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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public Works DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 1018 105-106	Press Mis.
Dated 12-11-1871.	

Not to be folded or roughly handled

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department,
12th April 1871.*

No. 105. Read the following letter from the Consulting Architect to Government, to the Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated Madras, 11th March 1871, No. 126 :—

I HAVE the honour to lay before you the following report on the expenditure and progress made in the restorations of certain portions of the old palace of Teroomala Naick at Madura :—

Vault at the west end of the courtyard.—This vault, it will be remembered, was in a very dangerous condition. The central arch had bulged, and a large portion of the keying masonry had fallen. The whole vault had cracked longitudinally and thrust the outer pillars far out of the perpendicular; the failure of this portion of the structure was no doubt due in a great measure, if not entirely, to the removal of two small columns which supplemented the larger ones.

The size of this vault is considerable. It is 100 feet long, 44 feet span, and 74 feet high to the underside of the crown. I have secured the vault in between the springing and the top of the arches by eight wrought-iron tie rods of 2-inch round iron, bolted to massive cast-iron heads 18 inches in diameter. The holes for the rods having to be bored in some cases through 10 feet of solid brickwork.

The middle arch was centred and the gaps have been successfully closed by masonry. The two small stone columns have been replaced, and, after the lapse of a reasonable time to allow for setting, they were tightly wedged up to their work, and will no doubt greatly relieve the larger columns (one of which shows slight signs of distress) of a large share of the superincumbent weight. The cornice, which has a projection of upwards of 6 feet, has been renewed, and the whole *façade* is being finished according to the old models. The roof has been entirely broken up and replastered.

New Municipal Office.—There was some little difficulty in proceeding with this work, a portion of the building being used as a store-godown for tools and implements belonging to the Department of Public Works. A place has now been provided for these articles, and the work of breaking through the walls for the necessary windows is being proceeded with. In the meantime the whole of the vaulting has been secured by concealed iron ties; the roof has been broken up and replastered; finials added to the two domes; and the cornice, according to the original model, raised and replastered.

New Court to the south-west.—The west wall of this court, lately in a most critical and dilapidated condition, has been walled up, and foundations for a new wall on the south side have been laid and the wall brought up to the level of the ground. Scaffolding has been raised inside. The interior of the roof has been replastered, and a portion in the centre decorated according to the original colours. This room, when finished, will make an excellent Court-house, and the Judge might hold sessions here while the principal chamber in which he at present holds Court is undergoing the process of restoration.

Restored portion and general remarks.—As a specimen of what the interior will be like when fully restored, I have entirely completed the smaller dome south of the Judge's Court. This dome covers an area of about 30 feet square, and is about 55 feet in height. From traces of colour here and there it seems evident that the

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12th April 1871.*

whole of the interior, and indeed the exterior also, was covered with polychromatic decoration, of which nothing now remains but a few roofs. These originally escaped the white-wash brush owing to the difficulty of getting at them, but in later years they appear to have been purposely preserved.

The existing patches of colour in the roofs formed so strong a contrast to the white walls as to be almost disagreeable, and this effect was heightened as the colours, by restoration, become more brilliant. Without altering any of the original colours, I found it necessary to suppress a little at the springing of the

dome, and to add a few flat tints below. This has had the effect of linking the decorated portion to the plain portion and producing a very harmonious result.*

*The south-west Court, restored during my absence, has been repainted just as it was found, and the general result is harsh in the extreme.

Taken altogether, the little dome as restored will, it seems to me, bear comparison both architecturally and artistically with anything I have yet seen. I at first imagined that gold would be absolutely necessary to produce any really good effect, and I searched diligently for traces of it, but now I see the work finished I doubt whether gold would really add much embellishment, although it is considered an indispensable accessory to all other systems of archaic decoration with which I am acquainted. As far as I can myself judge, I have no hesitation in pronouncing this portion of the restorations to be a perfect success. I am fully aware, at the same time, that my own convictions regarding a work in which I take so warm an interest cannot be very valuable, and I wait with some curiosity outside expression of opinion.

In the restorations of the figures and mouldings I regret I cannot report so favourably. The whole of the old decoration may be divided into two systems: the apparent support of weight by the forms of living creatures, and the accentuation of the lighter constructive lines, such as arch lines and roofs, by floral decoration every nook has its monster's head, every cornice its dragons and dwarfs. Most of them although betraying an atrocious ignorance of anatomy, are vigorous and full of action. The faces are frequently pleasing, and always comical, and the assumed ferocity of the dragons exhibits much humour. The figures done by my own men are tame and idiotic as compared to the old work, and totally lack vigorous action. The men I have now employed are quite capable, in my opinion, of rendering the figures more realistic; but without constant supervision the archaic expression of the old work would be lost, and I think it better to accept a few bad figures (which may in time be corrected) at the beginning of these restorations than to lapse into tameness and realism. I have instructed four of the best men to copy some of the old groups and mouldings, and I hope by this means they will instinctively recover their own peculiar forms of expression.

As I have before explained, the Palace has been built at different periods, and I find now that much of the ornamentation has either been executed at different times or is overlaid. The old work is generally neat, regular, and well designed; the new, coarse and uneven.

