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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Public DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	1357	Press
		Mis.
Dated	29-9-	1869.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 184. Read the following letter from R. F. CHISHOLM, Esq., Architect, Madras, to the Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, Fort Saint George; dated Madras, 11th September 1869, No. 343.

In compliance with G. O., No. 1478, dated 2nd December 1868, Public Department, I have the honour to report that I visited Madura in June last, and inspected the old palace. I submit, herewith, a memorandum and six drawings, the result of my visit and inspection.

No. 344.

Report on Tirumala Naik's Palace, Madura, by R. F. CHISHOLM, Architect, Madras, 11th September 1869.

Tirumala Naick's palace at Madura is said to have been constructed in the seventeenth century. The main rectangle of the building is arranged symmetrically between the four principal walls, and covers a superficial area of nearly two-and-a-half acres. The general mass lies east and west. The chief feature is a large rectangular open court marked A. on plan drawing No. 1, measuring about 165 feet in length, and 100 feet in breadth. This court is transepted by two smaller-roofed courts marked BB., each measuring about fifty-five feet in length by about thirty-six feet in breadth. The west end of the quadrangle is occupied by a square hall or chamber measuring about sixty-two feet across. This square is surmounted by a dome. The chamber below the dome is octagonal in form, the octagon being formed by arches spanning the corners from the columns marked b on the plan. The whole of the remaining space between the external walls is occupied by massive stone-columns supporting a brick-and-mortar superstructure.

2. Exterior to the great quadrangle and to the north-west, is the hall formerly used as the Collector's Court, marked D. on the plan. This hall is illustrated in Fergusson's "History of Architecture," but the illustration taken from "Daniell's views in Hindoostan" is not quite correct. The lines on the ceiling* would seem to indicate boarding over the ribs, and single arches are shown in the triforium, whereas the roof is a brick and mortar-pointed waggon vault without longitudinal lines of any kind, and the triforium originally appears to have been in triplets: Drawing No. 2, though a coarse and inaccurate representation, gives a better idea of the interior of this hall.

3. Due west of the great quadrangle is a rectangular hall marked E. now used as a Record-room. To the south of this is a smaller hall F. formerly used by the Sudder Ameen. Neither of the courts, marked respectively D. and F. are now used. The west end of the former (D.) after being pronounced unsafe and unfit for use, fell during heavy rain in May 1858. The latter seems to have been a ruin as I have sketched it for a long time past, and it does not appear to be known when the two missing polished columns were removed, (see Drawing No. 4.)

4. Externally the view from the south-east is very pleasing. A massive wall rises to the height of forty feet, accentuated at the eastern angles by Hindoo turrets (in imitation of muntapums) of considerable altitude; beyond these, the skyline is pleasingly broken by the domes and vaults of the main structure. Except on the east face the exterior wall is perfectly plain, without projections or ornament of any kind.

5. The present condition of the building is not very satisfactory. All the outer aisles about the open court, with their arching and domes, are in fair condition; but the inner arches and domes, supported by massive columns forty feet high, are cracked in all directions, and some of the domes have fallen, and nearly all are cracked. The state of the vaulted roof at the west end of the courtyard will be better understood by a reference to my water-colour sketch No. 5. This hall or chamber is, constructively speaking, unskilful in the extreme. There is literally nothing to counterpoise the thrust of the waggon vault but the columns. Their inability to do the work seems to have been discovered before the centres were struck, and this apparently led to the addition of the small shafts on the exterior of the vault. These slender

shafts by chance form extremely pleasing features, and greatly add to the beauty of the facade. The removal of the two centrally situated appears to have led to the immediate failure of the vault, which has both cracked and bulged, causing the large piece of masonry to fall out of the central arch. The rectangular court E. is equally unskilful, but has been preserved by a mass of dead masonry piled on the outside.

6. The two rectangular chambers marked BB. are badly cracked; that on the north has been supported by buildings remains of which extend over a very large area, but the southern one has been strengthened by the immense buttresses added to the exterior marked aa.

