

Modern Indian Architecture
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Lecture 07
Revivalism

Hello students, nice to have you once again and like I said in the last session we will be looking at revivalism today and we will pick up some of the things that we had mentioned in the last presentation and build from there.

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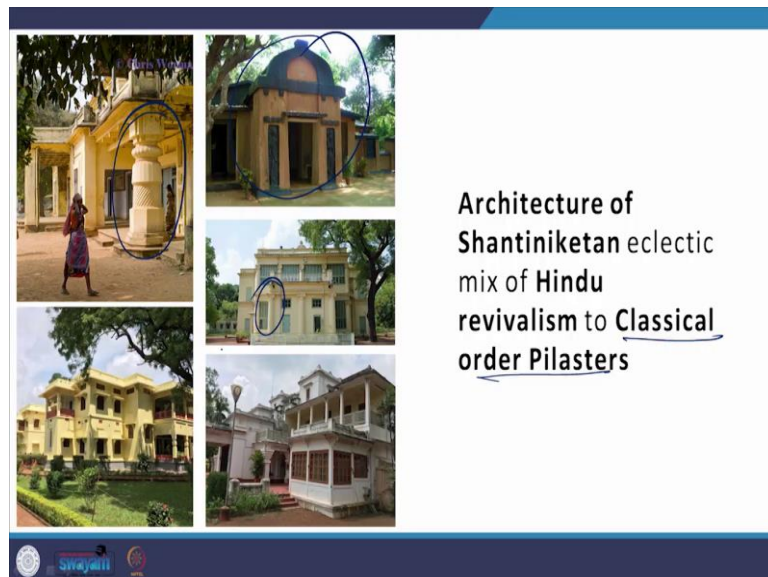
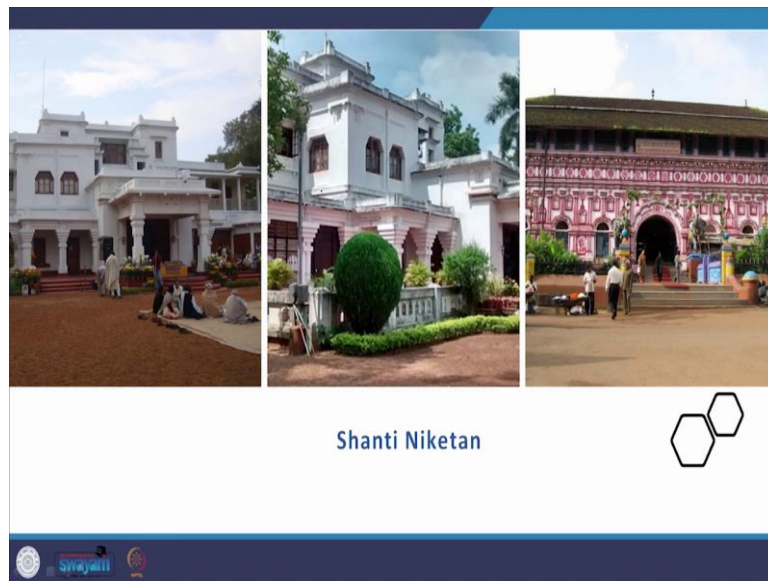


Revivalism

- During 1920s - Some patriotic Indians - initiated institution-building activities
- Appropriate architecture for Institutional buildings
- Now- Their turn to think of 'experiments' with 'built form' as a symbol of national identity

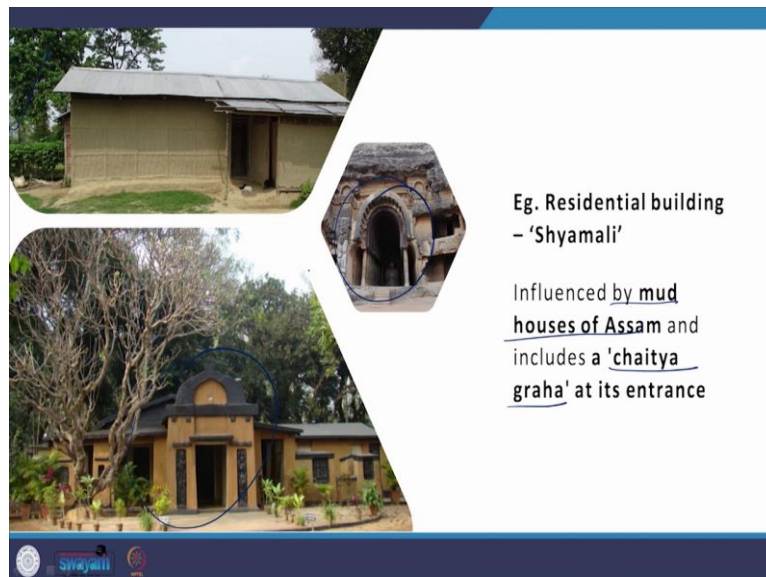
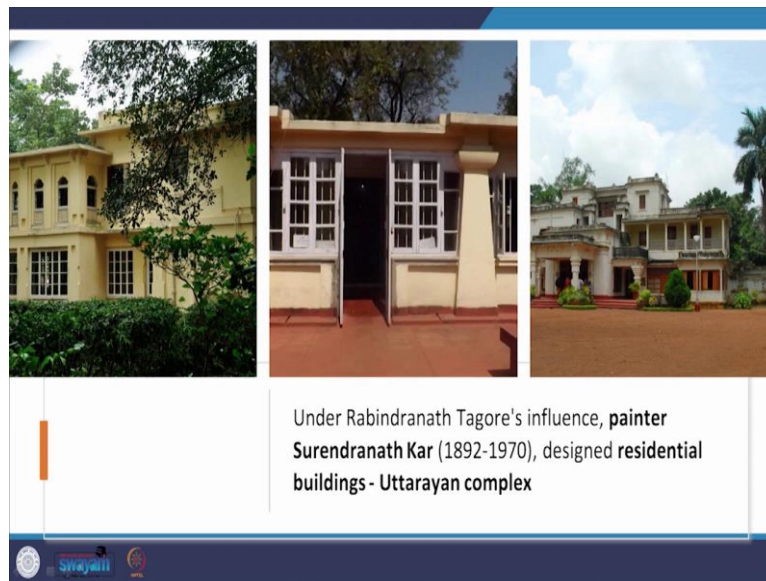
During the 1920s patriotic Indians were a part of our freedom struggle, they initiated institution building activities with an appropriate architecture for institutional buildings and one of those was the Banaras Hindu University, now their turn to think of experiments with built form as a symbol of national identity as I mentioned last time this was already done, an attempt was made by the British when they used Indo-Saracenic architecture to build on that sense of national identity and we had seen that in several presentations back.

