NORTH WEST CONSORTIUM DOCTORAL TRAINING PARTNERSHIP

UKRI Arts and Humanities Research Council

Standard Application form for students applying for a +2 or +3 studentship in the Arts and Humanities

(September 2022 entry)

1. Studentship applied for (please tick):

☐ +2 (PhD - current students)

☒ +3 (PhD)

2. Ring fenced studentship you wish to be considered for (please tick):

☒ Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)

3. Institution in which you have been offered a place/or have applied to:

☐ Lancaster University   ☒ University of Liverpool   ☐ University of Manchester

☐ Manchester Metropolitan University   ☐ Keele University   ☐ University of Salford

☐ Royal Northern College of Music

4. Candidate's details:

Name:	
Application / Registration number:	

Address:	
Town:	
Postcode:	
Country:	
Telephone:	
Email address:	
Nationality/Resident Status:	☐ UK National ☐ UK Settled status ☐ EU National not resident in the UK ☐ EU National resident in the UK for the past three years ☒ Other

5. Project details:

Mode of Attendance ☒   a. Full time   ☐   b. Part time

Pathway:	Heritage
Institution:	University of Liverpool

Project title (+2/+3):	Decoding Mumbai's Art Deco Dwellings (1930s-50s): Modernity, Hybridity, and Postcolonial Identities in late-colonial Architecture of Mumbai

6. PhD Proposal (to be completed by all students):

6a) Please provide between 6 and 10 keywords that describe your research

Bombay Deco	UK-trained Indian Architects
Postcolonial Applications	British Architects in Bombay
Critical Historiography	Contested Heritage
Hybridity in Architecture	Identity in Architecture
Indigenous Modernity	Modernization

6b) Please describe the proposed research using up to 1,500 words, referring to the guidance. Include a word count.

Introduction:

Mumbai's Architecture in the late-colonial period was an active proponent of intense socio-cultural changes by playing a crucial role in forming colonial spatial relations, reflecting and/or contesting modernities and their rationalities, including/excluding groups and empowering identities. Shifting from colonial Imperialism to postcolonial modernism, how did Mumbai's Architecture represent these transformations? How did architecture promote Indians' self-determination and decolonization in the face of colonial hegemony? How did buildings reflect the notions of modernity, national identity, shifting power and progress?

Broadly examining how these notions were shaped/re-shaped in Mumbai's built-environment and later focusing on Indian architects and Bombay Improvement Trust's low-rise middle-class (Art Deco-styled) housing in suburban Mumbai neighbourhood, the project aims to create a decolonial 'hybrid' narrative in opposition to the imperial 'urban history of Bombay'.

The 1930s-50s saw industrialization, nationalism, a rise in education and wealth among Indians, and the birth of the architectural profession. Many UK-trained Indian architects experimented with Art Deco to show modernism (Gandhi, 2019). Not only the grand buildings but the humble dwellings and self-contained flats built by Bombay Improvement Trust (BIT) for middle-class Indians, like Belvedere Apartments and Vilherville Bungalow, reflected this style. Mumbai's architecture and planning represented modernity by using new materials, functionality, a character away from traditional Indian or Victorian and a new promise of a different, independent future (Sorabjee, 2019). Additionally, Lau suggests Bombay Art Deco reflected *"Empowerment and Resistance"* (Lau, 2011).

As Bhabha discusses when colonisers dominate or appropriate the colonised, the latter rarely subjugates; instead, they re-appropriate themselves, using *"Hybridity"* (Bhabha, 1994), similar to Pratt's "transculturation." Hybridity is not simply an intermixing of two cultures but rather a re-orientation of spaces by colonised in a subversive manner to create *"resistant, opaque and dissonant exchanges"* leading to forming 'third space/autoethnographic expressions' (Beattie, 2005). With many Indians attending J.J. School of Architecture, working in British firms, getting trained in the U.K., and at the same time Mumbai's Parsi and Anglo-Indian families attaining more power and showing passive-resistance against colonialism, *anti-colonial Hybridity* in dwellings became more conspicuous (Evenson, 1989; Mukherjee, 2017). It can be seen in the building's facade and iconography (Indianized motifs), socio-spatial practises (use of verandahs, having personal toilets) and the politics among BIT,

government and the community (Parsi businessmen acquiring coveted lands, workers' unions, Backbay Reclamation).

