

M. Nazareth, Architect & Engineer, Karachi

Introduction

Nazareth had his practice opposite the Parsi theatre. A major portion of his work, so far found comprises several residential buildings along with a few mixed use commercial buildings consisting of shops and godowns on the ground floor and living areas on the upper floors.

The records discovered relate to the period between 1913 and 1924. In the later period of his work, he seems to have entered into a partnership with Karia Khemji and worked under the title of Nazareth and Karia, Architects and Engineers. The records show the extent of his practice in different parts of the city – from Market and Jail Quarter to Napier, Preedy and Serai Quarter, and even the newly emerging Lyaree Quarter. It is clear from the drawings that his clientele consisted of comparatively less affluent sections of society, as the land packages on which he built are comparatively small.

In the Jamshed Quarter there is a road by the name of Nazareth Road, pointing towards a possible association with either M. Nazareth or his family. His projects found to date include the following:

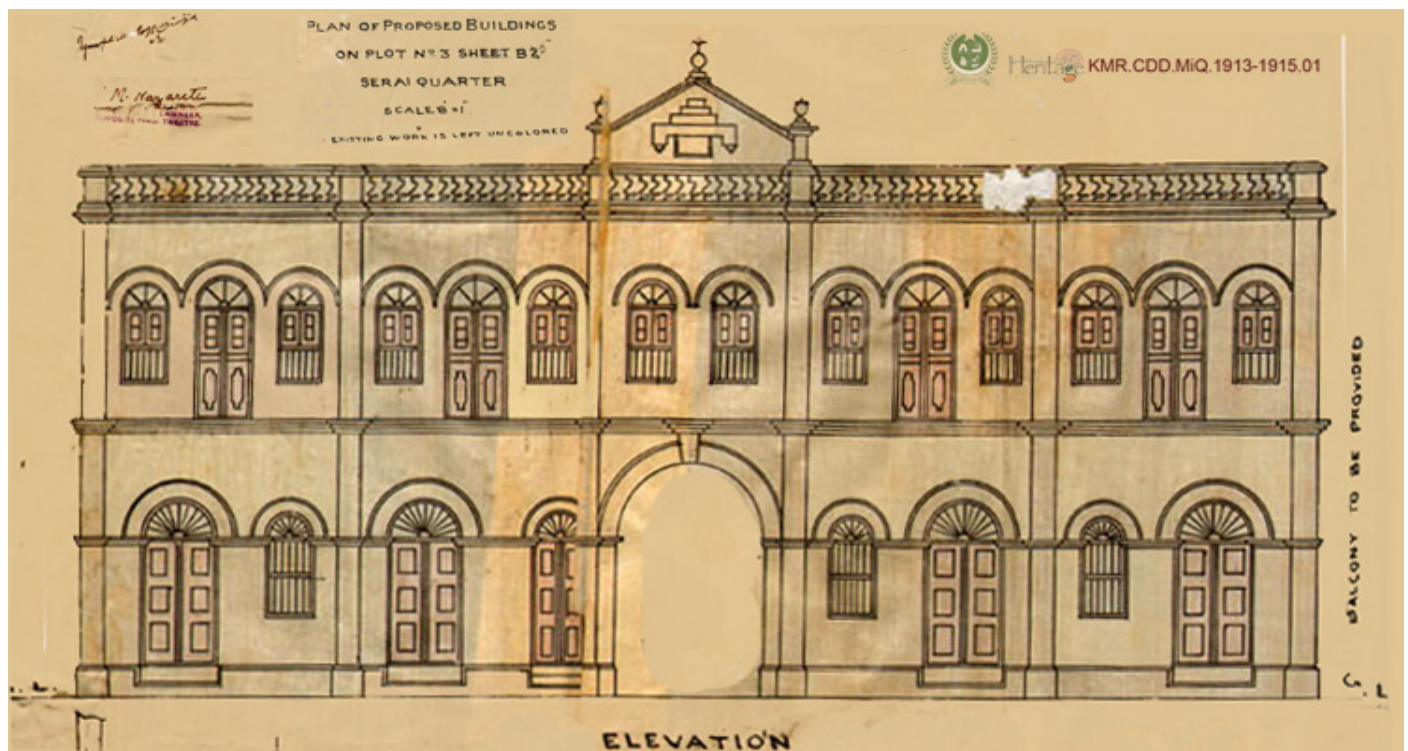
- 1913-1915:** A house on plot no. 2/1C sheet D-2 Jail Quarter.
- 1913-1915:** Building on plot No. 3, 17 & 18 sheets A8, Old Town Quarter.

