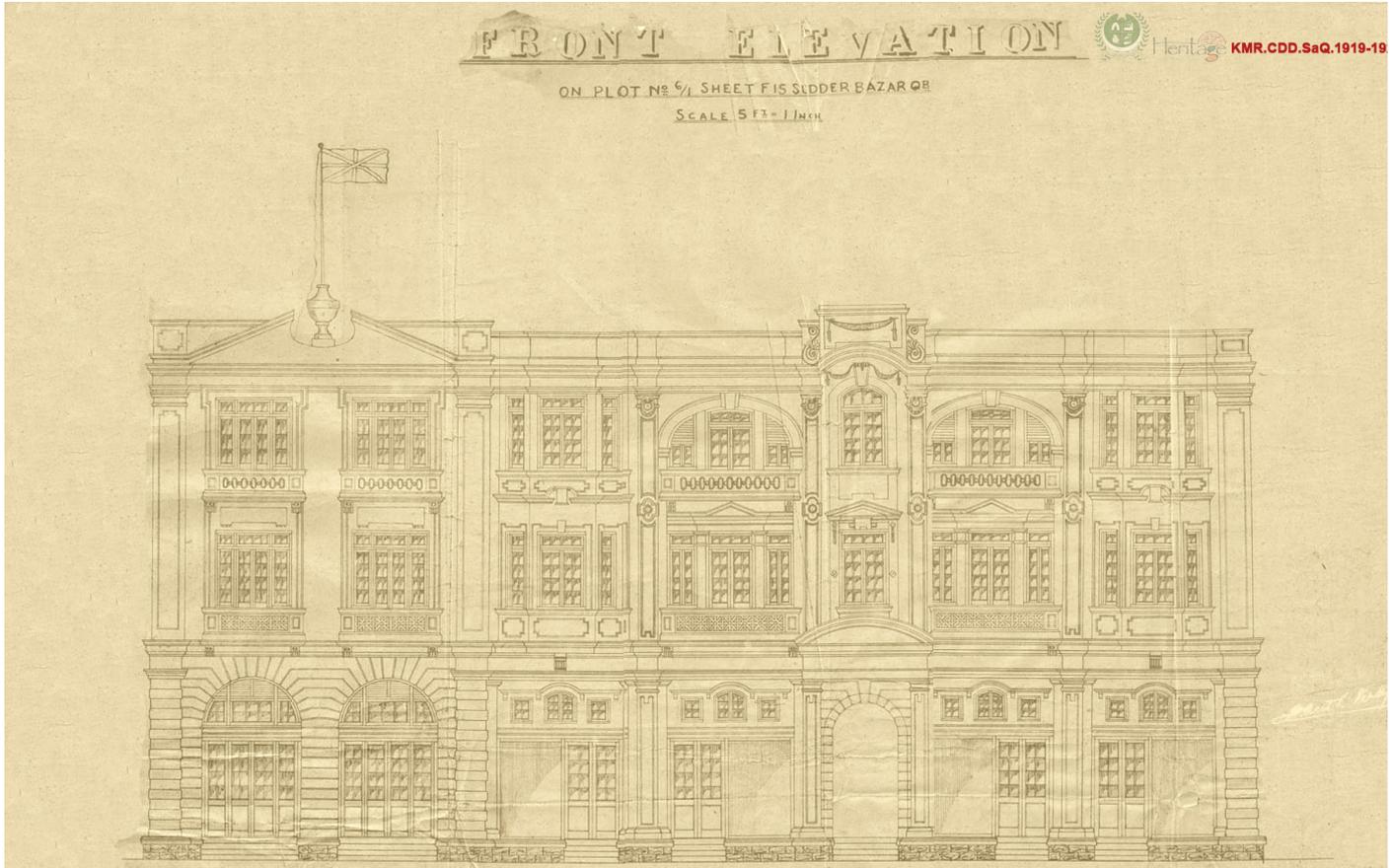


## Hassasing H. Advani, Architect & Engineer, Karachi



Well drawn elevation of Krishna Manzil, 1919, Saddar Bazaar Quarter. Although in a much neglected state, the building has survived.

