

# Renaming Ananda Coomaraswamy Mawatha: A Grave Historical Error



AnandaCoomaraswamy

**I**t was with sadness and dismay that I read in today's paper that Ananda Coomaraswamy Mawatha is to be renamed Nelum Pokuna Road. As an architect and designer I have supported this Performing Arts Theatre from the first day I saw its built form evolving. I celebrate it as an iconic landmark of Colombo. There is no better compliment we can make to this institution than continuing to associate Ananda Coomaraswamy's name with the street it stands on.

Coomaraswamy's contribution to the arts and crafts of this country remains unmatched: His book *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art* is the only comprehensive historical text we have on the arts and crafts of Sri Lanka, without which future generations would have no docu-

mentary evidence of its rich cultural heritage. There is a beautiful convergence between the past that Coomaraswamy celebrated and the future symbolized by the new Performing Arts Theatre. The fact that a principal road of Colombo is named after Ananda K. Coomaraswamy ensures that the generations to come will continue to be aware of this pre-eminent intellectual and scholar, and commemorate his outstanding contribution to the island. Removing his name from this street is an irrevocable loss for all of us, and it cannot be allowed to happen.

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