



In the 1880s, a picturesque addition was made to the Anglican Churches in Bombay with the establishment of All Saints' Church in Malabar Hill. It featured a spacious half-acre garden encircled by palm trees and tropical foliage (Hill, 1920, 33). Initially conceived as a chapel, its primary intent was to cater to the needs of individuals residing at a considerable distance from St. Thomas Cathedral. The location of the Cathedral, requiring an eight-mile carriage drive, prompted the establishment of a church to provide a more accessible place of worship for the local community, consisting mainly of individuals who had come from the United Kingdom and were residing in and around the area.

On 15th July 1873, The Times of India published a message: 'Is it not surprising that the residents in or about Malabar Hill have never combined in endeavouring to get a church erected on the spot? How many are there, instead of being compelled by force of circumstances to remain in their bungalows on Sunday morning, as at present, could, to use the words of a poet of the last century: ...To God's house repair To hear His word and see His face. To learn His will and sing His grace And vent their hearts in praise and prayer?'



In 1875, a petition was submitted to Reverend Henry Arthur Douglas, then Bishop of Bombay. The petitioners knew it would take a while before a chapel could be ready to use. One of the petitioners, Mr. Justice R. Pinhey, offered a spacious detached room at Altamont (now Altamont Road) for a chapel. They requested the Bishop to sanction the room at Altamont for Divine service until the chapel would be constructed. The Bishop approved this petition before he passed the following year (All Saints' Church, 2003, 1).

In 1880, the Government in Bombay approved a plan with an estimated cost of 13,608 rupees to build a church. They granted the Public Works Department (PWD) a site for its construction and committed to providing a grant-in-aid of 5,000 rupees, with the remaining funds raised through public subscription. Despite challenges such as escalating costs of building materials, labour issues, and difficulties with the chosen site, the All Saints' Church was built. It was designed by Major Charles Mant, the Architectural Executive Engineer and Surveyor with the Bombay PWD, and completed within thirteen months (Holliday, 146). Lady Olive Fergusson, the wife of Sir James Fergusson, the Governor of Bombay from 1880 to 1885, laid the foundation stone on 25th November 1880. The site granted by the government was strategically located near the reservoir, offering a central position for the residents (All Saints' Church, 2003, 2). It was mentioned in the Times of India on 26th November 1880 that the government generously provided a complimentary site and covered half the actual cost for the construction of the church.



On Monday, 16th January 1882, the All Saints' Church was consecrated in a ceremony attended by 40 to 50 residents from the surrounding neighbourhood (All Saints' Church, 2003, 2). A newspaper published in 1882 calls it "the pretty little church on Malabar Hill" (All Saints' Church, 2003, 1). Mant was the first architect who mastered the Indo-Saracenic style in Bombay. He began his career in the military and then became a civil engineer, but not in architecture. He was born in Poona and studied at the Addiscombe and the Royal Engineers School at Chatham before moving to Bombay in 1859.

Mant's deep understanding of Indian culture allowed him to collaborate effectively with Indian subordinates, including draughtsmen who required training. After initially working on structures in the Gothic style, he emerged as a pioneer of Indo-Saracenic designs. Notable examples of his work include the Rajah of Kolhapur's memorial in Florence, Kolaire High School, and others. In 1873-74, Mant embarked on a journey through Europe to study European architecture. Upon his return to India in December 1874, he received a promotion to the rank of Major. He was under the leadership of Sir Richard Temple, Lieutenant General of Bengal, and later the Governor of Bombay. Temple, an admirer of Indian architecture, appreciated Mant's incorporation of native features into his designs. In 1877, Mant assumed the role of acting Director of the Bombay School of Art and Superintendent of the Antiquarian Remains of India and continued to work on the architectural landscape of Bombay (Chrimes, 2016, 120).

The All Saints' Church had a lovely design, featuring a nave and a semicircular chancel (Holliday, 146). It incorporated a tidy bell tower, contributing to the overall height of the building, reaching approximately 64 feet from the base to the tower's pinnacle. However, the bell turret, complete with its wooden steeple, was dismantled in 1951 due to damage caused by a cyclone. Following its removal, the bell found a temporary home in the Gable of the church and later in the Garden until it was relocated to its current position above the vestry door (All Saints' Church, 2003, 2).



Marked by Gothic-inspired architecture and arches with Porbunder and Coorla stone, the church has a teak-beamed ceiling and was constructed in an east-west orientation, placing the chancel to the east. As its intended use was for morning services, the east end of the chancel wall lacks window casements. The altar is adorned with intricate wood carvings, showcasing a decorative Gothic style with canopies and crockets.

Towering lancet windows grace the north and south walls of the nave, adorned with golden-yellow stained glass. They are personal memorials placed discreetly within the chancel's sidewalls. Brass plaques at the base of each window bear poignant inscriptions. The inscription on the north wall plaque conveys a heartfelt message: "To the Glory of God and in loving memory of Olive Fergusson who died of cholera at Parel 8th January 1882, this window is given by her devoted and sorrowing brother and sister Walter & Sophie Hughes. The Master is come and calleth for thee." Lady Fergusson's passing at thirty-one years of age occurred at Government House in Parel, and she found her final resting place at Sewri Cemetery (Holliday, 146). These two windows feature a unique design, portraying an angel elevated above the earthly realm on dark-hued clouds. The angels gaze down at the women depicted in the inner light, perhaps extending a gently beckoning hand to symbolise their departure from the mortal plane. The scenes are adorned with tropical flora, creating a serene and symbolic atmosphere. Notably, each woman is painted in a distinctive portrait style, likely representing the individuals to whom the stained glass is dedicated (Holliday, 147).

Tragically, on 22nd November 1881, Major Charles Mant Friba took his own life, grappling with financial troubles and concerns about the structural integrity of his architectural designs. His untimely demise marked the end of a talented architect who had significantly contributed to the Indo-Saracenic architectural style in India (Chrimes, 2016, 121).

Around 1887, the house at Malabar Point became the permanent residence of the Governor of Bombay. This shift resulted in a notable increase in the Anglican population in the area, leading to a growth in the congregation of the All Saints' Church. Consequently, the church became the regular place of worship for the Governors (All Saints' Church, 2003, 3). While it remained affiliated with the Cathedral, it wasn't until 1957 that it was established as a separate ecclesiastical parish within the Mumbai Diocese of the Church of North India (Garware, 2023). For a significant part of its history, the Bishop's Chaplain served the church, residing with the Bishop in his house on Malabar Hill (All Saints' Church, 2003, 3).



A portion of the land where the church is situated has been put to good use. The Cathedral Schools have established a kindergarten on this land, which the church has leased at a nominal rent. A two-story house has been constructed, with the top floor designated for the residence of the church Presbyter and his family. This development addressed a longstanding need for the Chaplain to reside near the church. Over the years, the church has been actively supporting the All Saints' Home, situated in Mazgaon, dedicated to aged women. The church has extended help through financial contributions and personnel support. The church is also closely associated with 'The Shelter' in Byculla, a home catering to orphaned, destitute, and court-committed girls, primarily of school-going age. The girls are enrolled in English Medium Schools in the vicinity. 'The Shelter' is conveniently located in Byculla. This commitment to charitable endeavours reflects the church's ongoing dedication to community welfare (All Saints' Church, 2003, 3).

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