Research Article

Tale of the 'Twin City': Historicizing the Urban Form of Nagpur (1803-1936)

For the stories hidden underneath our buildings[1]

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The study attempts to analyse the applicability of global colonial theories at the grassroots levels through a case study of Nagpur. Nagpur was first the capital of Gond rulers, then the Marathas, and later the administrative headquarters for the Central Provinces in the colonial period. As the second capital of Maharashtra, Nagpur also continues to assert its position in the political realm in the postcolonial period. However, despite its prominence, there is an unusual gap in colonial records about the city. This study aims to fill these gaps and historicizes the formation of urban Nagpur. Categorizing key events in history based on archival sources under the three frameworks of colonial urban development, trade, and public culture, this study consolidates a cogent historical narrative especially by redrawing archival maps between 1818 and 1930 and linking them with important events, to reimagine the trajectory of urbanization. The study attempts to critically analyse spatial components from British governance: the administrative area, the railways, the cantonment, the civil lines, and the 'buffer space' to demonstrate how the emergence of a European environment distanced itself from the medieval city as a strategic defence mechanism. This buffer zone underwent transformation; the cordon sanitaire understood as that very component of colonial separation became the centre of trade and industrialization. This introduces the third entity in the development of urban Nagpur: its immigrant elites, and its labour force that complicates this urban form of the 'twin cities'.

Colonialism, Urbanism, History, Nagpur, Mofussil

Introduction

Kevin Lynch in *A Theory of Good City Form* describes colonial cities as bipolar, with two zones lying side by side: "old and new, crowded and extensive, disorderly and orderly, poor and rich, native and foreign" (Lynch 1981: 20-22). Anthony D. King similarly states that colonial cities are not a single unified entity, but two different cities physically juxtaposed to each other but remaining in distinction architecturally and socially because of their colonial legacy (King 2007: 36). Eric Lewis Beverley in *Colonial Urbanism and South Asian Cities* contradicts these theories of duality by arguing that their portrayal as two halves—black and white—is redundant to their complex urban forms which consist of multiple centres of growth (Beverley 2011: 489). Similarly, works by Prashant Kidambi (2017), Veena T. Oldenburg (1984), and Douglas Haynes (1991) step away from the preconceived notion of segregations and duality by putting forth narratives of political and cultural interdependencies between indigenous and western agencies. While many existing studies inspect the processes of colonial urban development in Indian cities, the principal focus remains on port cities or on princely states. There is a gap in the case of smaller cities that were provincial capitals, revenue centres, trade cities, and mining

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towns, which acted as a base to generate raw materials, and where colonization served to significantly transform the urban fabric. This study attempts to analyse the applicability of global colonial theories at the grassroots levels through the example of Nagpur. Nagpur had been a capital to Gond rulers, the Marathas, and later the administrative headquarters of the Central Provinces under British rule. It is presently the second capital of Maharashtra, and asserts its position in the political realm. Its medieval history is well documented. But despite its prominence as the capital of Central Provinces, there is a gap in its colonial records. Given the importance accorded to administrative capitals within records, and the scale of architectural and construction activities in the city under the British, this insufficiency of literature seems unusual. This study aims to fulfil these gaps. Historicizing urban Nagpur, this article categorizes the key events or triggers in the history of the city under the three frameworks of colonial urban development, trade, and public culture, as evidence. By redrawing archival maps of the city between 1818 and the 1930s and linking them with important events, this article attempts to reimagine the colonial urbanization of Nagpur. Such connections will help to locate key moments that acted as catalysts to the transformation of Nagpur's urban form. The study attempts to critically analyse spatial components that emergence from British governance: development of the administration area, railways, cantonment areas, the civil lines, and the 'buffer space', to demonstrate how a European-built environment distanced itself from the medieval city as a strategic defence mechanism. The paper analyses the transformation of this buffer space—the cordon sanitaire, understood in different cities as that very component of colonial separation, that developed as the centre of trade and industrialization. These observations bring forth the third entity that is important in the development of urban form: immigrant elites and labour forces that demonstrated the complexities of the urban form, that steps away from the notion of a 'twin city', while at the same time, representing fractures within the city's urban boundaries.
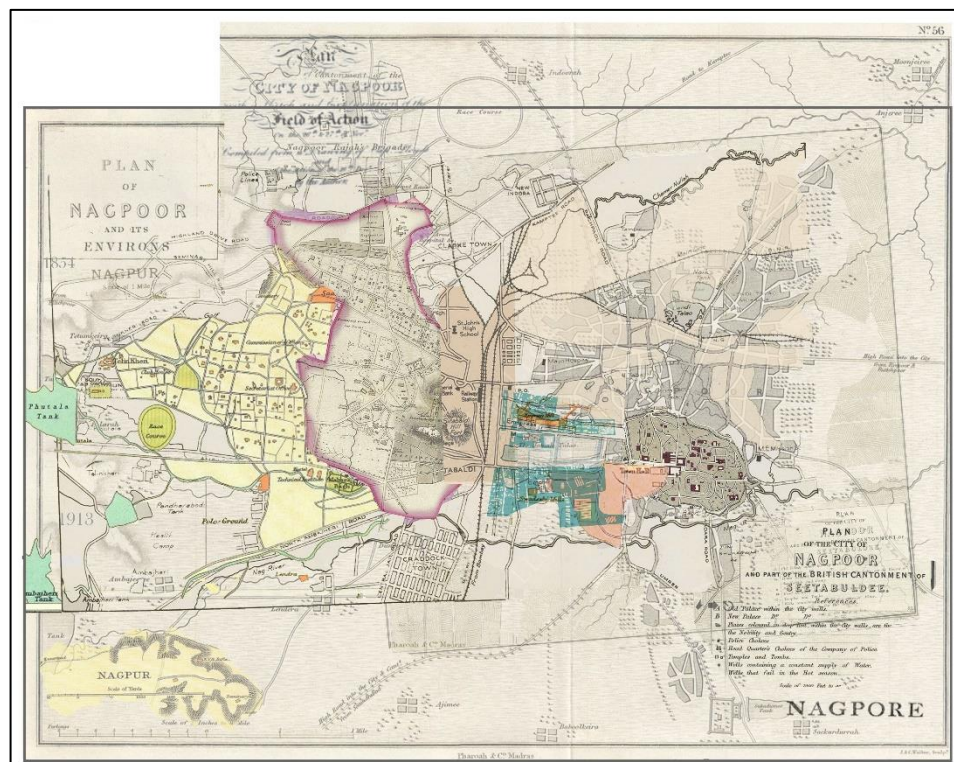
Colonial Beginnings

Image 3.1: Layers of the city; a Palimpsest of Nagpur (source: author).

This segment delves into Nagpur's colonial urban genesis, examining archives and techniques of cartography to reveal pivotal events shaping settlement between 1800 and 1854. The study explores the settlement's growth, emphasizing on segregation components employed by the colonizers to dissociate from the medieval city within Nagpur's evolving urban landscape.
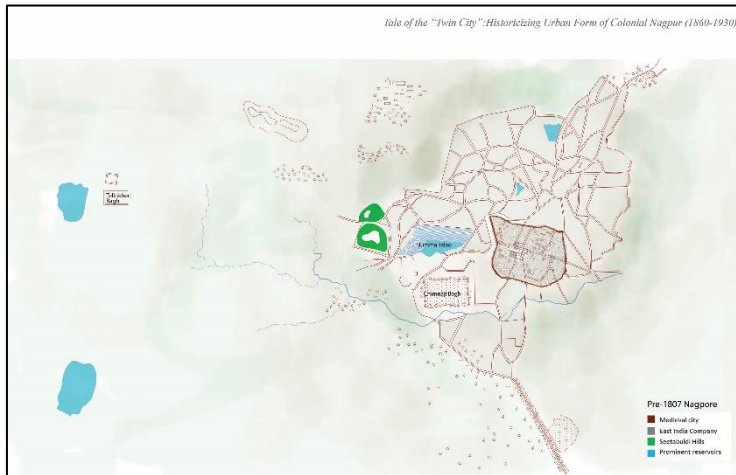
A Strategic Defence Mechanism

Image 3.2: Precolonial Reconstruction of Nagpur (source: author).

The tale began when H.T. Colebrook, an orientalist envoy, ventured into Nagpur in 1799. Welcomed warmly at the royal palace, Colebrook's initial experience was one of "embarrassing warmth" and civility. So much so that he stayed at the summer house of royalty for a period of two years. However, when his attempts to forge an alliance with Raghoji II failed in 1801, the harmony shattered, leaving him feeling more tricked than disappointed. The repercussions of this diplomatic failure could be observed in the Battle of Assaye in 1803, where the Bhosle rulers joined forces of the Scindias of Gwalior against the East India Company. Earlier during the Madras occupation, the British cavalry had to seek Bhosle ruler's permission to cross their territory, emphasizing Nagpur's strategic location for the Company and its intent to occupy the region. The abundance of geological resources in the region, with rich coal and manganese deposits, further solidified its significance. Arthur Wellesley was hence determined to occupy Nagpur. The 1803 loss compelled Raghoji II to concede Cuttack and Balasore in Orissa, effectively linking the regions between Calcutta and Madras for the Company and paving the way for British supremacy in India. For Nagpur it acted as the first jolt of gradual takeover through the treaty of Devgarh. Raghoji II thus surrendered not only his territories in Orrisa but also the independence of Nagpur, marking a loss of sovereignty to an alliance with the East India Company with the Devgarh treaty mandating a permanent British envoy in the royal court. For the next 15 years, Mountstuart Elphinstone (1804-1807) and Richard Jenkins (1807-1828) served as British envoys to Nagpur, stationed in the Bhosle court, pressing for the ruler's agreement to the subsidiary alliance.[2] But unlike Colebrook's residence at the royal palace in 1799, Elphinstone constructed 'Falconer's Hall,' and later Jenkins established a more permanent residency on the western slopes of the Sitabuldi Hills (Cotton 1896: 51).[3] This