- 1913-1915:** Building on Plot No. 57 of sheet C-6, Market Quarter.
- 1913-1915:** Building on Plot No.23, Sheet B-5 Serai Quarter.
- 1913-1915:** House on plot no. 84, sheet no. A2 Old Town Quarter.
- 1914-1921:** House for Mr. Jayashankar Madhawji, on Plot No 34 and 34/A, sheet C-6 Market Quarter.
- 1914-1921:** House on Plot No. 123 sheet A-20, Napier Quarter.

A house on Plot no. 2/1C, Sheet No. D-2, Jail Quarter, 1913-1915

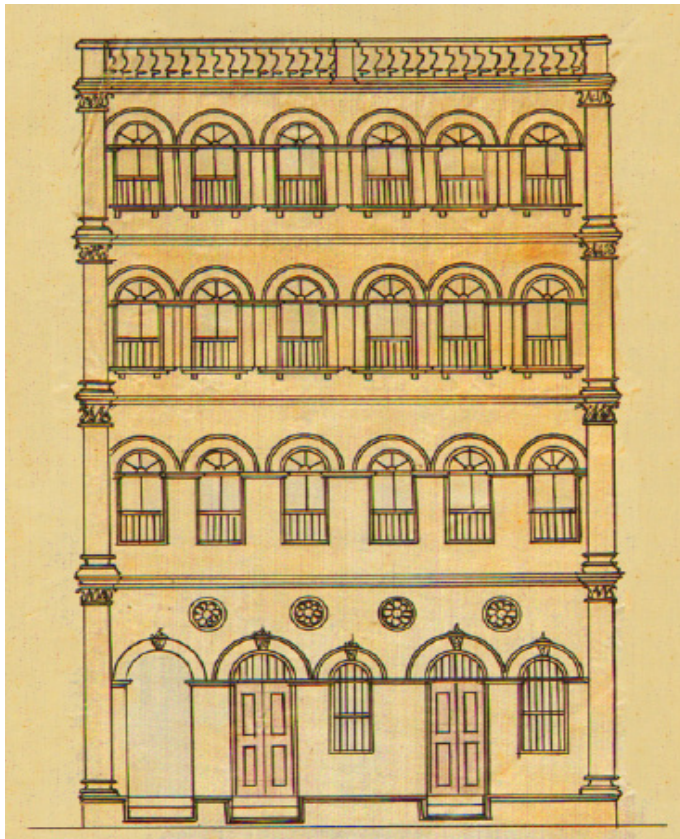
Reference No.KMR.CDD.MiQ.1913-1915.01

The building was designed in 1915 for a plot measuring approximately 33'x80' on No. 2/1C, Sheet No. D-2, Jail Quarter. The residence was designed for Mr. Muhammadali Moosaji Bhodabhoj whose correspondence is available on their letter head titled Adamji Bhodabhoj, General Merchant and Commission Agent. The building is designed with four storeys abutting the 40' Jail Road and with only three storeys in the rear. It consists of two apartments facing the front and rear roads while the middle portion is designed as an open-to-sky stair well shared by all apartments. The fourth floor in the front however, carries only one apartment. Each apartment consists of two spacious rooms, a verandah and a gallery providing access to a bath, W.C. and a 'cook room'.



Submission drawing of elevation for Plot No. 3, Sheet No. B-2, Serai Quarter, 1913-1915.

