



# District Grand Lodge of India S.C. Grand Chapter U.S.R.A.F.I.C.



Freemasons' Hall, Sukhadwala Marg, Fort, Mumbai 400001.  
Tel.: 022-22074495/3800 Email: dgsec@yahoo.com/usrafic@gmail.com

**Noshir Godrej Paghdwalla**  
Mob.: 09821262714 / 09619404415

**District Grand Secretary**  
Hon. Grand Secretary (Scot)

**Grand Scribe Ezra**  
Hon. First Grand Standard Bearer (Scot.)

DGLI\_USRAFIC:NGP:Appeal:170  
April 21, 2025

## **TO THE WORSHIPFUL MASTERS/FIRST PRINCIPALS, SECRETARIES/SCRIBE 'E'S AND BRETHREN/ COMPANIONS OF ALL LODGES AND CHAPTERS UNDER THE SCOTTISH CONSTITUTION IN INDIA**

It is with profound sorrow that we reminisce on the recent devastation caused by a ravaging fire to our cherished Masonic building in Mumbai on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2025—a place where generations of Brethren have gathered in fraternity, shared in our ancient traditions, and upheld the sacred principles of our Order. Tragedy has befallen a place most sacred to our Order—a home where wisdom was imparted, friendships forged, and Masonic light kindled in the hearts of many.

What once stood as a proud symbol of our Brotherhood lies today in ruin. Two of our Temples, namely the Lodge room and the Chapter room housed in this esteemed structure, which have long stood as a beacon of Light, Knowledge, and Charity, now lie devastated by the ravaging fire, and their restoration calls for the collective strength of all who value their legacy.

Yet, undaunted by the challenges and rising from the ashes of destruction, the Freemasons' Joint Hall Committee is now saddled with the undaunted task to restore the structure and make it even more glorious. The strength of Freemasonry has never been in bricks and mortar alone but in the unity and resolve of its Brethren. Today, we call upon you to answer this solemn duty — to give us your support, and to ensure that our cherished heritage property is restored to its former splendour.

As members of this noble Craft, we have always risen to meet adversity with unwavering resolve. Today, we seek your support to rebuild and restore this treasured edifice, ensuring that future generations of Freemasons may continue to find inspiration within its walls. Freemasonry teaches us the virtues of Charity and Unity. Now, more than ever, we must put these principles into action. The cost of rebuilding is exponential, and the need is urgent. **We therefore make this earnest appeal to your Lodge/Chapter as also individual Brethren/Companions to contribute generously toward the restoration fund. No amount is too small, and every offering shall be received with profound gratitude.**

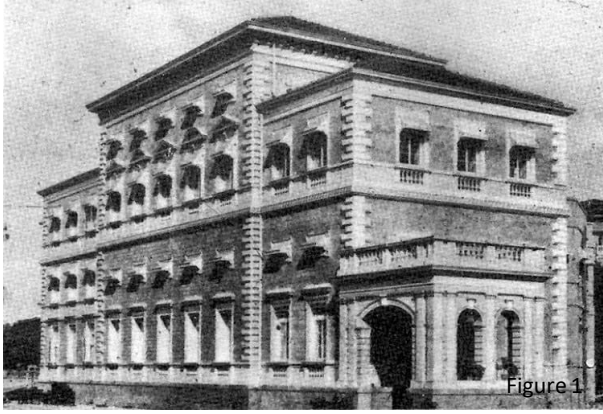
Let it be said that when the call came, we answered—not with mere words, but with tangible support. Let us demonstrate that our Brotherhood is not merely one of words, but of action—proving that from the ashes, we can forge an even brighter future.

May the Grand Architect of the Universe bless and guide our collective endeavour.