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[2] Under the subsidiary alliance, Indian rulers had to pay a subsidy for gaining protection under the British and this would allow British administrators certain control over their foreign affairs in return. They maintained a thorough record of events in the city during their tenure such as the *Report of the Territories of the Rajah of Nagpore* (Jenkins 1827, Sinha 1950)*,* and the *Memoir of Mountstuart Elphinstone* (Colebrooke, Cowell, & Colebrooke 1873). *The Escheat of Nagpore* (India 1920) records the death of last Bhosle ruler and consequent discussions amongst stakeholders of the East India Company for the annexation of Nagpur.
[3] Sitabuldi/ Seetabuldee: Present day Sitabuldi area in Nagpur which was spelt and pronounced as Seetabuldee in the colonial period. The paper limits the use of the term 'Seetabuldee' in reference to the 'Battle of Seetabuldee', as referred in the archives.

residency placed beyond the hills becomes the first evidence and an urban demarcation of the strained relations between the two entities and the beginning of a twin city.
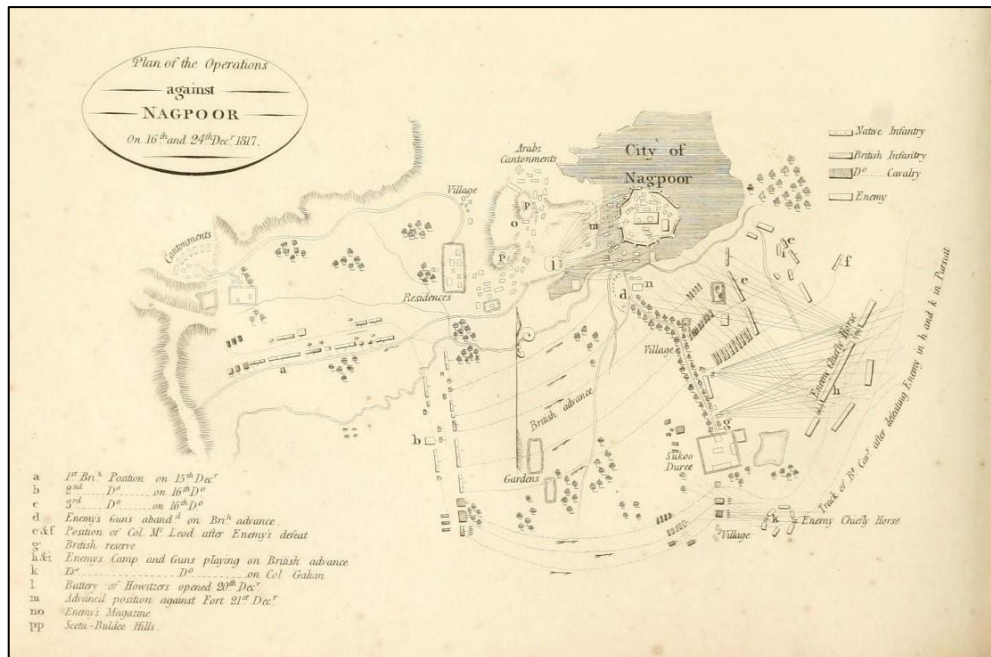

Image 3.3: Princep's Plan of Operations Nagpoor, 1817 (source: Prinsep 1820: 231 / public domain).

In 1816, following Raghoji II's demise, Appasaheb assumed the Nagpur throne. He further entered into the subsidiary alliance with the Company that had been carefully avoided by Raghoji II. This alliance brought into the city an army of British, stationed around the Sitabuldi Hills, constructing their military cantonment, and thus establishing an informal British power over the city. Some previous pacts between the two parties had mandated cutting Nagpur's ties with the Maratha counterparts in Pune and Satara, and a breach in one such treaty initiated the Third Anglo-Maratha War: the Battle of Seetabuldee in 1818. Appasaheb, post this defeat, lost his *musnud* (hereditary nobility position), leading his exile and Raghojee III's ascent to the throne under new treaty declaring Nagpur a princely state (Jenkins 1827: 317).[4] The treaty vested symbolic rule in Raghoji III, with actual control held by Resident Richard Jenkins. It mandated the Resident's administration of the town for six years, with a provision for the Bhosle ruler to assume full powers and territorial control after a certain age (Jenkins 1827: 338) (Jenkins 1827: 338). Raghoji III's heirless demise in 1853 provided the British an opportunity to seize control over the rich geological landscape of Nagpur.[5] This is well documented by Jenkins in correspondence to the Viceroy, Dalhousie:

> I hear from India that the Raja of Nagpur is dead… He has left no son heir and made no adoption, and it would give us if Rs 400,000 a year. I think this [is] too good 'a plum' not to pick out of the Christmas pie. Lord Dalhousie (Andhare & Sontakke 2015: 38).

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[4] *Masnud / masnad* Arabic term for Royal Throne

[5] Extensive Archaeological Surveys were carried out in Nagpur and its surroundings by Stephen Hislop. These surveys were later used to determine potential regions where further excavations and mining of raw materials could be carried out. By the mid-1800s, coal and manganese mines were initiated in Chanda, Umred, Kamptee and Balaghat. In 1871 when the Nagpur Central Museum was established, the surveys were exhibited and paved way for the establishment of Tata Steel Plant in Jamshepur after Dorabji Tata'a visit to the place.

The events leading to Raghoji III's death were discussed between various governors, stakeholders of the Company, and the Resident. A decision was made to forbid the queen from adopting an heir for the throne, citing the lost battle of 1818 and declaring that "the administration of Nagpur for last 40 years was already a gift" (India 1920: 40).[6] The Doctrine of Lapse was announced, and the Company established direct rule over the city. The royal family was discredited from all their possessions. Additionally, it was decided, to pay off all the debt incurred till now by the Company from the Nagpur treasury. This was a ruthless transition of power and caused extreme distress among the rulers and the public. Their lands were snatched, the livestock: horses, camels, and elephants sent to butchers; the royal treasury was spent on administrative expenses, the furniture was removed, the valuables were auctioned in Calcutta, and their palace was burnt (Majumdar 1957: 25).[7] The marks of these distressing events can be seen reflected on both social and urban landscape of the city.

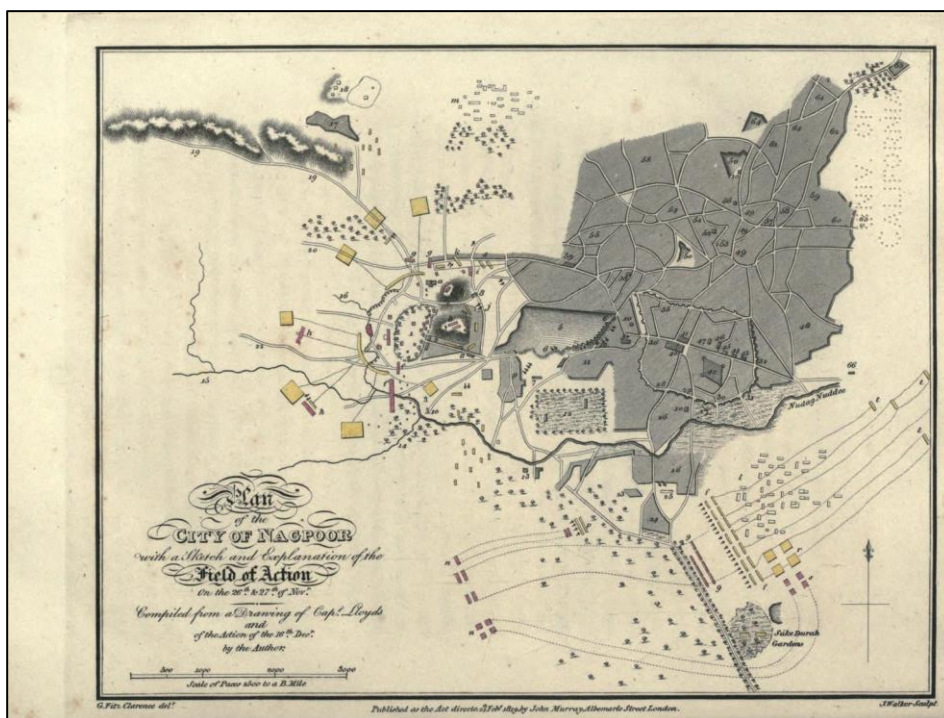### *Tracing the Colonial Beginnings: Cartographic Enquiries*

Image 3.4: Fitzclarence's Plan of Nagpoor with Sketch and Explanation (source: Fitzclarence 1819: 120 / public domain).

Some of the first maps of Nagpur retrieved through archives are plans for the 1817-1818 Battle of Seetabuldee to conquer 'Nagpoor' drawn by the British military officers. According to one of these maps it was around 1816, when the East India Company first established its foothold on the outskirts of Nagpur (image 3.3). It map demarcates the city limits and the surrounding regions, where one can find indigenous settlements, reservoirs, gardens, and battlefields of the Bhosle kingdom. This map by Lt. Colonel H.S. Scott and H.T. Princep ascertains the original limits of the city and the initial positions of the Company military. The almost deserted surroundings of the city became the military bases and site of the battle.

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[6] Nagpore / Nagpoor: Present day Nagpur as spelt and pronounced during the colonial period.

[7] "Thus Dalhousie finally extinguished three of the great historic royal Maratha families…And I have heard it said that these seizures, these sales, created a worse impression not only in Berar, but in the surrounding provinces, than the seizure of the kingdom itself. It is no wonder that Nana Sahib and the Rani of Jhansi were in open rebellion, and both Nagpur and Satara showed strong symptoms of it during the dark days of the Mutiny" (Majumdar 1957: 25).
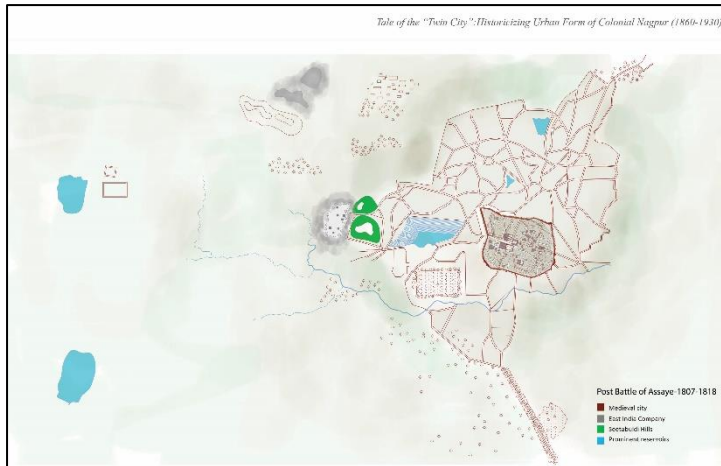
Image 3.5: Emergence of the Residency Compound between 1807 and 1818 (source: author).