This adds to architectural, historical and social value to Art Deco buildings and with many of them being undocumented, unappreciated and demolished, the research becomes more topical.

Literature Review:

Significant literature which focuses on complex, hybrid and heterogenous interpretations of Indian colonial architecture emerged in the 1990s by Kidambi, Chattopadhyay, and Hosagrahar. Inspired by Hybridity, a significant imperative is Chattopadhyay's focus on Modernity and Nationalism in her analysis of Calcutta. She observes buildings as "text" and explains how spaces are co-produced from various spatial and social practices (Chattopadhyay, 2005). Such an approach breaks the coloniser-colonised polarities and encourages overlapping identities, as used by other post-colonial thinkers like Wright, Bozdogan, and Vale. Further, Beattie's thesis on Calcutta is the closest study of analysing Hybridity in an Indian everyday setting and Rao's 'House, But no Garden' focusing on BIT housing, inspire this research.

Seminal work which connects Art Deco Architecture with Post-colonial theories includes Lau, Georgio, Denison, and Freschi. Each of the works focuses on creating critical historiography and multiple modernities (Denison, 2019; Freschi, 1997). The most recent scholarship on Mumbai's Art Deco through a post-colonial perspective is Lau's paper "Contesting Imperialism in Modern Architecture: British India", where she infers Art Deco as *"a decisive reaction against imperialism,"* if not being anti-colonial (Lau, 2011). Later, she analysed Art Deco in Hong Kong as a style of Modernity, Appropriation and Empowerment by pointing out that it was not *passive* or *innocent* and was a style of contestation because of the invisible politics and power dynamics among the architects, the patrons, and the local community (Lau, 2016). Her views resonate with Georgio's in his thesis where he examines underlying politics behind Filipino Art Deco, using Datuin's *Critical Categories* as a tool where categories of 'Modes of Production', 'Representation' and 'Power' acts as themes to analyse Art Deco, which is an essential methodological precedent to this research (Georgio, 2003).

Nonetheless, the scholarship on Mumbai's Art Deco concentrates mainly on grand buildings or stylistic analysis, ignoring the how and why of architecture and the contribution of Indian architects in creating spatial cultures of Identity and Modernity, thus offering a research gap.

Research Questions:

1. Does the production of architecture in the late-colonial Mumbai reinforces/challenges the notions of self, progress, and national identity?

2.   How was international Art Deco appropriated by policies, patrons, BIT, and architects to fit the city's needs and create a 'hybrid space'?

3.   Can Mumbai's Art Deco Architecture be interpreted as a manifestation of Appropriation, Modernity, and Post-colonial Empowerment?

Aim:

The research would investigate how Mumbai's Art Deco Architecture was shaped by Indian agents to respond to various political, social, and nationalistic demands during the late-colonial period. Focusing on Art Deco dwellings built between 1930-47 by UK-trained Indian architects and BIT, the research aims to create critical historiography of 'indigenous modernity', which connects the materials, process, design and patronage of buildings with broader socio-economic-political issues. It dialogically engages how individual dwellings' spatial practises and design are related to the wider networks of practices and ideas on 'modernization'.

Methodology:

A qualitative research strategy is planned in distinct phases:

Phase I

A scholarship review on 'Architectural production and politics, identity, and modernity' and Art Deco principles will be done. Literature on post-colonial critiques focusing on architecture will be reviewed. These will be combined to form critical themes that will comprehend the adaptation and transformation of Bombay Architecture, resulting in an interpretative **framework** of strategies and tools used by Mumbai's policy-makers, architects and the local community.