### Introduction

From the records so far conserved, it appears that Hassasing H. Advani worked as Architect and Civil Engineer in Karachi in the first quarter of the 20th c.

His works include institutional, commercial as well as residential buildings that were built in various Quarters of the city. The papers and drawings so far found comprise correspondence and submission/completion drawings to the Karachi Municipality.



The projects documented are as follows:

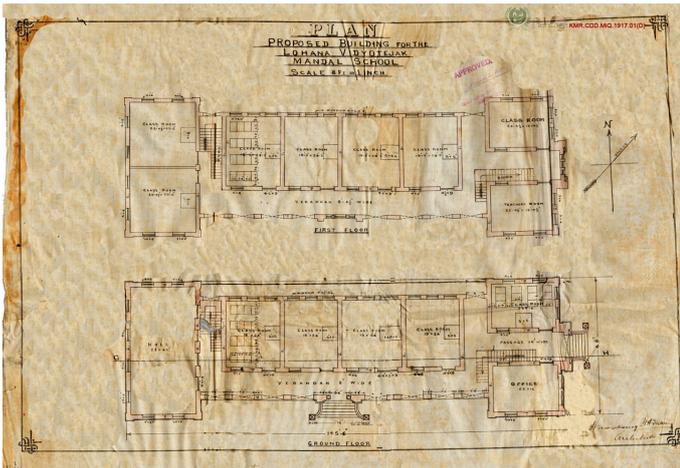
- 1916-1917:** Lohana Vidyotejak Mandal, Plot no. 275, Sheet E-1, Jail Quarter.
- 1917:** Building on Plot No. 14, Sheet A-17, Market Quarter.
- 1919-1921:** Building on Plot No. 6/1 of sheet F-15, Krishna Manzil, Sudder Bazar Quarter.
- 1922:** Building on Plot No.266, sheet K-6, Lyaree Quarter.

The records also contain submission drawings related to additions and alterations in several buildings. Whether he was also the original architect/engineer of the buildings could not be established. The drawings include buildings on Plot no. S-60, sheet E-3, Runchore Quarter; Plot no. 74-c, sheet C-6, Market Quarter; Plot No.5, sheet R.B.-7, Ram-bagh Quarter; Plot no. 1, sheet C-1 Muchee Mianee Quarter.

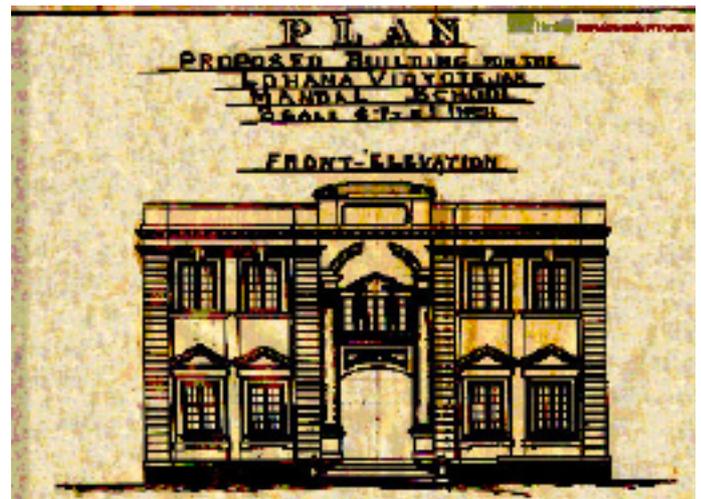
### Lohana Vidyotejak Mandal School, Jail Quarter, 1916-1917

Reference No. KMR.CDD.MiQ 1917.01(D)