Another map, drawn by Captain Lloyds during the 1818 battle and compiled by G.A. Frederick Fitzclarence, details the city's main quarters and the residences of the royal and noble gentry (image 3.4).[8] This map highlights the residency compound at the foot of the Sitabuldi hills, west of the medieval city (image 3.5). Resident Jenkins deliberately chose to position his residency near the hills for strategic reasons. The hills played a crucial role in the defence of British troops by offering a strategic vantage point despite their gentle topography.

During the 1818 battle, this residency, served as a shelter for the families of European military fighting against Bhosle cavalry positioned across the hills. The natural defence provided by these hills ultimately motivated the growth of the cantonment westwards (Fitzclarence 1819: 110). Post the 1818 battle, capitalizing on its natural defence advantages, Sitabuldi Fort was constructed over the two hillocks. Towards its east lied the Jumma Talao, an intermediary

space, a tank defending the Bhosle fort city and simultaneously acting as a cordon sanitaire of the British.[9] Post 1818, indigenous settlements had naturally retreated towards the medieval city.[10] Many were later removed by the Company to create a 'greenbelt,' akin to New Delhi, serving as a clearance area for gunfire and rapid troop mobilization following the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny. Later, between 1818 and 1854, the residency compound evolved into a garrison west of the Sitabuldi Hills (image 3.6).
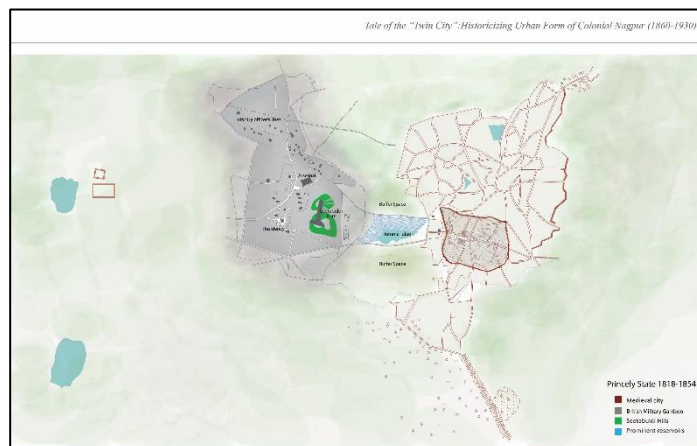

Image 3.6: Expansion of the British Military Cantonment between 1818 and 1854 (source: author).

Despite the city's complete annexation, it remained a princely state, with a persistent distrust between the two entities. The 1854 map reveals the residency compound's development into a military cantonment, encompassing functions like a church, infantry, arsenal, treasury,

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[8] Fitzclarence also provides a detailed description of the Battle of Seetabuldee and its surroundings: "From the top of this eminence the view was most extensive and almost panoramic. A magnificent tank, called the Jumma Talao, about three quarters of a mile long, extends from the suburb of the city, which is nearly due east of the residency, to the Arab village at the foot of the Seta Buldy hills. To the south-east, and round to the south of the residency, is the field of battle of the 16th December, and the plains on which the columns of attack were formed. To the west the whole of the country was whitened with tents, with the residency bungalows, and huts of the bazar at the foot of the hill directly beneath..." (Fitzclarence G.A. 1819: 104)

[9] Cordon Sanitaire: "An empty zone insulating the foreign from native quarters with a minimum separation of 2 kms in colonial cities", it was justified as a hygienic measure to safe keep its people from the diseases arising from the native town (Kostof 1992: 112)

[10] Population of city between 1820 and 1821 was 1,11,231 (Jenkins 1827: 20)

residential lines, parade ground, magazines, encamping grounds, and cemeteries (Pharoah 1854). However in these 36 years, the only British establishments developed in the medieval city, that too at its fringes were a Mission school and a hospital on its outskirts, evident of the socio-political rift between the British and the local communities.[11]

Railways: An Escape Route

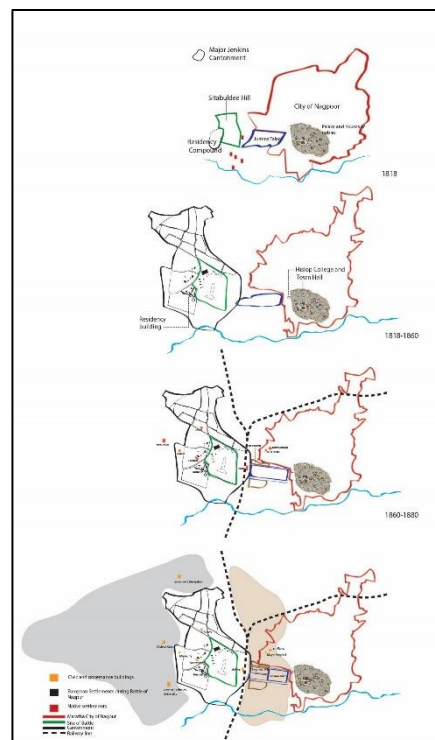Image 3.7: Railways as a Means of Separation and Defence Mechanism (source: author).

The Nagpur railway station commenced operations in 1867, and its construction on the east of the fort physically divided the city into two sections. This railway was part of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway project (GIP), connecting cities like Bombay (1864), Delhi (1864), Lucknow (1862), Nagpore (1867), and Madras (1873). Across these cities, railway stations were strategically

positioned as extensions of the cantonment, following a model exemplified by Veena Oldenburg in *The Making of Colonial Lucknow* (1984). The design aimed to serve as defence schemes post the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny, facilitating the rapid evacuation of Christians in case of another uprising. As George Wheeler notes, all stations were envisioned to be turreted and fortified in case of mutiny (Wheeler 1876: 217). Hence, it is speculated that the same logic determined the location of railway station adjacent to the cantonment, civil station, and Residency in Nagpur (see image 3.7).

Image 3.8: The Urban Growth of Nagpur from 1803 to 1854 (source: author).

> The Maratha country also was not altogether free from troubles. There was a plot at Nagpur, and it was reported that the First Cavalry would rise on June 13, 1857, and being joined by citizens, murder the Christians. But the major part of the sepoys remained loyal, and the cavalry was disarmed (Majumdar 1957: 64).

In Nagpur, the railway line physically severed connections between the medieval city and the colonial station through an elevated construction. The only links were an

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[11] The mission school and mission hospital was established by Stephen Hislop, a Christian missionary and an archaeologist. Christian missionary activities were predominant in the city, with an aim to 'educate' and 'civilize' the 'native' population, with contributions of education, famine relief, plague relief, and healthcare systems. Several churches, schools, and hospitals that still function in the city find their way back to an initiative that was started by missionaries (Wilson 1864: 21).

underpass and a bridge, minimizing the risk of attack and obstructing visual connectivity. This railway design followed the prototype strategy connecting multiple military cantonments for quick provision of military equipment and swift evacuation of the Europeans. It acted as a segregating element between the medieval city and the cantonment, alongside the buffer spaces. The lone residency that came about in 1803 had evolved into a structured garrison by 1854, housing a strong military force on the fringes of Bhosle territory while maintaining absolute distance from the indigenous city. There were multiple layers to this distancing- the green belt, the railway line, the fort, and the cantonment. This cantonment became a symbol of the military grandeur of the East India Company in Nagpur, intimidating the local populations perpetually and instigating fear of the colonizers. Thus from its very beginning, Nagpur's colonial urban development was conceptualized as a deliberately segregated defence mechanism against rebellion (image 3.8).

Establishing the Colonial Station and an Elite European Environment

This section examines the planning interventions of Nagpur's colonial station, emphasizing on its deviation in form and architecture from the medieval city. It analyses the developments from 1860-1930, a period crucial for the city's growth as the provincial capital. It scrutinizes European perceptions of the indigenous city by questioning the narratives of 'development'. In an effort to decolonize the urban form, the section also highlights erasures resulting from these 'developments'.

> Aimee gave her first impressions of Nagpur as something of a garden city…fine public buildings and an inviting looking public garden, with beautifully kept lawns and spreading trees, roomy bungalows each standing in its own grounds…they passed a dusty golf course…a palatial building on the hill was pointed out as government house. They drove along the ridge on the outskirts of the cantonment and saw the distant haze of smoke over the big native city pierced now and then by a tall factory chimney. They drove through another public garden, all lawns, and flowers…(Crouch 2015: 126)
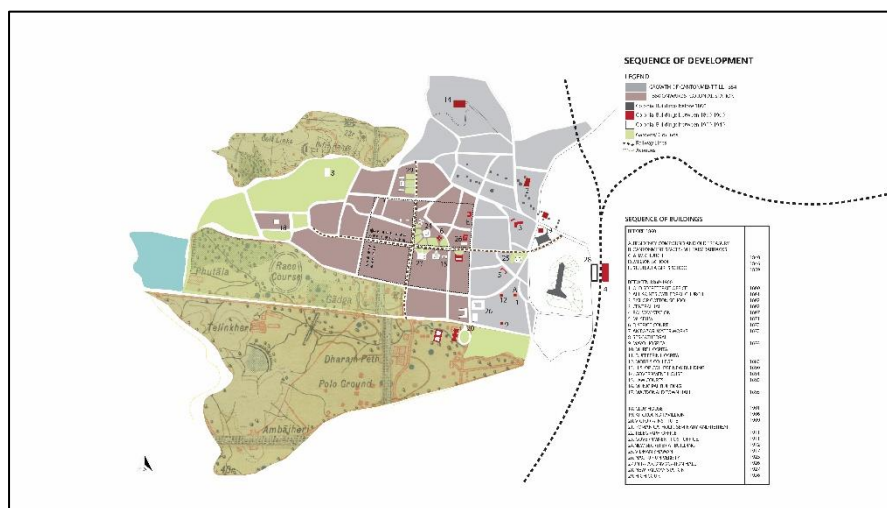

Image 3.9: The Sequence of Development of the Colonial Station (source: author).

