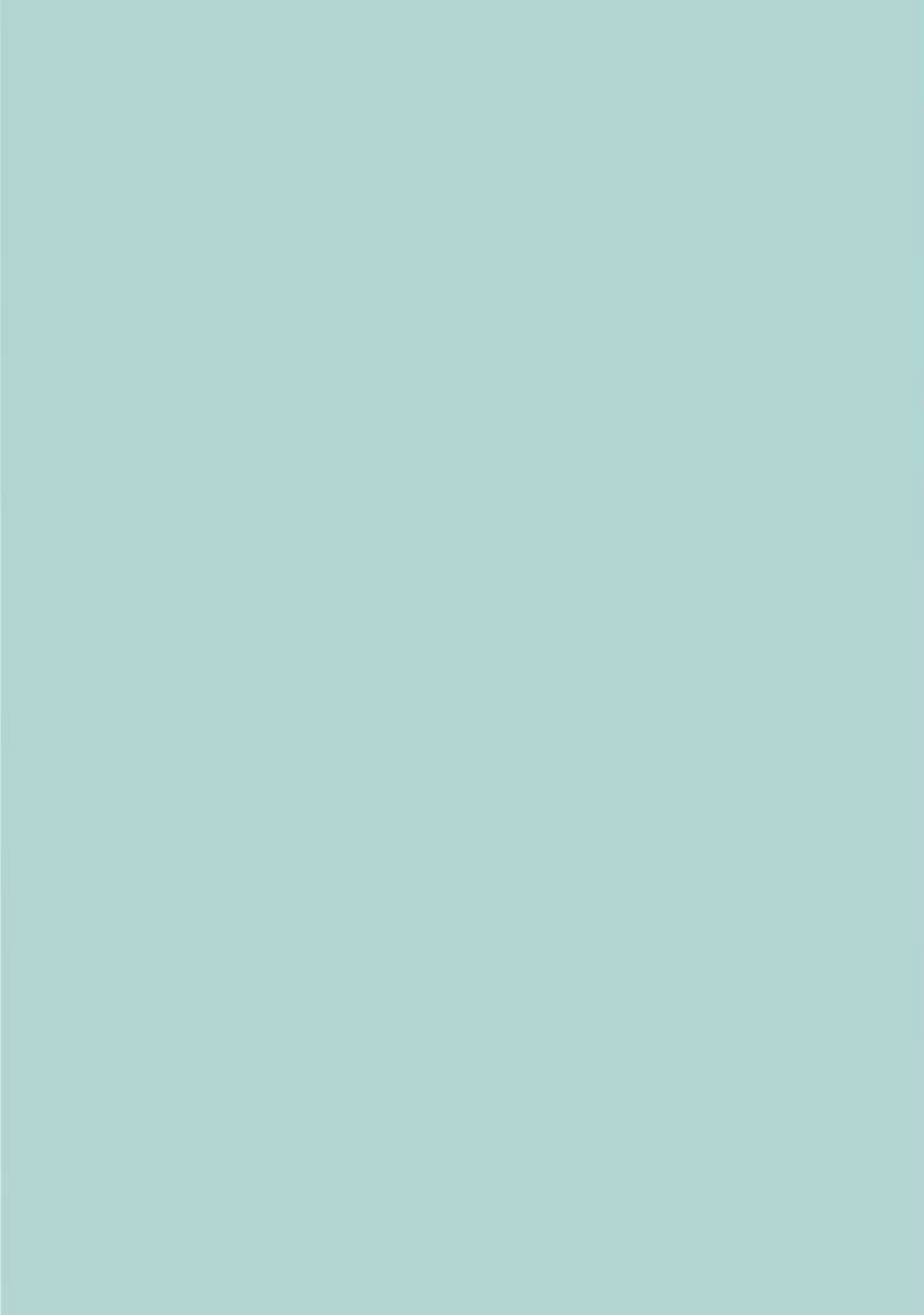


**CLOCK TOWERS
OF
KARACHI**



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CLOCK TOWERS OF KARACHI

INTRODUCTION

The Clock Towers of Karachi is a compilation of findings on eleven clock towers around the old part of the city, all of which were built during the time of British colonization. I have explored these towers using primary and secondary resources to find out what their original purpose was and what purpose they serve today.

