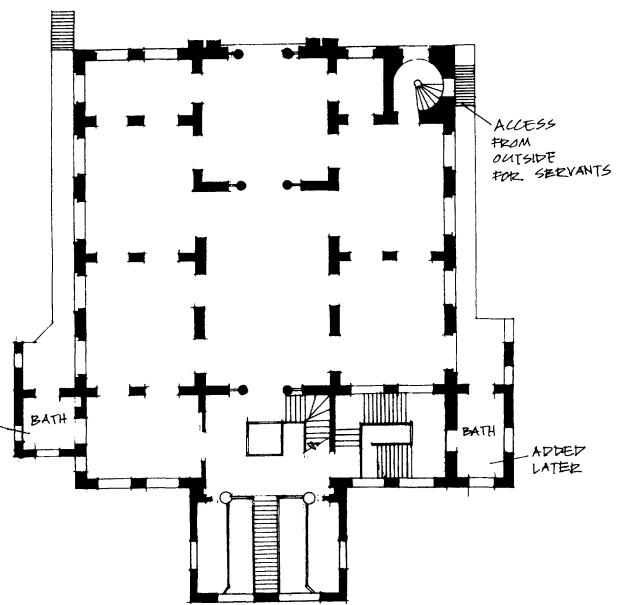
In the mid nineteenth century, traveling along Old Court House Street from Esplanade Row, one could find on the left a narrow city block between Waterloo Street and Ranee Moody Gully that had the rare advantage of having two streets opening to the lots. The third lot from the other end of the block (that is, from Cossitola Street, renamed Bentinck Street) was 180 feet deep and 96 feet wide on the Ranee Moody Gully side and 86 feet on the Waterloo Street side (Figure 6a). It had an additional advantage of abutting Crooked Lane on the west. Despite the narrow streets and lanes—Waterloo Street was only 25 feet wide with 7- to 8-foot sidewalks on either side, and Ranee Moody Gully was 16 feet wide—the blocks between Cossitola Street and Old Court House Street were the prime locale for fashionable shops and prestigious offices. Consequently, many residential buildings in this area were transformed to suit such needs, or, put another way, the building stock was amenable to both residential and nonresidential uses. The house on 23/24 Waterloo Street was ideal for such a changing market.<sup>42</sup>

Initially, the front of the house faced Ranee Moody Gully. The front edge of the site was defined by the carriage house and servants' quarters. A couple of steps led to an 11-foot-deep portico, with a pair of symmetrical double columns giving it a sense of formal dignity. Six more steps at the entrance door led to a square entrance hall with a small chamber to the left that could be used as a cloakroom. The entrance hall opened on to a central room 30 feet deep and 19 feet 4 inches wide, the largest room in the house, which in turn was directly connected to two sets of rooms on either side, each measuring 16 feet by 19 feet 4 inches and symmetrically arranged. The central hall and the two rooms on the south led directly to a 14-foot-wide south-facing verandah. A circular private staircase on the north face of the building connected an identical set of rooms on the second floor. In addition to the stair, the north face contained the other service spaces typically included within the house at that time—bathroom and storage (*bottlekhanna*). The winding staircase continued to the terrace above the second floor. At a later time, probably within a couple of decades, a larger staircase was built in the southeast corner of the verandah to provide independent access to the second floor (Figure 6b). The 1872 Street Directory indicated that

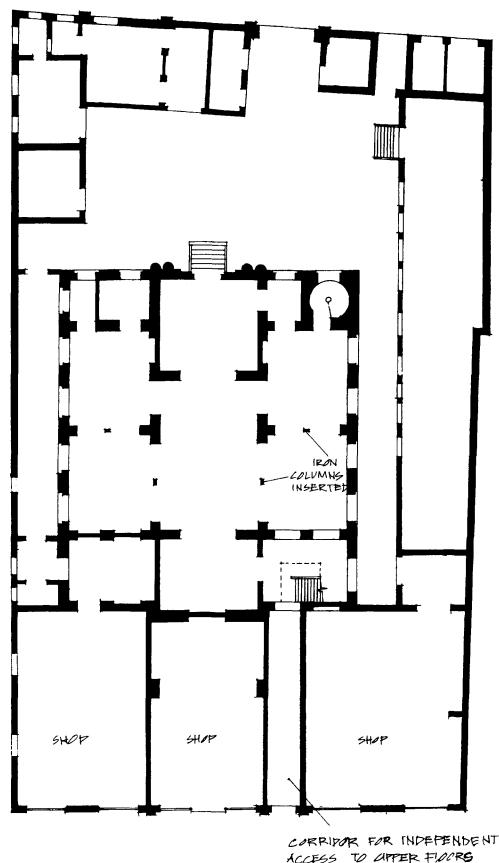


**Figure 6c** House on 23/24 Waterloo Street, ground floor plan showing second set of changes

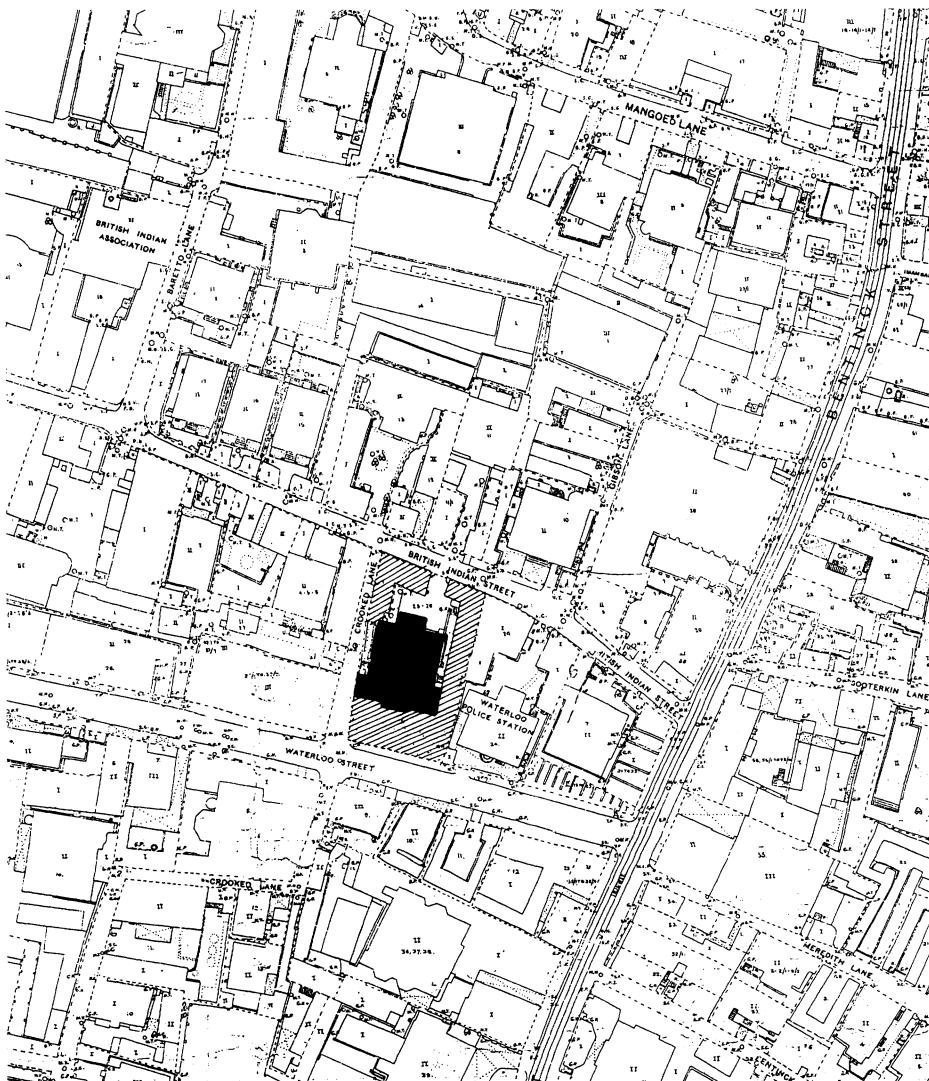
the house was being used as the Adelphi Hotel. Consequently, the proprietor must have felt the necessity to add a more public stairway. The positioning of the public stairway in the verandah was obviously designed to cause minimum changes to the building, but it also opened up the potential of interpreting the house as having two "fronts." Still later, a third floor and extra bathrooms on the southeast and southwest corners of the second floor were added, serviced by narrow balconies (Figure 6c). The large staircase on the southeast was not extended to the third floor. Instead, at a later time the ground on the south was enclosed, creating three large interconnected spaces, which could be defined as more public spaces, considering their proximity to the street and their relative dimensions (Figure 6d). A third staircase (in the fashion of a grand stair but with smaller dimensions) was built on the central axis, connecting the public spaces directly with the upper floors. The central axis on the south side on the second floor was pro-



**Figure 6d** House on 23/24 Waterloo Street, second-floor plan showing second set of changes



**Figure 6e** House on 23/24 Waterloo Street, ground floor plan showing third set of changes

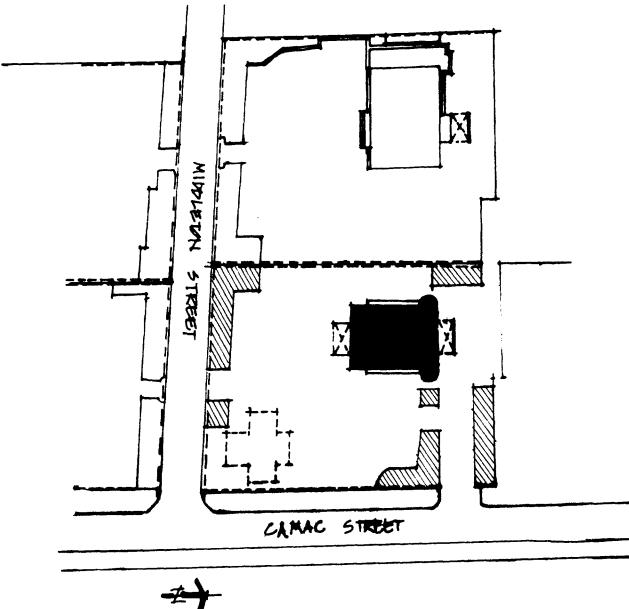


**Figure 6f** Site plan based on R. B. Smart's Survey of Calcutta, 1887–1909

longed and enclosed to accommodate the stairs from the shop. Two 10-inch walls were extended southward along the central axis to separate the two staircases and create a room on the southwest side, maintaining the symmetry of the plan. At the same time, perhaps, the east edge of the lot was built up to provide extra outhouse and storage space. The 1892 Street Directory indicated that the building was still being used as a hotel but had changed hands. It is not hard to imagine the manner in which the large spaces on the south and the formal central stair would be advantageous to the needs of a hotel.