In 1861, Nagpur became the capital of Central Provinces and Berar, marking the initiation of efforts to elevate the city to appear its Divisional Headquarters and Provincial Capital status. The newly formed government of Central Provinces aimed to emulate their contemporaries in Oudh and Punjab which largely influenced policies for rest of the country (Metcalf 1964: 37-65). To transform Nagpur from a garrison into a prestigious seat of power, the civil station project was initiated. In the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s, prominent buildings were erected, including a Roman Catholic cathedral designed by Major Richard Sankey (and later extended by George Friedrich Bodley) and key structures like the

Central Jail (1862), English Church, Central Museum (1871), District Court (1873), and Mayo Hospital (1874), constructed by Henry Erwing, a PWD officer. However, until the 1880s, there was no concentrated effort to establish a cohesive and formally planned city (image 3.9). The mentioned structures were primarily situated within the garrison, with only a few extending beyond its boundaries, such as Morris College, the jail, hospital, and the court. The lack of a city planning vision is evident in the inconsistent architectural styles and the placement of buildings scattered across the new developing civil station.[12] Hence, in 1884, a dedicated civil-station sub-committee was formed to create a planned intervention for the station. This committee was distinct from the Municipal council responsible for public works and medieval city improvement. The 1908 Central Provinces Gazette notes the transformation of approximately 15 short lanes into tree-lined avenues during this period, aimed at introducing a European aesthetic to street design in the station.

These avenues were then expanded in an irregular grid-iron plan, accompanied by large, landscaped compounds filled with flowering trees, transforming the station's appearance (image 3.10). Such grids, common in newly planned stations, expedited land allocation and resource distribution while facilitating user
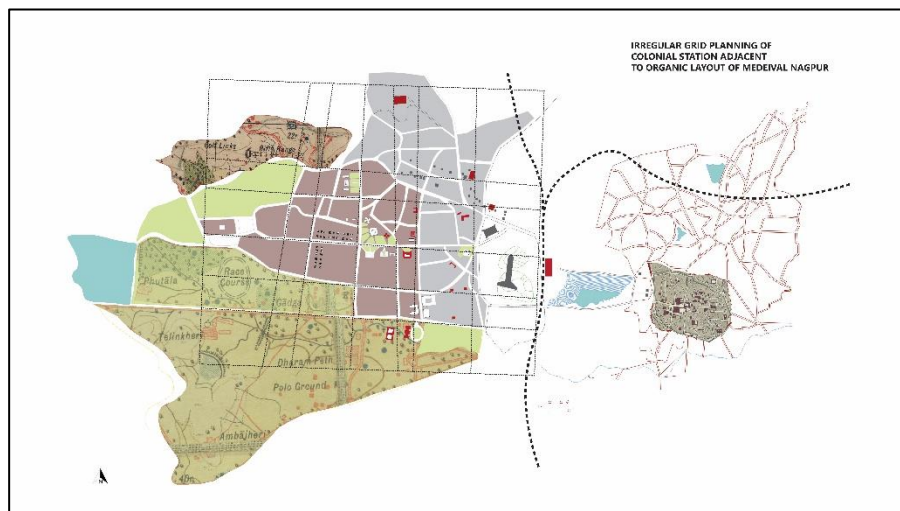

Image 3.10: Irregular Grid Form of the Colonial Station (source: author).

accessibility (Lynch 1981: 82). Beyond green spaces, the desire for familiar surroundings led to the creation of new public gardens like the Seminary Hills. Additionally, existing historical gardens like Ambazari, Maharajbaug, and Telinkheri, originally for Bhosle ruler's summer refreshment, were enhanced for the European community's use. Between 1880 and the 1900s, the city was designed along western ideals of a colonial garden city, featuring European-style structures, tree-lined avenues, gardens, and bungalows—a setting tailored to the cultural preferences of European elites (King 2007: 182).

It is believed that a control over urban lands results in the gain of the most tremendous power. And when the principal owner of the land is the state itself, it can use this power according to its fancies (Kostof 1992: 52). This control of land was predominantly evident in colonial cities across provinces in India. In 1869, Nazul land policy was initiated in Nagpur which allowed the government to acquire non-agricultural lands from the annexed rulers cost-free. The British Government allotted this land on 30 years lease which served various purposes including accommodating influential persons and for commercial, institutional and civic works. This policy facilitated the British government's acquisition of extensive land, enabling the expansion of the cantonment into a European station, and laying the foundation for the current Civil Lines. The Civil Lines and the colonial-era structures as we see today are largely a product attained

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[12] Russell mentions that as a whole, the government buildings in Nagpur were miserable and inconveniently scattered, causing inconveniences to the users (Russell 1908: 260).

through this Nazul policy.[13] An analysis of the 1880-1920 development reveals five primary zones: administration, residential, recreational, institutional, and power centres. While the power centres were strategically positioned in the north, administrative blocks in the centre were flanked by residential and institutional counterparts for convenient access. Recreational spaces and lakes were allocated on the station's outskirts, adjacent to residential bungalows, providing panoramic views and individual garden compounds (image 3.11).
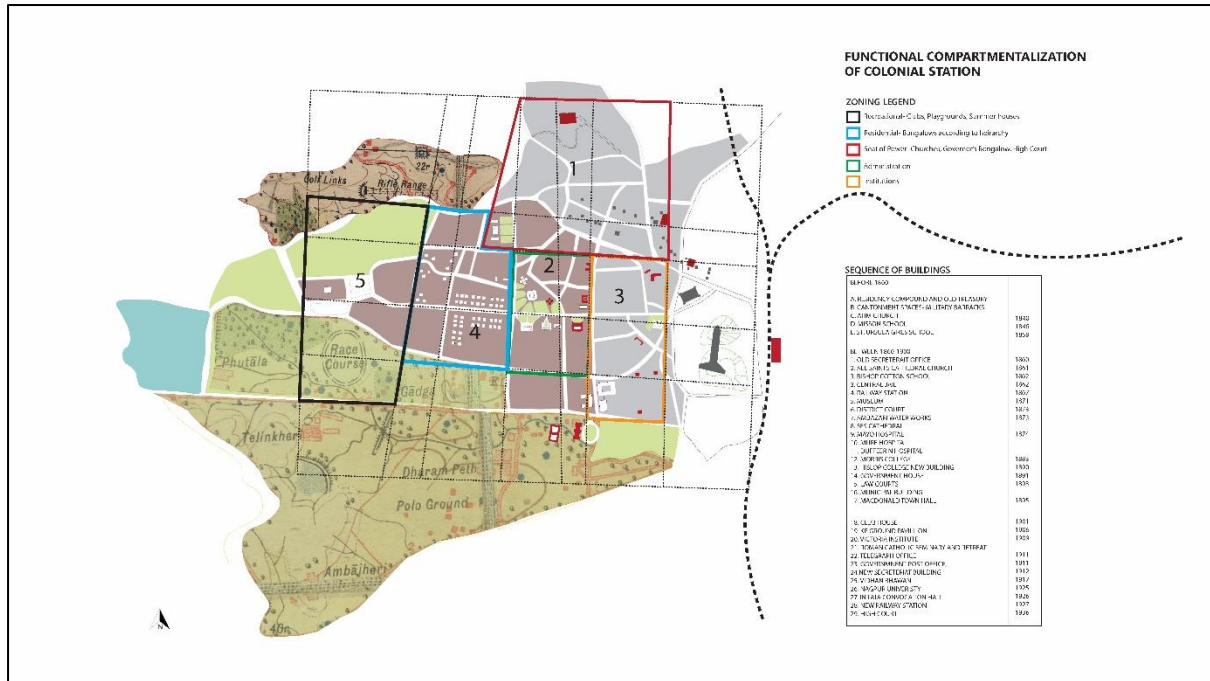

Image 3.11: Compartmentalisation of Functions in Colonial Station (source: author).

In 1891, the Governor's house was erected on a steep isolated hill in the northern part of the station surrounded by churches, cathedrals, and European cemeteries. The civic buildings occupied the centre, with residential and recreational spaces extending westward. The residences of European officers were organized hierarchically, aligning with their social class structures. Larger bungalows for senior officers were flanked by gardens and lakes, while junior officers' residences clustered near civic buildings. Sports facilities like golf courses, cricket and football fields, polo grounds, and racecourses adorned the flat plains, hosting an exclusive 'European only' club (1901) and the Victoria Technical Institute (1906). These developments reflected an organized approach to European city planning, consolidating the preliminary efforts. Concurrently, plans for water supply to the newly established settlement were underway, culminating in the 1873 Ambajari waterworks.[14]

Although the planned strategy for the civil station began early in the 1880s, it was the period between 1900 and 1920 that witnessed a pivotal transformation in Nagpur's urban landscape. Lands were procured for building 'several enlarged new courts and offices' (Russell 1908).

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[13] Under this policy, in 1869, the propriety rights remained with the government while the user would pay a rent of between Rs 7-10 (Government 1917: 63). Even today the properties these properties are held with the State Governments, and the owners have to renew the leases.

[14] Alexander Binnie, a British military and civil engineer proposed a scheme based on the gravitational supply of water, to transfer water from the Ambazari reservoir to the civil station in 1873. Prisoners from the Central Jail were employed as construction workers for this mega water supply project (Broich 2007). This exemplifies that while moderators and the authoritative decisions remained with British military engineers, it was the labour classes that were the builders of these massive projects in the city.