When these clock towers were originally built, they served a specific purpose and functionality at a time when wristwatches were not used. Before the middle of the 20th century most people did not have watches, and prior to the 18th century even home clocks were uncommon. To facilitate the people with time, these structures were placed near the centers of towns in busy areas and established mostly in the tallest structures so that they could be heard all over. The British rulers believed the clocks that were visible from far distances would work to develop a value for time in the lives of the native population. These clock towers don't serve the same purpose as most clocks do not function anymore. Today the structures are mostly viewed as aesthetically pleasing and otherwise ignored. Their history is not considered when this view is established. These clock towers are actually to be treated as important artifacts in major colonized cities that represent the visual, economic and social culture of the nation in that period.

In order to encourage the revitalization of the clocks I have particularly focused on the mechanics of each of the towers. I specifically looked into the manufacturing of the clocks to be able to date back how long ago the mechanism of such clocks was developed and how valuable this technology could actually be.



Front view of the clock tower of the Trinity Church.

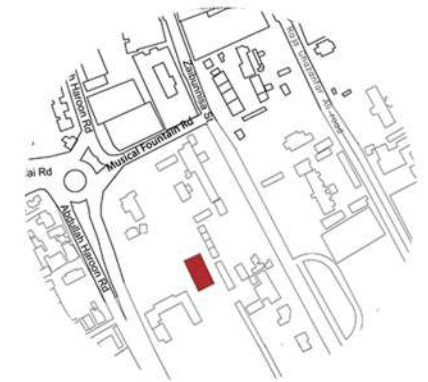


A close up of the tower shows the neglected state of the non-functioning clock as thick layers of dust have visibly piled up onto it.

History: The Church was developed in 1855 and initially designed by Bombay engineer Captain John Hill. His design was not fully carried out and changes were made by John Burton. Made with yellow coloured Gizri stone, the Church comprises of a prayer area, pews and a lactern for the delivery of sermons. The architectural design was particularly distinctive at the time as it was characterized by Romanesque architecture apparent by its high ceilings and the semi-circle arches in the windows and various entrances. The windows in the tower increase upwards from one to four. At the time of its construction, there were no lighthouses in the city hence the tower was used as a beacon for ships. During WW1 it was also used as a signaling station by the British. Due to this it developed an architecturally military style, evident in the battlement-looking structure at the top of the tower. Various changes have also been made regarding the height of the tower as it started out as a five storey 150 feet tower but in 1904, its height was reduced to 115 feet with three storeys due to vibration caused by strong sea breezes and safety reasons. Later in 1970's, the original timber-frame pitched roof was replaced with a coffered barrel arched roof of concrete. Additionally, the church did not initially house a bell tower or a clock—they were constructed later in 1901-03.

Location: On the crossing of Musical Fountain Rd and Abdullah Haroon Rd.

Current state: Today the tower is not used as a clock tower but remains a part of the building which is still used as a church. The clock has been forgotten and unmaintained for a long time. However, recently talks are in the works to have the clock running again using a digitized Rado clock to replace the current winding clock.



24°50'56.2"N 66°59'50.7"E



A view of the dispensary from the bottom.



The clock in the tower is broken and hollow as the entire outer face of it except for the Roman numbers on the dial have been stolen.

History: The Eduljee Dinshaw Charitable Dispensary stands at the heart of Saddar. Built in 1882, it was the first building in Karachi designed in Italianate style, influenced by the Italian Renaissance. It was constructed using funds from Eduljee Dinshaw, a renowned Parsi landowner, philanthropist and educationist in Karachi. The dispensary is made of yellow Gizri stone with a semi-circular pilaster and an arcaded frontage. The tower is at the centre of the building and has one clock on the main facade. According to the population in the area, the last time the clock was seen functioning was during Governor of Sindh, Daud Pota's rule in 1999.

Location: Located at the intersection of Preedy Street and Raja Ghazanfar Ali Road.

Current state: Currently, the clock does not work due to lack of proper maintenance and some of its parts being stolen. The clock is hollow and barely there except for the outer circle with roman numbers on it. The ground floor of the dispensary first floor of the dispensary is occupied by residents that work for the government.



The stairs that lead up to the residential area on the second floor of the building.



24°51'40.6"N 67°01'41.2"E



The empress market quarter building with the clock tower at the centre.

History: The Empress Market was built in 1884 to commemorate Queen Victoria, Empress of the British Empire in South Asia. The clock tower stands at a height of 140 feet and consists of clocks situated on all four sides of the tower. It is built in an Indo-Gothic style using buff coloured Gizri sand stone. The structure in the city centre was designed to compete with the Crawford Market of Bombay and therefore was 12 ft higher. The tower contains a winding clock that would be wound up with a key every 15 days. The clock was manufactured in England by SMITH & SONS, today a British multinational company and one of UK's largest engineering businesses known as the Smiths Group. The company was founded in East London in 1851 by Samuel Smith, a watch and instrument maker.

