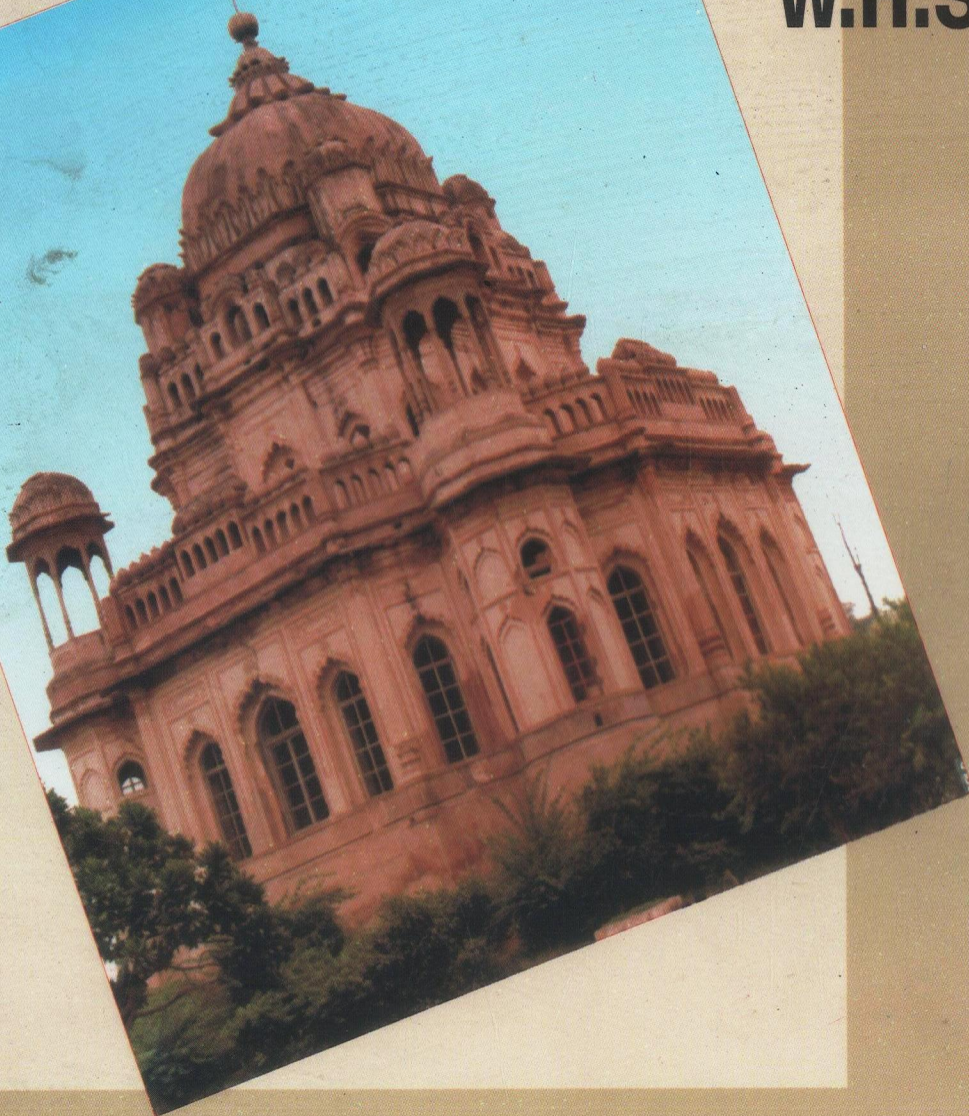


Lucknow

THE HISTORIC CITY

W.H.Siddiqi



PREFACE

There has been a long-standing demand by tourists as well as students of architecture for a book on Lucknow's monuments based on historical facts, and with descriptions of salient architectural features.

The Archaeological Survey of India, which has been the custodian of protected monuments did not pay adequate attention to the preservation of Lucknow's monuments or to the improvement of their surroundings. This happened because Lucknow fell within the purview of the then Northern Circle, Agra, which was largely preoccupied with the upkeep of the monuments of Agra and Fatehpur Sikri. It was Professor S.Nurul Hasan, the former Union Minister of Education and Scientific Research, who took the decision for the establishment of a separate circle for Lucknow.

Consequently, the Archaeological Survey of India formed the Lucknow Circle, the jurisdiction of which extended upto Allahabad in the east, Kanpur District in the north-west, and Jhansi District in the south. In recent years, the Archaeological Survey of India has published a number of guide-books to several groups of monuments, namely those of Ahmedabad, Bhuvaneshwar, Fatehpur Sikri, Goa, Konarak, Mandu, Mamallipuram (Mahabalipuram), Nagarjunakonda, Rajgir and Sarnath but Lucknow did not receive its due priority.