Fraternally and sincerely,

**Noshir G. Paghdwalla**  
Dist. Gr. Sec/Gr. Scribe 'E'  
Trustee – Freemasons' Joint Hall Committee

Bank account No. **003100500000071** in the name of  
**"Scottish Masonic Fund of Benevolence"**  
with The Zoroastrian Co-op. Bank Ltd., Fort Branch,  
IFSC: ZCBL0000003 (6 times zeros)



## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ARCHITECTURAL BUILTFORM

The Freemasons' Hall located in the Fort precinct of Mumbai, is an important historical and architectural landmark in the city. Built in 1897-99, it serves as the headquarters for the Freemasons' fraternity in Mumbai and houses the District Grand Lodge of Bombay. Over the years, the Freemasons' Hall has played a significant role in the cultural and social life of Mumbai, not only as a center for Freemasonry but also as a place of community engagement. The Freemasons' fraternity has been involved in various charitable initiatives in Mumbai and beyond, supporting causes such as education, health, and social welfare.

The building is known for its grand, imposing façade and beautiful interiors, which include a large central hall used for ceremonies and events. The building was designed by Architect J. Campbell, F.R.I.B.A and M.S.A and executed by Mr. Nusserwanji Dinshaw. The foundation stone was laid in 1897 and the foundation ceremony was performed by Lord Sandhurst, the erstwhile Governor of Bombay. The hall has a rich history, serving as a place for meetings, rituals, and social gatherings for the Masonic brethren. Architecturally, the Freemasons' Hall features a blend of neoclassical and Italianate style.

Today, Freemasons' Hall in Fort remains an iconic symbol of the Freemasons' presence and influence in Mumbai, and it continues to be a focal point for the fraternity's activities in the region. The Freemasons' Hall is classified as Grade II-A heritage building and asset with the value of - A(arc), B(per), E, F, G(grp), standing for its outstanding architectural value, the period of construction and the building style, the sociological and community value it brings to the precinct and the city and its unique architectural features and artefacts as a chain of architectural developments in the period; as classified by the Heritage Regulations for Greater Mumbai - 1995 and Heritage List of 2012.

## 2 THE EVENT OF FIRE

Figure 2

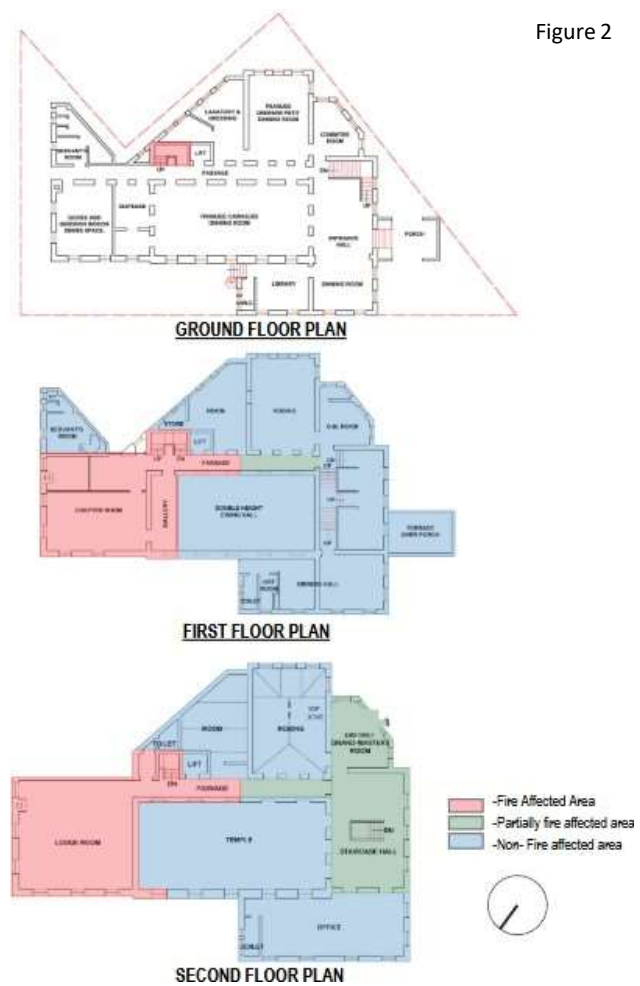
A fire broke out in the North-Eastern Block of the Freemasons Hall, located in Fort, Mumbai, on the night of 15th February 2025. Preliminary investigations indicate that the fire was caused by a short circuit.