The turn-of-the-century urban plan (Smart's plan based on surveys between 1887 and 1892) indicated the shops and the adjacent outbuildings, while the municipal drawing of 1911 showed another set of changes taking place (Figures 6e, 6f).<sup>43</sup> The formal stair on the south was eliminated, and a separate channel of access was created to the

southeast staircase. Some of the walls in the house were replaced by iron columns and beams to create more generous space between the bays. The north portico was eliminated, presumably to create unimpeded access to the godowns now formed by dismantling the interior walls of the outhouses on the east. In addition, several entrances now opened directly on to Crooked Lane. The first two floors were used as office spaces, the third floor was used for lodging, and the large spaces on the Waterloo Street side were converted to three independent shops, which received a newly articulated elevation. Thus the proprietor, Cawnpoor Woollen Mills, was using the site for at least four purposes—shops, offices, godowns, and lodging—each of which could be rented independently. With the property given over to multiple uses in an attempt to maximize rental space, there was hardly any open space left in the premises. The south-facing verandahs, supposed to welcome the



**Figure 7a** House on 3 Camac Street, site plan (building has been demolished)

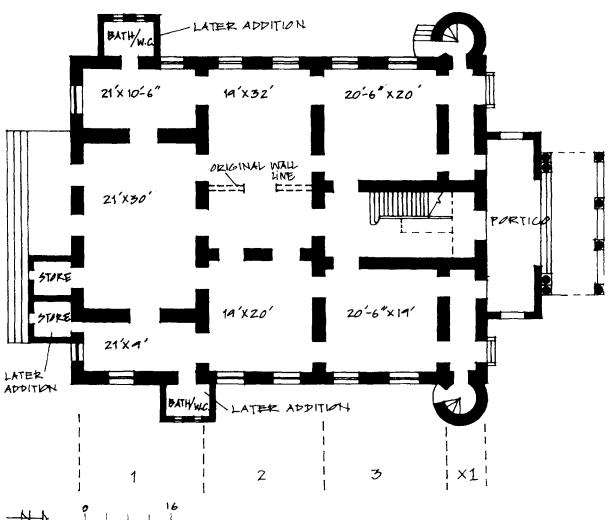
refreshing evening breeze, had become a secondary concern. By this time, the front of the house had turned away from Ranee Moody Gully (renamed British Indian Street) and definitely belonged to Waterloo Street.

The changing configurations of the house on Waterloo Street demonstrate the principles on which houses were built and transformed in the course of the nineteenth century. The dimension of the rooms in the initial ground floor plan was determined by the comfortable span of 20 feet, constructed with 10-inch-deep timber beams spaced approximately 24 inches apart. The width of the rooms could obviously be increased with the additional expense of increased beam depth and close spacing of beams. In the largest houses in the city, it was not uncommon to find rooms 30 feet and even 40 feet wide.<sup>44</sup> This was the basic structural principle that determined the pattern of house plans until iron columns and beams became the vogue. That, however, explains little of house planning and use. The generous dimensions and the multiple openings between rooms, which created an ideal pattern for uses that were more public than private, raise some issues about the social life of the residents.

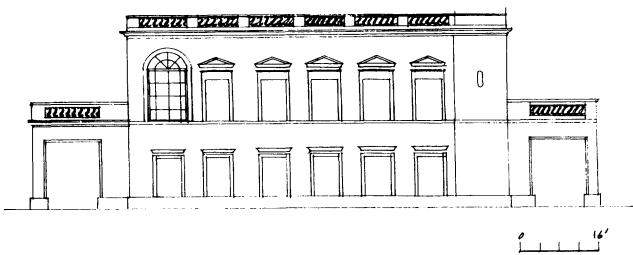
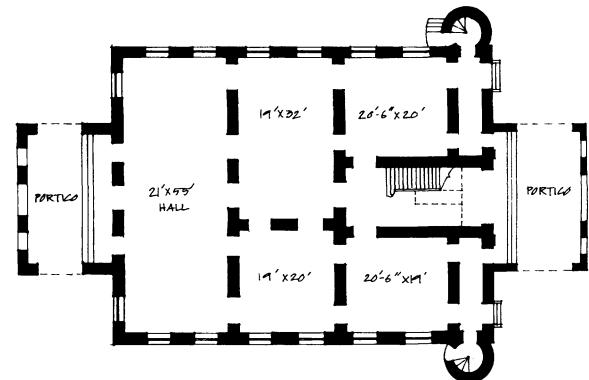
Let us consider another house, one on Camac Street that had quite a few points of similarity with the Waterloo Street house. This one, built in the early nineteenth century, was located far from the bustling crowd of Old Court House Street, in the then quiet grandeur of the suburbs of

Chowringhee.<sup>45</sup> The house, as far as the maps and street directories indicate, was not used for purposes other than residential and was occupied by single families, unlike the Waterloo Street house. This was exceptional, considering that most residences in the last decades of the nineteenth century in the Chowringhee area, rather than being single-family dwellings, were either shared by several families or used as boardinghouses. In the area bounded by Chowringhee Street, Wood Street, Park Street, and Theater Road, there were eighteen boardinghouses in 1872, with one less in 1892, but the shared occupancy of houses increased sharply from twenty to fifty-six between 1872 and 1892.<sup>46</sup> The sparseness of the single detached dwellings in the maps belies the density of occupancy of so many of these houses, which could have, on average, fifteen boarders as well as the numerous servants.

The single-family house at the crossing of Middleton and Camac Streets stood on a large lot 240 feet wide and 285 feet deep (Figure 7a). The house was built 150 feet away from the entry on Middleton Street. The entrance portico, however, did not face Middleton Street. In keeping with the norm of having the carriage port to the north, the path that led from the Middleton Street entrance went around the house to the back of the site where the formal entrance was located. This was the standard practice in all south-facing lots on east-west streets such as Harrington Street and Theater Road. The desire was to create a distance from the street, yet to leave the southern aspect open for verandahs, gardens, and informal living. The street edge was, as usual, defined by the carriage house and servants'



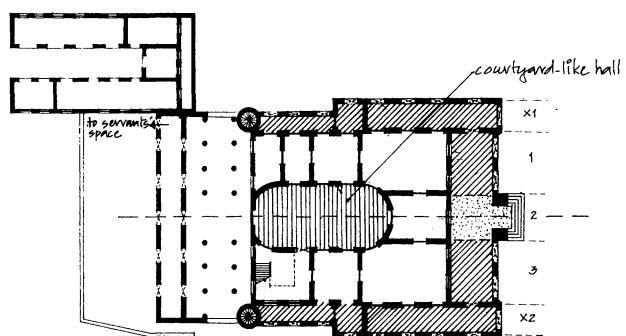
**Figure 7b** House on 3 Camac Street, ground floor plan showing some nineteenth-century additions



**Figure 7c** House on 3 Camac Street, ground floor plan and elevation after modification, 1905. This plan demolished the bathrooms and stores that had been added as afterthoughts.

accommodation, while the cook rooms and storage were located on the northern end, close to the main house but separate. By 1856 an entrance to Camac Street had been created, thus reorienting the approach to the house.<sup>47</sup> This was a privilege arising from the corner site location, one that other houses on the same street did not possess, and it invariably suggested other readings of the site, for example, building another house near the Middleton Street edge. In fact, the site was carved into four separate lots in the early twentieth century.<sup>48</sup>

The entry sequence, the position of the service spaces, and the system of three sets of rooms on axis were reminiscent of the Waterloo Street house (Figure 7b). The entrance hall led to five rooms nestled in between the service spaces that claimed the corners of the building. On the second floor, the room deployment was similar except in the southern room, where, instead of two walls creating two smaller adjoining service rooms, two pairs of columns on each end were used to define a larger space. Two major differences from the house on Waterloo Street were the location of the main stairs, which defined the stair hall as an integral part of the design, and the north-south instead of east-west spanning of the rooms.



House on 1/1 Little Russell St

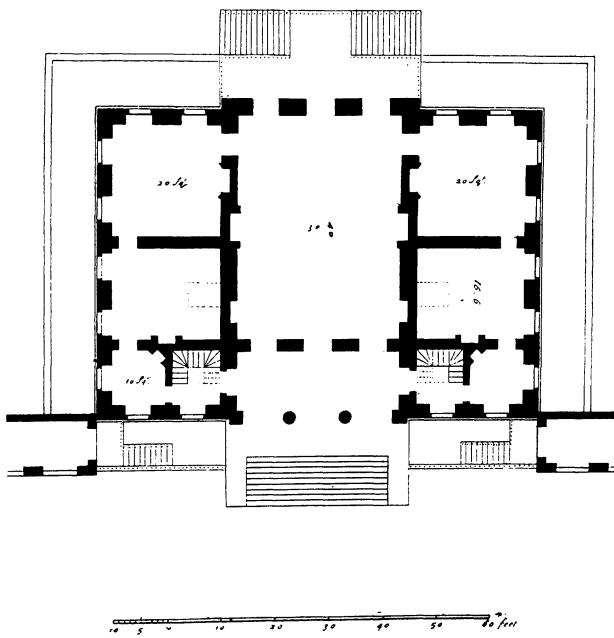
**Figure 8** House on Little Russell Street illustrates the pattern of nineteenth-century houses in Calcutta.