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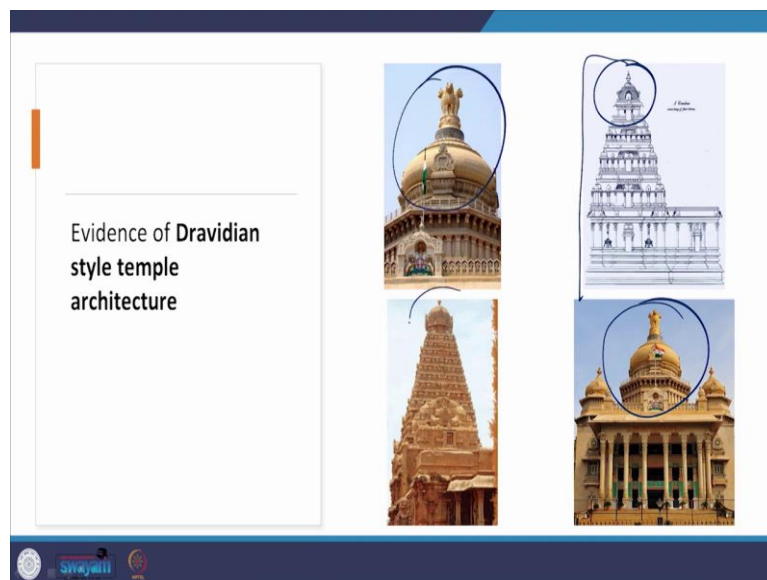
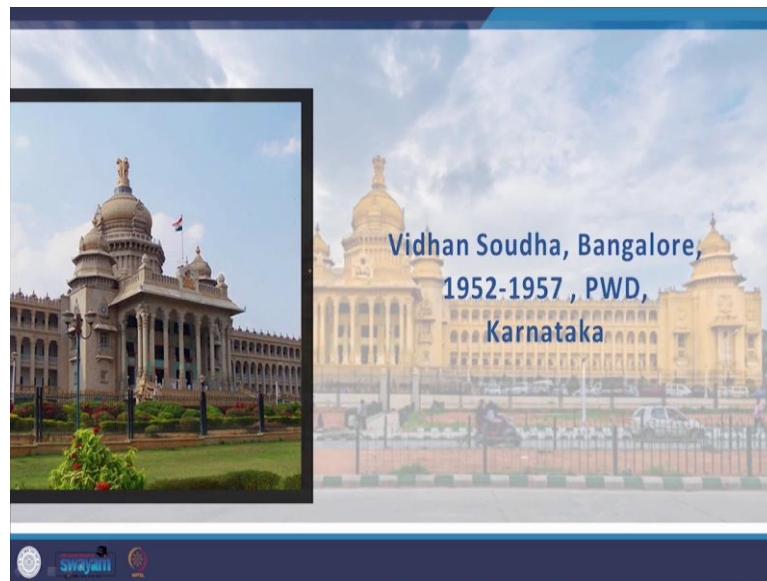
Now one other example of revivalism was Shanti Niketan under the mentorship of Rabindranath Tagore and the architecture of Shanti Niketan was not purely from Indian historical examples or revivalist, it also carried with it certain European tendencies for example it was an eclectic mix of hindu revivalism that for example you see in the column here or in some other features for example in this building here which is a direct derivation of the chaitya hall or chaitya graha to classical order pilasters that for example you see here in this house. So there is a mixture of identities within the Shanti Niketan.

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So under Rabindranath Tagore, a painter Surendranath Kar was from 1892 to 1970, he designed residential buildings which are called as the Uttarayan complex and different eclectic styles were found within this residential set of buildings, one for example was the residential building called Shyamali that I just showed you, this is a combination of the mud houses of Assam here and so the mud architecture that you find in Shyamali whereas the overall form of Shyamali is borrowed from the chaitya graha that is the entrance to the chaitya hall and that is the form of the Shyamali so this is how it was merged together it has also been called as the aristocratic folk paradigm but maybe we look at it some other time or you can look it up yourself I tried to study it but unfortunately I was not able to go deep into it.

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Then we come to a very strong example of revivalism in India the Vidhana Soudha in Bangalore from 1952 to 57 it was designed or executed by the PWD in karnataka and it is the evidence of Dravidian temple style architecture very very clearly, so if you look at the vimana of the dravidian style temple and then you look at the shikhra of the vimana you find that the top of the Vidhana Soudha, the dome at the entrance or porch of the Vidhana Soudha is direct derivation of the shikhra of the vimana that you see here.

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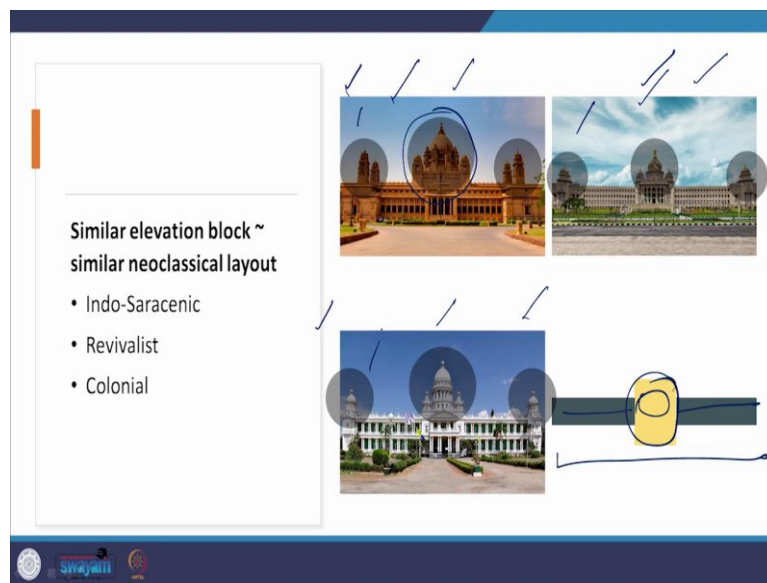
And so if you try to compare the images or the images of this impact of regional identity, if you compare IIT or sorry BHU with the Vidhana Soudha we find that in BHU it is a derivation of the shikhra of the north Indian temple vis-a-vis the vimana of the dravidian or the south Indian temple in the Vidhana Soudha, so in revivalism regional identities had played a role, the historical example from which that particular region's revivalist architecture is borrowed from that region's historical architecture, so this is the shikhara in the case of BHU and this is the vimana in the case of the Vidhana Soudha.

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Now the buildings are revivalist in appearance but in their layout and plan they are typically classical or neoclassical, this is the same point that we had made when we were looking at Indo-Saracenic buildings also where I pointed out that though Indo-Saracenic buildings were an amalgamation of traditional Indian elements with Western architecture but the layout continued to remain Western neoclassical layout and so we find whether the building is revivalist as in the Vidhana Soudha or in the IIT BHU or it is the colonial of the IIT Roorkee or the Capital building of Washington, all of them are, these two of course are neoclassical buildings, the classical plan but the revivalist buildings also follow that classical layout.

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Now there is a similar elevation block or elevation, similar neo classical layout of the building whether we look at Indo-Saracenic or revivalist or colonial, all three of them in India and this is the kind of plant structure, this is the central block which is has the entrance porch and there is a dome here and then you have these two wings spread on either side, so we find that in the Umaid Bhawan Palace we find that in the Vidhana Soudha and we find that in this colonial building.

Then again there is the combination of the domes and the repairs or the kind of minarets on the sides, the chatris on the side for example this, so what you find here is there is a central combination of the dome with few chatris surrounding it, it can be the pancharatana form as of the Bengal temple that I showed you earlier, there are the the bigger dome with the four small domes chatris around it, we find that in the Umaid Bhawan Palace, we do find that in the Vidhana Soudha, we do find that in this building and there are three different styles.

Then you find the side chatris, the corner chatris and it is here, it is here and it is here, so there is a certain kind of similarity in the overall form, layout, planning of the buildings whatever be the the outer garment the buildings are wearing and we will come back to this point about the outer garment again.