7. Architecturally speaking the structure may lay claim to represent a pure style; throughout the visible portion there is nothing but column, arch, and dome; but a variety of skill and the work of different hands is distinctly recognizable as the structure rises. Unlike the buildings of the western world, however, the builders gradually appear to get more timid and inexpert. The plan is grand, and the work to the tops of the columns and some of the lower arches well-worthy of the plan: above this, however, miserable expedients such as wooden ties are resorted to; the method of working from the square to the octagon before turning the dome is clumsy and constructively incorrect; and lastly, the roofs have been added without proper counterpoising. It appears to me that these are not the only evidences of the work having changed hands. There are indications of extensive alterations and additions as the work proceeds. On reference to the plan it will be observed that the open court was, in all probability, twelve columns long by six broad, that is, 200 feet by 100 feet. This supposition is supported by the fact of the arcading with the angles marked by domes running symmetrically with the double square, and the courts BB. bisecting it in equal parts. As the structure stands, the courtyard is ten columns long by six broad, and the centre of the transept between the sixth and seventh column from the east, and the fourth and fifth from the west. Hence it would seem highly probable that the court marked G. is a subsequent addition, and this conclusion is further supported by the fact that the Hindoo plinth, shown by a double line on the plan* and marked ffff, runs symmetrically with the supposed double square, and if an addition, was probably executed some time after the work had reached this level. I have drawn out a plan drawing No. 3, fig. 1, showing the building as I imagine it to have been designed. I am of opinion also that the two Hindoo turrets or muntapums are additions to the original design, but built with the whole of the east end at a somewhat later period than the main body of the work. If we look to the simple grandeur of the plan drawing No. 3, it is difficult to conceive that no indication of intended turrets would appear on it, and no provision made to sustain the extra weight. Neither is it likely the excrescences on the east face HHH., which reach only half way up the outer wall, and are cotemporary with it, formed part of the original design; indeed, the whole character of this face differs from the rest of the exterior, the other faces are left plain apparently for a stone-facing, but this face has projections and pegs for elaborate Hindoo ornamentation, and at one time a plaster parapet of considerable altitude appears to have existed. If these deductions are correct, they would go some way to show either that the work changed hands very soon after the commencement, or that a very considerable time elapsed between the commencement and the completion.

8. The turrets, parapet, and other projections on the east face give this face the look of an entrance facade, and the English have completed this look, by cutting an entrance through the solid brickwork. A Hindoo gentleman, who gave me the latter piece of information, told me that the entrance was a mystery, and that no one had yet discovered it. I found indications of an entrance or break in the wall without much difficulty at the west end. It will be observed that all the detached columns throughout the structure are of stone, the outer walls coloured black are of brick with small square brick pilasters to receive the cross-arching. The columns marked cc nearly buried in the wall, are of stone and circular, and must, therefore, have stood *detached*; here then is clear evidence of a break, and the only evidence so far as I could see throughout the whole exterior wall of the quadrangle, and it may reasonably be inferred that at some period this formed either a recess, or an entrance; at present it leads into the record-room, a mere *cul-de-sac*.

* See Drawing No. 53, fig. 1.