The treatment of the façade is similar to some other buildings designed by Nazareth that include Roman arched openings and articulation of wall ends with pilasters using capitals and bases borrowed from classical orders. The use of mouldings above arches and introduction of rosettes and keystones on the ground floor along with baluster railings on the roof create an attractive façade for a wealthy trader. The documents contain interesting correspondence between the owner and the Karachi Municipality regarding the need for compulsory open space. The letters stipulate that the apartment building was designed specifically for the Bohra community.



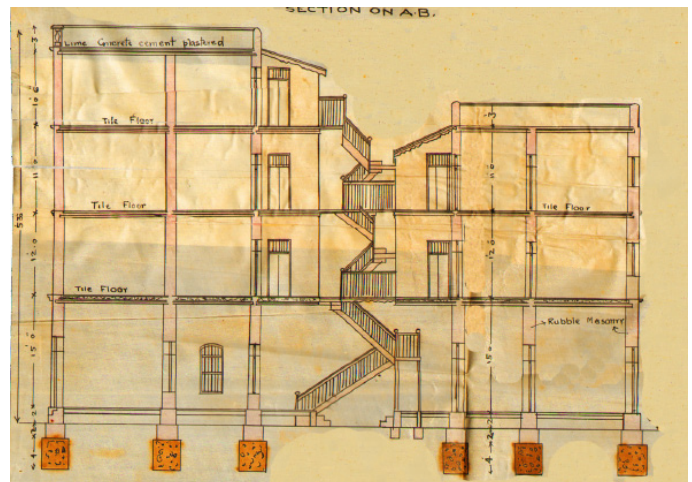
Front elevation of Plot No. 2/1C, Sheet No. D-2, Jail Quarter, 1913-1915.

Building on Plot No. 3, 17 & 18 Sheet No. A8, Old Town Quarter

Reference No.KMR.CDD.MiQ.1913-1915.01

This building is sited on an irregular package of land with a narrow front on the Rampart Row and an extended width in the rear abutting the Beela Dhobee Lane. The building was designed for Mr. Mohammed Siddik in 1915. A letter from the Municipality Engineer, J.Cecil.L.Verley, instructs the owner to attend a meeting along with the architect to discuss design related issues.

The three storey high building is designed on three plots and divided into several portions through the use of open-to-sky air wells. The plans seem to be hurriedly drawn in a sketch form showing an elevation facing the Bunder Road. While only one unit is accessible from the front, six rooms, probably shops, could be entered from the Beela



Sectional drawing of Plot No. 2/1C, Sheet No. D-2, Jail Quarter, 1913-1915.

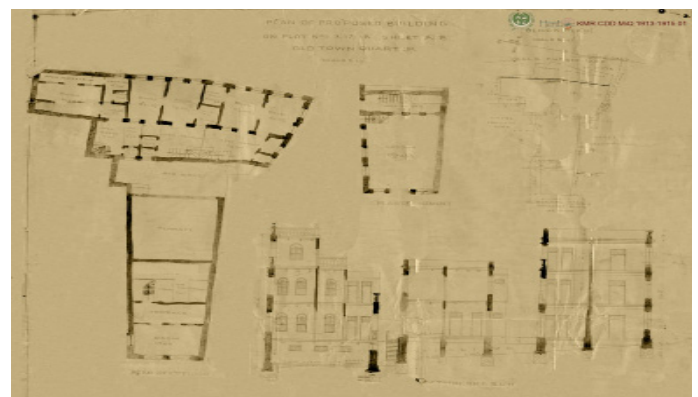
Dhobee Lane. Several staircases lead to suites located on the first and second floors.

In spite of the complexity and limited size of the combined lot, the Architect managed to squeeze in at least 5 small apartments each with its own kitchen and bathroom on the first floor, while four apartments are placed on the second floor along with a roof terrace. Even a godown has been provided in the basement on the side of the Rampart Row by taking advantage of the slope between the two roads. The elevation drawing shows utilization of Roman arches in the same way as several other buildings of the same vintage designed by Nazareth and some others.

