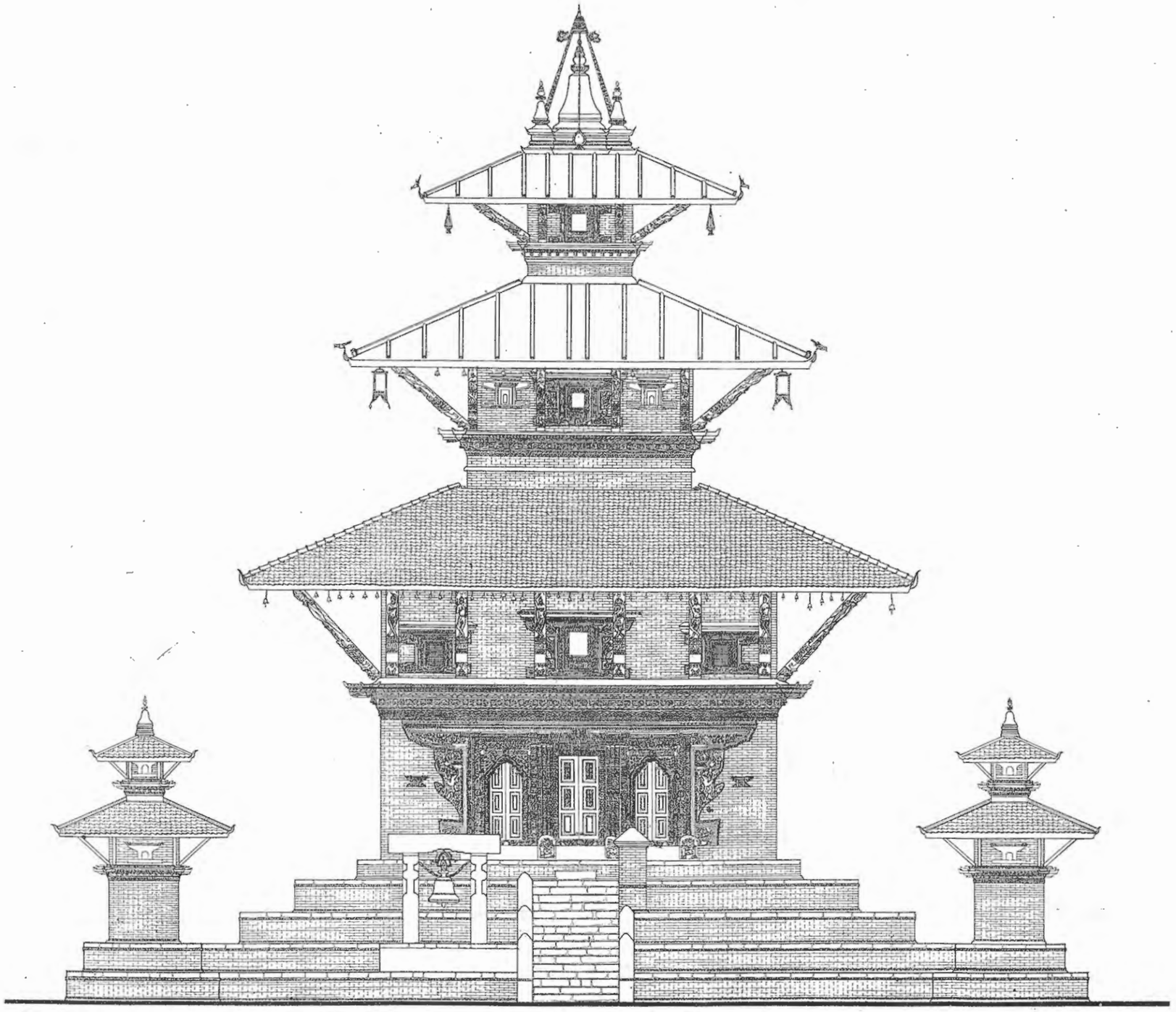


Fig. 36. South Elevation of Tripureshwar Temple.

