

## Conserving Built Railway Heritage: Need for a New Approach

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### Abstract

Railways form an integral part of achievements of the Industrial age that changed the notions of distance, time and space, and led to progress and development. Running the railways involved huge infrastructure, including laying the railway lines to build railway stations. Railway stations today form a major aspect of built railway heritage, and manifest the intelligent combination of technology, beauty and function. New innovative techniques were adopted in constructing the stations. These stations were designed as landmarks in the city in which they were built. The study of built railway heritage is important not only as industrial heritage, but also as sites preserving cultural heritage. Many stations were built in styles of architecture current at the time and incorporated the art, aesthetic elements of the period. The significance of railway stations extends beyond the industrial and cultural heritage given the living paradigm associated with them. Many originally built stations are still in use, and have evolved over time incorporating the changing needs. The urban context surrounding these places has changed, the flow of traffic has expanded, and movement of people and goods has multiplied. The evolving nature of these places also has a role to play in shaping the significance of built railway heritage. Understanding their significance thus requires a pluralistic approach to comprehend the complexity and layering they offer. This research establishes the need for a new approach to assess significance of built railway heritage in India through a case study of Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (CST), situated in the city of Mumbai. This is hoped to form a base for future communication, management and conservation decisions for building railway heritage.

**Key Words:** *Railway heritage, Railway stations, Significance assessment, Conservation*

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