Building on Plot No. 57, Sheet No. C-6, Market Quarter, 1913-1915

Reference No.KMR.CDD.MiQ.1913-1915.01

This building was designed for Mr. Noorbhoy Lotia in 1915. It is located on Bunder Road (now M.A. Jinnah Road) with its rear entrance opening on the 20' wide Chadee Lane. The structure lies in close proximity of the historic Max Denso Hall (1883) designed by the Municipality Engineer James Strachan. The building, designed as a mixed use structure, has its front facing the Bunder road while the entrance to the godown is from the Chadee Lane. A common



Submission drawing of Plot No. 3, 17 & 18, Sheet No. C-6, Market Quarter, 1913-1915.

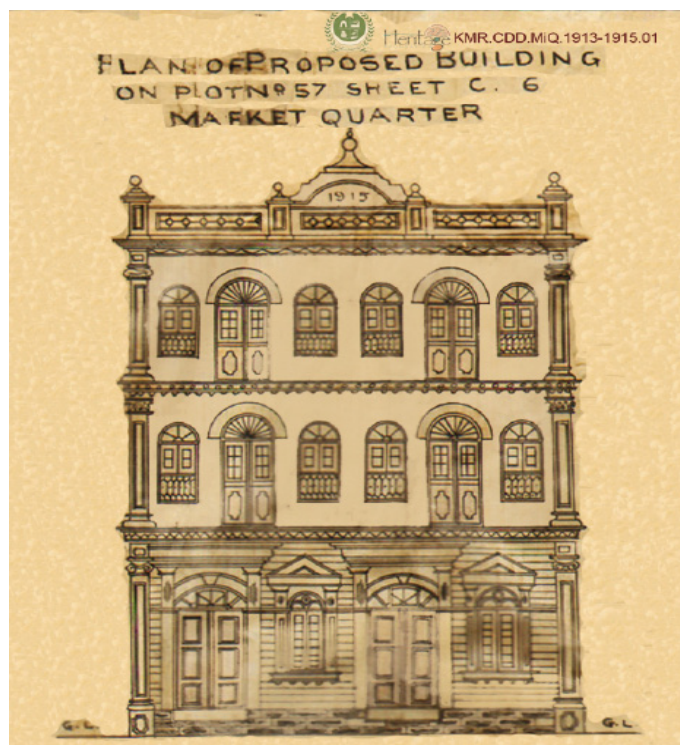
toilet is provided on the ground floor while living areas with services are accommodated on the first and second floors. Repetitive Roman arches adorn the façade while the building end walls are accented with decorative pilasters using a variety of classical orders. The ground floor carries windows with pediments, while the roof carries decorative baluster handrail and a raised central apex form displaying 1915 as the building date.

Building on Plot No. 3, Sheet No. B-2, Serai Quarter, 1913-1915

Reference No. KMR.CDD.MiQ.1913-1915.01

This building is located at the junction of Napier Road and Bel-lasis Street. This is also a mixed use building with godowns on the ground floor and living areas with open terraces and services on the first floor. The facade of the two storey building is also adorned with Roman arches, the entrance carrying a keystone to provide accent.

A letter from the owner Yousufali Aliboy Karimji to the Chief Officer and Chief Engineer, Karachi Municipality, inquiring regarding the delay in approval of the submitted drawings is also attached as part of the usual correspondence.



Elevation drawing of Plot No. 57, Sheet No. C-6, Market Quarter, 1913-1915.