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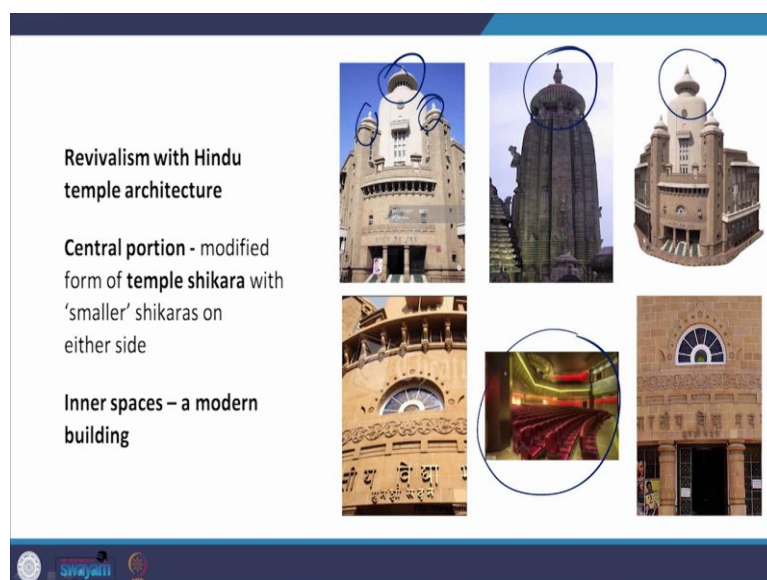
Now there is also the idea of the axial symmetry, so we look at the aerial view of the same three buildings and we find all of them have got a very strong axial symmetry, all of them carry the same kind of idea of a porch with the dome in the middle here and here and then there are these wings on either side. So revivalism per se symbolize the direction the revivalist would have liked architecture in post independent phase in India to take.

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We do find revivalism for example in the Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan that I had given you a glimpse of last time but it is more a classic example of deco Saracenic, it is another word being coined to be able to define what this building looks like because it is deco in the way the building is curved and the way the entire profile is but the elements that are used there are that of the hindu temple form or the traditional hindu temple form so the word saracenic so it is a combination of the clean geometry of art deco with hindu temple architectural features.

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So revivalism of the hindu temple architecture with the central portion being a modified shikhara as you can see, this is the temple shikhara, the pinnacle of the temple, north Indian temple, so that is here in the Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan and then you have the smaller shikharas on the side and but when you go inside the building it is a completely modern space so that is a kind of a tension that developed in these buildings again and again that though the form of the building could be made to look Indo-Saracenic or art deco colonial or revivalist but the heart of the building was modern, why?

Because the needs of our society had changed, technology had changed, professions and occupations and businesses had changed, the buildings had to operate in a modern economy and in a modern environment so you could make them appear in a particular style but inwardly the heart of the building had to remain modern and will come back again at a very standout point later on in this lecture.

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Revivalism – Modern Indian Architectural Movement

Bold and radical departure from mainstream contemporary architectural thinking in India

Represents **belief that past:**


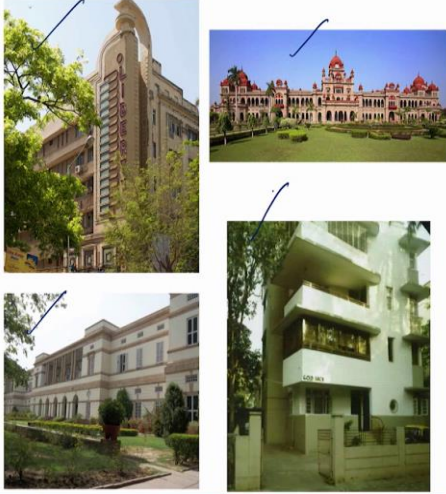
- Can give **order to present**
- Be a **source of identity and pride** for people who see it as part of their culture



Modern Indian Architectural Movement

Antireaction to western impacts in India, viz. Indo-Saracenic architecture, Colonialism, Art Deco and Modernism

Driving Force - Sris Chandra Chatterjee (1872 – 1966)



So revivalism in modern, the modern Indian architectural movement, it is a bold and radical departure from mainstream contemporary architectural thinking in India, it represented a belief that the past can give certain sense and order to the present and we are source of identity and pride for a people who will see it as a part of their cultural heritage.

The modern architectural movement was supposed to be an anti-reaction to Western impacts in India whether it was Indo-Saracenic that you see here whether it was colonialism, the flagstaff house whether it was art deco in Mumbai or whether it was the Carmichael apartments by Mhatre as a part of modernism in Mumbai I am sorry I hope this is, no I am sorry, this is not the Carmichael apartment but this is an apartment building by Mhatre in

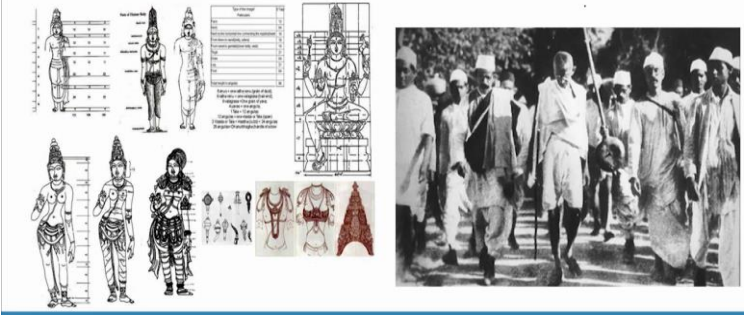
Mumbai. So that is a part of modernism the driving force behind this modern Indian architectural movement turned out to be Sris Chandra Chatterjee from 1872 to 1966.

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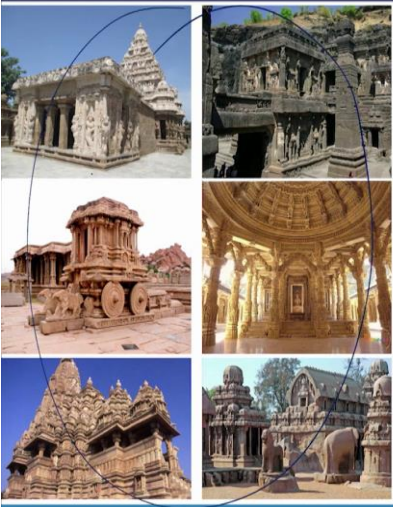
Modern Indian Architectural Movement

Chatterjee motivated by Swadeshi movement (1st 2 decades of 20th century)

In urban design, he turned to canonical texts, esp. Shilpa Shastras to establish basis of his designs



Architectural inspiration –
Magadha, Mamallapuram, Ajanta and ElloraDilwara, Conjeevaram and Vijaynagar



According to Chatterjee he was motivated by the Swadeshi movement in the first, that rose in the first two decades of the 20th century with the civil disobedience movement and the impact of the non-violent struggle of Gandhiji, in urban design he turned to the canonical text that is the Shilpa Shastras to establish the basis of his designs, the architectural inspiration that he drew from was Maghada, Mamallapuram, Ajanta, Ellora, Dilwara, Conjeevaram, Vijaynagar, all these different imageries that you see here he learned from all of them.

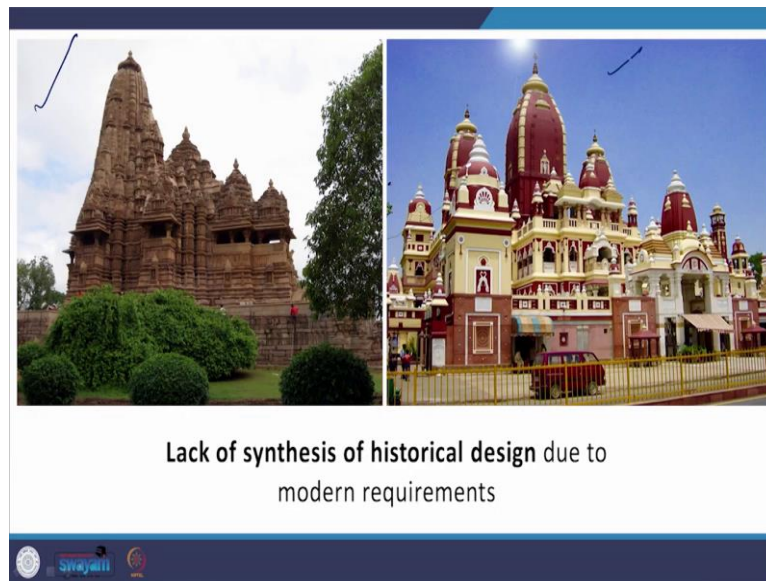
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And the temple predecessor, the temple that he built in Delhi, the Birla Mandir, the design that he executed was the temples of Bhubaneswar, so when you look at the temple here the Birla Mandir and you look at the temple of Bhubaneswar you find such a stark similarity between the form, but in his works now this is what I was talking about that completely stands out.

