

Home (1918) Department.
Education

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G.O. No. 107

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INDEXED

[Despatch Abstract.]

Conservation notes.

Recording ----- on the two palaces at Chandragiri, Chittor
district, submitted by the Superintendent, Archaeological Survey.

BACK PAPERS.

G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.	G.O.	No.	Department.	Date.

FURTHER PAPERS.

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HOME (EDUCATION) DEPARTMENT.

Received



Registered

1918

Subject.

Submitting printed copies of Inspection Notes on the Two Palaces at Chandragiri, Chittoor District dated the 7th December 1917.

ENCLOSURES

No. One

(In duplicate)

Spare copies Nil

No. 35

Station Mahabalipuram, Dated the 31st January 1918

From (Name) A. H. Longhurst, Esq.,

(Designation) Superintendent, Archaeological Survey Southern Circle.

To The Secretary to the Government of Madras,

HOME (EDUCATION) Department.
Fort St. George.

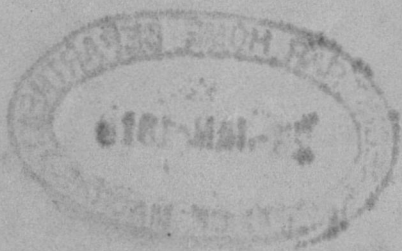
Sir,

I have the honour to submit in duplicate, copies of my "Inspection Notes on the Two Palaces at Chandragiri, Chittoor District, dated the 7th December 1917.

2. Copies of these Inspection Notes have been forwarded to the Director General of Archaeology in India, Superintending Engineer, III Circle, and the Collector of Chittoor District. *for information.*

I have the honour to be,
Sir,

Your most obedient servant,
A. H. Longhurst
Superintendent.



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of 267 (2) 3

INSPECTION NOTES ON THE TWO PALACES AT CHANDRAGIRI.

The two palaces stand close together in park-like grounds near the eastern gateway of the inner fort and immediately at the southern foot of the lofty granite hill known locally as Durgam. The grounds are well wooded and contain a large oblong masonry built tank fed by a stream which flows from a spring on the slopes of Durgam. The tank has a picturesque avenue of trees on each side and a flight of stone steps and an exit channel at its southern end. There is also a stone built well in the north-eastern corner of the grounds. The larger of the two buildings faces the southern end of the tank and is known as the Rājā Mahal or King's Palace, while the smaller one is situated 250 feet to the north-east of the former and is called the Rāni Mahal or Queen's Palace.

1. The King's Palace is a long oblong building running from east to west with the front facade facing the south while the back of the building faces the north and the hill Durgam immediately in front of it. It has a frontage of about 160 feet and is 50 feet in breadth. The building consists of a ground floor, first floor, second floor and a terraced roof with an ornamental parapet and a lofty brick tower in the centre with two little side turrets facing the south and small towers at each of the four angles of the building. The total height of the palace from the top of the central tower to the ground line is about 95 feet including the raised stone platform on which the building stands. As the ground slopes from north to south, this platform is higher on the south side than it is on the north. The above dimensions refer to the south facade where the platform is 10 feet above the natural ground level. A road leading to Chandragiri and running due east and west connecting the inner and outer gateways of the fort, passes immediately under the windows of the southern facade which look out upon a large open piece of ground now mostly under cultivation, and which in all probability, originally served as a parade ground for the troops and for military and religious processions, such as those held at the Dasara and the like. A curious feature about the building is that it possesses no entrances on the south side although this side may be regarded as the front, all the entrances and the two stone staircases leading up to the upper floors are situated on the north side of the building.

The nature of construction is both peculiar and remarkable and the main reason why the building is still standing to-day is due to the excellent quality and wonderful tenacity of the cement and mortar employed in its construction. This fact is particularly noticeable in the wonderful series of flat arches and coffered ceilings within the building. The plaster work too is excellent and its good quality has been the means of keeping the building watertight and preventing the growth of vegetation in the joints of the masonry and thus saving it from serious decay.

The retaining walls of the basement are built of large blocks of stone in mortar, the floor of which is paved with stone flags and makes a good foundation for the body of the building. The walls, arches, vaults and ceilings of the ground and first floors are built of coursed rubble masonry bedded in excellent mortar with here and there a patch of brickwork, the latter material appears to have been used at random or whenever the masons ran short of stone. The second floor, the terraced roof and the towers standing on it, are built mainly in brick, and very excellent bricks they are, hard, good in colour and thoroughly well baked and much superior to any bricks made in India at the present day. The art of manufacturing really good bricks cement, mortar or plaster like that used in the 16th century in India, seems to have become lost. Any rubbish is usually considered good enough at the present day, and expensive rubbish at that. Another curious feature about the building is the absence of timber in its construction. The brackets supporting the balconies and the little rafters carrying the projecting eaves and cornices of the roof and brick towers above, are all made of cut stone bedded in mortar and were originally, moulded and decorated in stucco. Much of this handsome stucco ornament still exists, but it is clear that this work and even the plain plastering of the outer surfaces of the walls were never completed, this is particularly noticeable on the northern facade.