Although the stair faced away from the entrance door, it created the possibility of a defined path of circulation, a suggestion taken up at a later date with the addition of a 15-inch wall to create a central vestibule through which movement could be controlled. Challenging this path of axial movement was the spanning of the rooms in the opposite direction. Although two or more doors from each room led to an adjoining room, creating the familiar permeable pattern, the spanning suggested the direction in which spaces could be expanded or contracted. It also created the possibility of articulating zones of privacy (from more public to private) perpendicular to the central axis of movement.

A 1905 plan of the house attempted to create two porticos instead of one and return the house to its former interior configuration by eliminating the bathrooms added on at the east and west and the storage space on the north (Figure 7c). In the process it also eliminated the two walls on the southern side of the ground floor, integrating the space of the smaller rooms on the sides with the larger room to form a spacious hall. The 15-inch wall articulating the central axis was also removed, demonstrating the ease with which the spaces could be modified on the east-west axis.

The three-bays-of-rooms principle was adhered to in houses where lot size permitted. An extra bay was sometimes added, parallel to the entrance axis, to accommodate service spaces, verandahs, and even an extra set of rooms.

The wraparound verandah was used in many houses to provide a convenient transition space that answered several purposes. An early-nineteenth-century building on Little Russell Street (Figure 8) displayed the utility of the wrap-around verandah.<sup>49</sup> The house was at one time being used by several boarders, and the large central space could be interpreted as drawing room, dining hall, and billiards room as the proprietor chose. The verandah in this context not



**Figure 9** Plan of Residence (Plate 59) by James Gibbs, *Book of Architecture* (1739)

only provided an extension of living space where one could enjoy the cool breeze or a delightful view, it could double as ancillary service space in which servants could work in close proximity to the main rooms. The service spaces and the verandah formed complementary parts of the same spatial envelope.

### Out of England?

Despite the classical garb of the buildings, calculated to simulate a sense of grandeur, the plans bear little resemblance to Palladian villas or neoclassical English country or town houses. Comparing the colonial houses with the examples in James Gibbs's *Book of Architecture* published in 1739, we find some critical points of difference.<sup>50</sup> In Gibbs's plans, modeled after Palladian villas, the private spaces were located near the wing ends, which were in turn connected to the service wings by a careful deployment of stairs and passages (Figure 9). In European mansions of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the axis of honor was located perpendicular to the entrance axis, with the "best" room situated farthest away from the central public spaces.<sup>51</sup> The second point of difference is their axial orientation. The long axis in Calcutta's houses was not engineered to produce an elongated frontal presence as in Gibbs's examples; it typically ran north-south, suggesting a formal movement

through a sequence of rooms from a more public entrance porch to a more private verandah on the south. The narrow face to the street and the sense of increased privacy as one moves farther into the house along its long axis can be interpreted as an urban response, similar to Victorian town houses and dictated as much by narrow lots as by the bustle of city life. One glimpse of the urban plans of Chowringhee, however, makes it amply clear that very few houses had an elongated façade, even when they had the lot size to indulge in such elaborations.

An important exception was, of course, the Governor General's Mansion in the Esplanade, which projected the English country house idea when it was completed in 1803. Government House was the residence of the Governor General (later the Viceroy) and his family and also accommodated his offices. Charles Wyatt, the architect of Government House, supposedly borrowed from the vocabulary of James Paine's plan for Kedleston Hall in Derbyshire, built in 1761. Historians have considered Government House an ostentatious yet poor copy of Kedleston, pointing out the "slackened" rhythm of the former and the difference in the façade and roof configuration.<sup>52</sup> The difference is not simply in the articulation of the elevation and in the proportion and rhythm of the columns but in the spatial arrangement itself. The supposedly "borrowed" vocabulary differed so fundamentally from Kedleston Hall that their similarity is limited to their outlines (Figures 10, 11).

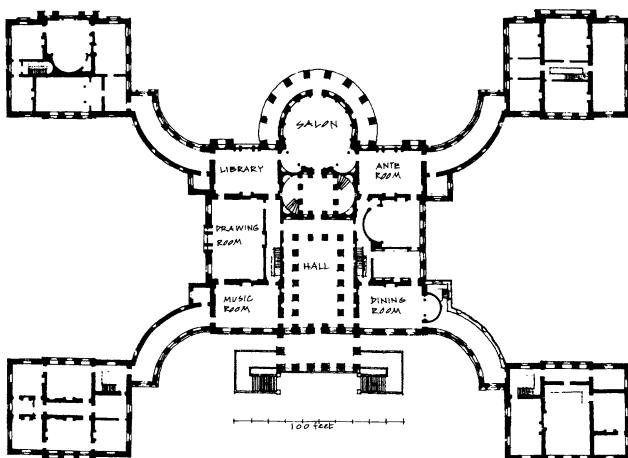
The state apartments of Government House were approached by a grand stair on the north that led to a transverse hall on the first floor. The ground floor was entered by a portico underneath the grand stair. The stair was large enough for an elaborate retinue of servants and for soldiers to present arms at the side. The north transverse hall, used as the breakfast room, could be entered through five doorways, although the central one was distinguished from the other four. From there the processional route continued into the large colonnaded central marble hall, the audience or *durbar* hall, used as the grand dining room, and then into another transverse hall called the throne room, which finally opened on to an apsidal portico. The marble hall had a coffered ceiling, but in contrast to Kedleston Hall all the rooms were lit from the side. The second floor was laid out similarly, with the central hall (with a polished teak floor) being used as the main ballroom. The transverse hall above the throne room was the public drawing room and the one over the breakfast room, the small ballroom. The ground floor was taken up by the offices of the aides-de-camp and contained another dining room for use during summer. As in other buildings in Calcutta, every space was interconnected with adjacent spaces by numerous doorways. Even here, the

main body of the mansion was elongated north-south, a peculiar decision only mitigated by the idea of double wings that extended to gather the view and breeze of the *maidan*. The council chamber occupied the first floor of the northwest wing, and the rest of the wing spaces contained the private apartments, a scheme similar to that of Kedleston, although differing in their individual layouts. The open plan of the main building was closed off by a wrought-iron railing and four imposing gateways delineating the premises of Government House. Significantly, all the ancillary offices, cookrooms, stables, and staff accommodation were located not only outside the building but across the street on the north. This, however, did not imply that servants did not stay around the clock in the governor's mansion, merely that there were no spaces within the main building specifically designed to accommodate them.

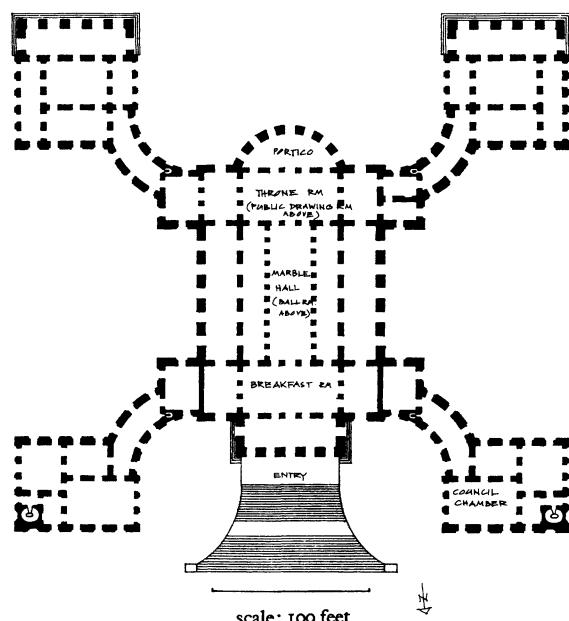
In Kedleston Hall the processional way into the state apartments was more tightly controlled (see Figure 10). A single entry to the large central hall defined the route, then led into the grand stair hall and finally to the salon and its connected portico. From the central hall a set of doorways on the entrance side and another pair located on the opposite end of the room began the system of clearly articulated movement through the mansion into the dining room, music room, and library (Figure 12). Each of the main rooms was protected by a small vestibule or anteroom or a passage or stair. Unlike Government House, the careful disclosure of the rooms at Kedleston and their highly articulated walls created a separate identity for each room. They

resembled a set of discrete figures brought together by a careful choice of connectors that emphasized the unique uses of the rooms (Figures 13, 14, 15). The identities of the state apartments were accentuated by the skylit vaulted and domed ceilings.