The modern requirements and plans only had the outer covering of these diverse traditional hindu elements, this temple was for the modern times and for the modern needs, so though the form itself carried with it a traditional hindu element temple form and that also Bhubaneswar but the building per se was a modern temple, it would carry with it drainage facilities, water lines, electricity, overall systematic administrative structure, the whole building was a modern building, topped up with the outer form of a traditional Indian temple did not have synthesis of design principles of Indian historical works and that is something.

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So when we read, this this lack of synthesis of historical design due to the modern requirements this that we could achieve in the olden times in the historical temples of India we would find it difficult to achieve not only in this one building but in so many other buildings that were built in our country or even in the West which tried to borrow styles and forms from past historical periods.

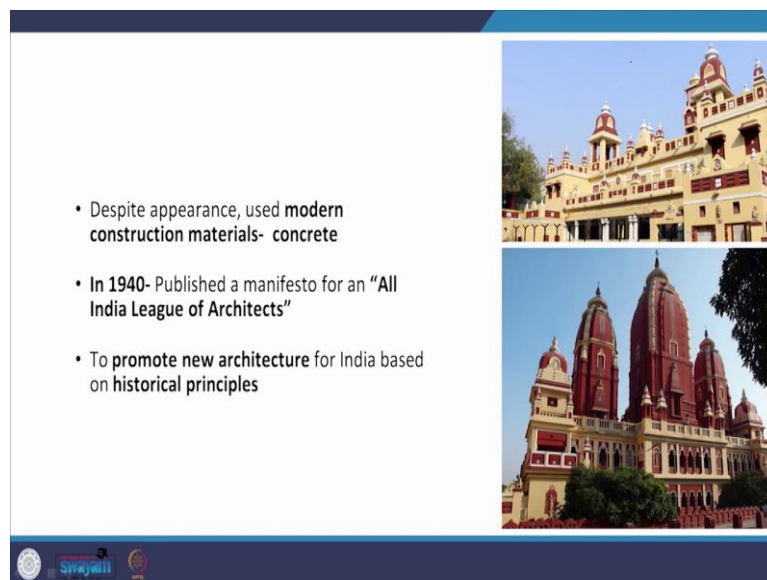
For example if you look at the eclectic style forms of the industrial revolution period in the West heavily borrowing from classical architecture, renaissance and gothic architecture and trying to put them together in various eclectic combinations in their buildings, those buildings still stand there a part of the European heritage or the British heritage but the anti-reaction against that kind of architecture was that it does not really give us the form that the modern building should have, that is why the form for the tall building erupted or rather came up in Chicago and New York where the pressure to build in a historical style was much less and that is why when modern architecture did take deep roots in Europe in the early part of the 20th century they did away with the so-called old historical forms completely to come up with these new geometries.

Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, Alvar Aalto and so many others which completely revolutionized what modern architecture would be in the 20th and now into the 21st century and we have never looked back since but that does not mean that the principles espoused in classical architecture are not there in these buildings, they are there, you see principles that define symmetry, proportional, rationalism, the quality of aesthetics et cetera

are universal principles, so that or symmetry for example so those universal principles remain true but they get seen in architecture in different ways.

So a building by Mies van der Rohe, a crown hall which is a minimalist building in glass and steel is actually having a very strong classical symmetry as it would be there in a greek temple but shown in a very different way with very different materials in a very different time for a very different need, so this is the point that I want to make here that we keep on repeatedly not able to succeed at best we are able to create an outer form but the building continues to remain and function for the modern man.

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Now despite appearance there was another thing about this building it used concrete which it had to because of the technology that was available to us today, the flexibility of concrete was much more desirable, much more durable but in 1940 Sris Chatterjee actually published a manifesto for an All India league of architects to promote new architecture of India based on historical principles, this in itself was a major contribution that he made in his writings.

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Chatterjee executed small body of work:

- Lakshmi-Narayan (Birla) Temple (1938)
- Mahasabha Bhavan (1939), Delhi
- Arya Dharma Sangha Dharamsala (1935), Sarnath
- Deshbandhu Memorial (1870-1925), Calcutta

House for Indian Nobleman

Ashok Singh Palace, Calcutta – His executed domestic project

All were Revivalist

Chatterjee executed a small body of work, all of it important, all of it forming a valuable part of the revivalist movement whether it was the Lakshmi Narayan or the Birla Mandir in Delhi, the Mahasabha bhavan, the Arya dharma sangha dharamsala in Sarnath, the Deshbandhu memorial in Kolkata, the house for an Indian nobleman, the Ashok Singh Palace, the house of the Indian nobleman which was never built but here is the design for it, the Ashok Singh Palace in Calcutta which was his formerly executed domestic project all were revivalist.

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Vastu Principle of Town Planning during Vedic Period (Indo-Aryans)

Chaturmukha

- Applicable to all towns - largest town to smallest village
- Site - either square or rectangular having four faces
- Town layout- E. to W. lengthwise, with four main streets
- Temple - always at centre

For urban design – he stuck close to canonical texts

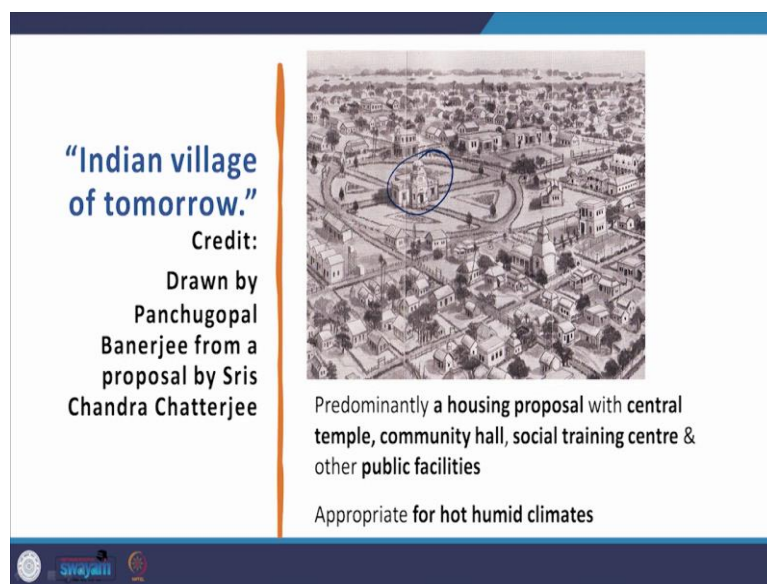
Generic Design for Indian village for 5000 persons – rectangular plan with formal entrance gates on each side – a *chaturmukha design*

Then his focus on urban design and urban planning, the Vastu Principle of town planning during the vedic or the indo-aryanic period and that was the idea of the chaturmukha, the

applicable, it was applicable to all towns from the largest towns to the smallest villages, the site itself was either square or rectangular you can see it here also and it had four faces in all four directions, the town layout was east to west lengthwise with four main streets and there was a temple always at the center.