Advani's earliest project found so far was designed for the Jail Quarter, also home to the historic KMC Building. The drawings show a two storey school building with a large hall, an administration office and five class rooms on the ground floor with another 7 classrooms and a teachers' room on the first floor. The main entrance is from the shorter end and is defined by



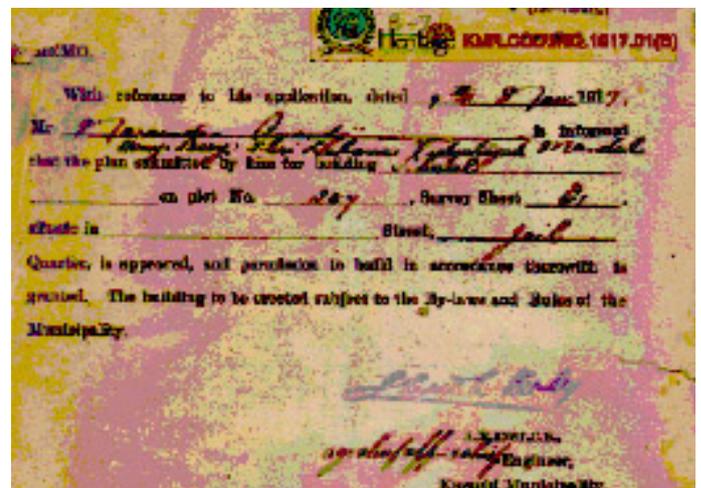
Plan of Lohana Mandal School, Jail Quarter.



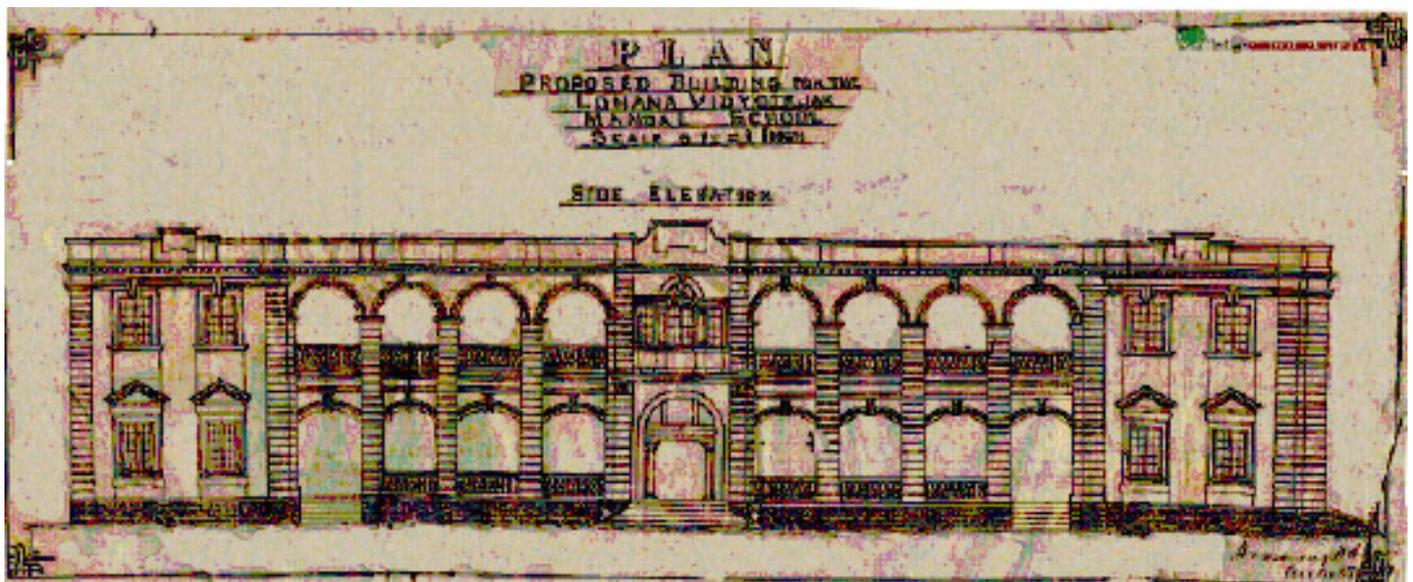
Front Elevation of Lohana Mandal School.