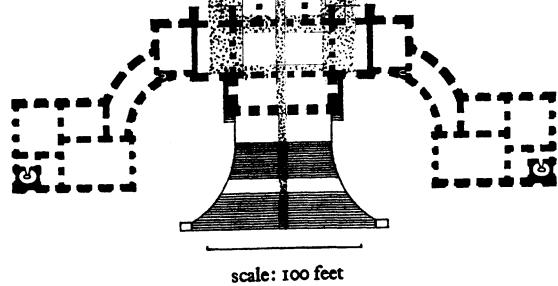
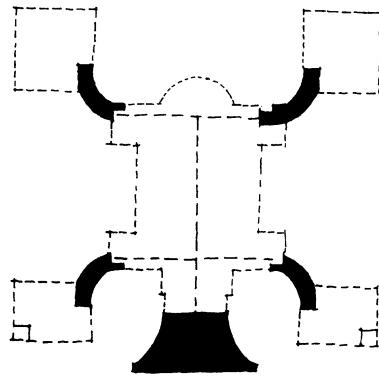
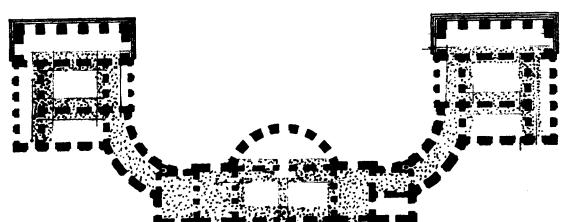
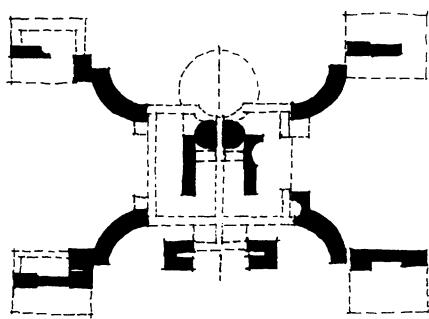
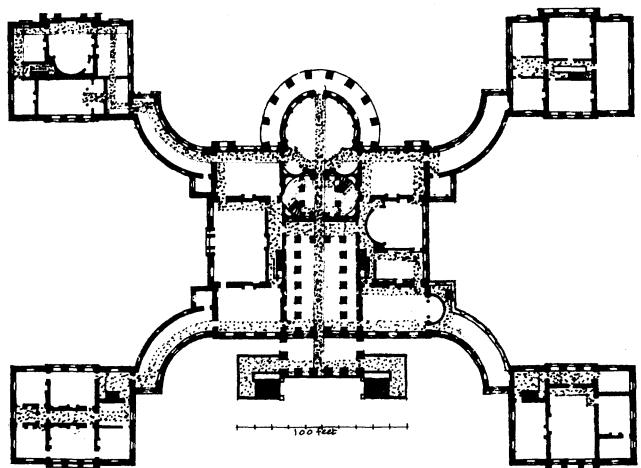
In its lack of equivalence in room definition, Kedleston was radically different from Government House (Figure 16). In Government House the main spatial organization retained the three-bay principle common in Calcutta, with adjunct spaces attached on the periphery. The domed salon of Paine's design for Kedleston broke with the rectangular symmetry by being an integral part of the internal arrangement. In contrast, Government House's south portico, despite being surmounted by a dome, was a separate entity (albeit attached) next to the transverse hall; it did not disturb the integrity of the interior rectangular configuration. As if to emphasize the equivalent relationships of the spaces, the entire building was contained within the same roof. The only change in wall articulation was the difference in wall thickness, which increased on the exterior of the building. The concept of strategically placed stairs and passages in Kedleston Hall, prescribing paths of movement, was absent in Government House. Here the private stairs were hidden within walls and moved to the extremities of the four wings to create a series of uninterrupted spaces. The stairs connecting the two main floors were located in the galleries next to the central spaces. But the stairs did not direct traffic by closing off certain areas, and passages did not open to rooms selectively—and it was not for want of space.



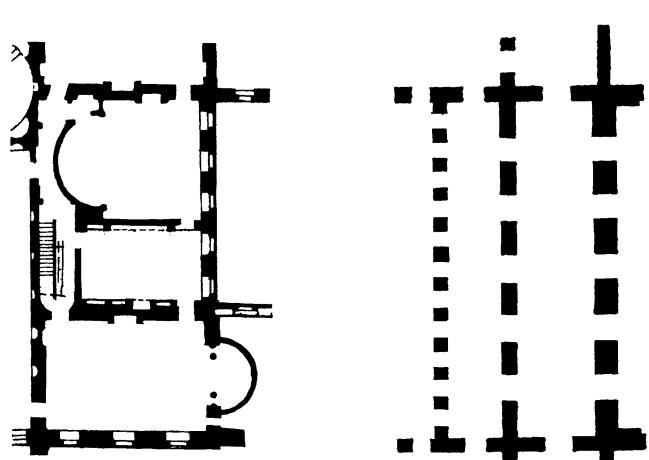
**Figure 10** James Paine, Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire, 1761



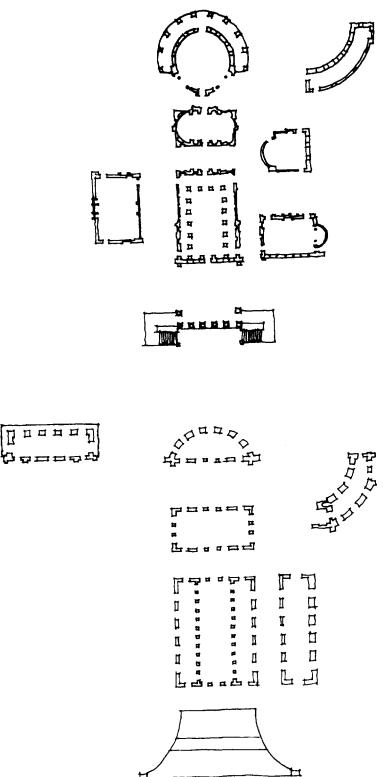
**Figure 11** Charles Wyatt, Government House, Calcutta, 1803



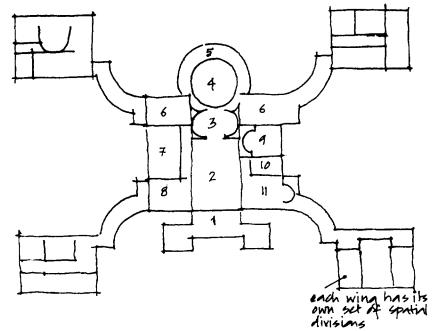
**Figure 12** Order of access in Kedleston Hall (top) and Government House (bottom)



**Figure 14** Wall articulation in Kedleston Hall (left) and Government House (right)



**Figure 15** Figural identities in Kedleston Hall (top) and Government House (bottom)



**Figure 16** Spatial order in Kedleston Hall (top) and Government House (bottom)

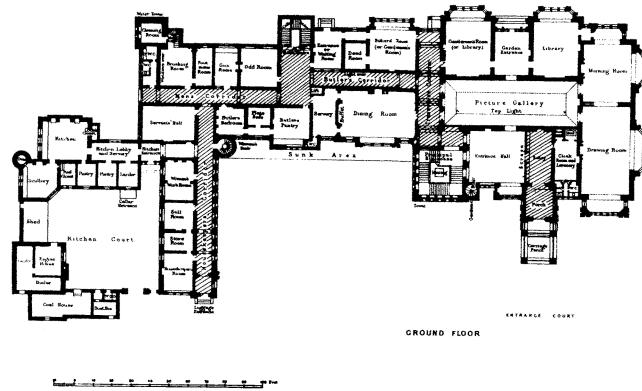
These formal differences in the articulation of walls, stairs, and passages were critical. They did not simply represent a difference between Kedleston's baroqueness and the more static classical geometry of Government House. They did not proceed from purely aesthetic or symbolic considerations, nor were they due solely to climatic differences. The differences resided in the form of social life they were meant to accommodate.

The design of Government House anticipated a pattern of social interaction that flourished in other large Calcutta residences, albeit at a less grand scale. In his discussion of colonial houses in Calcutta, Sten Nilsson remarked that the large lots allowed for infinite variations in the planning of these large buildings.<sup>53</sup> On the contrary, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century houses were remarkably similar, and followed a predictable arrangement of rooms based on the three-bay or three-bays-and-one systems. What differed were the dimensions and the number of rooms one could afford to build.

The most significant difference between these colonial houses and the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British contemporaries, of course, lies in the degree of openness

allowed in the former and in the articulation of servant spaces. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century plans of wealthy English households had already begun separating servant spaces from served ones, an idea that was elaborated and extended by Robert Kerr in his 1861 discussion of the "Gentleman's House."<sup>54</sup> If we take from Robert Kerr's repertoire a mid-nineteenth-century example, we find an elaborate system of hallways, stairs, and passages delineating paths of movement, and providing each room with its own specific enclosure and identity (Figure 17). Kerr wrote at length of the classification of rooms based on such principles of privacy:

It is the first principle with the better classes of English people that the Family Rooms shall be essentially private, and as much as possible Family Thoroughfares. It becomes the foremost of all maxims, therefore, however small the establishment, that the Servants' Department shall be separated from the Main House, so that what passes on either side of the boundary shall be both invisible and inaudible on the other. . . . that most unrefined arrangement whereby at one sole entrance-door the visitors rub shoulders with the tradespeople, how objectionable it



**Figure 17** Robert Kerr, ground floor plan of mansion in Bearwood, Berkshire, from Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1862)

is we need scarcely say when a thin partition transmits the sounds of the Scullery or Coal-cellars to the Dining Room or Study. . . .

[A]s we advance in scale in style of living, a separate Staircase becomes necessary for the servants' use; then the privacy of corridors and passages becomes a problem, and the lines of traffic of servants and family respectively have to be kept clear of each other by recognised precautions. . . . In short in a small house or a large one, let the family have free passage-way without encountering the servants unexpectedly; and let the servants have access to all their duties without coming unexpectedly upon the family or visitors. On both sides this privacy is highly valued.

It is matter also for the architect's care that the outdoor work of the domestics shall not be visible from the house or grounds, or the windows of their Offices overlooked.<sup>55</sup>

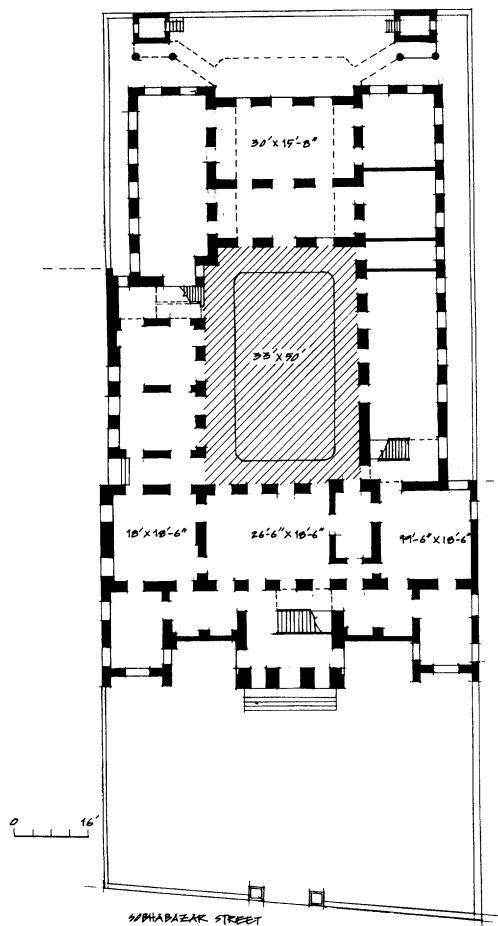
In concluding his discussion on privacy, Kerr noted that the open central lines of thoroughfare in Italian plans favored publicity. Consequently, his suggested remedy was the "indirect routes of the Medieval arrangement" refined to suit nineteenth-century needs.