This room, as I have before mentioned, is a waggon vault, very similar in character to the addition in the great courtyard, and glancing at the section drawing No. 1, equally unskilful; here, however, there was little difficulty in making the structure safe, and accordingly material is piled up on the outside to act as a counterpoise to the thrust of the vault. From its similarity to the vault east of the dome, and from the peculiarity of its position, it seems doubtful whether this formed a portion of the original design, or whether it might not have been an addition like the east vault G. These apparent indications of extensive alterations throw some doubt on the fact of the building being finished at all, as originally designed. From a careful study of the plan and sections, I am inclined to think that it was at one time the intention of the builders to roof the whole of the great quadrangle. The manner in which the columns are clustered together towards the outside would seem to indicate that they were intended to bear the thrust of a heavy roof, and the bolder row on the interior of the quadrangle run sufficiently high to admit of a clear storey between the springing of the upper arches and the roof. Round a very large portion a clear storey in triplets actually exists. Might not the failure of the roof of the great hall marked D. have deterred the builders from undertaking to roof in the larger span. This hall D. is covered by a waggon vault forty feet span; the abutments, however, are insufficient, and the roof must have cracked shortly after completion. It is possible that the key to the main structure may be found in the hall D. mentioned above. The whole of the west end has fallen, but from the remains and the view, it may be seen that the building was entered through a vestibule covered by a dome or domes. Like the great quadrangle there is no entrance on the north, south, or east faces. To the east of this building a dome L. stands formerly used as a court, which seems to have led to a large rectangular chamber. To the west of the quadrangle, the small court F. has the remains of a domical structure to the south, and at Srivallipootoor there is a structure which I am informed is more complete, where the entrance is a domed vestibule, leading to an oblong covered court; it is not unreasonable to infer from these facts that the domed chamber in the main structure may have been intended to serve the purpose of a vestibule to the larger court beyond, and it is certain that the want of a counterpoise, such as the roof over the main courtyard would have been, has led to the numerous failures throughout the structure. A professional man would be inclined to pronounce in favour of the supposition that this courtyard was originally intended to be roofed, and certainly were it not so, the constructive features of this portion would show a want of ingenuity strangely at variance with the skill displayed in the plan. The pretty grouping of the smaller domes and supports round the principal dome shows that the designers were perfectly aware of the thrusts they had to counteract, and the square domical hall 60 feet across, is a proof of their love for clear space, and it is difficult to conceive that the architect or architects would cluster these columns so closely together all round the courtyard for the sake of architectural effect merely, that they would widen the space and heighten the columns as they come nearer the inside and raise them in massive stonework over forty feet high and fifteen feet in circumference, merely for the display of a plaster parapet of grotesque Hindoo figures. These considerations, coupled with the foregoing remarks on the apparent alterations, would seem to render it doubtful whether the structure was intended originally for the palace of a Hindoo raja; might it not have been commenced in one generation for one particular purpose, and appropriated and finished by another generation for a different purpose? The historical records on the subject are too meagre to enable us to say positively it was *not* so.

9. Both in form and dimensions the main rectangle of the building (assuming the part shaded to have been an addition) bears a striking resemblance to the Jumma Mosque at Beejapoor, fig. 2, drawing 3. The points of the compass are similar in both plans. In each the chief feature is a square domical hall, and in each this feature is surrounded by aisles, and bounded by a solid wall. The central accentuations of the open court, although not so marked at Beejapoor, nevertheless clearly exist, bisecting what may be called the cloisters midway, and receiving different treatment to the bays on either side. In connexion with these considerations two facts are worthy of notice, viz., that the Mahomedans held the country for nearly fifty years in the fourteenth century, (see Nelson's Manual of Madura, Part III., page 80,) and secondly, that the history of the city as we have it, is obtained chiefly from Hindoo traditions and literature. The subject is one of much

interest, as it is within the range of possibility that further researches may compel us to assign to the Mahomedans a more prominent position in the history of this part of Southern India.

10. It has been hitherto assumed by many, and believed by the Madura people themselves, that the building was the work of Hindoos aided by the Jesuits who had established themselves in Madura before Tirumala Naick's reign. The Jesuits, I think, had something to do with the later portions of the structure, as, on either side of the big arch marked *e* on the plan, is the figure of an angel; but these angels, it will be observed, are on that portion which I have attempted to show *formed no part of the original design*. I believe hands and heads in purgatory are to be found; but these I did not see myself.

11. I trust I may be excused for putting these crude ideas on paper. I do so in case I may not have another opportunity of visiting Madura. The few days I was enabled to stay were nearly all spent in measuring the work for the necessary ties to keep the structure together, and I have no doubt a second visit would enable me to make careful plans, and so clear up much that it is difficult now to reconcile.

12. Before attempting any restorations it will be highly important to preserve the work from further decay with this in view. I have prepared an estimate, amounting to Rupees 6217, which provides for bracing the whole structure with suitable iron-ties, and this work I would strongly recommend the Government to undertake at once.

13. Speaking more particularly of the restorations, although there might be great temptations to strip what I believe to be the simplicity of the original plan of later adjuncts, yet I think it will be better to retain the familiar structure as it now exists, especially as some of the supposed additions are not without a picturesque beauty.

14. In order to restore the grand court to its probable form when last occupied, it will be necessary to pull down and rebuild at least two arches reconstructing them exactly on the original plan, and strengthening them with ties. The lateral aisles round the court will have to be in part rebuilt, though not to any great extent, and ties which can be concealed must be inserted throughout. The small lateral courts marked *B*. must be strengthened by iron bands cast round the upper galleries. The granite plinth inside the inner row of pillars in the great court, one of the finest features of the building, must be thoroughly repaired and completed in its recessed portions.