attached giant circular columns with classical order imagery. The side bays flanking the entrance are crowned with pedimented windows on the ground floor and the top of the entrance is emphasized by a flat tablet inscribed with the name of the institution, Kodyerjee Lohana Gujrati School. Another drawing shows the elevation of the long side with a central entrance echoing the front entrance, and symmetrically arranged long verandahs articulated with Roman arches defining both floors. The two ends blocks, projecting slightly forward, continue the architectural imagery of the front elevation. The building is oriented towards the southwestern prevailing breeze providing natural cool ventilation to the classrooms. The school design is in conformity with planning and building bye-laws that stipulated two-thirds compulsory open space.

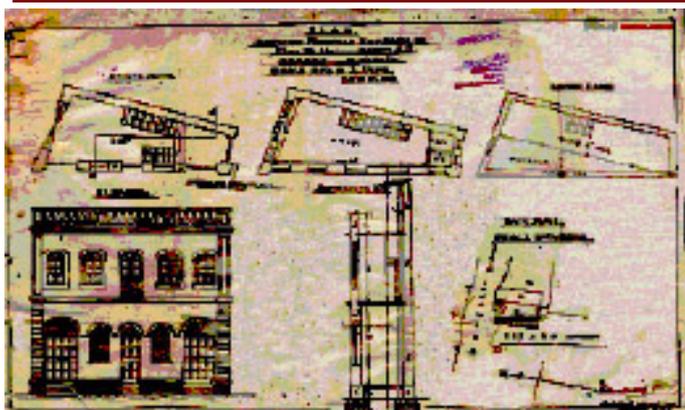
A related document provides a list of owners' names, plot numbers and location that were given building permission in May 1917.



Approval letter of Lohana Mandal School signed by Engineer, Karachi Municipality.



Side Elevation of Lohana Mandal School.



*Submission drawing of Plot no. 14, Market Quarter.*



*Map of Sudder Bazaar Quarter showing location of Krishna Manzil Sudder Bazaar Quarter, Heritage Foundation Archives Sheet SB6 1926.*

## **Building on Plot no. 14, Sheet A-17 Market Quarter, 1917 Reference No. KMR.CDD.MiQ 1917.01(Y)**

The drawing shows a commercial building that was designed at the crossing of Daryal Street and Virji Street in the same year as the Lohana Vidyotejak Mandal School. This small two storey building comprises a shop and staircase on the ground floor and a room with a bath and w.c. on the first floor with a 6'-0" wide shed on the roof terrace. The arched treatment of windows and doors in buff coloured Gizri stone, follows the commonly utilized architectural element that is found in many buildings constructed at the time. The drawing consists of floor plans, one elevation, a section and a site plan, fulfilling submission requirements. The approved drawing is signed by J.C.L. Verly, Karachi Municipal Engineer, dated February 1917.

## **Krishna Manzil, Plot no. 6/1, Sheet F-15 Sudder Bazaar Quarter, 1919-1921 Reference No. KMR.CDD.SaQ 1910-1921.01**

This is the most striking building designed by Advani, that also happens to have survived the ravages of time. The building is located in the Saddar Bazaar Quarter, a locality that by this time had developed, from purely commercial to a prestigious commercial cum residential area, mainly for occupation by 'natives'. It boasts a 101 foot frontage with a generous area of over 9,000 sq ft. An imposing three-storey mixed-use structure, Advani's tour de force dominates the Dundas Street with its eclectic mix of architectural features.

