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Government of Madras.

Public Works DEPARTMENT.

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Dated 3 — 12 — 1857

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 14. Read the following letter from Colonel C. E. FABER, Chief Engineer; to H. FORBES, Esq., Acting Secretary to Government, dated 30th November 1857, No. 5588.

SIR,

The Judges of the Sudder Udalut having reported their opinion of the Court House being in an unsafe state, instructions were given to the Civil Architect to examine the building, who having complied with this order furnished a report, copy of which is herewith submitted, in which he states that "he does not share in the alarm as to the state of the building" but in proceeding to point out its condition, he mentions facts which appear to me to justify a different conclusion.

1 Copy of letter from Civil Architect No. 605, dated 10th November 1857.

1 Do. " do. From Major Lawford, No. 240, dated 24th November 1857.

2. Colonel Atkinson considers that the cracks which he specifies are due to the nature of the sub-soil, but thinks some effect may be produced by two tanks in the compound, and on the whole "does not consider there can be any absolute danger."

3. The Civil Architect having suggested the examination of the Court House by some other Officer, Major Lawford was requested to inspect it, and that Officer taking a different view of its condition, regards it "as being in a dangerous state and liable to suffer most serious injury from a severe storm."

4. Major Lawford agrees with Colonel Atkinson, in ascribing the cracks to the nature of the soil, and weakness of the foundation, which is only 4 feet deep.

5. My own opinion coincides with that of Major Lawford, so far that I consider the building unsafe, and I would recommend that arrangements should if possible be made for providing other accommodation for the Court, pending a final decision as to the measures to be adopted.

Letter from Colonel W. H. ATKINSON, Civil Architect, Presidency Division; to Colonel C. E. FABER, Chief Engineer, dated 10th November 1857, No. 605.

SIR,

In obedience to your orders, as conveyed in the Extract of your Proceedings No. 4756, of the 27th Ultimo, with copy of the letter of the day before from the Judges of the Sudder Udalut to yourself, complaining of "the dangerous state of that building in their opinion, and that it can no longer they consider be occupied with safety," I have the honor to state from frequent inspections of the Sudder Court House for years past and subsequently also to the receipt of their letter, I do not share in their alarm as to the state of the building; the walls are cracked certainly in many places, but not in my opinion to any dangerous extent, say from $\frac{1}{8}$ to a $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch at the most, the walls $19\frac{1}{4}$ feet high and 2 feet thick on the east side show 2 inches out of the perpendicular, a declension which might partly have existed from the first, as the house was originally private property and was built by the native owner some 30 years ago, and not all at once but in 3 separate portions, which may or may not have been well bound together when hurry and cheapness, and not durability were probably the chief considerations. Some of the Verandah pillars on the upper story are cracked through, at $2\frac{1}{2}$ or 3 feet from the floor, and to a depth of $\frac{1}{16}$th to $\frac{1}{8}$th of an inch, and on measuring the inclination from the perpendicular I find it to be 1 inch.

2. The roof also on the south east angle and also at the south end of the Porte Cochere, had also a nasty crack as much as $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide; the last one owing to the disruption of the southern portion of the building from the rest. In fact all the cracks are in the southern portion, the northern being at present free from them.

3. The lower story of the centre part of the building is of brick and clay, while the upper story and the wings are of brick and chunam throughout. The foundation of the centre portion is also of brick and clay, while of the wings it is of brick in chunam and 4 feet deep every where exclusive of basement of the same depth, although now filled up to about half its height with the successive gravellings found necessary time after time.

4. I have always attributed this cracking of the building to the nature of the sub-soil, which from the excavations that have been made is of a pure black, unctuous clay, without any admixture of sand, and is therefore affected by atmospheric changes, as shewn by ground cracks that in the season of draught not only cause the ground outside to open, but the floor within, and this I have no doubt affects the walls and roof &c., in other words is the origin of the whole mischief. But still I do not consider there can be any absolute danger, with the roof of good teak timber and plenty of it, with no lateral pressure from arches or sloping roofs, and with what has been done to it, within the last 3 years viz. building arcades of masonry between the verandah pillars on the lower story to distribute more the weight of it, doing the like in the upper story by means of arched wooden frame work, raising a portion of the roof on the south side of the building which had originally been built two or three feet lower than the rest and so forming a regular tank from which the water that collected in it from other parts of the roof had only one exit, putting water trunks all round the building for the purpose of leading the water from it gently away into 3 or 4 tanks inside the compound by means of covered drainage, and a pavement encompasssing the building, all which were done with a view of saving the building as much as possible.

5. Although perhaps the nature of the sub-soil which evidently nothing was done to improve at first, may be sufficient to account for all this cracking, yet I have often thought the presence of these tanks of a considerable size in the compound not many yards from the building must have had an injurious effect in the course of time, as it strikes me the water from the tanks may percolate through the ground cracks, or other natural fissures, and so soften or affect in some way the clayey sub-soil below the foundation, in which case the building resting on the foundation might be injured in the way it shews itself.

6. But this I merely offer as an opinion without pretending to affirm it. The 3 tanks I understand were excavated simultaneously with the building itself for the purpose of furnishing the material for the bricks.