0 1 2 3 4 5 10 15 m

THE TEMPLE

General

The traditional infrastructure which formerly managed the complex no longer exists and the community are no longer capable of maintaining the buildings or functions for which they were originally intended. The breakdown in management has resulted partly due to the collapse of the original temple *guthi* and the more recent adaptation in the 1970s of the Guthi Sansthan's responsibilities. Originally income generated from land bequeathed to the temple provided for all religious activities and maintained the *pujari* and his assistants. Today there are no funds and in theory maintenance is dependent on a small budget from the Guthi Sansthan and a budget for maintenance from the Department of Archaeology. If the temple and its community are to survive there is a necessity to look into new solutions to contemporary problems and to find answers and some initial seed funding to provide an impetus for developing programmes that can be self sustainable.

Description

The temple is typical of its kind with a three tiered roof construction built in the traditional Newari style but dating from the Shah Period. The plan is based on the concept of the Panchayan, whereby Shiva is surrounded by four demigods. The main Mahadev temple is set high on four diminishing brick platforms and there are four small two tiered temples located at the corners of the second platform which house four special divinities representing Ganesh, Vishnu, Surya, and Bhagawati.

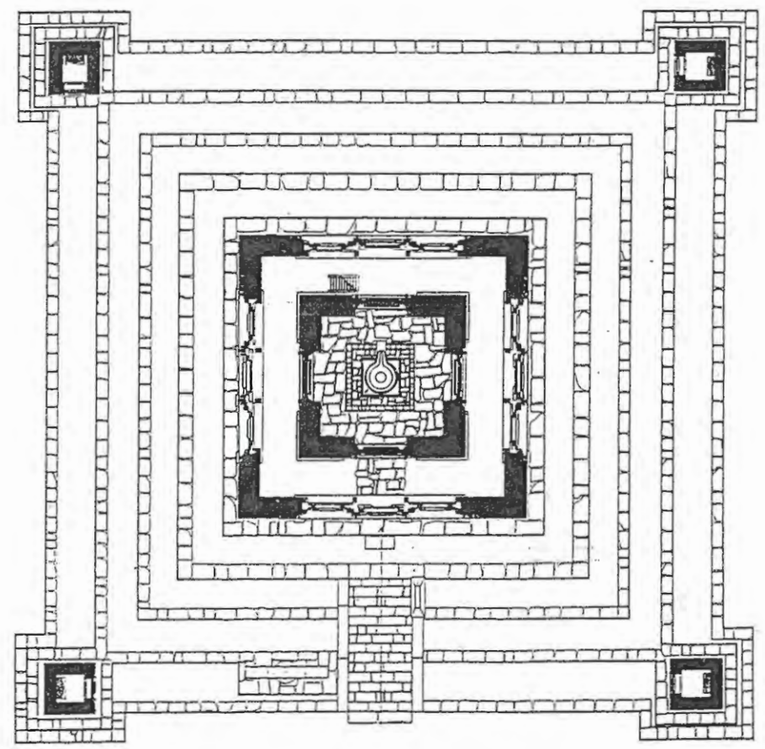


Fig. 37. Ground Plan, Tripureshwar Temple.

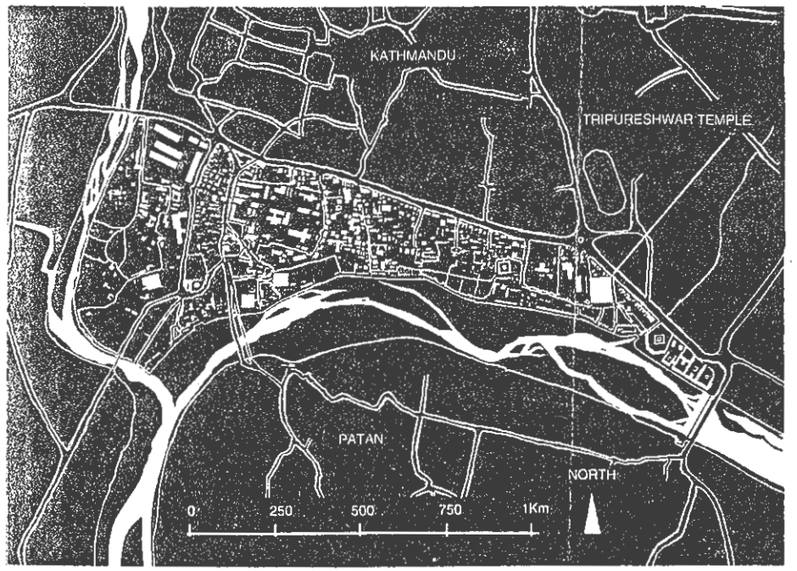


Fig. 33. Teku Thapathali map; locating Tripureshwar Temple Complex, Thapathali, Kathmandu.