The ground floor is provided with a handsome arcade or vaulted corridor running the entire length of the northern facade. The floor above is carried on massive pillars and cross arches with square coffered ceilings in between each group of four pillars. In the centre is a large hall with an entrance on the north side leading into the corridor. This hall is 35 feet long and 30 feet in breadth and has a raised stone platform running all round three sides of the room and a balcony window facing the south. On each side of the central hall are two smaller oblong rooms measuring 30 feet by 15

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feet, each with a small bay window facing the south. At each end of the corridor is a flight of stone steps leading up to the upper floors and there are also two little rooms 9 feet square, at each end of the building. The raised platform in the central hall seems to indicate that this apartment served as a guard-room, as such platforms are usually found in the fort gateways.

The plan of the first floor is very similar to that of the ground floor but the central hall in this case, is much loftier and is provided with an open gallery above which over-looks the hall below. It is a fine handsome apartment with a panelled frieze above the cornice and a decorated stucco ceiling. It appears to have been used as a Darbar Hall. The plan of the second floor is similar to that of the first floor except that the central space is occupied by the open gallery around the Darbar Hall and instead of an arcade on the northern facade like we have on the two floors below, there is here an open terrace. The flat roof above the second floor takes the form of a fine open terrace with a small tower at each of the four corners of the building and a lofty tower over a domed hall in the centre. On each side of the south face of the central hall is a little brick cell crowned with a tower similar to the others only smaller. These two cells appear to have been used as shrines, where perhaps the Rājā installed his family deities. The central hall is open on all sides and well ventilated above and seems to have been used as a pavilion and pleasure resort. At each end of the terrace between the two towers at the angles of the building is a small flight of brick steps leading up to a little ruined platform from which may be obtained commanding views of the surrounding country. The southern facade is much handsomer than the northern and is more profusely decorated with stucco ornament. The three rows of projecting balcony windows in the centre and the towers at each end of the building give this facade a very handsome appearance. The roof line too, is pleasingly broken by the group of stepped towers in the centre and at each corner of the building. Altogether it is a very handsome building and one of the finest specimens of Indo-Saracenic architecture in India.

2. *Repairs.*—It is clear from the above general description of the King's Palace, that the best means of preserving this handsome and historic building from further decay is to protect the exposed masonry where the plaster no longer exists. The curious mixture of rubble and brickwork used in its construction does not lend itself successfully to "pointing" as a means of arresting further decay. At the best, such a method would produce a most patchy appearance and would take longer and prove more expensive than plastering. Therefore I would suggest that the whole building from the floor of the stone basement to the roof line be replastered where necessary and care taken that the plaster employed be of the same quality and the same colour (so far as possible) as the remaining old plaster, such as that existing on the towers on the roof and on the southern facade.

3. All large cavities and open joints in the masonry should be grouted before the plastering is undertaken. The idea is to make the building thoroughly watertight and proof against the growth of vegetation. The brick towers on the roof are in fairly good order but they all require patch repairs. The broken parapet along the terrace of the roof should be restored all round in order to prevent accident to visitors. The same remark applies to all broken and missing parapets in front of openings and balconies, throughout the building. Care should be taken that all of these new parapets and dwarf walls are of a uniform height. An existing old parapet should be taken as a guide, and all new parapets on that floor should be an exact replica of the old one so that they may produce a uniform appearance and not spoil the general view of the facades of the building. Some of the arched window openings have been partly filled up with stone screens and fillings in order to convert the building into a rest-house. These fillings should be removed and uniform dwarf walls built in their place. The unsightly chicks too, should be removed, where chicks are required, they should be fixed inside the windows and not outside and they should be painted dark brown or chocolate colour so that they are not noticeable from outside.

4. The eaves and broken cornices are for the most part too decayed to attempt restoration but where they still remain in good or fair order they should be replastered and their original outline restored as far as possible. There are plenty of existing portions to serve as a guide for this work. Many of the smaller openings are broken and decayed. These should be repaired with new brick work before the plastering is undertaken. The towers on the roof are particularly in need of such repairs and where additional support is required new brickwork should be provided. It is impossible in these notes to put on record each item of repairs, many of them are only of minor importance, but all are necessary. I went over the whole building with the Overseer stationed at Chandragiri in October last and pointed out to him on the spot what repairs were required and showed him existing examples that should be taken as models in carrying out the repairs now proposed.