15. The vaulted space at the west end of the court, covered in the centre by the large dome, next claims attention. This space might be divided by low walls into three spacious apartments as shown on the plan, sufficiently screened from each other, which would be available for any administrative purpose contemplated by Government, such as the public reception room and Cutcherry of the Collector. The central apartment can be lighted by improved perforations in the dome, furnished with appropriate glass windows. The two apartments at the ends can be supplied with sufficient light by raising the domes, or by the insertion of glass eyes.

16. The room *E*. now used as a record-room might remain so. It needs little more than superficial restoration and glazing. The two rooms, one of which is half ruined, next to *E*. might be enlarged by the addition of a third at the corner *F*., and thus four large rooms would be available *en suite* for official use.

17. The rectangular hall *D*. would be best suited for the court room of the Civil and Session Judge. The vaulted roof of this room can be repaired by careful tentative removal, and restoration prosecuted from a scaffold erected below. A portion of the north-western external wall, extending along perhaps three bays, will have to be taken down and rebuilt, and the whole of the western gable, which fell in May 1858, must be reconstructed on the original design so far as it can be recovered. Private apartments for the Judge, or for other parties connected with the courts, could be constructed in connexion with the western side of this hall.

18. It might be considered desirable to associate the Municipality of Madura with the restoration of an edifice which is the chief ornament of the city. In that case a place for the Municipal offices could be provided in the dome covered structure marked *L*., which could have a separate entrance towards the most important streets of the town.

19. The external buildings marked *HH*. might be adapted to the purposes of a Police guard.

20. Under these suggestions the whole of the open courtyard with the lateral aisles and those at the east end would remain unappropriated, but they would be useful to the numerous persons who repair to the Collector's Cutcherry for audiences and business, a purpose probably not very remote from that to which they were originally devoted. It is obvious that no transverse partitions or obstructions could be raised in these magnificent cloisters, without entirely destroying the effect of perspection which constitutes their principal merit.

21. I may mention that no difficulties are likely to arise in attempting to carry out these restorations with correct details and in proper spirit, for at Madura, strange to say, there has been no change in the arts of sculpture and architecture. At the present time masons and stone-cutters are carving the gods and devices similar in all respects to those their forefathers carved five hundred years ago, working probably with the same implements, emulated by the same superstitions, and delighting in the same grotesque forms and details. Madura is probably the only place in Southern India where, for more than five hundred years, the art has remained stationery, and after this lapse of time, is an exponent now as it was then, of the true expressions and feelings of the people.

(Signed) R. F. CHISHOLM,
Architect, Madras.

Transferred to the Public Department, with reference to Proceedings in that Department, No. 1478, dated 2nd December 1868.

FORT SAINT GEORGE, (Signed) C. A. ORR, Colonel, R. E.,
— September 1869. *Secy. to Govt., P. W. D.*

No. 185. ORDER THEREON, 29th September 1869, No. 1357.

The Government have perused with much interest Mr. Chisholm's valuable Memorandum, which contains some ingenious suggestions respecting the original design of the group of buildings known as Tirumala Nayak's palace at Madura.

2. They believe that the whole of the existing buildings are susceptible of restoration and of useful appropriation in providing accommodation for the Revenue and Judicial Establishments of the district, as well as for the Municipal body; and apart from this, they consider that the further dilapidation of the structure would be a matter of regret. The buildings might be substantially repaired within ten years by the steady application of a few thousands of rupees per annum.

3. The Government accordingly resolve to direct that an appropriation of Rupees 10,000 be inserted in the budget of 1870-71, for the preservation of the palace in the manner suggested by Mr. Chisholm, and that consideration be given, in the Public Works Department, to the question of the best mode of manufacturing and transporting to the locality the heavy pieces of iron work requisite for the execution of the work.

(True Extract).
R. A. DALYELL,
Actg. Secy. to Govt.

To the Public Works Department, with a statement and six drawings.
To R. F. Chisholm, Esq.
To the Accountant General.
„ Revenue Department.