If nineteenth-century English houses attempted to provide each room with a zone of seclusion, why was not the same attempt made in Calcutta? The primary principle of Calcutta's nineteenth-century houses was the subordination of individual spaces to a larger unity generated by the large central hall(s) (see Figure 8). In this arrangement, the halls provided the main path of circulation as well as living or dining space, and set up the equivalent relationship of the other principal rooms to the hall/central space by room-through circulation, ensuring multiple readings of the prin-

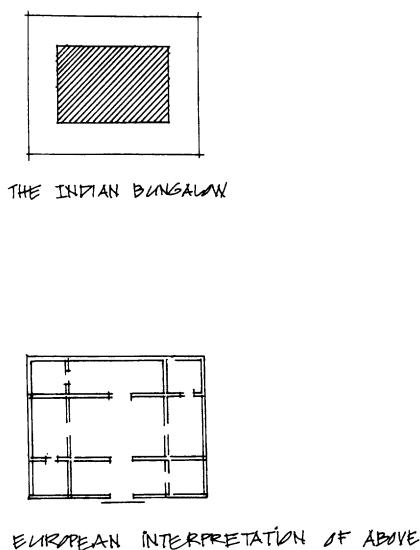
cipal rooms: they could just as well be used for bedrooms, billiards rooms, or offices. Given the various models available to the builders, why did they decide on such an arrangement of rooms? Surely all of it cannot be attributed to changing market needs; Government House certainly was not built for speculation! For such a pattern to become acceptable, it must have fulfilled other needs.

### "A Long Opera"

The house at the crossing of Middleton and Camac Streets discussed earlier was demolished in the first half of the present century. No longer could the market afford the luxuries of 80-by-20-foot rooms.<sup>56</sup> The social life and social relations that such a plan embodied belonged to a different era. It was a time when numerous tall windows and doors provided the maximum possible cross-ventilation in a house without a central courtyard. When the chief fear of disease was rising miasma, and heat was considered deadly in itself, tall ceilings and numerous air passages provided a sense of openness that soothed residents psychologically as well as physically. The articulation of private spaces by secondary channels of movement found in Gibbs's or Kerr's plans of English houses was a secondary concern, since it would invariably close some paths of air circulation. Instead of analyzing the colonial houses as inept copies of English residences, it may be more reasonable to see these buildings as accommodating the Indian model of the urban courtyard house (Figure 18). From such a perspective, the colonial house design was an attempt to adapt the principle of the Indian house of single-loaded rooms around a courtyard within the geometry of a single-roofed entity. In fact, the dimensions of the central hall in some house plans explicitly suggest its use as the focal point of gathering and as a source of access to individual rooms, in much the same way as a courtyard. It is not surprising that both the Waterloo Street and Little Russell Street residences (see Figure 8) with courtyard-like halls were used as boardinghouses at one time. Centrally located shared spaces surrounded by rooms that could be rented individually or as suites seemed as if they had been planned with such a use in mind. Colesworthy Grant provided another point of view for understanding these house plans.<sup>57</sup> He noted that the arrangement of the Europeans' residences was derived from the bungalow plan of "middling classes of natives," which consisted of one or two rooms surrounded by verandahs on all sides: "The European resident improving upon this, encloses the verandah by erecting either a mat or brick wall, and in like way, throwing partitions across the corners, converts the verandah into little rooms for the convenience either of himself or visitor friends."<sup>58</sup> The three-bay pattern



**Figure 18** Nineteenth-century house on 102 Sobhabazar Street

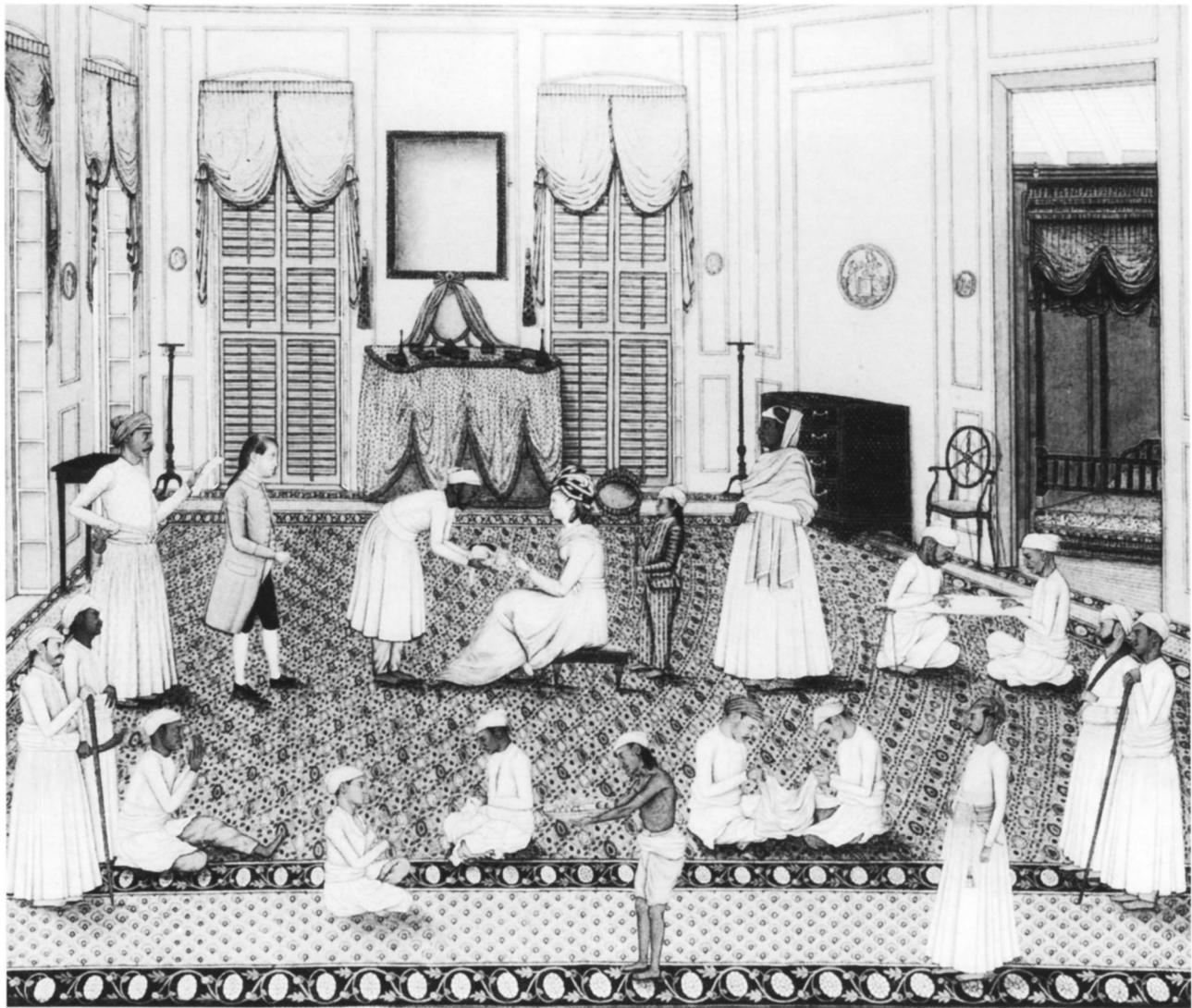


**Figure 19** The origin of the Anglo-Indian residence in Calcutta, based on the drawing by Colesworthy Grant, c. 1860

with a large central room produced from such a line of reasoning coincides remarkably well with the pattern derived from the courtyard houses, and perhaps together they explain the dominance of the three-bay pattern (Figure 19).

Much of the conformity of the European residences in this period was predicated on the need to accommodate large gatherings and so to make up for the scarceness of public places of recreation. In the words of a resident, men of rank kept an "excellent table, those of small income a good one."<sup>59</sup> Breakfasts brought fifteen people to the table and dinner, twenty-five. Meals were conducted more in the style of medieval English houses and less like their nineteenth-century counterparts. Late-nineteenth-century British visitors looked back wistfully to the days when up-country visitors and newcomers enjoyed the generous hospitality of the residents, with no need to resort to hotels. The large houses and their numerous servants could easily accommodate several guests, who often stayed for a while. Even for casual visits, each person was accompanied by his or her retinue of servants, adding to the numbers already present in the household.

Such a large space, busy with attending servants, recalls the painting of Lady Impey with her servants (attributed to Shaykh Zain-al-Din; Figure 20).<sup>60</sup> Lady Impey was the wife of Elijah Impey, the Chief Justice of Calcutta. The picture, painted in 1780, shows Lady Impey sitting on a low stool in the center of a large room. The walls of the room are paneled, the venetianed French windows and doors are adorned with valences, and the scant furniture in the room is placed against the narrow wall spaces. A carpet large enough to cover the entire floor forms the field of action, its borders defining the edges of the room. One of the several doors in the room shows part of a bedroom. Seventeen Indian and one European staff are shown either waiting on the lady or engaged in their household work. The figures in the painting are composed so as to delineate a set of visually permeable spaces. The figures that are closest to the lady, such as the boy fanning, the *ayah* (maid servant), and two men, possibly the *banian* (manager) and *khansamma* (cook), constitute the center of the composition. The *sircar* (accountant), tailors, weavers, and the *dhobi* (washerman) form the next circle, while the gardener, bearer, and a couple of *soontaburdars* and *chobdars* (standard-bearers/guards) define the outer edge of the event. The painter was not necessarily portraying all the actions that would take place in one room, but rather all the actions taking place in closely interconnected layers of space that together formed one singular event of household work in clear view of the lady of the house. Zain-al-Din's painting bears this similarity with John Zoffany's 1784 depiction of



**Figure 20** Lady Impey with her servants in Calcutta, attributed to Shaykh Zain-al-din, c. 1780, from Jeremy Losty, *Calcutta: City of Palaces* (London, 1990)

the Auriol and Dashwood families in Calcutta (Figure 21). In Zoffany's painting, the servants not only form the envelope of the composition, but their figures are inserted in the very center of the composition, where they serve at a tea party. Without careful attention one could actually miss the black boy holding the plate with the teapot. As in Zain-al-Din's painting, their proximity to the subject depended on the job they performed. It is this proximity of figures and virtually unimpeded visual access that were embodied in the plans of Calcutta's colonial houses. In other words, the service spaces were inextricably linked to the served spaces, constituting one fabric, even when the site plan showed physical separateness.

