

# REBUILDING A PAST: A CITY'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS DISASTER

## ITINERARY

### Week 1: London, UK

Buildings to see: St Paul's Cathedral  
Affected gates: Ludgate, Newgate, Moorgate and Temple Bar  
City fabric of areas rebuilt after 1666 fire

### Week 2: Berlin, Germany

Neues Museum  
The Brandenburg Gate

### Week 3: Dresden, Germany

### Week 4/5: Kathmandu/ Gorkha, Nepal

Kathmandu Durbar Square  
Patan Durbar Square  
Durbar School  
Changu Narayan  
Bhaktapur Durbar Square  
Gorkha Durbar

## READING LIST:

The rebuilding of London after the great fire: T.F. Reddaway  
A more beautiful City: Robert Hooke and the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire: Michael Cooper  
Sir Christopher Wren: the design of St. Paul's Cathedral: Kerry Downes  
New city: contemporary architecture in the city of London: Alec Foreshaw  
Dresden: a city reborn/ edited by Anthony Clayton and Alan Russell  
The Neues Museum Berlin: conserving, restoring, rebuilding within the World Heritage: John Ziesemer, Melanie Newton

*I wander thro' each charter'd street,  
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow.  
And mark in every face I meet  
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.*

*In every cry of every Man,  
In every Infants cry of fear,  
In every voice: in every ban,  
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear  
-William Blake*

## PROPOSAL

April 25, 2015 – The world shook under Nepal. Undulating waves of the moving earth crushed valleys and shifted Himalayas. In the process, over 9000 lives, dozens of villages, and a number of the temples and heritage sites that had endured centuries were lost. Suddenly, a country struggling to merely maintain its architectural heritage was faced with the mammoth question of how to rebuild from the rubble.

Dealing with the rubble belied the true challenge, the void in the city fabric created by the loss of these structures; Gods were missing from their abodes, possibly removing their blessings, missing architectural heritages left gaps in the nation's cultural identity. Thus, beyond the terror inspired and hardship incurred in the aftermath of the earthquake, the disappearance of monuments that were intrinsic part of the daily lives of Nepal's citizens destabilized the populace.

To heal and move on, the people resolved it must rebuild following the pattern set by their predecessors – roughly every 80 years an earthquake devastates and the Nepali people rebuild grander than before.

This time around however, the architecture and engineering societies of Nepal are faced with a new challenge – 'do we rebuild these monuments as exact replicas?' For the first time in history these monuments have been documented, enabling this option. Or, as this is the first recovery in which Nepal has access to modern materials and building technologies, 'should these options be incorporated to ensure these heritage sites pass the test of time?'

This proposal looks to find answers to the aforementioned questions in history. Disasters and great conflicts have led to many of the world's great cities to have been razed and rebuilt in the past. In some occasions the past image of the city is recreated faithfully, in others, the disaster is an opportunity to rebuild their version of 'a better city'. Searching beyond natural disasters, as a Nepali, I wish to examine the social consequences of a disaster – whether a type of disaster engenders a reaction to preserve or to distance one's self from the past.

For the intents of the research, I intend to look closely at London, a city that rebuilt from the ashes of the Great Fire of 1666 and WWII. Dr. John Schofield writes – 'the fire created the opportunity to build [a city in a new form] which would quickly become the hub of the British empire... So the creation of the Empire owes something to the Great Fire of 1666'. I also intend to study the contrast of Berlin's dramatic rejection of its past with Dresden's embrace of its architectural heritage following their respective experiences after WWII.

Architecture, especially cities and monuments, speak the language of its inhabitants. The attitude taken to rebuilding is a direct reflection of the pride and mental state of the society within which the architecture is placed. This proposal hopes to gain insight into the disparate manner in which societies react to rebuilding.