Departing from conventional construction practices, the city embraced a new era in congruence with its imagined and planned purpose with the involvement of consultant architects for the Government of India like James Ransome, John Begg, Henry Alexander Nesbitt Medd, and HV Lanchester. The cornerstone of this evolution was laid in 1906 with the commissioning of a new Secretariat building, designed by James Ransome.[15] This marked the initiation of a significant phase of experimentation with stone construction, employing locally sourced black basalt stone and yellow sandstone, a shift from the previous brick and lime mortar construction, undertaken for administrative buildings.[16] The resulting two-storied structure, characterized by its innovative octagonal plan, enclosed courtyard, and integration of vernacular elements for climatic adaptation, served as a pioneering example. Adorned with Italian marble flooring, the building, complete with advanced amenities like electricity and telephonic networks, set the stage for a series of subsequent grand architectural endeavours. This transformative journey was a deliberate effort to reflect the imagination of a provincial capital. In 1911, replicating the Secretariat prototype and continuing the experiments with local materials, John Begg constructed the Post office and the Telegraph office. This Post office was brick and sandstone composite structure, adorned by an imposing sandstone clock tower and a white marble statue of Victoria.[17]
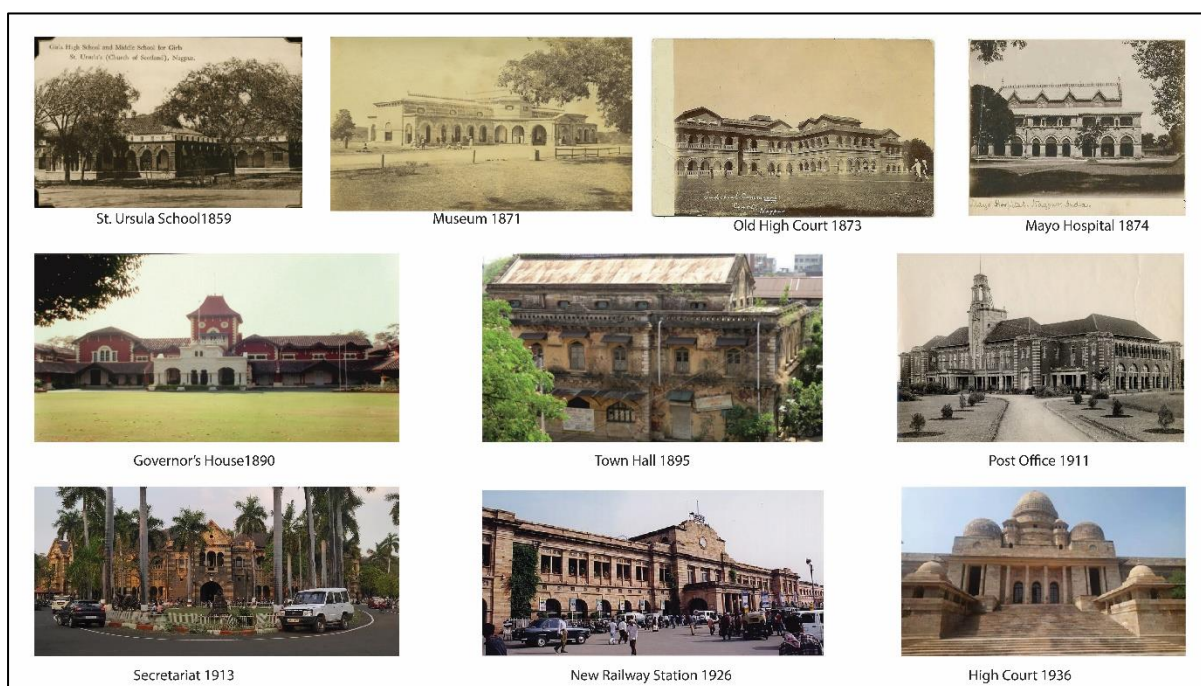

Image 3.12: Transformation of Architectural Forms in Public Buildings, 1859-1936 (compiled and sourced by author).

By 1917, a similar blend of brick and sandstone characterized the Vidhan Bhavan, a two-storied building with a pitched roof, typical of colonial structures in the city. With every building the architects were working with increasing scales and grandeur of these structures. The

[15] The construction began in 1905 and was carried out by the Public Works Department. The officers in charge were L. Oldham, R.E., the executive engineer, and J. Desmond, assistant engineer, with the mouldings designed by L. Jennings. An archival newspaper article describes the architectural characteristics of this structure as "renaissance adapted to the climatic conditions." The exterior facades are entirely in stone masonry with banded blocks of basalt and yellow sandstone laid alternatively. The ornamentation such as cornices, pillars, mouldings, and entablatures have been carved out of yellow sandstone, and depict British emblems (Anonymous 1911).
[16] Prior to the Secretariat building, a small edifice for a Criminal Court was constructed 1893, most likely to experiment with the fusion of the black basalt and sandstone.
[17] John Begg was a Consultant Architect for Bombay Presidency in 1901 (Chrimes 2015: 130).

pinnacle of this stone construction was realized in 1926 with the new Railway station, entirely crafted from sandstone. Part of a broader trend across the empire from 1925 to 1930, this railway station marked the zenith of Nagpur's architectural transformation and paved way for the next grand edifice- the High Court. In 1917, Henry Vaughan Lanchester was commissioned with the town planning of the city.[18] Lanchester along with Patrick Geddes submitted a report on his proposed improvements, and through his intervention between 1925 and 1930, two main avenues were laid in the city. One connected the civil station to the medieval city called the Central Avenue (discussed in the next section) and the other was the East High court road which connected the Government house, the Secretariat, and the Central Post Office, all the important administrative buildings.

Image 3.13: The Urban Morphology of the 'Twin-City' (source: author).

Today, a leisurely walk along this avenue unveils colonial civic structures on one side and officers' bungalows on the other, each ensconced within expansive garden compounds. The avenue's unassuming monumentality provides a living testament to Nagpur's bygone era as a colonial provincial capital. Its pinnacle is marked by the 1936 High Court, an eloquent sandstone structure titled 'Poetry in Stone', by the viceroy. The structure echoes the architectural essence of New Delhi's Viceroy House, demonstrating its architect Henry Medd's previous experiences from the Imperial capital.[19] With an intersectional courthouse in 1860 in brick, a Gothic cathedral, a Victorian-Gothic-revival Secretariat, a modern railway station, and a Delhi order of the Nagpur High court in 1936, one can walk through the city comprehending different decades of colonial rule (image 3.12). It was not just a capital that was erected in one go, but a suture of progress made from one decade to another. It emerged as the governance hub for the Central Provinces, a constructed administrative capital designed to align with its intended purpose.[20] The construction of these buildings in a small-scale capital also represents that at least by the

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[18] Henry Lanchester was engaged to visit as consulting expert to provide advice for the site of the capital in New Delhi in 1912. With Patrick Geddes, he also prepared improvement reports for Baroda, Indore, Balrampur, Jubbulpore, Lucknow, Lahore etc. (Tyrwhitt 1947).

[19] Henry Alexander Nesbitt Medd had worked earlier for Edwin Lutyens on the design of the Viceroy's House in New Delhi, and with Herbert Baker on the Council House and Secretariat Buildings. He was also the architect of two churches: the Cathedral Church of Redemption and the Sacred Heart Cathedral in New Delhi. As consulting architect to the Government of India he was commissioned to design the Nagpur High Court in 1930s. After this, he was appointed Chief Architect for the Government of India between 1939 and 1947 (Morris 2005: 176, RIBA 1940).

[20] According to the classification of colonial cities made by Anthony D. King, cities can be divided into individual settlement area, district town, provincial capital, cantonments, major ports and colonial capitals (King 2007: 41).

1930s, the Imperial government did not slightly believe that India was to become independent in another decade.

The colonial urban development of Nagpur diverged significantly from the existing indigenous cityscape. By 1901, the civil station, with only 17,000 residents, stood in sharp contrast to the medieval city, which supported a population of 127,000. This data highlights the intentional planning of affluent zones designated for European residents on annexed land. An alien environment had evolved right next to the indigenous community, complete with elite suburbs, monumental buildings, and garden compounds. This was unlike anything in the medieval city, with its tangled and interwoven alleys. Apart from representing the notional capital, the colonial station served various other purposes. First, it segregated European members from the indigenous community, and reduced contacts between the colonial and colonized masses. Second, it acted as a symbol and instrument of control, both outside and inside its boundaries through its hierarchical subdivisions. Third, it helped the members of the community maintain their European self-identity and dwell in familiar European social environments. The station provided a culturally recognizable space, providing the members with emotional security in an uncertain, unfamiliar land (King 2007: 50). The seat of power thus transited from the Bhosle fort to this elite garden suburb laid with massive buildings of imported European aesthetics that were suffused with European ideals of beauty.

Indigenous City: European Perception and Decolonization

> The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types based on racial origin, to justify conquest, and to establish systems of administration and instruction (Bhabha 1994).

It is a fact throughout many South Asian colonial cities like Calcutta, Madras, Delhi, Bombay, or Lucknow that European settlers considered the indigenous part of cities to be a grossly unhygienic spaces with 'townspeople living above each other in houses clustered together accessed through narrow lanes'. The numerous descriptions of the medieval city by the colonizers describe it as an unhealthy, plague-infected environment. With epidemics like cholera taking its toll, the Fort city remained a distanced and unsanitary space for the British community in Nagpur. The patronizing reading of the indigenous city by orientalist writers was another factor that paved the way for the creation of 'clean and tidy' colonial stations across the country. In the Times of India from 1917, a writer urges the Government to move the capital of Central Provinces to a better, cooler location. He urges them to replace the capital and even build it from scratch if required. Describing Nagpur further, he writes:

> The place bears an ominous name, and it well deserves it. It is the haunt not only of the cobra but of the scarcely less deadly pestilence,-plague. Built on black cotton soil it can never be rid of malaria, while nature has denied it almost every amenity of life (Anonymous *The C.P. Capital* 1917).

Colonial establishments worldwide have triggered profound identity crises in their former colonies, extending beyond physical destruction into their minds. The colonizers' inherent superiority over the 'natives' permeated their perspectives, leaving an indelible mark on subsequent independent cultures, evident in art, writings, historical representations, and entrenched belief systems. Varied perceptions of colonists and locals on the same subject often led to the dominant story becoming the future narrative. In the mid-1800s Bengal, two Durga Puja paintings exemplify this disparity. Sevak Ram's work highlights the deity worship and the indigenous celebrations, while William Prinsep's painting emphasizes British entertainment rather than the deity itself. Similarly, James Fergusson's text *Architecture at Ahmedabad: The Capital of Goozerat* (cf. Hope 1866) adopts a Eurocentric lens assuming a

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certain superiority over the east with use of European principles to study Indian architecture. In contrast, Maganlal Vakhatchand Sheth's personal descriptions of Ahmedabad in *Amdavadno Itihas* (1851) paints a nuanced portrait, delving into everyday lives, politics, and sociological aspects, providing readers with a more intimate understanding of the city's history. These examples bring forth an assumed intellectual hierarchy between the colonizers and colonized. For Nagpur, this dominant narrative predicated on the colonizers gaze was about the unhygienic situations of its medieval city, and the manifestation of diseases through it. The sanitation reports however describe the case to be the other way around. The first cases of cholera in the city were observed in 1865. Samples of water from the Jumma Talao were sent to Calcutta for tests which claimed that the water was contaminated. The sanitation report cites the reason for this contamination to be the surface drainage from the civil station and railways levelled at a higher stratum. The use of this contaminated water was the reason for the spike of cholera in the medieval city.[21]

Image 3.14: Lendi Talao in 1854 (source: Pharoah 1854 / public domain).