TRIPURESHWAR MAHADEV MANDIR

HISTORICAL DATA

Name:	Tripureshwar Mahadev Mandir
Location:	Thapathali, Ward no.11
Founder:	Queen Lalit Tripura Sundari
Temple Built:	1818 AD (1875 BS)
Sattals Built:	1820 AD (1877 BS)
Temple & Sattals rebuilt:	1937 AD after the 1934 earthquake
Religion:	Hindu
Divinity:	Shiva
Ownership:	Previously Raj Guthi now Guthi Sansthan.

Tripureshwar Temple was founded by Queen Lalit Tripura Sundari and in 1818 AD, it was placed under the ownership of the Raj Guthi. At that time 781 Ropani of land was donated by the royal family to the Raj Guthi for the maintenance of the temple and its daily worship. The exact location of the *guthi* land at that time is not clear. Only a fraction of this land remains today as part of the curtilage to the temple and a section of arable land/market garden that leads down to the river.

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

The temple is dedicated to the Hindu divinity, Lord Shiva, the most powerful God of the Hindu pantheon. The image in the central shrine is a *lingam* and there are four associated shrines set around the base of the main platform and 18 attendant shrines in the courtyard itself.

Despite the lack of sponsorship, the *pujari* (priest), who is employed as an officer in the Guthi Sansthan, continues to practice the daily worship and to fulfill the religious responsibilities.

Each day there is a morning and evening *puja* (worship) carried out by the temple attendants or by the *pujari*.

Each lunar month *Pradosh Puja* (special worship) is performed two days before full moon and two days before no moon.

The special annual worship of *Barsha Bandhan Puja* takes place on the temple's foundation day during the months of April and May. Also at around this time *Satu* and *Sarbat*, (barley flour and sherbet), are offered to residents and visitors.

During November the *Akash Deep Puja* takes place at which time a flaming vessel is raised on a long bamboo pole.

Towards the end of October and the beginning of November, various divinities are washed and food offerings are made.

A ceremony takes place at the end of November during which the main image of the Shiva *Lingam* is bathed in hot water.

The cycle of worship is completed in March with the *puja* of suppression.

Added to the specific *pujas* listed above there are, each year, a series of annual *pujas* taking place throughout the kingdom which are also observed at the Tripureshwar Temple. They are:

Teej Brata - a festival in August/September especially observed by women who require ritual cleansing in the Bagmati River.

Krishna Astami Puja - in honour of the birthday of Krishna at the end of August, all night worship takes place in the temple complex.

Dashain Puja - the most important religious family festival which lasts for nine days in October.

Shivaratri Puja - one of the most important festivals of the Kathmandu Valley in honour of Lord Pashupati, (patron of the Valley and protector of animals). Worship takes place all day and all night for two consecutive nights between the end of February and the beginning of March.

Temple

The temple houses the main divinity of the complex, a Shiva *lingam*, which is worshipped regularly by the *pujari* or by his assistants. The smaller shrines placed around the temple house the attendant divinities of Ganesh, Surya, Bhagawati and Vishnu which are worshipped on a daily basis by the local inhabitants.

Sattal

Traditionally the *sattal* surrounding the temple provided accommodation to families undertaking the religious responsibilities of the temple. Public space provided short term accommodation for pilgrims, the homeless and transient families. Between 1913 and 1973 AD certain portions of the *sattal* were used as an orphanage. Space was also used to store religious paraphernalia for ceremonies and feasts as well as shared agricultural implements.

Courtyard

As in Newari domestic architecture the temple courtyard is a public space in which many of the activities of daily, secular and religious life are performed. The courtyard which is paved with the traditional brick laid in different patterns is a fine open space. During all the big festivals the courtyard is used for different religious activities and each day it serves as the communal space for the occupants of the *sattal*. These communal activities help to bind the community together. Within the courtyard there are 18 different attendant shrines, the sacred foundation stone,and two pillars, one of which supports the image of the founding Queen Lalit while the other supports *Nandi*, the bull - Shiva's vehicle.