House on Plot no. 84, Sheet No. A2, Old Town Quarter

Reference No. KMR.CDD.MiQ.1913-1915.01

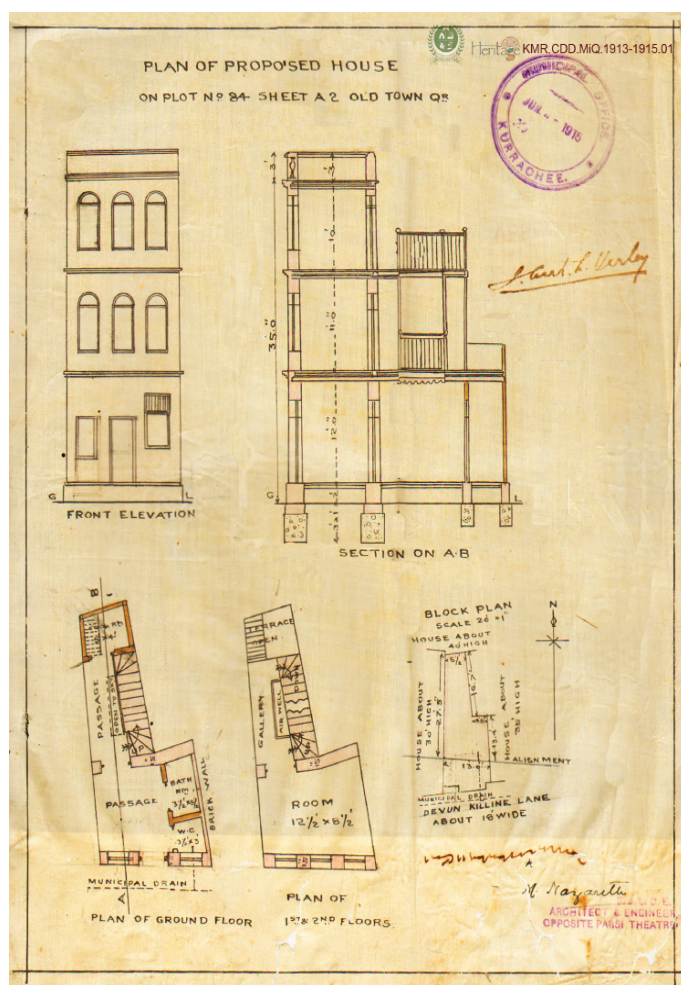
Among the earliest projects of M. Nazareth is a house on Plot No. 84, Sheet No. A2, Old Town Quarter, dated 1913-1915. Mr. Ramji Busria, in his capacity as the owner of the building wrote to the Karachi Municipality for granting him permission to build a 36' high building, as some portion of his land was acquired by Karachi Municipality itself. No completion document has so far been found.

The house was located at "Devun Killine Lane" in the midst of houses which were higher than 30'. The house was located at 'Devun Killine Lane' in the midst of houses which were higher than 30'-0" on the other three sides. The three-storey high residence had a passage, stair case and a bath on ground floor and a room, a gallery and an open terrace on the 1st & 2nd floors.