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5. The interior of the building is in a very much better state of preservation than the exterior, thanks to the care bestowed upon it by the Public Works Department when they converted the building into a Government resthouse. Some portions of the interior are coloured red, some grey and some white. The appearance of the interior would be much improved if the colour of the walls, arches and ceilings was uniform. The dull red colour employed in the Darbar Hall makes that apartment particularly dull and gloomy and does not set off the proportions of the room or the beauty of the ceiling. The same remarks apply to the dull grey ceilings on the same floor, while some of the coffered ceilings on the ground floor and in the interior of the central hall on this floor, which is now used as a godown, are in the same dirty state as when the Government first took over the building years ago. I would suggest that when the repairs suggested above are completed, the interior of the building, from top to the bottom, be colour-washed a light buff colour and that all timber work be painted dark brown or chocolate. The wire netting fixed to some of the window openings to keep out bats requires repairing in places.

6. Where necessary new stone steps, ashlar worked, should be provided on the north side giving access to the verandah. The ancient mortar wheel standing against the plinth of the verandah should be removed to the group of sculptures on the platform at the end of the tank. It is interesting but not a thing of beauty.

7. The terrace on the roof and also on the second floor require patch repairs and proper drainage is required here and there to prevent surface water from flowing down the face of the building. Some of the stairs and landings also require patch repairs.

8. The area occupied by the palace grounds from the outer avenue of trees on the west side of the tank to the fort wall on the east, and from the foot of the hill to the road, should be cleared of all small bushes and rank jungle growth, only the large trees should be allowed to remain. Trees and bushes which obstruct the view of the tank from the palace windows should be removed. The attempt at a flower garden between the tank and the palace is a failure and is unnecessary, a well-kept plot of grass would look better and prove less trouble to keep up. Care should be taken that surface water drains do not flow into the tank. The overflow exit to the tank requires minor repairs and the water channel should be kept clean and free from obstructions.

9. *Queen's Palace.*—This building is built in the same style and similar materials as that employed in the King's Palace, and like the latter building, it has to rely mainly on its outer coating of plaster for its preservation. The building is oblong on plan and faces the east and consists of a ground floor, first floor and a terraced roof. It has a frontage of 92 feet and is only 16 feet in breadth with a square projecting hall on the west side which is the chief apartment in the building. The ground floor is on a level with the natural ground and has no raised platform like the King's Palace. In the centre of the eastern facade is the main entrance into the central hall at the back of the building. On each side of this entrance are two lofty rooms with large open arched doorways. At each end of the building is a stone staircase leading up to the upper floor and the roof. The big hall or room at the back is 15 feet square and has a small entrance on the south side leading out to the back of the building. The plan of the upper floor is similar to that of the ground floor except that the rooms are smaller and originally had balconies at the back and front. The central hall forms a pleasant room with large windows on three sides. The ends of the building are occupied with the two staircases, the one at the southern end being carried up to the terraced roof. The roof is flat with a tower at each end over the stairs and a larger one over the central hall below. These three towers are similar in style to those adorning the King's Palace and constructed in the same manner. The chief point of interest about the building is its elaborate and beautiful stucco decorations. These are particularly handsome and some are picked out in colours, but unfortunately the colouring was never completed. It is a curious building and the plan of the ground floor resembles a stable more than anything else.

10. *Repairs.*—There are a vast number of very large and serious cracks in the walls, ceilings, crowns and joints of arches, and a number of large cavities in the walls both within and without the building. These should be filled up by grouting and plastering where necessary. Most of the window openings, doorways, the tops of parapets and balconies are broken and should be repaired and restored to their original outline but it is unnecessary to reproduce any of the missing stucco ornament. The staircases, landings and passages connected with the same should be repaired and proper stone steps should be provided at the entrances to the stairs on the ground floor. The roof, towers and balconies require to be made watertight and proof against the growth of vegetation. When these repairs are finished the building should be plastered outside wherever the old plaster is missing or decayed, care being taken to preserve all the remaining stucco ornament in their present condition. New plaster should be coloured to the tone of the old. When all structural repairs are finished inside, the interior

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Madras, 7th December 1917.

conservation notes.

Home DEPARTMENT.

According to the two (Sd. M)
 papers at Leeward Agency, Lehihood Dist.,
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” ” ” ” ” ” 191 .

C. No. 145, From the Subd. Acct., No. 35, dated 21-1-1918

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No. 107, dated 31-1-1918.

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Note:- The Conservation
notes do not raise any points
of order. Mr. Dougherty
simply states that certain
repairs are necessary and as
to the manner in wh. they shd.
be executed he has given
oral instructions to the
Contractor in Charge of
the job. Besides this

provision for annual
 repairs the Ash Supdr. (C) ^{in the conservation budget for 1918-19}
 has also proposed a special
 allotment of Rs 2000 on
 account, for maintenance of
 the repairs now suggested.
 The notes may simply be
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