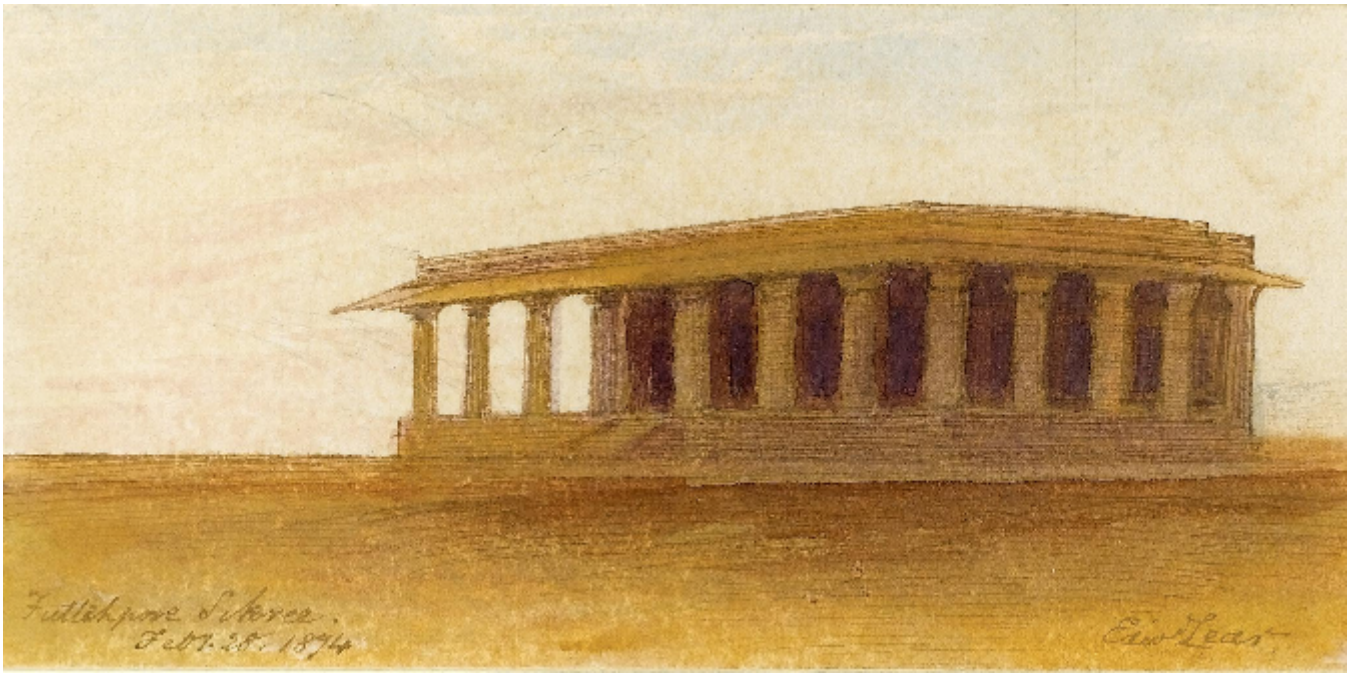
View at Fatehpur Sikri, India

Edward Lear

Sold



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Description

Edward Lear (1812-1888)
View at Fatehpur Sikri, India

Signed lower right: Edwd Lear and inscribed lower left: Fattehpore Sikree/Febr. 28 1874
Pen and brown ink and watercolour
17.2 by 8.6cm., 6 ¾ by 3 ¼ inches

Fatephur Sikri was a capital city of the Mogul Empire built by Akbar in 1570 before being abandoned soon afterwards for Agra 23 miles to the east. This building appears to be Tansen's Baradari, a red sandstone pavilion where Tansen, the famous musician of Akbar's court allegedly used to play. It stands on the right after entering the city through Agra Gate.

Lear was invited to India in 1872 by his friend Thomas Baring, Earl of Northbrook who had been appointed Viceroy of India and finally left Naples for Bombay in the autumn of 1873. He arrived on 22nd November 1873 and stayed until 11th January 1875 - it was his last major overseas tour. He reached Fatehpur Sikri on 26th February 1874 and left on the morning of the 28th, the day the present watercolour was drawn. He wrote of Fatehpur Sikri: `The great mosque cloisters, and the vast gate, the surprisingly white marble tomb of the Paternal Fakir, struck and impressed me greatly. Everything here is elaborated and worked out incredibly, but the architecture seems to me coarse and eccentric as to general effect rather than beautiful' (see Edward Lear's Indian Journal, edited by Ray Murphy, 1953, p.88-89)

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