The connectedness of the spaces and the presence of numerous Indian subjects mirrored the habitation pattern of an extended Indian family, an idea that many British men had adopted in their cohabitation with Indian wives and mistresses in the eighteenth century.<sup>61</sup> Such "unrestrained colonization" was increasingly seen as a problem among the British, and a deep distrust of miscegenation set in. This included sanctions against wearing Indianized clothes and Indian fabric and marrying Indian women. Between 1787 and 1793, in response to corruption among the East India Company's servants, Governor General Lord Cornwallis set in motion the process of Europeanizing the administrative structure, first by relegating Indians to minor roles in

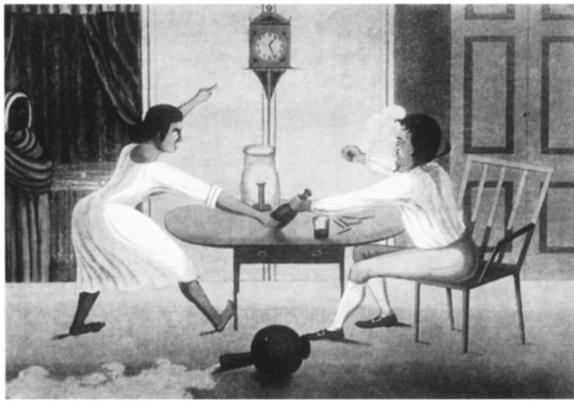
administration and second by encouraging Company servants to distance themselves from natives and native lifestyle. The premise of these decisions was that Indian lifestyle was inherently corrupting to morals, and that, in order to secure individuals in the administration against moral degeneracy, strict social boundaries between rulers and ruled were necessary.<sup>62</sup> By the 1830s interracial domestic arrangements were frowned upon by the establishment and anxiously denounced by the increasing number of European women who came to India.<sup>63</sup> The marital and sexual liaisons that bred “half-castes” was one of the more detested and problematic aspects of Anglo-Indian life, particularly considering that the most light-skinned offspring could pass as Europeans.<sup>64</sup> The presumption was that half-castes unable to overcome their flawed origins could be identified by their peculiarly Indian tastes and habits. Consequently, wearing Indian fabric or smoking a hookah were considered severe breaches of etiquette among European women. These women felt the need, and were told by their

male counterparts of the necessity, to cultivate a bourgeois inferiority free from native influence. Mrs. Fenton, as a newcomer to India, was told, for example, never to wear Indian fabric in case she were to be mistaken for a half-caste.<sup>65</sup> Such protocols could be maintained in fashioning dresses but not in other aspects of daily life.

But the hybrid culture of interracial relations did not disappear as Lord Cornwallis had envisioned. While interracial marriages became less frequent among the higher-ups in the administration, and all forms of racial mixing were designated as problematic, the hybrid culture did not and could not disappear until the spatial arrangement of colonial life was refigured. The tensions inherent in a policy whereby the British separated themselves from the natives on moral and administrative grounds while at the same time being dependent on them was never more apparent than in the attitudes toward the sexual proclivities of European soldiers and the lower class of Europeans. Throughout the rule of the East India Company and the subsequent control by



**Figure 21** John Zoffany, *The Auriol and Dashwood Families, Calcutta, 1783–1787*



**Figure 22** James Moffat, *The Bottle and the Bed Scene at Calcutta*, c. 1805. Note servant watching from doorway while master and mistress argue.



**Figure 23** Ayah Stealing a Child, "Confessions of an Oxonian," c. 1825

the British Crown, the policy of providing British soldiers with Indian prostitutes—which meant making room for Indian prostitutes specifically designated for British soldiers in cantonments and regimental bazaars—was retained even under severe criticism from many fronts.<sup>66</sup> And even for the upper crust of the administration in Calcutta, the spatial arrangement of domestic space would not be substantially refigured until the turn of the twentieth century. Consequently, although Mrs. Fenton despised the thought of her maid servant (the “black-faced thing”) always at her elbows, she submitted to the prevailing domestic practices because in Calcutta, she told herself, one could not apply British rules of self-sufficiency.

In his treatise, Robert Kerr decried “speculative villas” that failed to separate different activities in the house and to provide separate domains for servants and residents. The builders of Calcutta’s speculative villas worried little about arranging for the servants and spent most of the money on the construction of the main house. The servants’ spaces were an afterthought. Kitchen and ancillary service spaces were never an integral part of colonial houses in India because of the differing perception of servants’ needs in this context. The lack of articulation in the colonial context expressed a disinterest in spending any more than the bare minimum for the accommodation of servants. The distance between the house and the servants’ rooms was expected to compensate for the lack of clearly articulated territory, but it did not ensure visual privacy of the type found in British houses. And in the urban context, the distance between the house and the servants’ quarters could not be great. From her window, a newcomer to Calcutta in 1812, Lady Nugent, the wife of the Commander-in-Chief, could see her servants at work, since much of the preparations, including cooking,

took place outdoors.<sup>67</sup> On her arrival she found a houseful of servants, “the inferiors arranging themselves in the hall, the superiors attending us to the drawing room,” and observed that “it seemed to be the duty of ten or twelve to remain on the staircase, and in the passage . . . and we were both sadly annoyed with the number of salaams that are made, whenever we move from one room to another.”<sup>68</sup> The house, she added, “is really full of these people.” In 1835 Emma Roberts was “struck and rather scandalized by the strange position” occupied by servants:

None of the inferior domestics keep themselves, as in England, in the background: the watercarrier alone confines his perambulations to the back staircases, all the others, down to the scullions, make their appearance in the state apartments, whenever they deem it expedient to do so; and in Bengal, where the lower order of palanquin bearers wear very little clothing, it is not very agreeable to a female stranger to see them walk into drawing rooms, and employ themselves in dusting books or occupations of the like nature.<sup>69</sup>

If the presence of servants is barely acknowledged in Zoffany’s paintings despite their proximity, it was because being conscious of their presence was too uncomfortable. This was a time before electrically generated fans replaced the *punkha* pullers, who sat in an adjoining space and pulled fans suspended from the ceiling in the room where the master or mistress contemplated sleep, work, leisure, or a moment of privacy. In a society so acutely race-conscious, British residents had to conduct their most private conversations within the earshot of native servants, who were always present in an adjacent space in case they were needed. The small chambers and verandahs next to bed-

rooms and dining rooms were adjunct spaces that answered the needs of comfort. The spatial adjacency of servants and masters, the threat of sexual tensions, and the crucial role the servants played in raising European children combined to produce the specter of racial degeneracy.<sup>70</sup> Such proximity occasioned distrust, and the servants came to be regarded as a necessary nuisance. Amateur painters left impressions of the untrustworthiness of native servants who were privy to disputes between husband and wife (Figure 22) and more paranoid depictions such as that of an *ayah* (maid servant) stealing a child with the intent to offer her as a sacrifice (Figure 23). Several attempts were made starting in the eighteenth century to control the salaries, duties, and activities of servants, but with little effect.

And yet no one suggested abolishing the system. During the age of the East India Company, the directors in London considered large retinues of servants excessive. Those in India ignored such rebukes as an inability on the part of the directors to understand the circumstances of a foreign land.<sup>71</sup> Even when they professed to detest the servility or habits of the Indian staff, the colonizers derived profound satisfaction from their presence. This was, after all, what ruling was all about. This was playing a part in the theater of empire. Many, like the Eden sisters, in their descriptions of the pageantry of Calcutta life, could hardly contain their satisfaction and amusement. Emily Eden, who arrived in Calcutta in 1836 with her brother Lord Auckland, the new Governor-General, felt “Robinson-Cruoish,” occupying a tiny island of civility:

My particular attendant, who never loses sight of me, is an astonishingly agreeable kitmatgar. . . . He and four others glide behind me whenever I move from one room to another; besides these, there are two bearers with a sedan at the bottom of the stairs, in case I am too idle to walk . . .