Location: Situated in Saddar along M.A.Jinnah Road.

Current state: At present the clock tower is in a deteriorating condition with the clock no longer functioning. According to a vegetable seller in the market, Sher Ali, the clock stopped working 40 years ago. He also described to us how during Ayub Khan's rule the market would get cleaned and the bells would ring every hour.



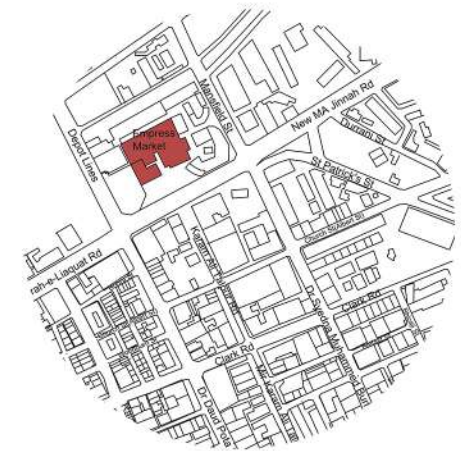
A close up of the neglected rusted condition of the clock. The hands of the clock are missing while the dial is broken.



A close up of two faces of the clocks on the tower. There is a clock situated on all four sides of the tower.



A close up of the balcony of the clock tower.



24°51'44.2"N 67°01'46.7"E



A view of the Merwether Tower from M.A.Jinnah Road.

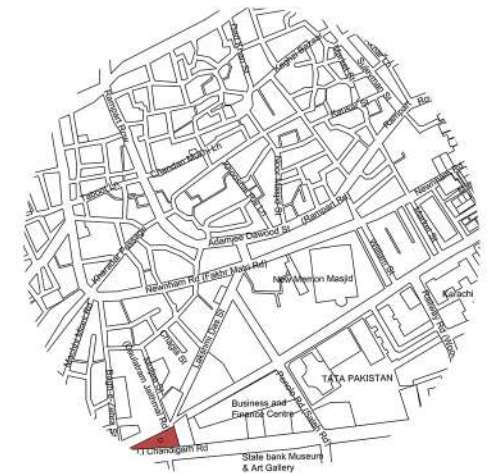
History: The Merwether Clock Tower is an important historical landmark designed by engineer James Strachan, in 1884, using public subscription. It was built in memory of Sir Willaim L. Merewether who served as the commissioner of Sindh from 1868 to 1877. At the time of completion which took 8 years, the building cost was Rs37,178. The Tower is 102 feet in height with clocks on all four sides. It is architecturally largely influenced by Gothic Revival, popular in Victorian England at the time. Made of buff colour Gizri stone, the tower displays impeccable craftsmanship with intricate carvings and details all over. The tower has one large bell (153 Kg) which would ring every hour and several smaller bells (51 Kg) ringing every quarter of an hour.

Location: Located at the junction of I.I Chundrigar Rd and M.A.Jinnah Rd which was a thriving commercial centre at the time of construction.

Current state: The tower is now maintained by the Standard Chartered Bank Ltd. with a solar powered clock put in place that tells Pakistan Standard Time. The Standard Chartered logo is brandished on all four faces of the clock. There is a small lawn around the structure that is looked after by a couple of gardeners.



A close up of the working clock.



24°50'56.2"N 66°59'50.7"E



A view of the Denso Hall from M.A.Jinnah Road.

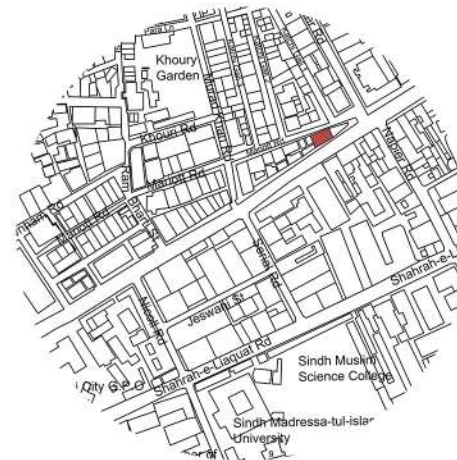
History: The Denso Hall, built in 1886, was designed by James Strachan as a recreational library space for natives. On the East side of the two-storey building there is a staircase leading up to a small room with the clock tower facing Napier Road and right opposite Jehangir Kothari Building (1934). The building was made in a Venetian Gothic style, following an architecturally simple and rustic design due to a lack of funds. It employs Tudor arches in its ground floor and ogive arches for the first floor openings. Gizri sandstone was used in its construction. The clock in the hall was a gift from Rao Sahib Ramdas Morarji. In the past the clock would be illuminated.