Several plans with minor revisions have been found, however, the final layout approved by the Acting Engineer Karachi Municipality shows three shops of approximately the same size, a staircase facing Inverarity Road, two large godowns and a staircase opening towards a 4' wide side street. The layout on the first and second floors of the building is identical: commodious apartments with a view of Inverarity Road consisting of a living

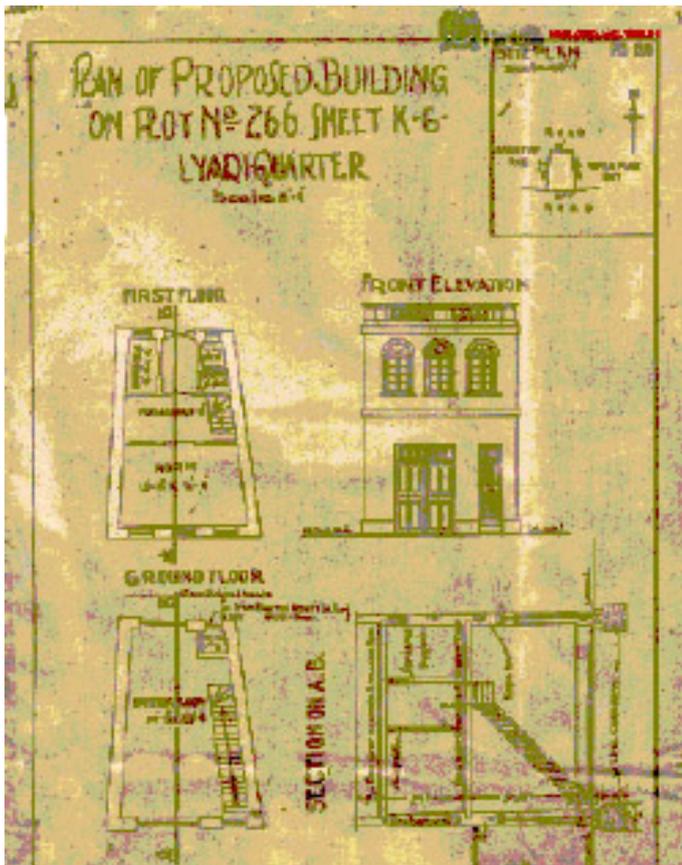


*A recent photograph of Krishna Manzil.*

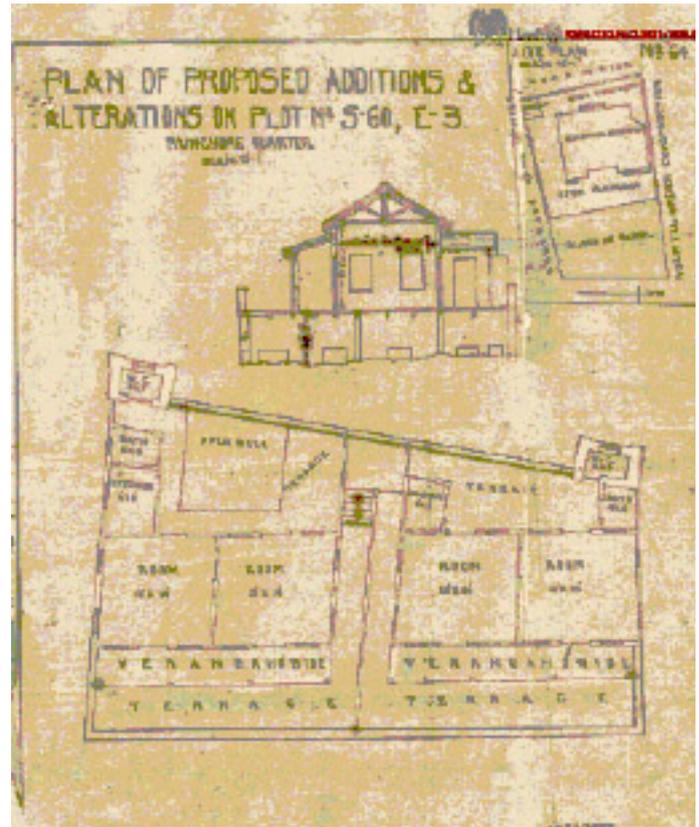
room and a kitchen, a bedroom with dressing and bathroom. A store and servants room are placed at the rear of the building. A 14'3" wide air well provides the necessary ventilation.