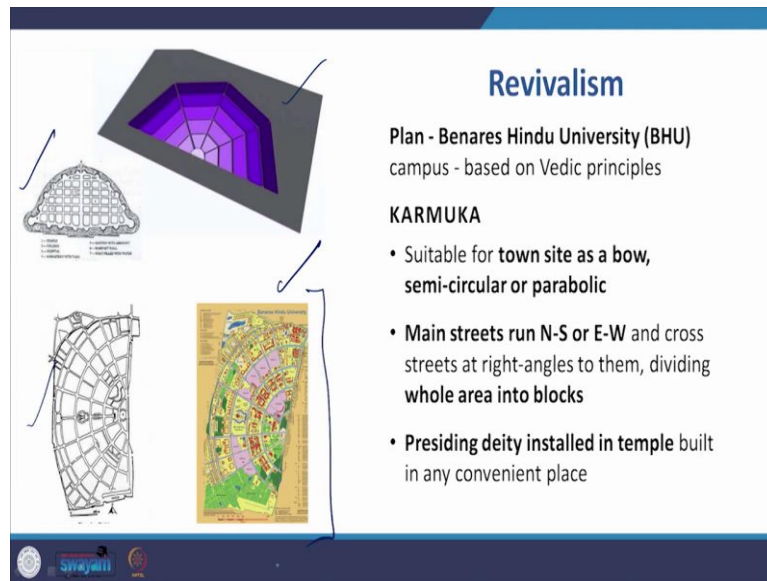
For urban design he stuck close to the canonical text again I refer back to the shilp shastras and the generic design for an Indian village was for 5000 persons having a rectangular plan with the formal entrant gate on each side, a chaturamukha design.

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So then the idea of the Indian village of tomorrow was a drawing that was done by Panchugopal Banerjee based on a proposal by Sris Chandra Chatterjee and that was predominately housing proposal having a temple at the center, a community hall, social training center and other public facilities all appropriate for a hot and humid climate.

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Revivalism

Plan - Benares Hindu University (BHU) campus - based on Vedic principles

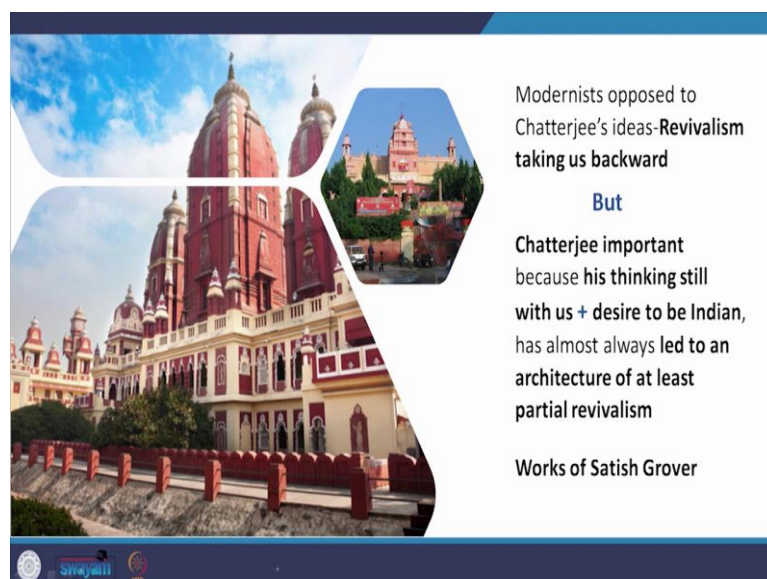
KARMUKA

- Suitable for town site as a bow, semi-circular or parabolic
- Main streets run N-S or E-W and cross streets at right-angles to them, dividing whole area into blocks
- Presiding deity installed in temple built in any convenient place

The slide features four diagrams: a purple-tinted plan of a semi-circular town, a grid plan of a town, a detailed street plan of a town, and a color-coded map of a town. The BHU logo and 'Swayam' text are visible at the bottom left.

Now to look at the revivalist idea in the actual plan of the Banaras Hindu University campus which is based on vedic principles, the karmuka it is suitable for a town site which is a town site is like a bow or semicircular or parabolic and it is also meant to be suitable for towns located next to river fronts or seashores, the main streets run north south or east west there are cross streets that run at right angles to them dividing the whole area into blocks, so this is the actual plan of BHU, this is the actual plan, the presiding deity installed in the temple which is built at any convenient place within the karmuka.

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Modernists opposed to Chatterjee's ideas-Revivalism taking us backward

But

Chatterjee important because his thinking still with us + desire to be Indian, has almost always led to an architecture of at least partial revivalism

Works of Satish Grover

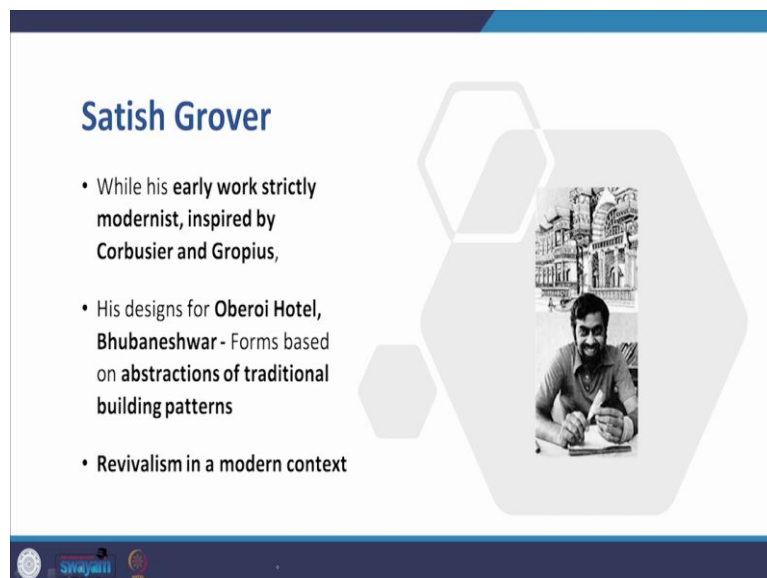
The slide features three photographs of the Banaras Hindu University campus, showing the main temple and surrounding buildings. The BHU logo and 'Swayam' text are visible at the bottom left.

The modernists were opposed to Chatterjee's ideas and of course that was bound to happen because they thought and we will again come back to this point in the next presentation when we look at the first generation of Indian architects from 1945 to 1970 they said revivalism is taking us backward but Chatterjee is important because his thinking is still with us, there is a desire to be Indian and it is always led to an architecture of at least partial revivalism if not a total image carry over from the past.

And one example we see is in the works of Satish Grover, later on we will see a much more subtle impact of traditional or vernacular architecture on modern buildings in India which would be defined truly defined by John Lang as the modern Indian architecture and that is under critical regionalism or regional modernism where the building is modern, it has vernacular principles embedded within it, it speaks to us of a modern Indian building there is no denying it, it is a modern building but an Indian building.

It is different from revivalism because revivalism clearly shows in its form that this is borrowed from traditional forms, a critical regional building is much more subtle in the way those forms are presented to us but with regard to the works of Satish Grover I would say that they fall between outright revivalism and the more subtle regional modernism.

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Satish Grover

- While his **early work** strictly **modernist**, inspired by **Corbusier and Gropius**,
- His designs for **Oberoi Hotel, Bhubaneshwar** - Forms based on **abstractions of traditional building patterns**
- **Revivalism in a modern context**

The slide features a blue header and footer. The main content is on a white background with a large, light gray hexagonal graphic element on the right. Inside this hexagon, there is a small black and white photograph of Satish Grover sitting at a desk, and above it, a small architectural drawing of a building facade. The footer contains several small logos, including one for 'Sri Jayanti'.