Phase II

Historical research to create a **narrative** on 'Mode of Production'. Sources include:

- Government Publications: Reports of Bombay Plague Committee, Bombay Improvement Trust, Development Plan of Greater Bombay, Administration Reports of Commissioner of the City of Bombay; Gazetteer of The Bombay Presidency, The Gazetteer of Bombay city and Islands, and Maharashtra State Gazetteers, obtained from India Office Records at the British Library, National Archives(Richmond), SOAS Library, Maharashtra State Archives, Asiatic Society, and National Archives(India).

- Literature: Officers' accounts, native accounts, biographies, travelogues, family histories.

- Non-official publication: The Indian Antiquary, The Builder periodicals; The Times of India Newspapers; Construction Manuals, 1925 Paris Exposition Catalogues, 1938 British Empire Exhibition Catalogues.

Phase III

A case study research will be undertaken to study buildings as "(Pratt's) autoethnographic expression." 5-7 case studies will be taken from a single Mumbai neighbourhood to gather similarities/dissimilarities in the building's design (plan, sections, elevations), form, elements and iconography. Data collection modes include document analysis, archival research, fieldwork observations, stakeholder interviews, measured drawings, sketching and photo-documentation. The data obtained will be assessed in a matrix of 'Bombay Deco' attributes to create a **catalogue** of the case studies.

Phase IV

The aforementioned phases of research will be combined with a 'decolonial psychoanalytical reading' of buildings as results of "transculturation" and Bombay as "contact zone" (as done by Chattopadhyay, Pratt and McClintock) to create an **interpretation** of social practices, perception and use of space to understand 'Power.' This will eventually lead to a complete picture of Post-colonial transformation in Mumbai's Art Deco concluding the research.

Timeline:

Sept-Dec 2022(Phase I): Literature Review, Auditing 'Research Methodologies' and 'Postcolonial Geographies' module

Jan-Jul 2023: Archival Research, Conceptual Framework

Aug-Dec 2023(Phase II): Archival Research, Fieldwork I

Jan-Aug 2024(Phase III): Fieldwork II, Case Study analyses/cataloguing, Thesis Outline

Sept 2024-Mar2025(Phase IV): Internship, Full Draft/Feedback

Aug 2025: Submission

Relevance:

The research is envisioned to add to the histories of 20th-century Architecture, Indian Modern Architecture, and Art Deco. Built on the intersection of Architecture, History and Postcolonialism, the thesis will contribute to the burgeoning discourses on Architecture History in Global South, serve as a basis for future interdisciplinary studies, and encourage emerging architects to question western dominance on architectural historiography.

This PhD is not limited to a new scholarship but is also impact-driven. It involves cataloguing and determining Art Deco buildings' cultural significance, encouraging conservation of mundane yet historic buildings in rapidly-urbanising Mumbai. Furthermore, Britain and India's shared heritage can lead to bilateral relationships like Asia-Scotland Trust, Charles Wallace Trust, and UKIERI, and strengthen the historical relationship through conservation.

References:

Beattie, M. (2005)*The Marketplace as Hybrid Space"*Dissertation.University of Newcastle,2005.

Bhabha, H.K. (1994)*The Location of Culture*,Routledge.

Chattopadhyay,S. (2005)*Representing Calcutta:Modernity, nationalism, and colonial uncanny*,Routledge.

Denison, E.(2019) "Art Deco and the Other." =*The Routledge Companion to Art Deco*,pp.293–313.

Evenson, N.(1989)"Modern Planning and Colonial City."In *Indian Metropolis: view towards West.*Yale University Press,pp.132.

Freschi, F.(2019) "Art Deco, Modernity, and Politics of Ornament in SouthAfrican Architecture"*The Routledge Companion to ArtDeco*,pp.253–70.

Gandhi, T.N.(2019)*Art Deco: BombayStyle*. Available: https://www.artdecomumbai.com/research/art-deco-bombay-style/[Accessed December 16, 2021].