Exd. J. Wright.

N. 343

Madras 11th September/69

From. P. F. Whisholme Esq^r
Architect Madras.

To
Col. Charles A. O'Connell R.E.
Secretary to Govt. P. W. D.

Sir

In compliance with G. O. No. 1578 dated 2nd December 1868 Public Department. I have the honor to report that I visited Madras in June last and inspected the old palace. I submit herewith a Memorandum and six drawings the results of my visit and inspection.

I have the honor to be

Sir

Your most Obedient Servant.

P. Whisholme
Architect Madras

Govt. of Madras

PUBLIC.

To

THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

Secy, &c., &c.

Dated September, 1869.

Recd.

Encl.

G. O., 29th September 1869, No. 1357.

RECEIVED

NOV. 10. 1869.

Directing that an appropriation of Rupees 10,000 be inserted in the Budget of 1870-71, for the preservation of Trimmale Nigala's Palace at Madras, in the manner suggested by Mr. Whisholme.

9

Handwritten: 7/10/90
J. J. J. J. J.
J. J. J. J. J.

Ed. A. Munnich

Secretary to Gov.
Pitts.

~~1069~~ 1069 Dick
Ridley Dec 29 11

- [illegible]



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "M. J. ...". The signature is written in a cursive style with several loops and flourishes. It is located at the bottom right of the page, below the typed name "M. J. ...".

appropriation in providing
accommodation for the
Revenue and Judicial
Establishment of the Dis-
trict, as well as for the
Municipal body; and
apart from this, they con-
sider that the further
dilapidation of the structure
would be a matter of
regret.

The buildings
might be substantially
repaired within 10 years by
the steady application of a
few thousands of rupees
per annum.

3. The Government, ^{accordingly} re-
solve to direct that an ap-
propriation of Rs 10,000 be
inserted in the budget of
1870-71 for the preservation
of the palace in the man-
ner suggested by Mr.

Chisholm

11
The accompanying report by Mr.
Chisholm contains some ingenious
suggestions respecting the original
design of the group of buildings
known as the Palace of Sarnath
at Madura and some valuable
information respecting the measures
which ought to be taken in order to
preserve the structure from further
decay.

My own impression on this subject
is that the whole of the existing
buildings are susceptible of restoration
and of useful appropriation and that
the work ought to be undertaken
by this Government in a spirit of
economy, resolution and patience
such as that which has animated
the restorers of our great ecclesiastical

dispt 4/10

buildings in England in recent years.
By the steady application of R. 20,000.
per annum - or even less - at the
end of 10 - or 15 years the fabric
would be ~~placed beyond the reach~~ ^{substantially repaired}
of decay & be made to afford useful
accommodation for the Revenue and
Judicial Establishments of the
District as well as for the Municipal
Body.

Before asking the Govt. to commit
themselves to any plan for the
restoration of the buildings I wish to
visit the place once more in company
with Mr. Chris. John and if possible
or, if his duties convenience
permit him to absent himself
from Madras. I hope to be able to
effect this in the month of October
next.

In the mean time the Govt. ¹³ might,
I think, to sanction the steps proposed
by Mr. Chris. John for strengthening the
semi ruinous portions of the building by the
insertion of iron ties and bands.
Even if the building is ~~never~~ made use
of it might not be in the interests
of the arts to be suffered to fall
down. I don't hesitate to affirm that
in the eyes of all lovers and students
of antiquity & architecture in Europe
the further dilapidation of the
structure would be a matter for
regret and reproach. The Govt. should
affirm their intention to insert an
appropriation of R. 10,000. in the
budget of 1869-70. for the preservation
of the Palace in the manner suggested
by Mr. Chris. John & call upon the
S. P. W. to report in what manner
the heavy pieces of iron work requisite

25-1-18.1
7-9-16 ✓

1892

Out. of { 186 } Gillman,

Public

To
The Public Works Dept.
Vancouver

Date *Sept. 11. 22.* }
Recd. }
1869, No. }
1357

Nos. 184. 185.

Directing that an ap-
provision of \$10,000 be
inserted in the Budget
of 1890-91 for the pre-
servation of the natural
history of the
Marine in the museum
and protected by Mr. Christy.

022/9.
1225m