7. Notwithstanding this report of mine, I trust you will nominate some other officer whom you may consider competent to furnish his own report independent of this, for the better satisfaction of the Sudder Judges, doubtless the most effectual way of remedying the evil would be to pull down and re-build the disrupted southern portion. But at the present time of Financial pressure I am unwilling to recommend such a step, which would cost in round numbers some ten thousand Rupees, using old materials and which in ten or more years in such unfavorable soil might become just as bad as now, as it would be only patching after all, and not homogeneous work.

8. In the mean time without waiting for actual orders, I have been repairing the roof to resist the weather to the utmost.

Letter from Major E. LAWFORD, Superintending Engineer in charge of Central Circle; to Colonel C. E. FABER, Chief Engineer, dated 24th November 1857, No. 210.

SIR,

With reference to your instructions of the 11th Instant, I have the honor to report, that having carefully inspected the Sudder Court House, I am unable to concur in the Civil Architect's opinion of the unimportant nature of the dilapidations that Building exhibits; but on the contrary I consider it in a dangerous state, and liable to suffer most serious injury from a severe storm.

2. The cracks are on one side of an alarming kind and so recent in their appearance, that it is impossible to say how far they may eventually extend. The wall 40 feet high from basement to coping of parapet, is 3 inches out of the perpendicular.

3. You will be at no loss to account for these injuries, when you consider the very faulty nature of the foundations, which are only 4 feet deep, resting on treacherous clay, which has shrunk under successive seasons of drought, and caused the settlement of the building, which is far too heavy for such weak support. In fact, I am quite at a loss to understand, how the Court House could have become Government property under such circumstances of construction.

4. The College is another instance of the dangerous character of the Madras Soil; and I find that the partial remedy of laying sand in a trench around the foundations which was adopted in 1855, has failed in that building.

5. There are cracks reported in the house lately purchased for the Commissioner of Police, but the Civil Architect considers them of no great importance at present.

6. My own local experience is much less than that of Colonel Atkinson, but my general knowledge would certainly lead me to declare the Sudder Court House no longer fit for occupation, and incapable of effectual repair, owing to defective foundation.

No. 15. ORDER THEREON, No. 2245; dated 3rd December 1857.

The Chief Engineer will be good enough to make immediate enquiry for temporary accommodation for the Sudr Court, in communication with the Judges, and to submit an Estimate for the repairs wanted to the Court House.

(Signed) H. FORBES,
Acting Secretary to Government.

№ 605 Civil Architect's Office

From,
Colonel W. H. Atkinson,
Civil Architect P.W.D.

To,
The Chief Engineer in the D. P. W.
Fort Saint George.

Sir,

In obedience to your orders, as conveyed in the Extract of your Proceedings №1756, of the 27th ultimo, with copy of the letter of the days before from the Judges of the Sudr Adalat to yourself, complaining of "the dangerous state of that building in their opinion, and that it can no longer they consider be occupied with safety", I have the honor to state from frequent inspections of the Sudr Court House for years past and subsequently also to the receipt of their letter, I do not share in their alarm as to the state of the building; the walls are cracked certainly in many places, but not in my opinion to any dangerous extent, say from 1/8th to a 1/4 of an inch at the most; the walls 19 1/4 feet high and 2 feet thick on the east side show 2 inches out of the perpendicular, a declension which might partly have existed from the first, as the house was originally private property and was built by the native owner some 30 years

it from other parts of the roof had only one exit, putting water trunks all round the building for the purpose of leading the water from it gently away into 3 or 4 tanks inside the compound by means of covered drainage, and a pavement encompasing the building- all which were done with a view of saving the building as much as possible.

5 Although perhaps the nature of the Sub Soil which evidently nothing was done to improve at first, may be Sufficient to account for all this cracking, Yet I have often thought the presence of these tanks of a considerable Size in the compound not many yards from the building must have had an injurious effect in the course of time. as it strikes me the water from the tanks may percolate through the ground cracks, or other natural fissures, and so soften or affect in some way the clayey Subsoil below the foundation, in which case the building resting on the foundation might be injured in the way it shews itself—

6 But this I merely offer as an opinion without pretending to affirm it- The 3 tanks I understand were excavated simultaneously with the building itself for the purpose of furnishing the material for the bricks.

7 Notwithstanding this report of mine I trust you will nominate some other Officer whom you may consider competent to furnish his own Report independent of this, for the better Satisfaction of the Under Judges. Doubtless the most effectual way of remedying the evil would be to pull down and rebuild the disrupted Southern portion But at the present time of financial pressure I am unwilling to recommend such a step, which would cost in round numbers some ten thousand Rupees, using old materials and which in ten or more years in such unfavorable Soil might become just as bad as now, as it would be only patching after all, and not a homogeneous work. —

8 In the mean time without waiting for actual orders, I have been repairing the roof to resist the weather to the utmost. —

I have &c—
Signed/ W. H. Atkinson
Colonel. Civil Architect
&c &c.

Civil Architect's Office, Pantheon Road,
Madras, 18th November 1857.

