



LORD OF DALHOUSIE



**BASS-RELIEFS  
OF THE DIRECTORS  
OF THE GIP RAILWAY COMPANY  
ON THE FRONT FACADE OF  
THE VICTORIA TERMINUS  
BUILDING**



EARL OF DUFFERIN



THOS WATT



COLONEL HOLLAND



LORD ELPHINSTONE



LORD REAY



MOUNT STUART ELPHINSTONE



SIR BARTLE FRERE BART



SIR J. JIJIBHAI BART



JAGANNATH SHANKAR SHETT



CENTRAL RAILWAY

*World's Most  
Beautiful  
Heritage  
Station Building*



## World's Most Beautiful Heritage Station Building

The present day Headquarters Building of Central Railway popularly known as Victoria Terminus (now Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus) is an architectural marvel. This magnificent monument was originally planned as the office of GIP Railway. This is the most photographed building after Taj Mahal, and was designed by Frederick William Stevens, a consulting architect. The construction started in 1878 and on jubilee Day in 1887, it was named after Queen Empress Victoria. Thus taking almost a decade to built it at a princely sum of Rs. 16,13,863/- Stevens designed the monumental Terminus which was the largest building then erected in Asia and which even today is a standing testimony of his innovative talent. The first ones to occupy the newly constructed building of GIP Railway were the establishments of Agency, Accounts, Audit, Chief Engineer, Traffic Manager, Passenger Goods, Police superintendent and ticket printing.

### ARCHITECTURAL STYLE :

The Victoria Terminus was designed in the Gothic style adapted to suit the Indian context. The Gothic style, offering the colour and complexity of Mughal and Hindu architecture, harmonized and most effectively made reference to the indigenous preference for ornamentation, making it the right choice of style for Victoria Terminus. The skyline, turrets, pointed arches and eccentric ground plans of the Gothic Revival structure being closest in appearance to the traditional Indian palace architecture gave an appropriate platform for the incorporation of vernacular architecture. The building is a utilitarian work of art, with Steven's wit and play in a deceptive non-symmetrical symmetry. The building is symmetrical about the east-west axis. The elements are freely changed in style, size and materials, and yet there is an indescribable unity in totality.

The 'C' shaped building is planned symmetrically about the east-west axis. The uni-axial symmetry is crowned by a high central dome, which acts as the focal point around which the building is built. The two side wings enclose the courtyard, which opens onto the street. The wings are anchored on all four sides by turrets that effectively balance and frame the central dome.

Striking features in the main entrance include ornate wooden doors spaced between impressively crafted marble columns and a grand cantilevered staircase that loftily skirts the walls with eight and a half feet wide overhanging slabs of blue stone. beautiful wrought iron railing and rich Sienna marble wall. Between each of the eight ribs of the dome are long, stained glass windows decorated with the GIPR monogram, and arms and foliage. The use of different coloured stone creates a striking impact. There are carvings in white limestone contrasting with gray basalt stone used for detailing on the dome. The main structure is in yellow malad stone and red sandstone with limestone used effectively to pronounce the corner stones.

### STATUE OF PROGRESS :

The crowning point of the whole building is the central main dome carrying up as a finial at its apex, a colossal 16'-6" high figure of a lady pointing a flaming torch upwards in her right hand, and a spoked wheel low in the left hand, symbolizing 'Progress'. This dome has been reported to be the first octagonal ribbed masonry dome that was adapted to an Italian Gothic style building. It is taken most logically from a square plan at the base, and has been developed ingeniously after the finest transitions of the upper corners of the square of the dome into an octagonal base of the dome. The construction of the interior of the dome is entirely open and exposed to view from the ground floor. The outside buttresses are carried up vertically, each to an apex in bold relief to finish in turreted pinnacles. These pinnacles, eight stone ribs, bring out in continuation of the buttresses, each carried inside, on handsomely capped marbles of choicest design, which marbles themselves spring through, from massive and exquisitely foliated carvings, running right round the interior of the dome. The stone ribs of the dome are cleverly shaped to a flat ogive.

The space between the stone ribs of the dome being filled in with long stone slabs, to give a horizontal stepped effect. These ribs are taken up and terminated at an apex, which forms 'Progress'. This statue is the only embellishment in statuary to which attention is focused, when one looks at any angle and on the west main facade of Victoria Terminus. There is no doubt that the rest of the embellishments could be termed 'abstract', as the ornamentation has no reference to any particular object of bringing anything in to special focus.



### THE WINGS:

There are other pieces of statuary, one representing 'Agriculture' on the central gable on the south side and one each on two gables of the wings of the west facade representing 'Engineering & Science' & 'Shipping & Commerce'. There are a large number of other embellishments like gargoyles, grotesques and figures of animals carrying standards and battle-axes, etc. In addition, there are a large number of bass-reliefs and ornamental friezes more attractive than the statuary decorates the facade. The delicately ornamented arches make the interiors look like the grand cathedral. Ceilings are very high and exude a sense of space and freedom so that even when the hallway is full capacity there is no sense of claustrophobia. The west front, approached by a grand gateway and sculptures of a lion and tiger forms three sides of a square with a courtyard between the two wings.

Inside the booking office is a wealth of the choicest Italian marble, polished Indian blue stone and elaborate stone arches covered with carved foliage and grotesques. Other features here include a tessellated floor, dados of glazed tiles, stained glass windows, galleries of highly ornamented iron work executed by students of the J.J. School of Art and long counters made of cleverly blended wood - ebony, teak and sewan. The groined roof of the booking office was painted in a shade of azure with gold stars.

On the facade are bass-reliefs in large size, of 10 Directors of the Old Great Indian Peninsula Railway Company at that time. Nana Jagannath Shankarseth and Sir Jamshedji Jijibhoy were the

only Indian Directors.

### Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus :

When the construction of passenger station for the GIP Ayrton, Secretary of the GIP at Mody Bay - a proposal that Government of Bombay as well London. The Directors in the proposal and alternatively and passenger station at Bori Bunder, which could gradually be enlarged with additions from the Esplanade and land reclaimed from the harbour side. The land required for the station and terminus was estimated to be about 80 acres. Work on the terminus eventually begun in may 1878 and took 10 years to complete at a cost of Rs. 16,13,863/- for the offices and Rs. 10,40,248/- For the station.



a new central terminus and was under consideration. A.S. Company had proposed a site was acceptable to the as the Board of Directoes in Bombay, however, countered suggested a temporary goods

The next important modification came in 1929. The former station, which adjoined it, was reserved for suburban traffic and used to have 6 platforms. In March, 1929, when the Governor, Sir Frederick Sykes, opened the remodelled VT the station was remodelled to have 13 platforms the last five being exclusively used for through trains to and from various parts of India. An extensive car park was also provided for the convenience of passengers. Over the following decades, more additions and modifications were carried out to the original buildings. With the increase in suburban Passenger traffic, first double discharge platform was provided in May, 1990 and by January, 1991 all the suburban platforms were made double discharge. Further additions were made in February, 1994 by making total no. of platforms as 15. In March 1996, the station was renamed as Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus the building was listed as a world Heritage monument by UNESCO in July 2004 for an outstanding example of late 19th Central Railway architecture with a view to accommodate 24 coach trains platform 16 to 18 were constructed with spacious parking and entry from P'D'mello Road in September 2007.

Even today, the terminus continues to play a significant role in the life of lakhs of local railway commuters and long distance passengers. The building is a must on the itineraries of tourists from all over the world visiting the city. In time, Victoria Terminus came to be considered as one of the finest station in the world.