Gregorio, C.E.R.(2003)"ArtDeco Filipino: Power, Politics and Ideology in PhilippineArt Deco."Dissertation,University of Cincinnati,2003.

Lau, L.K.P.(2011) "Contesting Imperialism in Modern Architecture"*International Journal of Humanities*,9,pp.73–80.

Lau, L.K.P.(2016)"Self-fashioned Identities"*Post-colonial Text*,11(3).

McClintock, A.(1954)Imperial Leather. New York:Routledge.

Pratt, M.L(1992)"Imperial Eyes"Routledge.

Sorabjee, M.(2019) "Swadeshi Moderne:Aesthetics,Politics & Appropriation in Bombay'sDeco."*Art DecoMumbai*.

(Wordcount:1499)

6c) Please provide information on how the proposed research and postgraduate training will contribute to your career development (max 250 words)

After my doctorate, I would share my research findings with relevant stakeholders: Mumbai Metropolitan Area, INTACH-UK, Urban Design Research Institute (UDRI), and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), leading to Knowledge-Exchanges. The setting of North-West will help me familiarize with heritage/cultural organizations- Liverpool World Heritage, English Heritage, Heritage Lottery Fund, BL and National Museum(Delhi), where I will look for placements.

My long-term goal is to pursue teaching and research at an academic institution, where I shall apply my enhanced academic ability and professional networks to publish papers based on my PhD. I will attempt to incorporate my research's learnings to inspire quality work among students. As an architect, I aim to form a Conservation Paradigm in rapidly-urbanizing Asian and African countries- the research area

where both my supervisors work. I plan to expand the boundaries of heritage to more humble architectural works like housing. Plus, I would use a 3-step method of Research, Design and Implementation, to provide sustainable architectural solutions in historic environments, working along with state and private actors.

Finally, I shall try to create partnerships among institutions in both India and UK to conserve the 'shared heritage' of the two nations and thereby enhance the nations' links. Many Indian architects have trained in conservation in the UK and worked on significant colonial buildings. Research at the University of Liverpool has focused on the heritage of Kolkata, Mysore, and the Ganges. My proposed research on Mumbai will help to conserve yet another great example of British overseas heritage.

6d) Please provide information on how the proposed research engages with issues relating to Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, and Sustainability (max 100 words)

The research endeavours to achieve representations of 'Modernism of the East' and 'Multiple Histories', which the West have historically subdued. It engages with 'Diversity and Inclusion' by finding values of under-researched Mumbai's middle-class Parsi and Anglo-Indian communities and examining the heritage of under-represented, mundane domestic spaces.

Such research will be embedded in policy and practice by helping professional bodies like MMR, ASI, and stakeholders, manage and conserve the historic buildings accurately and strengthen the community-institution-policymaker partnership. Furthermore, Conservation itself is regarded as sustainable as the process is cost-effective, use less energy, opposes sprawl and provides employment (leading to SDG 11).

6e) Please provide information on how the proposed research might be undertaken should the COVID-19 pandemic continue (max 100 words)

The first year is dedicated to extensive literature review based on primary sources (online archives of British Library, SOAS Library, Maharashtra State Archives and Asiatic Society Bombay) and secondary sources which are desktop-based in Liverpool. Physical visits to the archives in India have been shifted to the second year.

Should the pandemic continue, surveys and interviews with World Heritage Manager, planning bodies, metropolitan authorities, and residents will be done. Fieldwork has already been scheduled for the 2nd year. In the worst-case scenario, the catalogue and mapping can be still be done using Google Street

| | Images and online archives. |

7. Qualifications:

Year awarded	Qualification type	Qualification Subject	Awarding institution	Level	Class
2019	Bachelor of Architecture	Architecture	Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee	Bachelors	First
2021	MSc Architectural Conservation	Architectural Conservation	The University of Edinburgh	Masters	Distinction
Description:					

8. Relevant Experience: (max 350 words)

Description of relevant experience:	During my Bachelor's, I worked on a project where I did architectural surveys and archival research on the building crafts of Uttarakhand. Along with a faculty, I presented a paper on this at an international conference, which was funded by the institute research-travel fund. This influenced my undergraduate thesis, where I used a culture-led design approach and historic knowledge systems to propose a traditional market design in Delhi, which involved extensive interviews with communities. I received the Institute Thesis Prize and got the second departmental rank, which reinforced my beliefs on the significance of studying historic buildings.