/ A True Copy /
H. E. Chester Colonel.
Chief Engineer.

Encs.

Central Office of P. W.

No 240. Fort Saint George,

24th November 1857.

From,

Major E. Lawford,

Superintending Engineer

in charge of Central Circle.

To,

Colonel C E Faber,

Chief Engineer D. P. W.

Sir,

With reference to your instructions of this instant, I have the honor to report, that having carefully inspected the Sudr Court House, I am unable to concur in the Civil Architect's opinion of the unimportant nature of the dilapidations that Building exhibits; but on the contrary I consider it in a dangerous state, and liable to suffer most serious injury from a severe Storm.

2 The cracks are on one side of an alarming kind and so recent in their appearance, that it is impossible to say how far they may eventually extend.

Enclosure in a letter from the Chief Engineer to the Secretary to Government, P.W.D.

Date 30th November 1857

Rec'd 1st December 1857

No 5338

P.W. Despatch 1/12/57

Copy of a letter from the Civil Architect P.W.D.

(Reporting on the cracks of the building occupied as the Sudr Court House.)

extend. The wall 40 feet high from basement to coping of parapet, is 3 inches out of the perpendicular.

3 You will be at no loss to account for these injuries, when you consider the very faulty nature of the foundations, which are only 5 feet deep, resting on treacherous clay, which has shrunk under successive seasons of drought, and caused the settlement of the building, which is far too heavy for such weak support. In fact, I am quite at a loss to understand, how the Court house could have become Government property under such circumstances of construction.

4 The College is another instance of the dangerous character of the Madras soil; and I find that the partial remedy of laying sand in a trench around the foundations which was adopted in 1855, has failed in that building.

5 There are cracks reported in the house lately purchased for the Commissioner of Police, but the Civil Architect considers them of no great importance at present.

6 My own local experience is much less than that of Colonel Atkinson, but my general knowledge would certainly lead me to declare the Ludr. Court House no longer fit for occupation and incapable of effectual repair, owing to defective foundations.

I have &c

(Signed) E Lawford Major

In charge of C & C

The Chief Engineer B. P. W.

A true Copy

A.D.C. Lieut Colonel.

Chief Engineer

Encl. B.

Central Office of Public Works,
Fort Saint George,
30 November 1857.

Judicial

No. 5588.

From,
The Chief Engineer.

To,
The Secretary to Government P.W.D.

Sir,

The Judges of the Sudr Adawlut having reported their opinion of the Court House being in an unsafe state, instructions were given to the Civil Architect to examine the Building, who having complied with this order furnished a Report, copy of which is herewith submitted, in which he states that "he does not share in the Alarm as to the state of the building" but in proceeding to point out its condition, he mentions facts which appear to me to justify a different conclusion.

2 Colonel Atkinson considers that the cracks which he specifies are due to the nature of the subsoil, but thinks some effect may be produced by two tanks in the compound and on the whole does not consider there can be any absolute danger.

3 The Civil Architect having suggested the examination

Enclosure in a letter from the Chief Engineer to the Secretary to Government P.W.D.
Dated 30th November 1857.
Received 3rd December 1857.
No. 5588.

Copy of a letter from the Superintending Engineer in charge of Central Circle
Reporting on the present condition of the Sudr Court Buildings.

examination of the Court House by some other Officer, Major Lawford was requested to inspect it, and that Officer taking a different view of its condition, Regards it "as being in a dangerous state and liable to suffer most serious injury from a Severe Storm."

4 Major Lawford agrees with Colonel Atkinson, in ascribing the cracks to the nature of the Soil, and weakness of the foundation, which is only 4 feet deep.

5 My own opinion coincides with that of Major Lawford, so far that I consider the building unsafe, and I would recommend that arrangements should if possible be made for providing other accommodation for the Court, pending a final decision as to the measures to be adopted.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Your most Obt. Servt.

Central Office of P. W.
Fort Saint George,
30 November 1857.

A. G. Fisher Colonel
Chief Engineer.

To,
The Secretary to Government P. W. D.

Encls.

Pub: Works 1857 Department.
D.to Cons 8th December
No 2370.

From The Chief Engineer.

To, The Secretary to Government
P. W. D.

Dated 30th November 1857.
Received 1st Dec.

No 5388.

Encl: 1st Lieut/58 No 4684/7 Lud: Sch: 8/58
Encl: 19 Lieut/58 No 4684/7
Forwards 2 Reports one from Majr. Lawford and another from the Civil Architect, on the present Condition of the Ludr Grant Buildings and states that he agrees with the former on considering them unsafe, arrangements may be made for providing other accommodation for the Court pending a final decision as to the measures to be adopted. No 2245. 3d Dec. With an Order

Encl in the Ludr Dept/c
D/20 Lieut/58 C/No 217 inform
9 Feb.

No 14415.

No 2245.

The Chief Engineer will be good enough to make immediate enquiry for temporary accommodation for the Lords Court, in communication with the Judges, and to submit an Estimate for the repairs wanted to the Court House

Fort St George
3d Dec. 1857

Copied to the Chief Engr. Dist.