I append a rough statement of the quantity of work executed as measured by me. On the whole, this first attempt at restoration may be looked upon as most satisfactory. The restoration of the east waggon vault, one of the most

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dilapidated parts, place it beyond doubt that the whole structure can be in a similar way rendered perfectly safe and durable, and the completion of the little dome proves that the finer artistic work can also be carried out to a successful issue.

No. 106.

ORDER THEREON, 12th April 1871, No. 1,018.

CIVIL WORKS, No. 6.

THE Government have read the report of the Consulting Architect with interest and approve of the course which

he has taken in commencing the restoration of the Palace. They desire that the Consulting Architect will proceed to the restoration of the "new Court to the south-west" with as little delay as possible so that the Civil and Sessions Judge may be provided with accommodation in a quarter which will not be disturbed by the works in progress.

(True Extract.)

Colonel, R.E.,
Secretary to Government.

To the Consulting Architect.
,, Public Department.
,, Superintending Engineer, 8th Division.
,, Controller of Public Works Accounts.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

Restorations. Seeremala Nairs Hall Madras

Rough Statement of quantities of work executed

Quantity	Particulars	Rate	Unit	Amount	Remarks
250	Effect Seal & Venge	3/-	each	875	" "
234	Brickwork	5/-	"	1170	" "
17	Concrete	2/-	"	34	" "
156	Squares Plaster	4/6	"	702	" "
2	Small Temples	18/-	"	36	" "
2	"	18/-	"	36	" "
4	Large Griffins	10/-	"	40	" "
38	" Squares	4/-	"	152	" "
6	Square Screening	30/-	"	180	" "
3	Tops to domes etc	14/-	"	42	" "
802	Sufft ft Coloring	12/-	100	96	" "
	Total Cost of Iron work fixed			1400	" "
	Superintendence			1002	" "
597	Offt. Cut Stone	3/-	each	1791	" "
66	Sufft ft Windows	1/-	"	66	" "
	Scaffolding			18 1/4	" "
Total Rs. 9496				" "	" "

Chris Wilson
Consulting Architect to Government

Consulting Archt. Office.
Madras March/71

No 126

Consulting Architect Office
Madras 18th March 1871

From

R. F. Chisholm Esq.
Consulting Archt. to Government

To

The Secretary to Government
P. W. Department

Sir

I have the honor to lay
before you the following report on the
expenditure & progress made in the
restoration of certain portions of the
old palace of Teeroomala Naick
at Madura.

Vault at the west end of the Courtyard

This vault it will be
remembered was in a very dangerous
condition. The central arch had
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failure

Adm. 1871
Approved by the
Asst. Secy to Govt
Forwarded to the
Government of India
with department

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R. F. Chisholm

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The middle arch was centred and the gaps have been successfully closed by masonry. The two small stone Columns have been replaced, and after the lapse of a reasonable time to allow for setting, they were tightly wedged up to their work, and will no doubt

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New Municipal Office

There was some little difficulty in proceeding with this work, a portion of the building being used as a storegodown for tools & implements belonging to the Department of Public works. A plan has now been provided for these articles, and the work of breaking through the walls for the necessary windows is being proceeded with. In the meantime the whole of the vaulting has been secured by coiled iron ties, the roof has been broken

broken up and replastered. figures added to the two domes and the Cornice according to the original model raised & replastered.

New Court to the South West

The west wall of this Court lately in a most critical & dilapidated condition has been walled up, and foundations for a new wall on the south side have been laid & the wall brought up to the level of the ground. Scaffolding has been raised inside. The interior of the roof has been replastered and a portion in the ^{center} ~~center~~ decorated according to the original colors. This room when finished will make an excellent Court house and the Judge might hold sittings here while the principal Chamber in which he at present holds Court is undergoing the process of restoration.

Restored portion & General remarks

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the interior will be like when fully restored, I have entirely completed the smaller dome south of the Judges Court. This dome covers an area of about 30 feet square, and is about 55 feet in height. From traces of color here and there it seems evident that the whole of the interior and indeed the exterior also, was covered with polychromatic decoration, of which nothing now remains but a few roofs. These originally ^{escaped} ~~escaped~~ the white wash brush owing to the difficulty of getting at them, but in later years they appear to have been purposely preserved.

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Public Works Department

Proceedings of the Madras Government

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Read the following

From R. F. Christen Esq^r.

Consr. Architect to Govt.

W. E. 1268/11th March 1871

Postscript
An old friend of mine
J. L. H. S.

Chas. E. ...

R. F. Chickelum Esq.

Dec. 1864

Dated 11 2 March 1871

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a report on the
expenditure of money
made with the
restoration of
Leeroomala Naik's
Palace at Modur.

1889/1890, 12 Dec 1892

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progress.

[Signature]

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The Cong Architect ✓
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Desp 12/4/71

Dec 18 March / 90 344-345
" 21 " " 388
" 10 June " 138-139

Further Proc 1005 2/7/71

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Govt of Madras.

PUBLIC WORKS.

The Consulting Architect

13th April 1918

Dec 1854/186

Serumala Naidu's Palace

at Madras - Papering orders

on the letter from the Eng. Architect

to Govt: Submitting a report on

the expenditure & progress made

with the restoration of

Serumala Naidu's Palace

at Madras