Garden

Traditionally the surrounding land was a cultivated garden where flowers, vegetables, etc., were grown and used during religious festivals associated with the temple.

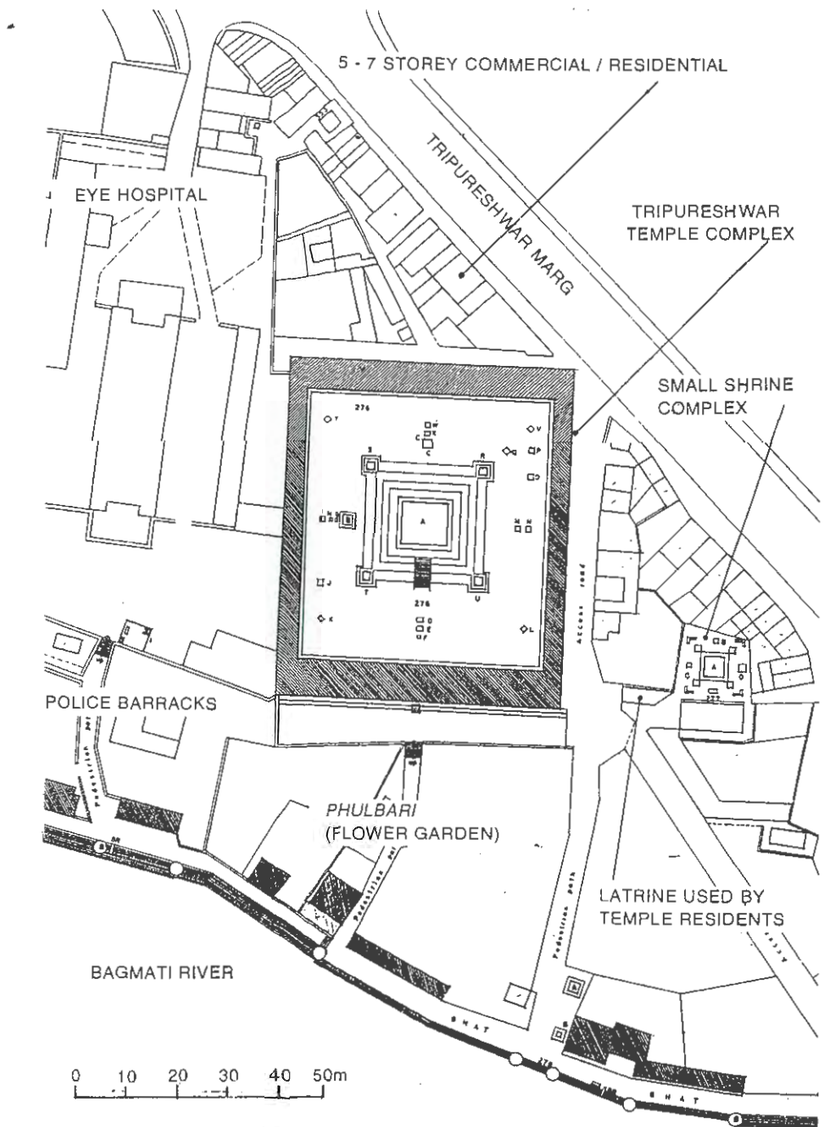


Fig. 34. Tripureshwar Temple Complex and its immediate surroundings.

The lower section of the temple is formed with doorways leading into a circumambulation enclosing the inner sanctum where the *lingam* is housed. The sanctum is accessible through a set of triple doorways on all four sides. The lowest roof is supported by timber *musi* (rafters) and 28 carved *tunasi* (struts) which describe the main characters of the Mahabarat epic. The twenty *tunasi* of the second roof reveal the life of Krishna while the twelve *tunasi* at the third level depict the Matrika goddesses. These two upper roofs are covered with gilded copper sheets. Crowning the top roof, is the gilded metal *gajur* (pinnacle) consisting of five pinnacles beneath a decorative umbrella.