Modern Revivalism

Historical architecture into a modern hotel

Unlike addition of few historical features
Here, **overall form is based on historical concepts**

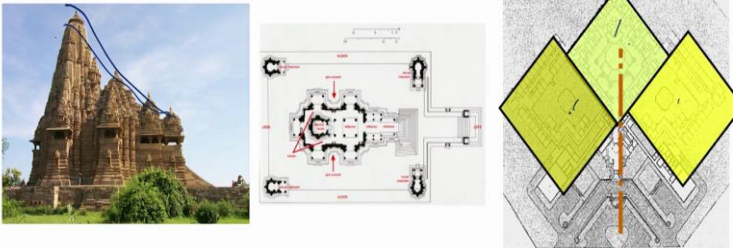
Conceived as synthesis of 2 ancient styles – Hindu and Buddhist

And that is, his early work was strictly modernist which was inspired by Corbusier and Walter Gropius but when he designed the Oberoi Hotel in Bhubaneswar where the form was based on abstractions of traditional building patterns it was revivalism in a modern context and the reason why Satish Grover could do which I believe as such an interesting job of coming up with a five star hotel with a revivalist idea or a modern revivalist design is because of the deep historical study that Satish Grover has done. You know as well as you might be aware of that there are some very relevant books on Indian history that have been written by Satish Grover.

I believe is one major book written by him and that goes to show that the deeper you study the more you can bring it out in your designs if that is also your forte, so historical architecture into a modern hotel as the Oberoi of Bhubaneswar unlike the addition of few historical features here the overall form is based on the historical concept and this is where he is a step ahead of just revivalist buildings with a modern layout but a form which is borrowed from traditional architecture.

Because here he encapsulate the concept of the hotel though modern is derived in its basics so called structure from traditional architecture, so here this building is conceived as a synthesis, an amalgamation of two ancient styles Hindu and Buddhist.

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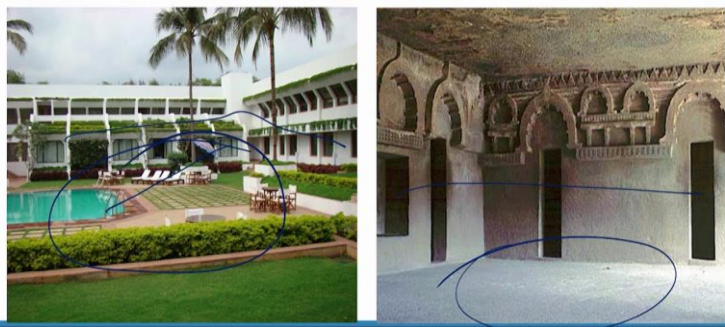
The Design

- Plan – essentially comprised of 3 squares
- Concept - gradual enlargement of architectural volumes of Hindu temples
- Intent - recreating linear movement- Hindu temples

The slide features three images at the top: a photograph of a traditional Hindu temple with a tall shikhara, a floor plan of a temple complex, and a diagram showing three overlapping squares of increasing size, representing the design concept. The text below explains the plan, concept, and intent of the design.

The design, the plan is essentially made of three squares, one, two, three but these three squares are all of different sizes and they grow, this is the smallest and I believe then this one followed by this one, this gradual upgradation of the scale of the square is similar to the gradual enlargement of the architectural volume of the traditional hindu temple from the earlier part as you move towards deeper into the temple towards the garbhagriha and you are right underneath the the main shikhara at the back of the temple, the temple form grows and enlarges. The intent is to create this or recreate this linear movement through the hindu temple within that of a modern five-star hotel

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Courtyard – reminder of Buddhist monasteries...
....where cubicles (viharas) clustered around main congregational space

The slide features two photographs at the bottom: a photograph of a modern hotel courtyard with a swimming pool and lounge chairs, and a photograph of a traditional Buddhist monastery courtyard with a central congregational space and surrounding cubicles. The text above explains the concept of the courtyard design.



And the other aspect of it is that the courtyard is a reminder of buddhist monasteries, this is the courtyard, a modern five-star hotels courtyard facing the swimming pool, this are the cubicles of the viharas within the buddhist monastery clustered around the main congregational space, here the congregational space being out in the open a swimming pool which as you know becomes the congregational space for a five-star hotel.

And the plan of the rockcut vihara that you see here these cubicles they become the rooms around the courtyard with the pool in the middle of the Oberoi hotel and this is the picture of that so this idea has been brought in here but it is a synthesis, it is only a person who has read the actual vihara design or studied it and then he studies the Oberoi hotel and then he is able to see, it is not visible to your naked eye because the form is synthesized, it is amalgamated, you are taking two different entities and merging them to create a new entity.

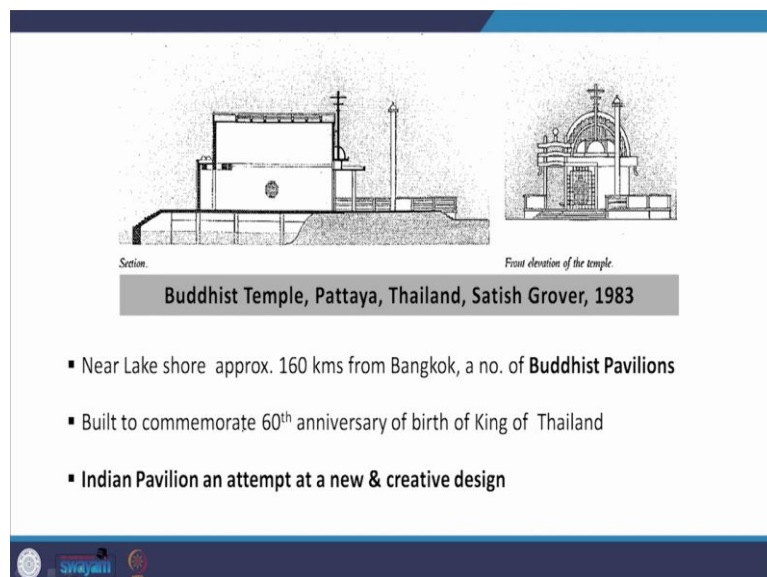
Do you remember in one of my earliest lectures I defined the word amalgamation, this is what is happening in the works of Satish Grover, so the evidence of the presence of buddhist and hindu identity in Oberoi hotel is in a way that you have to be knowledgeable or scholarly enough to be able to identify that.

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The fusion of traditional and modern is also been an important idea behind premium hotels in India particularly because those that accommodate foreign tourists in the 1970s 1980s we see that in the Ashok hotel, we see that here in the Oberoi hotel Bhubaneshwar because they were to project the image of India to the foreign tourists or the foreign clients, so there is obviously the more obvious Indian traditional elements like the columns in the interior spaces or the stone artwork in the interior spaces.

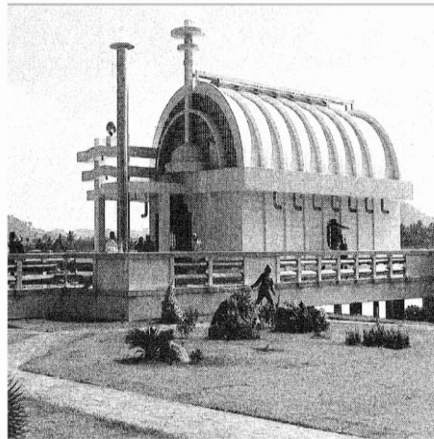
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**Buddhist Temple,
Thailand, Satish
Grover, 1983**