House on Plot No 34, 34/ A, Sheet C-6, Market Quarter, 1914-1921

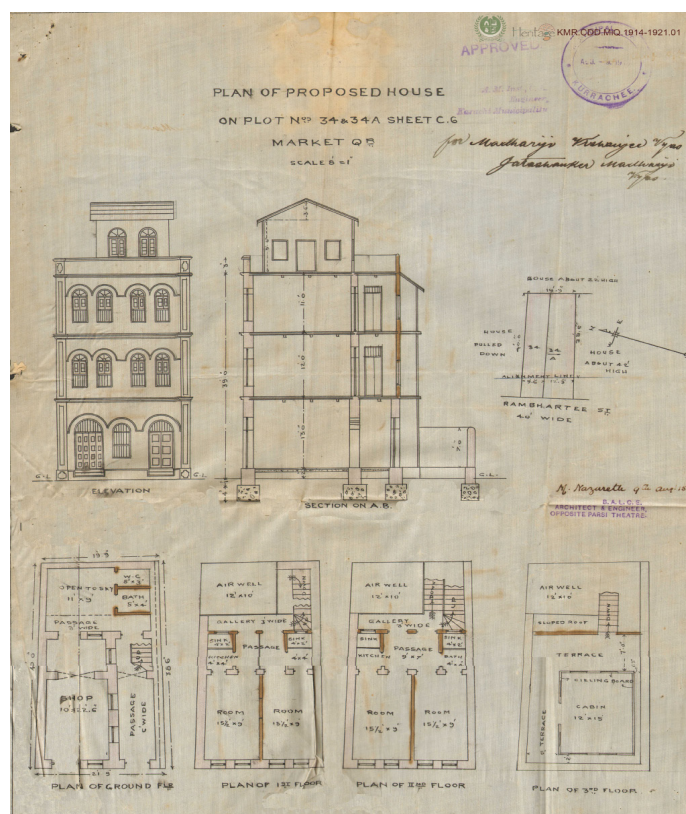
Reference No. KMR.CDD.MiQ.1914-1921.01

This house was designed for Mr. Jayashankar Madhawji and Mr. Madhawji Vishinji. The approval letter has an interesting note. It states that the permission to occupy any municipal land with building materials is not permitted and could only be allowed in case the street is sufficiently broad. In addition an advance payment of the fee was pre requisite along with a proof that a fence around the land to be occupied could be erected.



Submission drawing of Plot No. 84, Sheet No. A-2, Old Town Quarter, 1913-1915.

The four storey high building located on 25' wide Rambharti Road is surrounded by residential buildings on the other three sides. The accommodation consists of 2 rooms and an air well with services on the ground, first and second floors and a cabin and an open terrace on the 3rd floor. Roman arches embellished with mouldings are a dominant feature of the elevation. The drawing is signed by M. Nazareth, Engineer and Architect. The drawings were submitted a number of times before the Municipality Engineer J. Cecil L. Verley, stamped his approval.



Submission drawing of Plot No. 34 and 34/A, Sheet No. C-6, Market Quarter, 1914-1921.

House on Plot No. 123, Sheet A-20, Napier Quarter, 1914-1921

Reference No.KMR.CDD.MiQ.1914-1921.01

The drawings consist of a proposal submitted in 1915. The small three storey building is located on the 40' wide River Embankment Road, and consists of a passage stair case on the ground floor and a room on the first and second floors.

The drawings of the building were submitted by the owner Harumal Pursumal. The documents also contain a letter from the Architect responding to the issues regarding construction details that were posed by the Karachi Municipality before the approval could be granted.



Submission drawing of Plot No. 123, Sheet No. A-20, Napier Quarter, 1914-1921.

Building on Plot No. 14, Sheet A-26, Napier Quarter, 1915

Reference No.KMR.CDD.MiQ.1914-1921.01

This building is located on Goolmahmed Street. The 40' high building is designed to accommodate a large passage and godown with services on ground floor, while the two upper floors are identical with three rooms with attached kitchens. A common bathroom serves each floor. Two air wells provide ventilation and natural light into the building.

The building was designed for Mr. Visram Umla in August 1915. The approval documents have the seal of Measham Lea, Chief Officer of the Karachi Municipality, after whom the famous Lea Market of Karachi was named in 1931. The other signatory is J.C.L.Verley, Engineer Karachi Municipality.

Additions to Buildings: Plot No 105 A, Sheet A-21, Napier Quarter and No. 4C, Sheet E-1 Jail Quarter

Reference No.KMR.CDD.MiQ.1914-1921.01

Reference No. KMR.CDD.JaQ.1924.01

Two cabins and a room with pitched roof were added in 1915 as a third floor to an existing building in Napier Quarter. No information has been found so far regarding the architect of the original building, however, the existing treatment of the façade using Roman arches was not followed for the additional floor. The drawing is signed by Khemji Karia of the firm of Nazareth & Khemji.

In 1924 a large hall was made on the west side of a building in the Jail Quarter. The documents include the completion drawing as well as the building completion report and a memo.

Research and layout assistance:
Architects Samar Shamim Hussain, Zainab Fida and Mariyam Nizam.

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