I attended workshops/seminars by eminent Indian architects and organisations like Aga Khan Trust, which shaped my perspective. Therefore, I interned in INTACH, India's leading conservation firm. I worked on Heritage-Impact Assessments and |

documentation on British Colonial buildings like Allahabad High Court. This helped me get skilled in sketching, measuring drawings, photography, archival research, photo-editing, and drafting in AutoCAD and ArcGIS. When I became a licensed architect, I used these skills to work on residential projects. Later, I received a research fellowship where I did empirical surveys and interviews to document Intangible heritage in Himachal Pradesh.

I was awarded a fully-funded Commonwealth Scholarship to study in the UK. I learned teamwork while working with international students from different backgrounds and refined my research skills. Later, I demonstrated my learnings when I started working part-time architect intern in DRONAH, a Gurgaon-based conservation firm and worked on the adaptive reuse of a building. After graduation, I started working as a research editor at 'India Lost and Found, where I write and publish online articles on unlisted built heritage to generate awareness among the local community. I also became part of networks like ESACH and Europa Nostra to stay updated.

Because of my interest in Art Deco, while working on my master dissertation, I am planning to work with 'Art Deco Mumbai Trust' and conduct heritage walks, which will be useful for my PhD. With my professional and academic experience, I wish to bring conversations on cultural sustainability and East-West culture heritage to the NWCDTP cohort.

9. Supervision

Please propose up to 3 prospective supervisors for your PhD:

Institution	Supervisor
University of Liverpool	
University of Liverpool	

10. Research Training previously undertaken (max 250 words for this section)

10a) Please give details of the Masters programme and research training undertaken previously:

The Master's programme emphasised the understanding and the challenges of recording and conserving the built heritage. I worked on academic projects like 'Urban Conservation of Edinburgh New Town' and 'Heritage-Impact Analysis in Bath'. Both of which are World Heritage Sites which helped me learn their mechanism, assessment and management, which will be helpful when I work on the WHS of Mumbai's Art Deco Ensemble.

Moreover, courses like 'Modern Indian Architecture,' and 'Society, Culture and Built-Environment' in my bachelor's degree, 'Architectural Theory and World Views' short course led by RWTH Aachen, has helped me gather skills to conduct field survey, use archives and analyse data using many tools.

10b) Relevance of Masters and other previous training to your PhD project:

The Masters and the Commonwealth Scholarship family/network provided interpersonal and academic interactions, which helped me develop credible networks with international students and professionals across disciplines of history, geography, architecture and engineering, who possessed expertise in quality research. My qualifications have helped me develop transferable skills of transdisciplinary teamwork, research and dissemination (I presented and published two papers at international conferences). Such learnings will help me conduct my research in Liverpool more productively.

My Master's Dissertation on "Art Deco of Bombay through a postcolonial perspective," for which I received a distinction, developed and polished my critical thinking on Indian Architecture, using inter-disciplinary methods. My PhD will make use of the pilot study, preliminary data collection and networking with academicians and archives in India regarding Art Deco, now tried and tested in the Master's academic context.

11. Research Training needs (max 250 words for this section)

11a) Please give details of the anticipated research training needed for your PhD project, including difficult language training:

I would take MA modules: 'Postcolonial Geographies' and 'Research Methodology,' to develop relevant knowledge. For my personal development, I would train for 'Critical Thinking' to evaluate the quality of my and others' work and 'Problem Solving' to interpret my results. For Professional Development, I wish to get skilled in Outreach to effectively communicate my research to a non-specialised audience.