Pavilion - symbolic
references to Buddhist
architecture of Ashoka
period

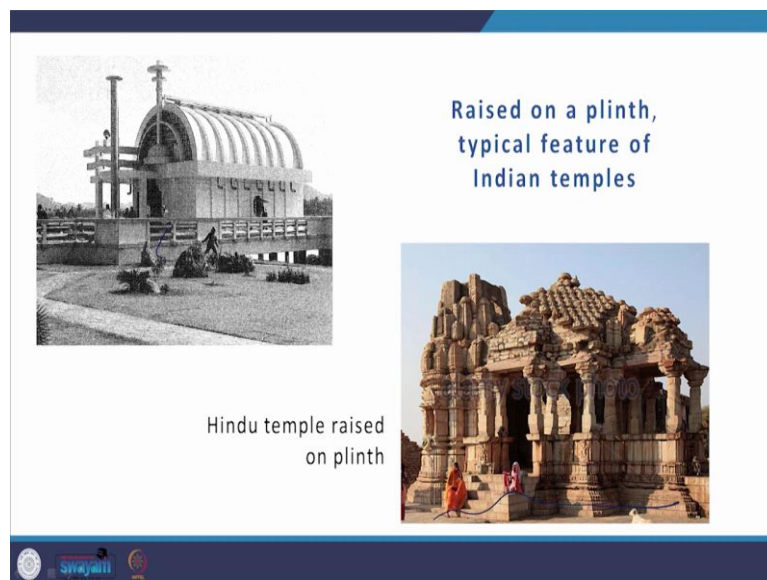
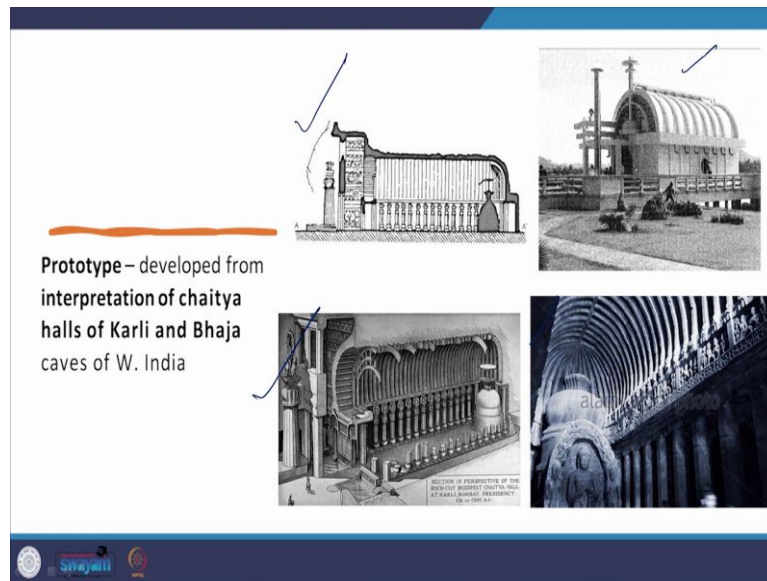
Grover refrained from
making verbatim copy
of any existing
model....



Then there is the buddhist temple in Pattaya in Thailand by Grover in 1983, it is near the Lake shore approximately 160 kilometers from Bangkok a number of buddhist pavilions were built there to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the birth of the king of Thailand and the Indian pavilion was an attempt to create to have a new and creative design, so this buddhist temple done by Satish Grover is a pavilion symbolic which is a symbolic reference to buddhist architecture of the Ashoka period.

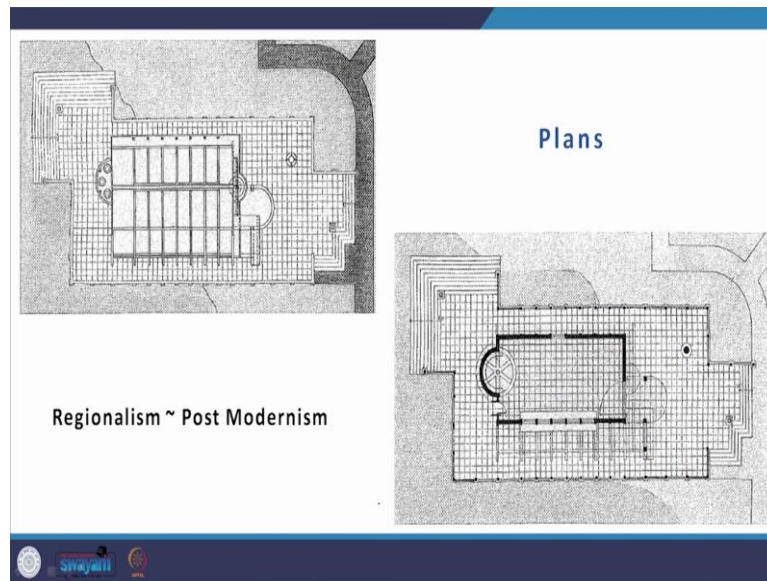
Grover refrained again from making a verbatim copy, Grover refrained again from making a verbatim copy rather than just making a buddhist temple to resemble that of for example the most famous of them all the Sanchi Stupa, he goes in and merges different identities into this one pavilion which carries with it the idea of the chaitya hall and the sanchi stupa and other features which we will look at.

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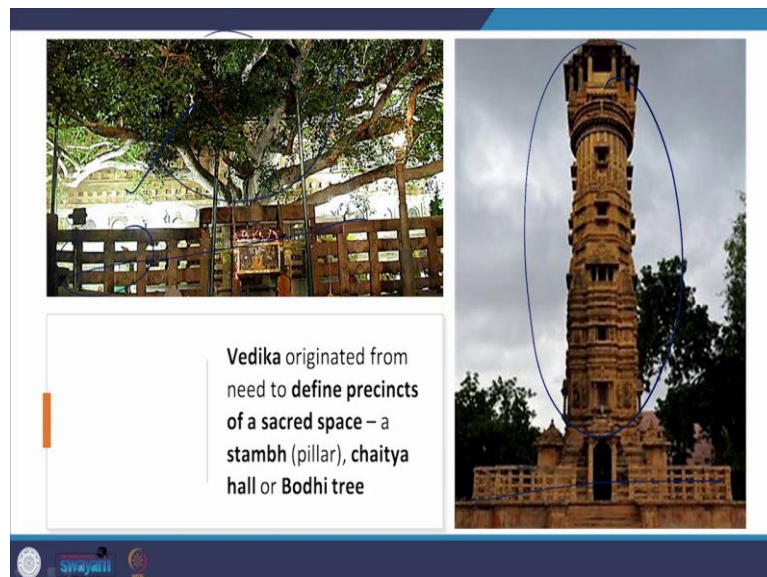
For example the prototype has been developed by interpretation of the chaitya hall of Karli and Bhaja caves of western India, so this is the picture so many of you might have reflected on this picture in your Bannister Fletcher book, this is the actual chaitya hall and this is the section of the chaitya hall and this is the section that you would find here in this buddhist pavilion by Satish Grover and then it is raised on a plinth which is a typical feature of a Indian temple or a hindu temple as you find it here and so you find it here also, hindu temple raised on a plinth.

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When you look at the plans, the plans are post modernist, remember that he is making it in the 1980s at a time when post modernism was spreading like wild fire in the West, right? The time of modernism was over, late modernism had come and was carrying on and the parallel movement was post modernism so you do find this post modernist identity in his work but it is a postmodernist Indian identity not a European postmodernist identity.