Present Condition

The roofs are of traditional timber construction supported off external walls and a central brick core which in turn carries the upper two roofs. The lower roof is covered with the traditional *Jhingati* tile set in a thick bed of clay, the upper two roofs are covered with copper sheeting (and originally gilded). The external walls of the temple structure are constructed with the special *do appa* (traditional wedge shaped bricks) that hide the mortar joints, several of which have been replaced with simple handmade bricks. The carved *Tunasi* to all the roofs and the 28 elaborately carved windows and four carved triple door are, except where damaged by water penetration, in reasonably good condition.

Repair Recommendations

A complete and thorough structural survey of the temple is not possible without scaffolding. From initial investigations it seems that, in general, the upper two metal roof structures are in reasonable condition. However it is anticipated that many of the *musi* (rafters) will have rotted under the metal covering and will need to be replaced. It is recommended therefore to remove the roof covering, the *phalek* (timber boarding) and to check the condition of the timber rafters and their fixings. When the structural timbers, such as the supporting beams carrying the uppermost roof structure are exposed, they should also be thoroughly checked for structural integrity. It is likely that the boarding to both the roofs will require almost complete renewal.

The lowest roof covered with *jhingati* tiles is, through lack of maintenance requiring a total overhaul. It is recommended that the structural integrity of the wall plates is carefully checked and if necessary they should be replaced with a carefully designed concrete ring beam which can be hidden within the present structure. The old timbers should be treated against infestation in situ.
New timbers in all the roofs and other timber structural elements should be chemically treated against wood boring insects and fungal attacks. When replacing the clay bed for the tiles, the clay should be treated with a special herbicide to prevent the growth of vegetation and the tiles should be dipped in a silicone preparation to prevent undue rainwater absorption.

The brickwork requires some careful conservation and replacement. It is recommended that a careful assessment is made of the replacement requirements and new bricks are specially ordered from the kiln to replace them.

