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Finding traces of Indo-Saracenic architecture in the city

Published: 📅 Mar 23, 2019 ⌚ 07:15 AM by Arpitha Rao

The history of Madras is replete with fascinating characters — writers, builders, thinkers, traders, luminaries and rogues, freedom fighters and politicians, who changed the city's political milieu.



Shalini; Senate House of Madras University

Chennai: Join Madras Inherited, a tourism group that specialises in heritage education and awareness, on an expedition to revisit the remains of Indo-Saracenic architecture in the city.

Shalini, Head of Operations, Madras Inherited, elaborates about this form of architecture. “The Indo-Saracenic style is an amalgamation of Hindu and Muslim architecture that was introduced to Madras by

the British. It includes many designs and engravings we find in Hindu temples along with trademark Muslim designs such as onion-shaped domes and more,” she explains.

Certain other forms like Byzantine architecture in the Senate House, friezes, Corinthian columns, Madras terrace roof and more prove that Indo-Saracenic construction is a confluence of European, Muslim and Hindu style of architecture.

At the heritage walk happening on March 23, participants will mainly be shown three buildings — Presidency College, the Tamil Nadu Public Works Department and Senate House. She says, “All these buildings were constructed roughly between the 17th and 20th century. In addition to explaining about the architectural aspect, we’ll be talking a lot about the history of these buildings too.” The guides will also be touching upon urban design, spatial patterns and how the Marina beach came into being.

As for why they zeroed in only on these three buildings, Shalini replies, “Along Kamaraj Salai, these constructions are a beautiful indication of Indo-Saracenic architecture and one doesn’t see such magnificence anywhere else. They exist in a very fragmented fashion in the city, so you can’t see the three stages of this style in the same stretch anywhere else.”

For further details about the walk, contact 89391 35048 or visit Madras Inherited’s page on Facebook/Instagram

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