Location: It is situated between M.A.Jinnah Road and Napier Road.

Current state: The clock itself and the machinery no longer exist, leaving a hollow gap in the tower. There is now an encroached building of a mosque adjoined to the Denso Hall, obstructing the right side of the structure. Currently, the building is being restored by The Heritage Foundation of Pakistan by Yasmeen Lari.



The space where the clock was is now hollow with just the roman numericals of the dial left behind. The Jehangir Kothari building can be seen right opporsite.



24°51'12.7"N 67°00'17.8"E



The first floor of the Hall, currently being restored by The Heritage Foundation of Pakistan.



An inside view of the face of the clock.



(24°51'49.4"N 67°00'50.0"E)



The clock is in a neglected state, blocked by banners and poles resting on it.

History: The Poona Bhai Mamaiya tower was built in 1889. It is a three storey building that consists of a winding clock with an antique machine and one large striking bell, which was perhaps rung every hour once upon a time. The machine inside is engraved by the letters 'Manufactured by Swadeshi Electric Clock Company. Bombay No.7'. There are two identical plaques on the tower that read 'Poonabhai Mamaiya Tower', one in English and one in Gujrati.

Location: Located on Ranchore lines in Saddar.

Current state: Today, the white and blue tower is in a dilapidated condition as it is completely neglected in the busy scene of Ranchore Line. Men have set up their stalls of sugar cane juice, mechanical parts and a Babar shop directly around the bottom of tower. The surrounding meat market which is under KMC's control is in no better condition, with the sewage water flooding one side of the market upto 6cm high. At my visit to the tower I was greeted by Ashfaq Kalay Kalay, a seller of oven parts. The tower is currently informally under his custody and he claims his ancestor Rajuddin Lal Bhai who used to own some of the buildings in the market would take care of the tower before him. The machine itself is rusted, covered in layers of dust and no longer works.





The engraving on the machine part reads: 'Manufactured by Swadeshi Electric Clock Company, Bombay No.7' identical to the one at KMC.



This is the single striking clock that exists at the top most part of the tower. The engraving on the clock reads: 'The Indian Standard Metal Company'.



A view of the english plaque on the tower.



The clock is broken and not functioning but all of the outer parts still exist and shows there is potential to be fixed.



Goats kept in the surrounding area of the tower due to Eid ul Adha.



A view of the Kutiyana Memon Hospital and the Jaffer Fuddoo Dispensary from Nawab Mahabar Khan Rd.

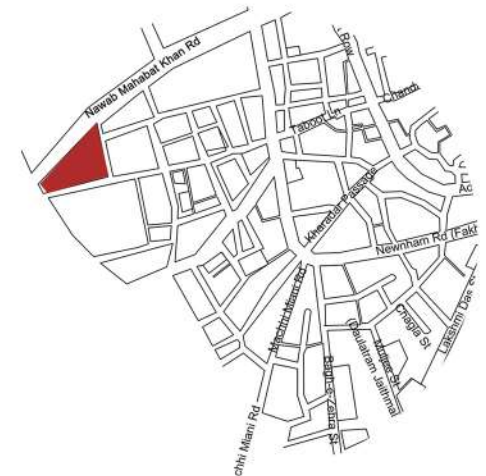
History: Now owned by the Kutiyana Memon Association and serving as part of the Memon Hospital, the Jaffer Fuddoo Clock Tower was commissioned by Muslim businessman and philanthropist Jaffer Fuddoo in 1904. It was constructed and designed by Moses Somake. The clock tower here is different from the others in Karachi due to its mix of varying architectural styles. It has arcades, arches, a cupola and a gabled roof while the central clock tower is topped by octagonal projecting eaves. Architect Mukhtar Husain says, "As you know the Jaffer Fuddoo Dispensary was the first building made by a Muslim philanthropist. Before that we see examples of generous Parsi and Hindu people contributing their bit to Karachi's cityscape". In the beginning of the 20th century, the Muslim community had become more educated and organized. This was a sign of Muslim prosperity in the Sub Continent and the tower marks that accomplishment.

Location: Along Nawab Mahabat Khanji Road in Kharadar Ghulam Hussain Quarters.