Although much defaced on the ground floor, the upper floors show the great care with which detailing of various elements was carried out. The highly modulated façade carries architectural vocabulary from diverse sources. The main façade is composed of several bays: two bays placed on either side of the entrance, the entrance itself defined by 2-storey high giant circular attached piers topped by a flat tablet at the roof level. The stone tablet carries decorative wreath feature, a recurring element at the time seen in Karachi, in stone as well as in cast iron balcony grills. The use of attached giant piers, slightly projecting window bays crowned with pediments, projecting balconies and ornamental stone balustrading at the roof level, all add to a highly ornamented and festive façade. The end block of the building has been treated in an entirely disparate manner. In contrast to the remaining bays that terminate in stone balustrading, the dual window bays of the end block are crowned with a classical triangular pediment. In the drawing a Union Jack is shown hoisted above the pediment of the end block, perhaps in a bid to show solidarity with the British Raj at a time when nationalist movements were agitating for the withdrawal of the colonial rule.

Krishna Mansion is the largest building found so far that exhibits the scale and architectural proficiency of Hassasing H. Advani.



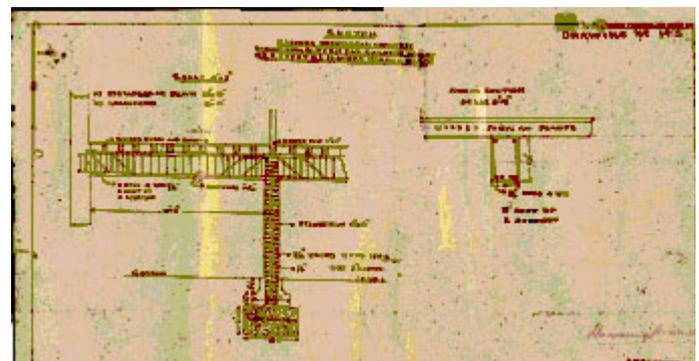
Submission drawing for Plot no.266, Lyaree Quarter.



Additions on Plot No. S-60, Sheet E-3, Runchore Quarter.

## Building on Plot No. 266 of Sheet K-6, Lyaree Quarter Reference No. KMR.CDD.LyQ 1922.01

The drawing shows a small building built in the Lyaree Quarter, an area that was still developing at the time. Designed in 1922 for Mr. Shamji Naraindas the building faces two roads on its two sides. The accommodation consists of a motor room and a staircase on ground floor and a room with bath and kitchen on the first floor, designed as a loft. Following the prevalent architectural vocabulary of the era, Roman arches are utilized on the first floor. The treatment of this unpretentious building shows that Advani was not averse to taking on commissions of both large and modest proportions. However, where the larger buildings e.g. the Krishna Manzil, are designed with great care and obvious enthusiasm, the small, modest building for Lyari, did not merit equal consideration. On the other hand, it is likely that the funds available for the Lyaree building did not allow the architectural flamboyance that could be displayed when designing buildings in more prestigious areas.



Detail of steel reinforcement for building on Plot No. 1 Sheet C-1 Muchee Mianee Quarter.

## Additions and Alterations Reference No. KMR.CDD.RuQ 1921-1925.01 and Reference No. KMR.CDD.MmQ 1920.01

A number of small scale additions for buildings on Plot No. S-60, Sheet E-3, Runchore Quarter, Plot No. 74-c, sheet C-6, Market Quarter, and details of steel reinforcement for building on Plot No. 1 Sheet C-1 Muchee Mianee Quarter have also been found.

Research and layout assistance:

Ar. Samar Shamim Hussain and Ar. Zainab Fida.