The pressing demand of scholars and visitors alike for a book on Lucknow made the Department of Cultural Affairs of the Uttar Pradesh Government commission this work through INTACH (The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage). The late Shri B.K. Thapar, former Director-General, Archaeological Survey of India was then Secretary at INTACH, and suggested my name, in view of my specialization in historical archaeology, art, architecture and epigraphy.

I was then approached by Mrs. Amita Baig of INTACH, for writing this monograph on Lucknow's monuments. I accepted the offer in 1993 since I had recently

retired from the post of Director, Expeditions Abroad, Archaeological Survey of India. However, my reappointment as Officer on Special Duty, Rampur Raza Library, Department of Culture, Government of India, delayed my work on this monograph, for which I express sincere regret.

When I tried to locate books and articles on this subject, I found that no detailed and scientific study had been made of Lucknow's monuments. The articles, which appeared in the *Journal of the United Provinces* more than forty years ago, were not specialised. A decade earlier, Percy Brown had written about Lucknow in his monumental work *Indian Architecture* (Islamic), Part II, but his coverage was not comprehensive, nor was his assessment of the architectural morphology of Lucknow's monuments, correct.

Surprisingly, some of the notable specimens of Mughal architecture at Lucknow were not even given cursory notice by earlier writers, including Percy Brown, while their obvious impact on the later buildings can hardly be exaggerated.

I have traced the urban history of Lucknow with reference to art and architecture and also its sophisticated composite culture, which was unique enough to still be remembered with nostalgia. The introduction deals with the development of Lucknow city through the ages; particular emphasis is given to the lavish court of Avadh during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with reference to its socio-cultural development. An overview of the development of Lucknow's unique architecture is also given here, as well as brief descriptions of popular building types.

The architectural expressions of Lucknow occupy a unique position in northern India, as the style is neither purely Indian nor entirely European. The Introduction is followed by a study of monuments dating to the Mughal era. This is followed by an appraisal of Nawabi architecture. In fact there are two main phases in the development of Nawabi architecture. One, which consists of the use of later Mughal features, both in terms of building material and ornamentation, sought inspiration from Safdar Jung's tomb, and the Qudsia Bagh Palace and mosque in Delhi, and the famous mosques and mousolea of Faizabad. This phase is represented by the early mosques, imambaras and karbalas of Lucknow. Except for the partially extant gate of the Sheesh Mahal of Nawab Asafud-Daula, very few secular buildings remain.

The second phase of Nawabi architecture is represented by a hybrid style consisting of modified European elements and certain symbolic ornamentation in the Avadhi style, such as winged angels, anthropomorphic figures and pairs of fish (the royal emblem) in stone, plaster and copper, embellished in gold. This phase is also remarkable for its European characteristics such as Palladian columns, pediments and fanlights, which were popularised by Adams. These features were used in Lucknow's residential architecture. Even Zenana buildings with tall windows mirror contemporary European style. The last section of this study deals with the monuments raised by the British after the annexation of Avadh in 1856.

The monuments have been described in chronological order. Visitors can study the map to plan suitable itineraries, and thereafter refer to the index to read about the monument.

Efforts have been made to include only those monuments, which are of historical and architectural importance and are still somewhat preserved in their original architectural setting. However, some of the isolated and lesser-known Nawabi buildings have been also described in view of their relevance to the urban history of the city. As far as possible, precise dates and the names of builders have been given. Inscriptions have also been studied for authentic information about the monuments.

The black and white photographs of the monuments were taken by Shri R.K. Saigal, retired photo officer of the Archaeological Survey of India; the colour photographs and slides were taken by Shri Jamshid Agha of Chitra Studio, Rampur. The accompanying drawings and plans of the buildings belong to the Archaeological Survey of India, and were prepared by the well known architect of Lucknow, Shri Ashish Shrivastava.

The spellings adopted here generally conform to those used by the Archaeological Survey of India.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my revered teacher, the late professor B.K.Thapar who suggested my name for this monograph and who also advised me. It is to his memory that this work is dedicated. I am beholden to Mrs. Amita Baig, Director-General, Architectural Heritage, INTACH, who took keen interest and encouraged me in undertaking the work. My thanks are also due to Mrs. Kamala Ratnam, of the same organisation, for her concern with the progress of work. I am grateful to Shri M.A. Khan, Conservation Assistant, Archaeological Survey of India, Lucknow Circle, who took pains to supply me first-hand information about some lesser known monuments, and also the photographs of these monuments.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to my wife Mrs. Naaz Siddiqi who assisted me and provided all facilities at home for writing and rewriting the book. Professor Shah Abdus Salam of Lucknow University also helped in my work for which I thank him sincerely.

Thanks are also due to Miss Shadab Gul, Professional Assistant, Miss Bilquees Farooqui, and Miss Mohini Rani of Raza Library who have helped in many ways and also typed the text.

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