In order to align my research's focus to that of LSA, I wish to be a part of the 'Centre for the Study of Architecture and Cultural Heritage of India, Arabia and Maghreb', led by my secondary supervisor and 'Architectural and Urban History Group' and 'Transnational Architecture' Forum/Blog led by my primary supervisor. Both these richly-diverse groups emphasise heritage through an interdisciplinary perspective, which can provide me with international intellectual support. Both my supervisors are experts in Indian Architecture and are currently running heritage-related projects in India, which is in line with my research.

11b) Please give details of the kind of resources you will potentially need during your PhD. Please also indicate whether your research project will require you to undertake research abroad.

Using NWCDTP Training opportunities, I wish to work as a research fellow in 'National Museum Institute, Delhi' through the International Placement Scheme. My second priority is to work on East-West exchanges in 'The Oriental and India Office Collection, BL' through BL Placement Scheme.

I also wish to conduct fieldwork for documentation in Mumbai(2 months) and London(3 months).

The year 2025 will be the centenary of *Paris Exposition '25* which instigated Art Deco. 'World Congress Art Deco 2025', organized by the International Coalition of Art Deco Societies, will be an excellent opportunity to share my research.

12. Collaboration with External Partners (max 250 words for this section)

12a) Is this or does it have the potential to be a collaborative PhD? If so, give the name of the partner organisation, and describe the planned collaboration. Indicate what discussions you have so far had with the partner organisation. You must also attach a letter from the partner organisation indicating its support in principle.

12b) Please give details of any potential collaboration you may plan to develop with external organisations during your PhD programme (industry, cultural organisation, government bodies etc…), including possible placements.

Two strategic partners who can lead to potential collaboration are Tate Liverpool and the British Library. Tate Liverpool has organised exhibitions like "Legacies of Empire" and "Artist and Empire", which are similar to my proposed research. There is a potential to work with curators and researchers and use Tate Liverpool to hold an exhibition during my PhD final year. Tate Exchange, an open experiment by Tate Liverpool, also offers space for the University of Liverpool students to host events. Likewise, the British Library holds many books, manuscripts, government publications, and reports on Mumbai and India during colonial rule. These resources plus expertise from BL will not only help my PhD but will lead to academic collaborations between Liverpool School of Architecture and BL and help me get valuable training as a researcher.

International potential partners can be the National Museum Institute, Delhi and Maharashtra State Archives, Mumbai which are repositories of manuscripts, travelogues and reports of Colonial Mumbai. Such collaboration has the potential to create cross-cultural value for internationally collaborative and connected research.

Another potential partner can be 'Art Deco Mumbai Trust', based in Mumbai, a non-profit organisation that organises exhibitions, guided tours, outreach programmes, creates inventories, and maps Art Deco style buildings in Greater Mumbai. ADMT can provide space to connect with communities in Mumbai and policymakers of Mumbai Metropolitan Authority, where I can share findings of my research to create impact and fulfill my professional aspirations, leading to people-based Knowledge Exchange Activities of NWCDTP.

13. Additional Applications

☐ Have you been nominated for or applied for any other studentship this year?

If yes, please provide details:

☐ Have you previously been enrolled onto a PhD programme?

If yes, please provide details:

14. References / Transcripts

☒ Your institution will need to attach two references and your transcript(s) from your programme application to this application form.

15. How did you hear about us?

Please let us know how you have heard about the NWCDTP and its studentships:

AHRC Website and University of Liverpool Website

16. Acknowledgement

I confirm that the information I have provided in this form is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge at this date. I fully understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the relevant forms are submitted to the relevant office in due time and that any missing information may render my application incomplete and ineligible. I authorise the North West Consortium DTP to disclose to the AHRC any information that is relevant to my application.

Signature: **(Type Name if submitted electronically)**	
Date:	26.12.2021