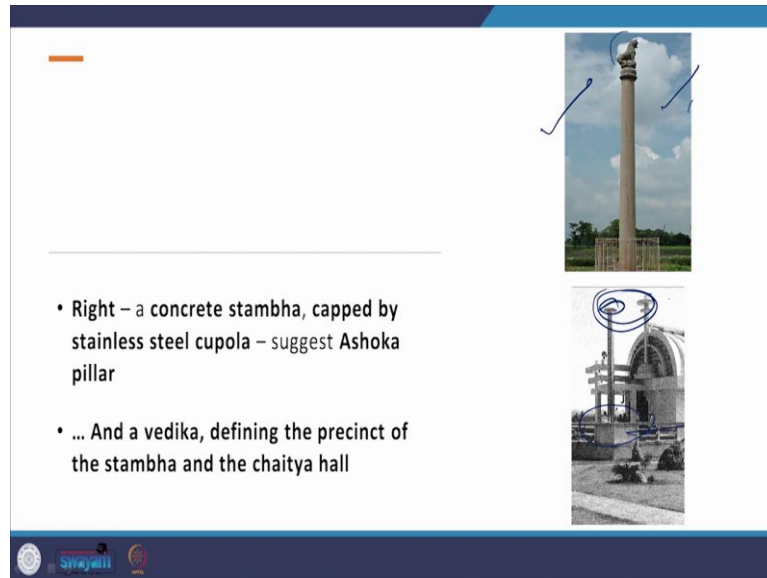
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Now there is for example the Vedika and the Stambh, the vedika was supposed to be this fence which is to define the precinct of a sacred space which can be, the sacred space can be a stambh, so the vedika is around the stambh, it can be a chaitya hall or in this case it is the

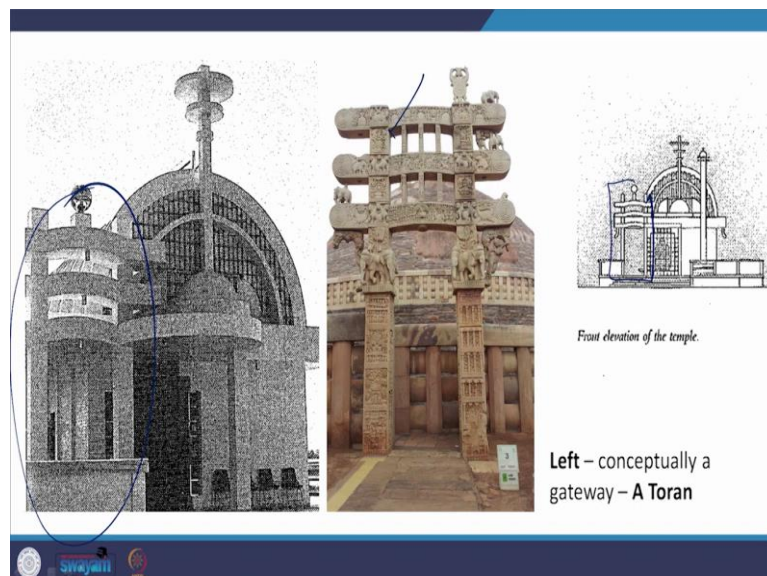
bodhi tree and the vedica is around it, so the vedica and the stambh have a role and the combination of the vedica and the stambh, the vedica and the bodhi tree, the vedica and the chaitaya hall.

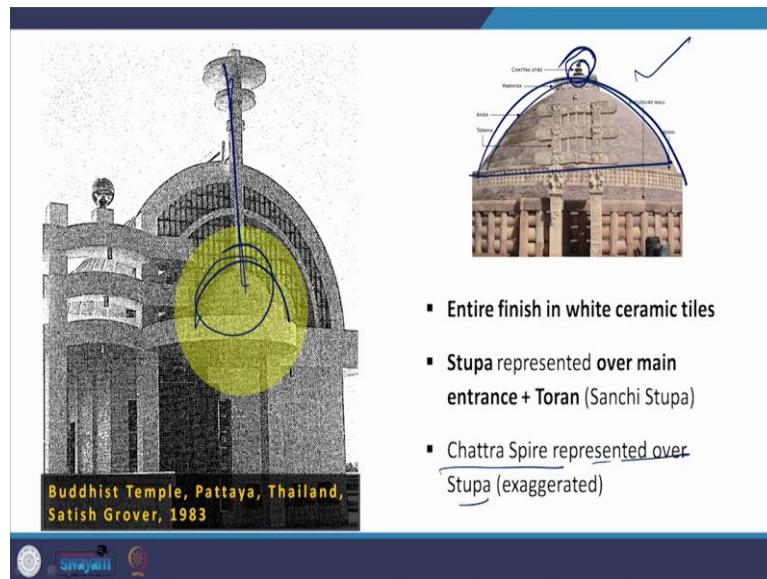
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So the right, this is a concrete stambha which is capped by a stainless steel cupola I am sorry, this is the one, this is the stambha actually but this is the stambha of Satish Grover which is capped by a stainless steel cupola and this suggests the Ashoka pillar and then around the stambha is the vedica and there is the vedica that is also defining the precinct of the not only the stambha but also the chaitya hall or the buddhist pavilion designed by Grover.

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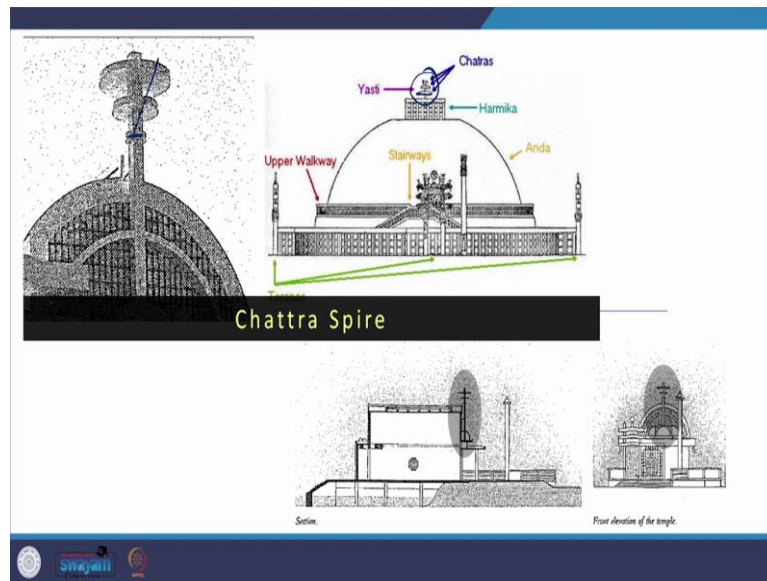




Now on the left is conceptually a gateway that is the Toran that you see here in the sanchi stupa and this is the thoran here that he has provided off axis to the buddhist pavilion, it is there and then the entire finish is in white ceramic tiles that would be a modern material the stupa, where is the stupa, it is here, the stupa is just symbolically represented, an entire built form probably the most important built form of buddhist architecture has been relegated to the background where the pavilion or the chaitya hall form takes over and the Stupa is just evidenced here right in the front of the pavilion over the main entrance and on the side of the toran and then there is the chattra spire which is represented over the stupa just as this is the chattra spire at the top of the stupa here.

But the scale is completely interchanged you have this big dome of the stupa so to speak and then you have this small chattra spire but here you have a small stupa and a big chattra spire.

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Not only that, there is one more thing the chattra spire on top of the buddhist pavilion by Grover is inverted, if you look at the chattra spire here, it goes from the bigger plate to the smaller one and here it is the smaller to the bigger one, so this is the chattra spire as you see it here in the buddhist pavilion so what do you find here, you find here a synthesis done by Grover, you find here a very studded revivalism, you find your reflection of hindu and buddhist identity in a building which requires a scholarly analysis, which requires a sense of a meditative you know study of the work to be able to put all the pieces together and see how he synthesized them, is it a good synthesis, is it a great synthesis, I will not be the judge of that, you be the judge of that.

But what I am saying is the attempt was made by him in the Oberoi hotel the attempt was made by him and you would require a scholarly study to identify that maybe in the other buildings where the form dominates over a so called Western or a modern plan, may be a lot of scholarly studies not needed, you know it, this is Indo-Saracenic, this is colonial, this is revivalist, it is very evident from there but not here.

Thank you so much for joining today, we will go to the first generation of Indian architects 1945 1970 in the next lecture, thank you so much.