There is a sentry at my dressing room, who presents arms when I go to fetch my keys. There is a tailor, with a magnificent long beard, mending up some of my old habit shirts before they go to the wash, and putting strings in my petticoat, &c., and there is the ayah to assist Wright, and a very old woman, called a metranee, who is the lowest servant of all. . . . George never stirs without a tail of fifteen joints after him. William has reduced his to three, but leaves a large supply at home; and Fanny has at present three outriders, and expects more; but it is rather amusing when by an accident we all meet, with our tails on.<sup>72</sup>

Describing a dinner at Government House, her sister Fanny made overt suggestions about the theatricality of the setting:

All the halls were lighted up; the steps of the portico leading to them were covered with all the turbaned attendants in their white muslin dresses, the native guards galloping before us, and this enormous building looking more like a real palace, a palace in the “Arabian Nights,” than anything I have been able to dream on the subject. It is something like what I expected, and yet not the least, at present, as far as externals go: it seems to me that we are acting a long opera.<sup>73</sup>

The brilliantly lit walls, the grand scale of the building, and the deployment of native servants transported Fanny to a world that seemed more like a dream or a theatrical performance than a real-life artifact. She was familiar with the formality of English country houses. This Calcutta house was, however, the “real palace,” a reality that paradoxically only seemed to reside in fairy tales. Fanny was clearly unsure about how to describe her newfound fact of life that seemed to slip between real possibilities and unreal imaginings. Instead, she chose the analogy of the opera, which she thought would convey the blending of the real sensory experience with the make-believe stage set that demanded a certain suspension of disbelief. Only in such a world could the hybrid juxtaposition of figures and artifacts make sense—juxtapositions that dissolved the boundaries between that which was familiar and that which was foreign. The physical elements that enabled Fanny’s long opera were the grand stairs and porticos; the formal progression of connected spaces, creating a series of vistas; and the embellishment of the edges with servants and staff. But the interior of the residence did not represent an opera stage that calculated the separation between audience and performers and planned entries and exits by selective deployment of screens. The open-plan, central-room design made it more like a theater-in-the-round. In the European model of the large house, all the spatial devices were garnered to accentuate a beginning-middle-end scenario of movement through the public apartments; one passed through a series of tightly bounded spaces with selective vistas. In the Calcutta houses, once beyond the front entrance, the interior space functioned not on the basis of a series of frontal planes but on a concentric arrangement that allowed multiple points of entrance and dispersal. The numerous doors and windows provided an almost uninterrupted view of the surroundings. In a very large building, such an arrangement could create the sense of endlessly repetitive spaces that one could only conjure in dreams. Such pleasures of imperialism were gained at the price of being watched by the servants. The same channels that extended one’s view of the surrounds would permit the others’ gaze to be turned inward:

I am in my boudoir, very much the size of the Picture Gallery at Grosvenor House; three large glass doors on one side look over the city, three more at the end at the great gate and entrance: they are all venetianed up at present. There are sets of folding doors open on to the bedroom and two bath-rooms at the other end; and three more on the other side into the dressing rooms and passage that lead to this suite of rooms, for everyone has their suite. Emily and I are on opposite wings, far as the poles asunder, and at night when I set about making my way from her room to mine, I am in imminent peril of stepping upon bales of living white muslin that are sleeping about the galleries . . .

In this climate it is quite necessary to have every door open, but I am making a clever arrangement of screens to screen everybody out; though it seems to me that people push to extreme the arrangement to prevent having the slightest trouble, even of thought.<sup>74</sup>

It took the designers over sixty years from Robert Kerr's time, and about a century from the time of the Eden sisters' sojourn, to recognize that the more undefined the servants' spaces, the more uncontrolled were their movements and spheres of action, an aspect that had been well understood and taken care of in contemporary English houses.

The situation of being surrounded by servants within the household was analogous to the organization of the larger urban context, which can be seen by highlighting the servant spaces in a map (Figure 24). The practice of having servant spaces next to the entrance and back walls created little islands, which could be interpreted as protected or besieged depending on one's point of view. Significantly, most of the residences did not even face the public street to announce their grandeur, being satisfied with an abrupt demarcation between the private domain and the public sphere outside the walls. The open plans of the buildings were arrested by strictly defined compound walls. The buildings that set up a direct relationship with public streets and articulated a transition space were shops and public buildings. Otherwise, neighbors shared nothing except the walls that separated them. Even in a locality where the residents were predominantly Europeans, the house next-door remained a relatively unknown entity. Neighbors were usually tenants who were there for a brief time. The high walls and ample intervening spaces resulted as much from suburban origins as from the uncertainty of market needs. The walls and the distance from the neighboring houses became tools for the owner to mitigate unknown challenges.

Although most British residents seemed to agree about the novelty of life in India and took pride in the pageantry that the colonial buildings afforded, few recognized or



**Figure 24** Portion of Chowringhee from R. B. Smart's Survey of Calcutta, 1887–1909, with servants' spaces shown in black

acknowledged the essentially hybrid nature of the spaces. The solid boundary walls, often designed so carefully after pattern books, provided privacy from the respectable natives but not from the laboring population. Attitudes toward the native population and the need of the real estate market produced discrete containments where the colonizers could provisionally participate in the long opera. The pleasures of imperialism did not simply necessitate the native presence among the colonizers—indeed, they were besieged by native practices in the very center of domestic life. British attempts to fix the signs of difference, in order to resist the

effect of the hybrid, proved difficult given the infrastructure of colonial dwelling. Colesworthy Grant, an astute observer, noted that few Europeans were willing to admit that they were products of a hybrid colonial culture. While the neoclassical architecture of the “native” town was dismissed as inauthentic, the colonizers refused to see how the houses they resided in were hybrid concoctions, a hybridity that went beyond stylistic ambivalence. In other words, the problem did not lie in the proportion of the façade, the rhythm of the columns, or the dimensions of the entablature; it was something more fundamental, more immediately felt when using the space.

There were more similarities between the buildings in the so-called white and black towns than was commonly accepted. Having lived in these colonial houses, British residents were cognizant that hybridity did not simply reside in the foreign body and the native town; rather, hybridity was a troubling presence in the formation of their own identity, an ambivalent space that they themselves occupied and whose impact they deeply felt. The difficulty resided not only in generating a “reality coincident with imperialist narrative.”<sup>75</sup> As the British recognized, what was disturbing the “reality” effect was not a distant Other; the disturbance was the consequence of everyday practices that inflected their own behavior and their ability to sustain a narrative of superior difference. The openendedness of spatial meaning unsettled dearly held ideas of public and private, self and other, by refusing to grant colonizers a sense of interiority within the safe confines of which to construct an imperial self. That is what made colonial cities like Calcutta problematic and necessitated the obsessive articulation of delimiting practices, even when such territorial markings inhibited the colonial desire for a sovereign space and when, in fact, the boundaries did little to prevent permeability.

## Notes

1. In the case of India, see Norma Evenson, *The Indian Metropolis: A View Towards the West* (New Haven, 1989); Anthony D. King, *Colonial Urban Development: Culture, Social Power and Environment* (London, 1977); Sten Nilsson, *European Architecture in India, 1750–1850* (New York, 1969); Pradip Sinha, *Calcutta in Urban History* (Calcutta, 1978).
2. In cantonment towns in India the separation between rulers and ruled was more of a possibility than in the presidency towns of Calcutta and Bombay, where the European community was a minority within a large Indian population (see King, *Colonial Urban Development*). But even in cantonment towns, the physical separation was not always adequate, as Kenneth Ball-hatchet’s discussion of prostitution and the Contagious Diseases Act demonstrates (*Race, Sex and Class under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and their Critics* [New York, 1980]).
3. Such a notion of dual cities presumes that the categories of colonizer/colonized are static. For an alternative point of view that complicates the racial

categories with class distinctions, see Laura Ann Stoler’s discussion of colonial categories in “Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and Boundaries of Rule,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31, no.1 (January 1989): 134–161.

4. For example, see Evenson, *Indian Metropolis*, 48–51. For a reading of the “unsuccessful” adoption of neoclassicism in Indian architecture, see G.H.R. Tillotson, *The Tradition of Indian Architecture: Controversy, Continuity and Change* (New Haven, 1989), 12.

5. Few scholars have done justice to the complex conditions that result in hybrid forms when building ideas are carried from one region of the world to another. For an exception, see John Michael Vlach, “The Brazilian house in Nigeria: the emergence of a twentieth-century vernacular house type,” *Journal of American Folklore* 97, no. 383 (1984), 3–23.

6. See Philip Davis, *Splendours of the Raj: British Architecture in India* (London, 1985); Evenson, *Indian Metropolis*; Nilsson, *European Architecture in India*; Sinha, *Calcutta in Urban History*.

7. For full details of the proclamation, see A. K. Ray, *Short History of Calcutta* (reprint ed., Calcutta, 1982), 116–119.

8. Proceedings of the Calcutta Committee of Revenue, 24 October 1774, cited in Sinha, *Calcutta in Urban History*, 18.

9. See the details of wills in Sinha, *Calcutta in Urban History*.

10. The census data of the time are not reliable, but the available figures indicate the following changes in the population of the city:

1821	179,917	1872	428,458
1822	230,552	1876	409,039
1831	187,081	1881	401,671
1837	229,714	1891	470,835
1850	361,369	1901	542,686
1866	358,362		

11. For an idea of the nature of property transactions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, consult W. S. Seton Kerr, *Selections from Calcutta Gazettes*, vols. 1–5 (Calcutta, 1864).

12. Ibid.

13. In 1822 Lt. Robert Grenville observed in *Fifteen Years in India: Or Sketches of a Soldier’s Life* (London) that “Chowringhee, Park Street, Dhurumtola, the Jaun Bazaar and Esplanade now form the European part of the town” (65). Two decades later Leopold von Orlich (*Travels in India including Sind and Punjab* [London, 1845], 45) and Edward Thornton (*The Gazetteer of the Territories under the Government of the East India Company and the Native States on the Continent of India*, reproduced in P. T. Nair, ed., *Calcutta in the Nineteenth Century* [Calcutta, 1989], 986) seemed convinced that the city was divided into two distinct parts formed by a line from Beebee Ross Ghat eastward. Orlich and Thornton were probably both quoting the *Bengal and Agra Guide* of 1841. Thornton, however, pointed out that a considerable part of the “European division” was inhabited by natives, “chiefly Mussalmans and the lower caste Hindoos, while very few Christians have their abode in the native quarter.” William Baillie’s 1792 map indicated the area around Tank Square (between Beebee Ross Ghat and Esplanade Row), the strips along Bytaconnah/Bowbazaar Street, Dhurumtola Street, and the Chowringhee area as inhabited by Europeans.

14. Evenson, *Indian Metropolis*, 23; Sinha, *Calcutta in Urban History*, 7–8, 20–27.

15. Emma Roberts, *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindooostan* (London, 1837), 9; Henry Cotton, *Calcutta: Old and New: A Historical and Descriptive Handbook of the City* (1907; reprint ed., Calcutta, 1980), 136. For the development of the suburbs of Calcutta, see John Archer, “Colonial Suburbs in South Asia, 1700–1850, and the Spaces of Modernity,” in Roger Silverstone, ed., *Visions of Suburbia* (London, 1997).