Across colonial cities in history, "dismantling the native settlements was deemed essential to the cultural rehabilitation of conquered population" (Kostof 1992: 111). When Patrick Geddes and H.V. Lanchester visited Nagpur city in 1817, the municipal committee emphasized solutions for the improvement of the 'native' city. The cited 'urgent problems' revolved around the 'removal' of congestion, and the restoration of public health and sanitation. There were additional suggestions made regarding the improvement of *nullah* (drains), prevention of dust, and a report about further available sites for the extension of the civil station.

Geddes in his response emphasized 'conservative surgery', 'diagnosis before treatment', 'repair and rebuilding', as he did for many other cities in India and Europe. In the Nagpur report, he questioned the British authorities across India for their stress on the term 'removal of congestion', forgetting to add to it the term 'elsewhere' to the sentence forgetting to imply relocation rather than 'removal'. The descriptions in the Gazette suggest the stubbornness of British authorities to justify mass destruction of the otherwise organic structure of Indian cities, under the western pretext of 'beauty'.

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[21] Report on the cholera epidemic of 1868, in the Central Provinces and Berar (Townsend 1869: 66).

There are still great areas of huddled huts and narrow lanes and some stagnant ponds and gravel pits, but wide new streets are being pushed further each year into the crowded areas… (Russell 1908: 380).

Image 3.15: Photograph from 1960 of the Central Avenue Road and Ganghibaug Park that replaced Lendi Talao (source: Deshpandi 1959: 29 / owned by author).

Geddes discarded plans of destruction, unless they were deemed absolutely essential. A specific case of Lendi Talao in the medieval city illustrates the bias held by authorities against the indigenous city (image 3.14). This reservoir was surrounded by squatters of weavers and brick makers, who supposedly used the water for their household utilities, and for brick baking. The reservoir, which was constructed by the Bhosles in the 1700s has been stated in the Geddes report as a site where cholera and malaria mosquitoes bred in the 1900s. The area surrounding the tank was marked for the highest number of civilian deaths due to fever. Geddes in 1917 suggested beautifying the Lendi Talao to reduce the spread of diseases (Geddes 1918: 5). But ignoring Geddes's suggestions to make a 'Tank Park', by reducing the size of the tank, the improvement authorities cut a 25m wide road through the surroundings of this tank, demolishing the settlements around it to de-congest it (image 3.15). Mass displacements and destruction followed in this de-congestion of the medieval city. The tank, rather than being beautified was filled with rubble and transformed into a garden. One wonders about the alternative solutions to build this 25m wide road connecting outskirts of Nagpur to the civil station rather than cutting through the existing fabric. No mention of the people whose residences were demolished, or information about their later settlements could be traced during the period of this study.

In the same report, Geddes is also asked his suggestions about decongesting the Dherpura locality. To this, he proposed against "removing of several houses from the area since it was sufficient to remove only a few" and cutting across a lane to open congested spaces (Geddes 1918: 10). The group of *mahar* (lower caste) community members that resided there was hence displaced to another locality. Dherpura, and its residents are today absent in the maps, archival documents, and memories of people. The making of the civil station too involved such displacements of indigenous communities. Four villages were absorbed into the European settlement under the Nazul land policy, and these residents were paid a certain amount in *muafi* (remuneration) for this. Another such case was that of Gadga village, where the indigenous community was relocated somewhere, and the village absorbed into the colonial station. The construction of Ambazari and Gorewada Waterworks too facilitated the displacement of indigenous communities from their villages that were present around these projects. The fact that people today justify the destruction caused by the Central Avenue road through the same narratives of 'unhygienic congested atmosphere' depicts the colonized mind-set inherited and preserved. Reinstating these erasures from the memories of the city in this article is a small attempt to decolonize the urban history of the city.

The making of the civil station of Nagpur was very much based on the lessons learned in previous colonial cities, and the culmination of those lessons that was projected onto one place. It was based on the already tried and tested strategies of defence, and reflected the ethos of strategy through its segregated components: the Sitabuldi Hills, the railway line, and the cordon sanitaire. The city grew into an organized military cantonment and then was developed as a provincial capital to serve and appear in congruence with its purpose. It was also a space that imposed power over the colonized population through its display of elitism and superiority. The imposing European structures, grand avenues, bungalows, and gardens, apart from being familiar built environments, were also symbols of British authority over the indigenous. The station itself was also categorically organized on the basis of class hierarchies. The civil station thus grew as one separate nucleus, along with its European ideals of reason and beauty, segregated from the apparently unhygienic and plague-infected another half.

The Buffer Space

Image 3.16: Map of the Trade Centre that Replaced the Buffer Space (source: author).

This section explores the 'buffer space' as a physical segregation component between the colonial station and medieval cities. It illustrates the transformation of this buffer space to driver of economic growth for the city, rather than what its original purpose was: of separating the two settlements. By examining the development of this area between 1860 and 1930, the article highlights the simultaneous emergence of a completely new settlement bridging the colonial station and medieval city, challenging the narrative of the 'twin-city' concept. In the 1600s, Chand Sultan of the Gond dynasty built Jumma Talao—a reservoir supplying water to his fortified city, strategically located on the outskirts near a city gate. Surrounded by gardens, it served as a recreational space, a role it maintains even today. Raghoji II later created a "*rainne*, similar to a fausse braye", a fortification as a measure of defence after the 1803 Battle of Assaye.[22] Facing the Jumma Darwaza and flanked by the Jumma Talao and Sitabuldi Hills,

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[22] Fitzclarence, in his text *Journal of a Route Across India* compares the defence scheme of Bhoslas fort to a *faussebraye*, an Italian terminology for a defensive barrier protecting the main wall of a fortification, placed outside the city gates, lower in height than the fort and preceded by a ditch (Fitzclarence 1819: 110).

the region remained a barren tract for decades after the 1818 battle. This land, a cordon sanitaire functioned as a barrier between the medieval city and the colonial station with the growing distrust and enmity between people after the two Anglo-Maratha wars. This reserved green belt in the form of a *maidan* (an empty ground) is a common component across colonial cities like Calcutta, Delhi, Bombay, Lucknow and Pune. From 1818 to 1854, this stretch of land in Nagpur witnessed no critical development, and it did not find any significant depiction within texts or maps of the region that showed the area around the reservoir. Several indigenous settlers around the hills had also retreated towards the medieval city, and the rest were displaced by the British to ensure an unobstructed view between the hills and the medieval city. Spiro Kostof's exploration in *The City Assembled* delves into the transformation of such areas, labelled 'Faubourg' or 'outside of the town,' as they gradually developed into distinct settlements, ultimately integrating with the main city over a period of time.[23]

> Passing tradesmen, the theory goes, attracted to a stable settlement with buying power, in time would plant themselves permanently, astride the highway, in shadow of the city gate, and develop their own organization, their own life (Kostof 1992: 53).

Nagpur's colonial development aligns with this theory, particularly in its history of cotton mills. In Nagpur, the 'outside the town' concept encompassed the peripheries of both the colonial and medieval zones, situated between them and encapsulated by the green belt that surrounded the Jumma Talao (image 3.16). For a long time, from 1818 till the advent of railways in the 1860s, this area lay largely vacant in terms of built environment, with only a few farms and gardens evident in archival maps, until Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata acquired the land in the 1870s.[24]

A Cotton Mill in Nagpur?

By the 1860s, Bombay was the world's third-largest cotton market, trailing only Liverpool and New York (Kidambi 2017: 18). In the early 1870s, as J. N. Tata sought a site for his inaugural textile mill, peers were perplexed by his consideration of a city other than Bombay, the 'Cottonopolis of India', where he also lived. J.N. Tata contemplated Jubbulpore in Central Provinces, almost choosing it, but a sage opposed, citing sanctity of the town and potential riots. Chanda, a coal-producing region, was also considered but dismissed for lacking road network. Eventually, 'Nagpore' emerged as a plausible location, and Tata acquired 10 acres of marshy land near Jumma Talao inexpensively. The decision puzzled traders and bankers in Nagpur; a Marwari banker initially refused funding, criticizing Tata for "putting gold into the ground to fill up the earth." Later, the banker acknowledged Tata's vision, stating Tata "had put in earth and taken out gold" (Lala 2004: 45). This decision was remarkable, given Nagpur's lack of history in cotton textile industries. By 1881 Nagpur was well connected to Bombay and Calcutta through railways. Connections were established with surrounding towns of Chandrapur, Balaghat, Umred and Katol all of which were treasures for coal, manganese and cotton. Nagpur thus turned out to be a pivotal site for collection and distribution of resources between small towns and metropolitan cities to be finally exported to destinations as far as China, Burma, and England. All of these served as a golden opportunity for Tata. It was a one-place-solution for the collection of raw material, production, acquiring resources for

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[23] Faubourg is a French word implying a suburb on outskirts of a town. The word is derived from *forisburgus* that means 'outside burg'.

[24] Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata (03.03.1839 – 19.05.1904) was an Indian industrialist, philanthropist and founder of the TATA Group. His first cotton enterprise was the Alexandra Mills in Chinchpokli, Bombay. In 1869 he had acquired this dilapidated oil mill and transformed it into a cotton mill. On the other hand he had established Empress mills from scratch.

production, trade, and transportation. The region was also conducive to cotton trade due to the numerous traditional weaving groups that were already involved in this business.[25] The rise of railways and the influx of inexpensive European cloth adversely impacted Nagpur's handloom weavers, leading to financial ruin and a halt in local weaving industries. Many of these weavers subsequently became the primary workforce for the cotton mills established by J.N. Tata. Consequently, Tata's Nagpur enterprise directly competed with European products in the Central Provinces' markets.

Modernity between Medieval and Provincial

Image 3.17: A General View of 'Seetabuldee' and the Expanse of Jumma Talao and the Sitabuldi Hillocks in the Background before the Establishment of the Mills (source: British Library 1860 / public domain).