Current state: At the beginning of 2019 the clock showed accurate Pakistan Standard Time. However, as of July 2019 the clock stopped working and a solution is yet to be found. The tower itself has been well maintained and is still in excellent condition. The dial is slightly broken, missing a few pieces but all the other parts of the clock are still in place.



A close up of the front most dial of the clock, not functioning.



(24°51'07.3"N 66°59'36.0"E)





A view of the busy scene surrounding the entrance of the Kemari Harbour.

History: The Sydenham Passenger Pavilion also known as the Kemari clock Tower was inaugurated on January 20, 1913 by Lord Sydenham, the Governor of Bombay. The clock tower has stood tall informing the British and keeping them punctual when World War I began, when the port saw more crowds. It was then that the area of the port had expanded, which included a new boat basin, which was five hectares across, ringed on three sides by the Return Wharf, the Sydenham Pier and the Railway Wharf. The tower has a clock on all four sides.

Location: Karachi Kemari Harbour entrance

Current state: The tower is well maintained and tells Pakistan Standard Time. It still runs on the original machine installed by the British.



A close up view of the Sydenham Clock Tower as it tells accurate Pakistan Standard Time.



A view of the clock tower showing its central position in the busy fish market area.



A close up of one of the four faces of the clock. The hands are intact while parts of the dial are broken.



A view of the busy scene in the surrounding area of the market where several public busses come and go.



The glass on the windows of the tower are missing while the shutters are worn and broken.

History: Lea Market, made in 1927, was named after Measham Lea, an Englishman who served as an Engineer at the Municipal Corporation. The clock tower takes the central stage in the market's layout and extends on two sides with separate stone blocks, made in plain cement. In 2009, a bomb blast occurred on M.A. Jinnah Road which weakened the structure. Around the clock tower, on a raised platform, is the vegetable market and a meat market. The tower is used for storage purposes.

Location: Situated in Napier Quarters at the crisscrossing of Napier Road, Sheedi Village Road, Siddiq Wahab Road and River Street.

Current state: The tower isn't of much use anymore except as a storage space for the market men. It's windows are broken and dislodged while the clock no longer works as many parts are missing.



A close up of the dislodged shutters and the broken window sill of the tower.



24°51'37.7"N 67°00'02.2"E



An inside view of one of the four faces of the clock.



(24°51'19.7"N 67°00'27.7"E)



A view of the KMC clock tower from M.A. Jinnah Road.

History: The Karachi Municipal Corporation Building was built in 1930 and inaugurated in 1932. The development of a 'British-Indic' style had rapidly spread in Madras and Bombay but was late to arrive in Karachi. The KMC building was designed by James S.C. Waynes of Edinburgh in an Anglo-Mughal style, becoming the first Anglo-Mughal building in the city. Made with pink Jodhpur stone, the grand edifice has evolved as an icon of the landmark structures of Karachi. The clock tower rises to 162 feet and has a clock on all four sides. It is an integral part of the building's design. The words 'H.M King George V, Silver Jubilee Clock' circle the face of the clock as the tower was made to commemorate the visit of King George V, the Emperor of British India at the time. It is a winding clock with a 15 kg key that must be rotated 300 times every 4 to 5 days. The dial of the clock is 12 by 12 feet fixed with hands made of brass. The bells are manufactured by Gillett & Johnston, a bell foundry and clock maker based in Croydon, England from 1844 till 1957.

Location: Along M.A. Jinnah Rd.

Current state: At present, the clock is well maintained and still functioning. At every hour there is a strike while at every fifteen minutes there is a quarter chime that is barely audible. The body of the clock, as well as the main machine is the original one from the time of the British Raj. The green and red machine has a tiny golden plaque engraved with the words 'MANUFACTURED BY SWADESHI ELECTRIC CLOCK, BOMBAY NO 7'.



This is the original antique British clock machine that runs the KMC clock. The machine has been newly painted red and green after it was maintained by a local clock smith.



A view of the inside of the clock tower from the first floor with the exposed mechanics of the clock and bell.



A close up of the quarter chime bell showing the name of the manufacturer. The engraving reads: Gillett & Johnston, Croydon, England'.



A close up of the plaque on the original antique British machine of the clock with the engraving that reads: 'Manufactured by Swadeshi Electric Clock Co. Bombay No.7'.



A view of the building from Aiwan-e-Tijarat Rd (Nicoll Rd).