The fire originated on the specific north west corner of the first floor of the Chapter Room, and rapidly spread to the timber members of the construction system of the built form. The flames penetrated the flooring of the Lodge Room, leading to reduction of timber to cinders and failure of partial floor at the specific spot and create a void in the area. This allowed propagation of the fire to extend to the second floor above, affecting both the Lodge Room.

The timber roof structure, and the second-floor structures sustained significant damage, with disintegration and deformation of truss members and false ceiling structural system - a partial loss at each system of the structure is observed. Portions of the adjacent passages and gallery areas are also affected.

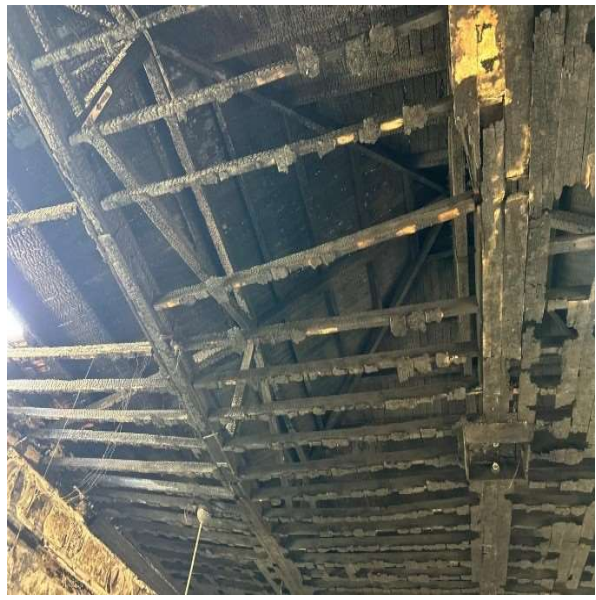
The second-floor structure comprises of a composite structural system, conforming to "triple floor" - with steel girders as primary members supporting timber floor joists which in turn support a timber false ceiling system. In general - this entire composition has suffered severe damage. The floor boards have been affected partially except the area where a complete loss of part floor is apparent. As an overall floor system - it appears in a fair condition and remains accessible for walking and carrying out repairs to roofing.

The first-floor structure - conforming to a similar triple floor composition, remains in a fair condition and has not allowed any penetration of fire to its structural integrity. The first floor remains accessible for walking and carrying out repairs to the second-floor structural system.



<sup>2</sup> Image Source: Figure 3 – K.Unwalla Architects.

<sup>3</sup> Images' Source: Figure 3 – K.Unwalla Architects.



The Eire spread quickly, severely impacting the structural integrity of the building. The second Eloor and Eirst Eloor passage walls are completely covered in a thick layer of soot. Even the air-conditioning system of the Main Temple has heavy soot accumulation within it.

The overall damage caused to this architectural marvel has caused large-scale detrimental scarring. The effort to reverse this and reinstate the original glory of the place is indeed a painstakingly expensive affair. We have appointed a team of expert heritage conservation consultants who have been helping us work around the current scenario. Based on all their multiple and detailed inspections of the Eire affected area, a comprehensive restoration proposal has been prepared, which is being put in action on immediate basis, to undertake the following essential efforts:

1. Immediate structural stabilization to prevent further deterioration
2. Restoration of critical architectural and historical elements
3. Conservation of any recoverable artifacts and heritage materials
4. Ensuring the building's future viability as a site of public engagement and historical education

The anticipated cost of works is as follows:

<b>SR.NO.</b>	<b>AFFECTED AREA- NATURE OF WORK</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
1	ROOF WORKS	₹ 1,66,89,740.00
2	BUILDING WORKS (STRUCTURAL & FAÇADE RESTORATION)	₹ 4,67,91,765.00
3	INTERIOR RESTORATION WORKS	₹ 63,27,300.00
4	FURNITURE, FIT-OUTS AND SOFT-FURNISHINGS	₹ 37,85,650.00
5	AIR-CONDITIONING RESTORATION	₹ 40,00,000.00
6	LIFT RESTORATION	₹ 25,00,000.00
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT</b>		<b>₹ 7,95,94,455.00</b>
<i>(in words)</i>	<i>Seven Crores Ninety-Five Lakhs Ninety-Four Thousand Four Hundred and Fifty Five only</i>	