The inaugural mill, 'Empress Mills', commenced operations in 1877, coinciding with the Queen Victoria's coronation. J.N. Tata, the visionary behind the enterprise, initially took residence in Nagpur to oversee its establishment. However, in 1880, he entrusted the managerial responsibilities to Bezonji Mehta, a former railway employee from Pune, who served as the stalwart manager for several ensuing decades. In the same year, 1880, the second mill was

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[25] These weaving groups were immigrants from different geographical regions. They settled in Nagpur after an invitation from the Bhosle ruler Raghojee II. While the Muslims arrived from Mirzapur, the Koshtis immigrated from Umred, a town near Nagpur. In the medieval period, local handloom clothes were supplied from Nagpur to the royals and to nobility and gentry in Poona. With the annexation of Nagpur and surrounding princely states by the British, this export and culture of expensive fine clothing was lost in the annexed courts, damaging the industry (Harnetty 1991: 456).

set into motion, its construction funded by the profits generated by the first mill. Notably, the site for the second mill included the acquisition and utilization of the Jumma Talao reservoir.
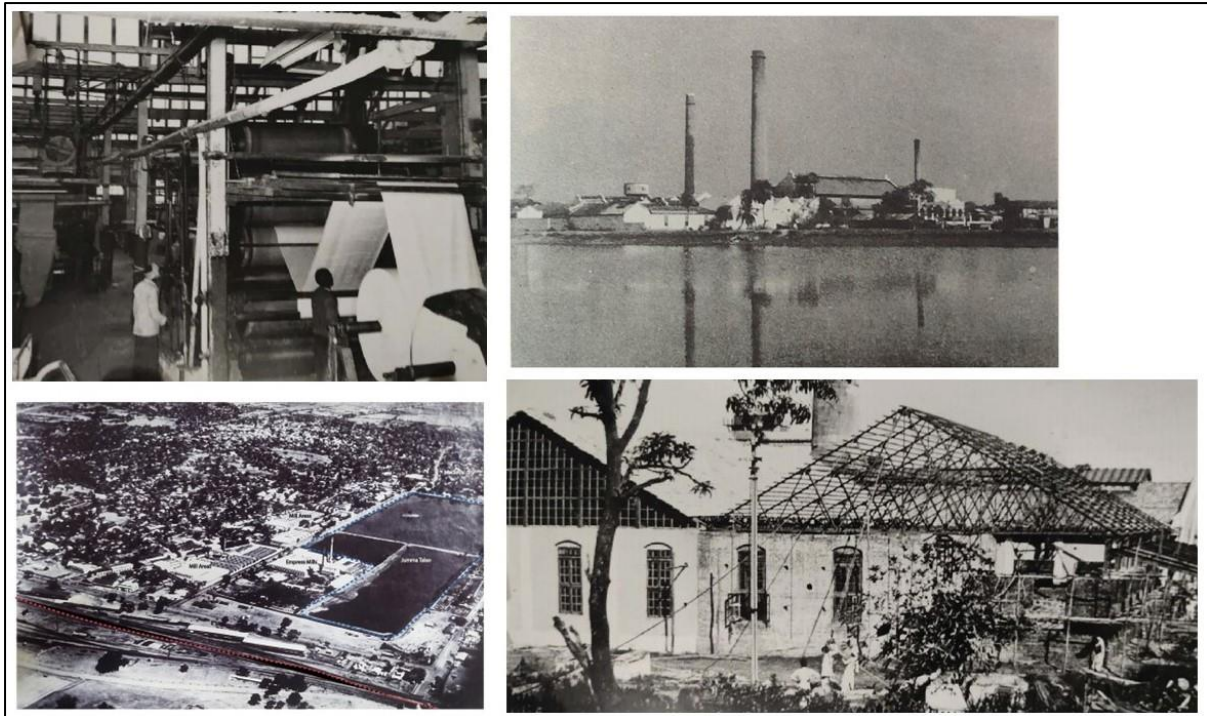

Image 3.18 (bottom left): Ariel Image of Empress Mills and its Built Environment of the Transformed Jumma Talao, the Proximity of the Railway Station, and Road Connectivity (source: Jayant Harkare / owned by author).

Image 3.19 (bottom right): Archival Photograph Demonstrating the Scales of Structures, Depicting the use of Steel and Glass (source: Jayant Harkare /owned by author).

Image 3.20 (top left): Archival Photograph Highlighting the Scale of Mills (source: Jayant Harkare / owned by author).

Image 3.21 (top right): The Post-Establishment Skyline of Nagpur at Jumma Talao (source: session 1950 / public domain).

To facilitate the foundation's construction, an ingenious approach involved filling a portion of the reservoir with mounds of soil strategically gathered from the surrounding area. Examining archival maps and texts unveils the gradual division and utilization of Jumma Talao for mill and market construction. The initial mill, erected with brick masonry and lime mortar, exhibits an entrance façade demonstrating an intersection of both colonial and indigenous ornamentation. Before establishing mills in Nagpur, J.N. Tata visited Lancashire mills. Upon learning about poor working conditions there, he prioritized the well-being of his Nagpur workers and hence the first mills featured innovations like an air dehumidifying apparatus and sprinklers. This was unlike anywhere in Lancashire or other Indian mills. Adopting to foreign expertise for technical purposes was very common in Bombay, where mill owners would hire trained personnel from Lancashire in their mills. Following the Bombay trend, Tata hired Lancashire's James Brooksby as a technical manager (Headrick 1988: 363-364). Brooksby introduced state-of-the-art machinery, making Empress Mills the most technologically advanced in India by 1878, significantly boosting production quantity and quality. Empress Mills thus developed as the most modern mill in the country. Archival photographs from 1918 depict newer mills that were being constructed in steel, a departure from traditional structures (image 3.18). This new innovation helped in attaining a massive scale, featuring glass facades for natural light and roof ventilators and marked a significant shift in Nagpur's urban landscape (images 3.19 and 3.20). The space between the medieval city and colonial settlement became a unique amalgamation of architectural styles, unlike anything seen before. The mills transformed the skyline,

introducing tall structures and brick chimneys, while affluent traders' bungalows adorned lake-view plots.

Analysing archival maps unveils the gradual changes spurred by this development. The reservoir, once undivided, was split to accommodate mills and a cotton market built in 1901. Lanes around the reservoir evolved into metalled roads connecting the cantonment, colonial settlement, and medieval city. The economic impact extended beyond the mills, catalysing ancillary industries like dyeing, bleaching, spinning, weaving, ginning, and pressing factories, along with markets (Russell 1908: 184). Following the 7th Congress session in 1890, indigenous elites established the Swadesi mills in the same area. This complex evolution added layers to Nagpur's palimpsest character, creating a multifaceted and dynamic urban environment. Prashant Kidambi notes for Bombay:

> The state of cotton trade determined levels of employment in the docks and on the railways, while the cotton and cloth markets were intimately connected with the industry (Kidambi 2017: 21).

Image 3.22: Mapping the Mills and their Surroundings (source: author).

The area surrounding the Empress Mills boomed as a marketplace for the trade of cotton, oranges, and other raw materials. As the exports increased, the requirement for permanent employees in the railways was also amplified. In 1890, this 'buffer space' accommodated a railway workshop and the Ajni railway village. This colony was planned with a series of row houses for employees of the railways, complete with a playground, a church, and a school. By 1925 this small tract of land with an area of about 3.5 sq.km incorporated 7 mills, ancillary factories, and settlements of immigrant workers and labourers. It transformed the skyline of the cordon sanitaire with its industrial modernity (image 3.21). In the centre of this British Indian heartland were a section of mills that competed with Lancashire through the cotton revolution. Today, hardly any of these spaces exist. The mills were shut in 2002, and between 2002 and 2012 all of them were demolished and replaced by the Empress Mall and the Empress City residential society. The demolition of the Ajni railway colony will pave the way in the coming years for a new metro station.

Immigrants, Labour Colonies, and Urban Growth

After J.N. Tata started the empress mills, many Parsi traders and industrialists immigrated to Nagpur. The 1908 Central Provinces Gazette states an increase from 346 persons to 481 persons between 1898 -1908 in Nagpur, and by 1911, this number for the province increased to 1757. The 1929 labour report states the predominance of the Parsee element in the managerial staff of the larger cotton mills and large Parsee interests is a very prominent feature in the central province (Russell 1908). The Parsi elites who moved to the province became directors of coal and manganese mines in the region, and entirely or partially owned 7 out of the 15 cotton mills in the province, 5 of which were located in Nagpur itself. Most of them had migrated from Bombay and established a Parsi community around Empress Mills. Alongside residential areas, cultural spaces like the Agyari, Billimoria Dharamshala, and Tata Baug emerged around the mills. A vast land was allocated for the Parsi cemetery as well. This reflected Kostof's description precisely of the passing tradesman who would implant himself permanently, and develop his organization and life on the outskirts of a foreign city (Kostof 1992: 53). Initially located around the mills, these Parsi gated communities also started emerging within the colonial station by the 1920s. The immigrant workforce significantly contributed to reshaping the cordon sanitaire. The labour commission reports from 1908, mention how, unlike Bombay and Ahmedabad, the immigrant workers of Nagpur were permanent dwellers, with an average work span of 7.89 years per person in the cotton mills. These labourers, when they migrated to the city, also brought their families with them and their accommodation was, therefore, a crucial factor for the growth of the city.
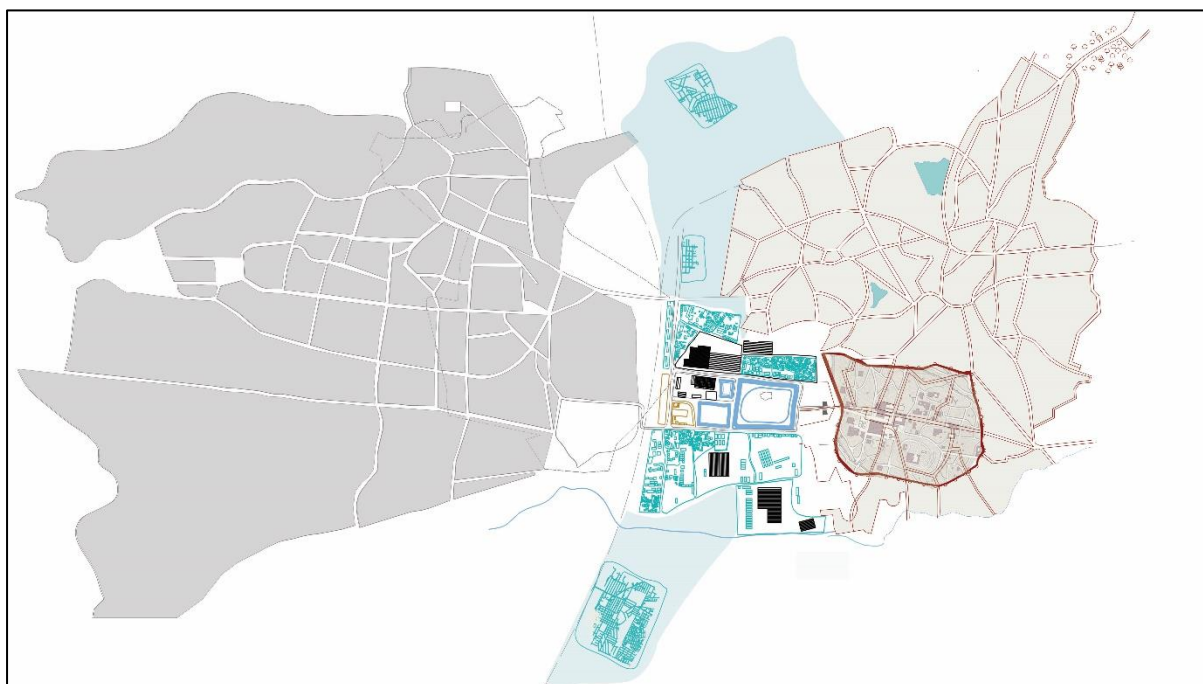