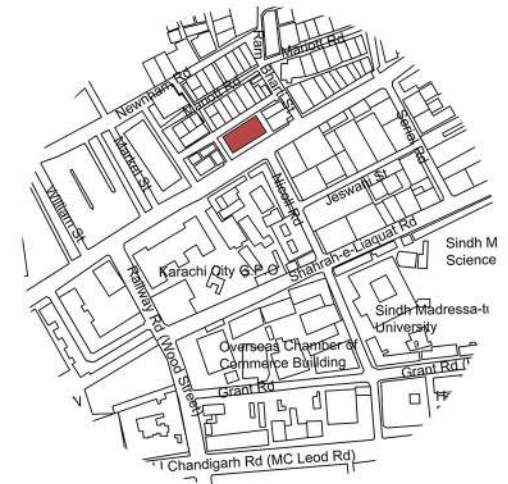
History: Built in 1924, Lakshmi Building was Karachi's tallest building and a major skyscraper in the early 20th century. Located in the commercial hub of the city, it was commissioned by the Lakshmi Insurance Company and the architects of the building were Maysers D H Daruwala & Co. Unlike the usual buff colonial structures of the time, this particular tower has similar characteristics to the grand skyscrapers of Chicago and New York. Originally, a statue of the Hindu goddess Lakshmi was placed on top of the building, until it was removed in 1947 at the time of Independence. The owner of the site migrated to India and sold the place to a Parsi businessman. Some of the Hindu residents were killed in the riots that occurred afterwards. The building was once known for its unique and luxurious look with its state of the art clock tower and its iron elevator.

Location: Along M.A.Jinnah Rd beside Bolton Market Quarter.

Current state: According to the manager of the building, the clock in the tower has not been working for the past 20 years although all its parts are intact and not stolen. The pink exterior of the building is marred with black stains however the clock is in perfect condition.



A close up of the clock which is frozen in time yet still in perfect condition.



24°51'08.1"N 67°00'09.6"E

History: The Swadeshi Electric Clock Company was founded by Kashinath Ganesh Narawane originally. It was originally located at Shastri Hall, Grant Road, Girgaum in Mumbai. The manufacturing of this clock company was related to the Swadeshi movement launched by Gandhi to promote locally produced goods and self-sufficiency. During the movement at least 30 clocks were manufactured by the company. The company shutdown in 1950.

Clocks manufactured by The Swadeshi Electric Clock Company

Karachi Metropolitan Corporation & Poona Bhai Clock Tower

Two clock towers in Karachi, the KMC clock tower (1930) and the Poona Bhai clock tower have machines manufactured by the Swadeshi Electric Clock company. The KMC's machine has been well maintained and fixed up by Saleem Bhai of English Workshop. The machine has been repainted a bright green and red and the clock is in perfect working condition. Meanwhile, the Poona Bhai Clock tower is in a neglected state. The machine was found to be rusted and covered in a thick layer of dust while the clock no longer functions.



The name of the manufacturer engraved on the machine of the Poona Bhai clock tower. The engraving reads 'Swadeshi Electric Clock Company, Bombay No.7.'

Ramkrishna Parmahansa Clock (1930)

The Ramkrishna Parmahansa clock is located at the Pune Municipal Corporation building in India however it was not always located there. The clock was made by Maruti Dattatraya Joshi alias Swami of Belur Math who was an electric engineer. It bears the picture of Ramkrishna Paramhans, Swami Vivekanand's guru, and also the name of the manufacturer Ms New Engineers, Swadeshi Electric Clock Company. The writing on the clock which mentioned 'Municipality House number 1, City Engineer', suggests that it must have been installed at the municipality office in Vishrambaug Wada. The Vishrambaug Wada is a mansion that exists in central Pune on Thorale Bajirao Road. It was the house of the last Peshwa of Maratha, Peshwa Bajirao II confederacy in the early nineteenth century. Today, the clock is in full working condition and fixed into the tower of the Pune Municipal Corporation building in the city of Pune, located in the Indian west-central state of Maharashtra.

Belagavi Pioneer Bank Clock Tower

Located on Kalmath Road in Belgaum (Belagavi), a city in the southwest Indian state of Karnataka, the Belagavi Pioneer Bank clock tower was built in 1939 by the bank. A clock, manufactured by Mumbai's Swadeshi Electric Clock Company, was installed in it 75 years ago and had been working ever since. The bank had employed a person to wind the clock once a week and keep it well maintained. The large bell in the tower was from John Tailor Company. However, in 2015, on orders of the Belagavi City Corporation, the clock tower was taken down in order to widen Kalmath Road to 45 feet and the antique clock was silenced forever.

Credits

A project of PCCC

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