16. Until the mid nineteenth century the names of the *paras* were mentioned in maps of Calcutta. For a discussion of Indian and British ideas of mapping the city, see Keya Dasgupta, "A City Away from Home: the Mapping of Calcutta," in Partha Chatterjee, ed., *Texts of Power* (Minneapolis, 1995).
17. On 20 June 1756, in a conflict between the East India Company and the Nawab of Bengal, the victorious Nawab's forces threw their English prisoners into a small room where many died of suffocation. One of the prisoners who survived was John Z. Holwell, who retired to England to write a highly embellished account of the incident, titled *A Genuine Narrative of the Deplorable Deaths of the English Gentlemen and Others who were Suffocated in the Black Hole* (London, 1758). This narrative grasped the imagination of Britons, and Calcutta became known primarily as the site of the Black Hole.
18. Sir Charles D'Oyly, *Views of Calcutta and Its Environs* (London, 1835). See also Jeremy P. Losty, *Calcutta: City of Palaces, A Survey of the City in the Days of the East India Company 1690–1858* (London, 1990).
19. Elisabeth Fenton, *A Narrative of Her Life in India, The Isle of France (Mauritius), and Tasmania During the Years 1826–1830* (London, 1910), 14–15.
20. James Ranald Martin, *Notes on the Medical Topography of Calcutta* (Calcutta, 1836), 63.
21. "Plan of Calcutta and its Environs surveyed by the Late Major J. A. Schlach for the use of the Lottery Committee and containing all their improvements with addition from the Surveyor General's Office and from recent surveys made by Captain T. Prinsep," 1825–1832, reproduced in Anil K. Kundu and Prithvish Nag, eds., *Atlas of the City of Calcutta and Its Environs* (Calcutta, 1990).
22. Seton-Kerr, *Selections from Calcutta Gazettes*, vol. 3, 550. Eight *sicca* rupees were worth 1 pound sterling.
23. Ibid., 547; also, vol. 5, 117.
24. Ibid., vol. 3, 557.
25. Ibid., 567.
26. *Calcutta Gazette* of 3 January 1805 contained this advertisement:
- Valuable landed property, the Russapuglah estate, for private sale by Tulloh & Co., comprising:
- The valuable and extensive grounds, gardens, and premises at Russapuglah, now let on lease at Sicca Rs. 178 per month, formerly the property of B. Turner, Esq., adjoining the main road, immediately opposite to the gardens belonging to R. W. Cox, Esq., and measuring one hundred and seventy-five beegahs of remarkably high, fertile ground, in an open, airy, healthy country.
- The whole laid out with a variety of fruits, flowers, and other trees, and possessing the very desirable advantages of having an extensive sheet of excellent water stocked with fish of different kinds; and merits the notice of any gentleman desirous of very extensive premises for agriculture or other purposes. On the grounds are the following buildings, viz.:—
- The premises consist of a well raised pucca built lower-roomed house, containing a large hall 32 by 28 feet, plastered with Madras chunam; two large rooms 23 by 17, four other rooms, 15 by 12 each; an enclosed verandah to the south, and open one to the north, each 28 by 18; with bottle-khanah, cook rooms, godowns, coach-house, stables, and other useful out-houses.
- On the same premise is also erected a neat pucca roofed bungalow containing a large hall, pucca built; two octagonal sleeping rooms with closets to each; open pillared verandahs to the north and south, venetian windows all round; with pucca built cook room, bottle-khanah, godowns and other out-houses (Seton-Kerr, *Selections from Calcutta Gazettes*, vol. 3, 581–582).
- Bottle-khanah* means pantry/storage. One *bigha* (alternatively spelled *beegah* or *biggah*) is about one-third of an acre, equivalent to 1,600 square yards; one *cottah* (or *cathba*) is 80 square yards; and one *chittack* (or *chattack*) is 5 square yards.
27. Seton-Kerr, *Selections from Calcutta Gazettes*, vol. 1. The Belvedere Estate house in Alipore, in the suburbs of Calcutta, had provisions of hot and cold baths. James Palmer, an undertaker attempting to diversify his business, notified the ladies and gentlemen of the settlement that he had procured a large assortment of marble slabs due to "the practice universally adopted among the genteel families of the Settlement, of having baths in their houses, lined, or only floored with marble slabs, likewise Halls and other Apartments" (285).
28. Seton-Kerr, *Selections from Calcutta Gazettes*, vol. 2, 543. *Abdarkhanna* means wine cellar; for "bottlekanna," see n. 26.
29. Seton-Kerr, *Selections from Calcutta Gazettes*, vol. 1, 34. The same notice contained an advertisement of a smaller single-story house on the east of China Bazaar, "highly raised from the ground" and containing a hall, two bedrooms, a verandah, a *bottle-khanah*, cookroom, and necessary house, standing on five *cottabs*, and yielding 100 *sicca* rupees in rent.
30. For example, the following advertisement appeared in 1786:
- A commodious and elegant House formerly occupied by the late Edward Wheeler, Esq. and at present tenanted by the Hon'ble Charles Stuart, at the monthly rent of Sicca Rupees 900, consisting of 2 halls, 8 large chambers, with 4 open verandahs, a grand staircase, and backstairs, closets, &c., all highly furnished, and in complete repair. The first floor raised 7 feet from the ground, and has under it eight excellent godowns. The premises occupy three beeghas, fourteen cottahs, and six chittacks of ground. The detached offices are extensive and convenient, fit to accommodate a large family, and all pucca built (Seton-Kerr, *Selections from Calcutta Gazettes*, vol. 1, 167).
31. Ibid., vol. 2.
32. Ibid., vol. 3, 533.
33. Ibid., vol. 4, 432–433.
34. One of the houses, located adjacent to Tiretta's bazaar, contained "pucca sheds 200 ft long and 32 feet wide." Seton-Kerr, *Selections from Calcutta Gazettes*, vol. 1, 292; also vol. 2, 517.
35. Colesworthy Grant, *Anglo-Indian Domestic Sketch* (Calcutta, 1862).
36. Ibid., 8.
37. Ibid., 11.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., 9.
40. Robin Evans, "Figures, Doors, and Passages," *Architectural Design* 48, no. 4 (1978): 267–278.
41. These buildings are chosen from a corpus of ninety-five examples that I have documented in the course of my research. Built throughout the nineteenth century, they support the generality of the pattern I analyze in this paper.
42. Building drawings from the archives of Mackintosh Burn Pvt. Ltd., Index no. 2087, dated 1911. Blueprints of this building and others discussed in this essay were all prepared in the first and second decades of the twentieth century to seek municipal permission to add bathrooms and make other alterations. Consequently they contain traces of previous changes made in the buildings. My discussion is based on the changes indicated in these drawings.
43. Map of Calcutta based on surveys conducted between 1887 and 1892 by R. B. Smart, revised in 1909; hereafter referred to as Smart's Plan.
44. The urge to have such large spaces unimpeded by columns caused structural problems. The dance floor of the Town Hall had to be reinforced with extra beams, while the London Tavern's large ballroom was rumored to be unstable, an accusation that caused the proprietors to bring out an advertisement vouching for its safety.

45. The house is indicated in Schlach's 1826 map. Building drawings from Mackintosh Burn Pvt. Ltd., dated 1905.
46. *Thacker's Directory of Calcutta*, 1872, 1892.
47. An entry to Camac Street is shown in a map of Calcutta prepared by W. Heysham in 1856, reproduced in *Atlas of the City of Calcutta*. Before that the house probably had a Middleton Street address.
48. Smart's Plan, 1887–1892, revised in 1909.
49. Plan of 1/1 Little Russell Street, from the archive of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation.
50. James Gibbs, *Book of Architecture: Containing Designs of Buildings and Ornamentations* (London, 1739).
51. Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* (New Haven, 1978).
52. Nilsson, *European Architecture in India*.
53. Ibid.
54. Robert Kerr, *The Gentleman's House* (1864; reprint ed., New York, 1972).
55. Ibid., 67–68.
56. Cotton, *Calcutta: Old and New*, 121.
57. Grant, *Anglo-Indian Domestic Sketch*.
58. Ibid., 6.
59. William Huggins, *Sketches in India: Treatise on Subjects Connected with the Government; Civil and Military Establishments; Characters of the European, and the Customs of the Native Inhabitants* (London, 1824), 110.
60. Elijah Impey and his family lived in a large house on Middleton Row, now occupied by the Loretto Convent. I am grateful to Dr. Oliver Impey for informing me that the painting is attributed to Zain-al-din but that there is no hard evidence to prove he is the painter.
61. See Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex and Class* (see n. 2).
62. For an account of the East India Company's policy on dress codes that prohibited the Company's servants from wearing Indian clothing, see Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton, 1996).
63. See, for example, Lady Maria Nugent, *A Journal of the Year 1811 Till the Year 1815, Including a Voyage to and Residence in India, with a Tour of the North-western Part of the British Possessions in that Country, under the Bengal Government* (London, 1839), 123.
64. See, for example, Lord Viscount Valentia, *Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia, and Egypt, in the Years 1802–1806*, vol. 1 (London, 1809), 242.
65. Fenton, *Narrative of Her Life*, 82.
66. Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex and Class*.
67. Nugent, *Journal*, 112.
68. Ibid., 85.
69. Emma Roberts, *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindoostan* (London, 1837), 7.
70. Laura Ann Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire* (Durham, 1995), 157–164.
71. Cotton, *Calcutta Old and New*, 76–80 (see n. 9).
72. Emily Eden, *Letters from India* (London, 1872), 84–85.
73. Ibid., 91.
74. Ibid., 91–92.
75. Homi Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders," *The Location of Culture* (London, 1994), 115.

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Figure 3. Courtesy British Library, London

Figures 6f, 24. Courtesy Calcutta Municipal Corporation

Figure 20. Courtesy Dr. Oliver Impey and British Library, London

Figure 21. Courtesy R.H.N. Dashwood

Figures 22, 23. Courtesy Oriental and Indian Office Collection, British Library, London