Image 3.23: Map Illustrating the Growth of the 'Buffer Space' by 1925 (source: author).

While specific area-wise population distribution data for Nagpur is lacking, insights can be drawn from available immigration data to make comparisons between the civil station and mills areas. The 1908 Gazette provides population figures, noting that in 1901, the civil station had 17,328 residents out of a total population of 127,734, encompassing the mill surroundings and the medieval city. In the Nagpur division, the immigrant population in 1901 was 170,000, primarily composed of mill workers from Akola and Nagpur. The Empress Mill, a major employer, had approximately 4,300 workers in 1901. The report highlights that a significant

proportion, around 90-100%, of immigrants in Nagpur were regarded as permanent settlers. By examining maps, it's estimated that the combined area of mills and worker settlements is around 5 sq.km in contrast to the 8 sq.km of the civil station. This suggests that during the same period, the buffer space likely had a higher density than the civil station. This comparison reveals distinct growth patterns for both areas and argues for the buffer space serving as a third focal point of development based on demographic contrasts. The influx of labour into the city necessitated housing provisions. The mill-surrounding areas saw the development of affordable residential units, with mill owners actively contributing to constructions like the Empress Mill *chawls* (residential unit typology) and the Model Mill *chawls*, an example of which is Sheth Jamnadas Pottdar, an industrialist and stakeholder in the Empress Mills.[26] Additionally, families were provided with facilities of a primary school, hospital, and a playground (Govt. 1929: 24). A crèche was established for the children of workers and in 1921, the J.N. Tata Parsi Girls school was instituted, located adjacent to the reservoir. The space was thus developed with J.N. Tata's radical and progressive approach, and through his labour welfare schemes.

In over a century, between 1877 and 2002, this locality absorbed the industrial culture of Nagpur. The Parsi *chawl* still has family members of the older generation of Parsi mill-hands residing in row house garden residences, whereas the Model mill *chawl* is a series of three two-storied structures with small compartments running on both its sides, above and below.[27] By 1923, labour housing extended to a 2 km. area in the Indora complex, designed as a garden township for Empress Mills's employees. Spanning 200 acres with 1500 blocks, it was named Bezonbagh in honour of Bezonji Mehta. Inspired by the civil station, it featured independent row houses with individual compounds, water, and toilets facilities (image 3.23). Construction costs ranged from Rs. 300-600, depending on dwelling type of *kuccha* (temporary structure) or *pucca* (permanent structure) houses. The complex incorporated roads, lighting, and numerous trees for a 'shady and beautiful' environment, as per the Labour Commission report. The buffer space, originally a zone of segregation, thus evolved into the epicentre of urbanization in Nagpur, aligning itself parallel to and extending the colonial developmental phase. During this era, the city assumed a prominent role in trade, prompting a transformation in its urban fabric to meet these economic demands. It developed into an independent economic entity, fostering an industrial culture. What was once a mere buffer space now housed seven mills and a colony of 1500 hutments. Interestingly, for the neighbouring European community, this space did not deviate significantly from the typical 'unhygienic' indigenous localities. This perhaps explains why colonial narratives overlooked it as a distinct settlement, contributing to the narrative of the 'twin city'. In this way, Nagpur stands out as an anomaly compared to the perceived dual character of other colonial cities, where multiple nuclei emerged simultaneously from scratch.

Conclusion

The transition of Nagpur between 1803-1930 was a complex, non-linear process. The city is a palimpsest made from the local Gond kingdom, the Maratha capital, a British garrison, a princely state, an administrative capital, and a trade and industrial centre. The transitions were

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[26] Sheth Jamnadasji Potdar came to Nagpur in the year 1875 as agent to Empress Mills. He called his brothers Jetmalji and Jivrajji for assistance in the city. Potdar was also responsible for opening brances of Empress Mills shops in several places such as Bankura, Calcutta, Layalpur, Madras, Rangoon, Ahmedabad, Bezwada, Karachi and smaller towns around Nagpur. He also took agency of Advance Mills in Ahmedabad. In Nagpur, he was the patron of Ram temple and a Dharamshala near station (Joshi, Huddar, and Kedkar 1941).

[27] The Model mill chawl still accommodates around 1000 persons. It has been unsafe and poses a risk to its residents with multiple cases of accidents. The recent one was in 2017 where a roof collapsed.

far from seamless, particularly during the tumultuous first half of the 19th century. The aftermath of the 1857 Mutiny prompted the implementation of defence strategies as a town planning mechanism in colonial cities nationwide. Drawing from precedents set in Lucknow, Hyderabad, Calcutta, and Bombay, Nagpur's colonial settlement inherited prototypical principles of segregation. The construction of a fort on two hillocks, along with the displacement of indigenous settlements to form a green belt, maintained a spatial distance between the medieval and western settlements. The strategic placement of the railway line acted as a final barrier, serving both as a visual and physical obstacle and as means to facilitate quick escape for Europeans during potential crises like the Sepoy Mutiny. The resultant colonial station in Nagpur thus emerged with planned execution aimed at separation, resulting in the discursive description of it as a 'twin city'. The planning of colonial station underwent significant changes due to shifting political dynamics. Initially intended as a military cantonment for the princely state, its role transformed when declared the capital of the Central Provinces and Berar, serving as a divisional headquarters. Its development, marked by scattered growth between 1860 and 1880, lacked coherence and largely adhered to the cantonment boundaries. The subsequent establishment of the civil station sub-committee in the 1880s introduced a more deliberate planning strategy, imposing an irregular grid-iron form on Nagpur's hilly topography. This development, rooted in colonial motives of asserting authority and intimidating the local population, featured an elite urban environment with large Europe-inspired buildings and garden compounds alien to the region previously. In the making of the 'civil station', still known as the 'civil lines', one finds several erasures of the city's pre-colonial urban past, which are still framed as colonial 'developments' rather than an 'elimination of indigenous cultures'. As the 19th century progressed, Nagpur witnessed the emergence of not just one but two new settlements adjacent to the medieval city: the colonial station and the trade centre. While one grew as a planned intervention, the other was simultaneously growing through the very components designated for separating the British military from locals. These elements of segregation, including the railways, Jumma Talao, and the green belt, became the catalyst and space for the development of a new, third settlement.

Spiro Kostof in *The City Assembled* defines a city as a congregation or an assembly of people who "come together to live a better life, to live it at their ease in wealth and plenty." He adds that "the greatness of a city is not the largeness of the site or its boundaries, but the multitude and number of its inhabitants and the power they hold" (Kostof 1992: 7). Building upon this perspective, it becomes apparent that the buffer space, or the cordon sanitaire within the British defence system, organically developed into a distinct microcosm between the twin cities. This challenges the conventional theory of binary or dualistic attributes typically associated with colonial cities. The growth began with one cotton mill in 1877, expanding to seven by 1890. This transformation affected a 5 sq.km. area, introducing factories and markets. Mill establishment attracted labour migration, fostering urban growth with new accommodations. The contrast between the emerging settlements was significant. One, an elite, monumental garden city with a grid form and urban hierarchy; the other, organic and clustered, featuring long-span mills, modern materials, innovative machines, and towering chimneys. The colonial settlement retained a European setting, while the industrial centre became a hub of innovation and modernity with new building materials. Parsi immigrant industrialists, joining J.N. Tata's endeavours in Nagpur, achieved success, elevating themselves to the elite class. Nagpur's colonial urban development thus deviated from the typical binary model, presenting an anomaly. The boundaries dividing these three microcosms were permeable to some extent. Post the 1857 revolt, British administration across India formed a landlord class from existing power structures to negotiate with indigenous populations. In Nagpur, these elites included former ruling members, traders, immigrant Parsi industrialists, and English-educated individuals. Charged with colonial ideals of city improvement and public welfare, these elites were elevated to authoritative positions, receiving

titles and invitations to imperial events. The elites from the three nuclei engaged cordially pertaining to their positions of power. These became transformed into porosities that were important for the maintenance of urban boundaries as well. It is, therefore, no wonder that in the 21st Century, a sense of elitist dynamic still prevails despite the city having culminated into a large and radial form. As Beverley states (2011), the theory of duality is redundant in colonial cities, to the various complex amalgamations that cities withhold in their urban histories. Therefore, this article asserts that Nagpur's colonial station exemplified a prototype of segregation, akin to other colonial cities. However, what is not typical in the case of Nagpur is its description as a 'twin city'. From 1860 to 1930, a complex negotiation of space and power unfolded among the medieval city, colonial station, and mill areas. This negotiation, centred on social class, revealed the fractures or porosities within the segregations simultaneously manifesting in the urban form. The city can thus be better described as a suture of three different microcosms: the medieval, the British, and the industrial, feeding into each other with a tripartite negotiation of space and power structuring the three centres.

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