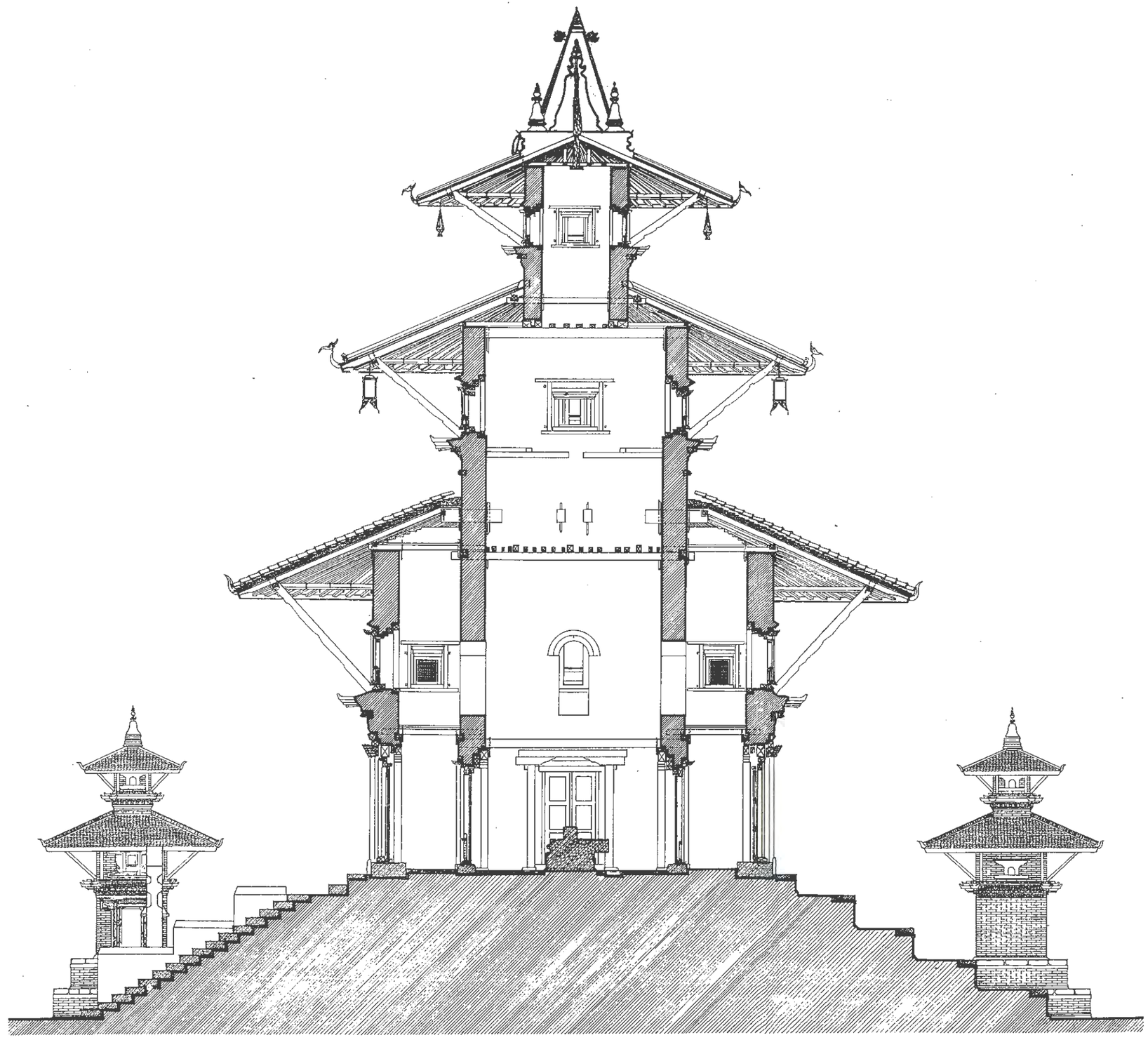


Fig. 38. North-South Section; Tripureshwar Temple.

0 1 2 3 4 5 10 15 m

THE SATTAL

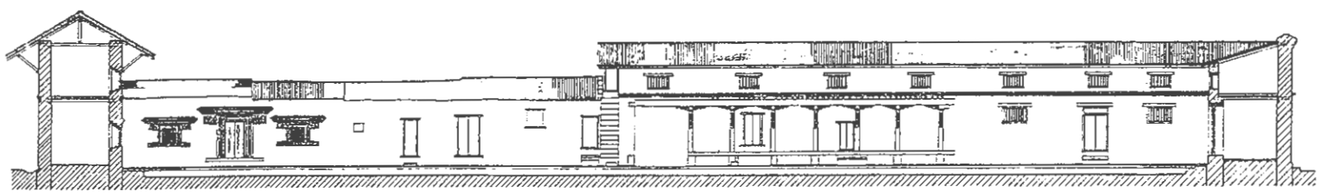
General Assessment

The Internal elevations of the *sattal* were once impressive, with finely carved balcony windows at the upper level supported on rows of double carved columns which open up the lower half of the building as *patis* for public occupation. The original pitched roofs were constructed to create a uniform pitch which was cleverly detailed to provide symmetry over different widths of structure. The upper floors originally provided accommodation for the temple attendants.

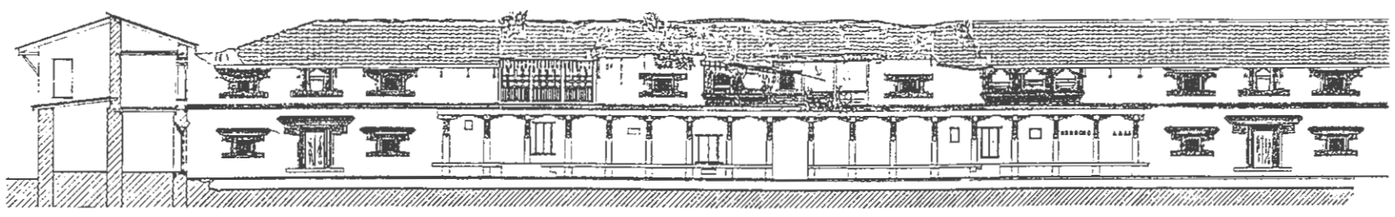
Over the decades and in particular since the 1934 earthquake the condition of the *sattal* has deteriorated due to earthquake damage, general misuse, lack of sponsorship and negligible maintenance. A once thriving community of priests and temple assistants has dwindled to a handful of people some of whom are paid to carry out the rituals associated with the temple. The remaining shelter has been adapted by the poor and needy to provide accommodation (See Figs. 39 & 41).

In the following paragraphs the condition of the *sattal* is described by elevation and proposals are set out for its repair and rehabilitation to provide more appropriate accommodation for all those presently staying within the complex and liberating the traditional *pati* space.

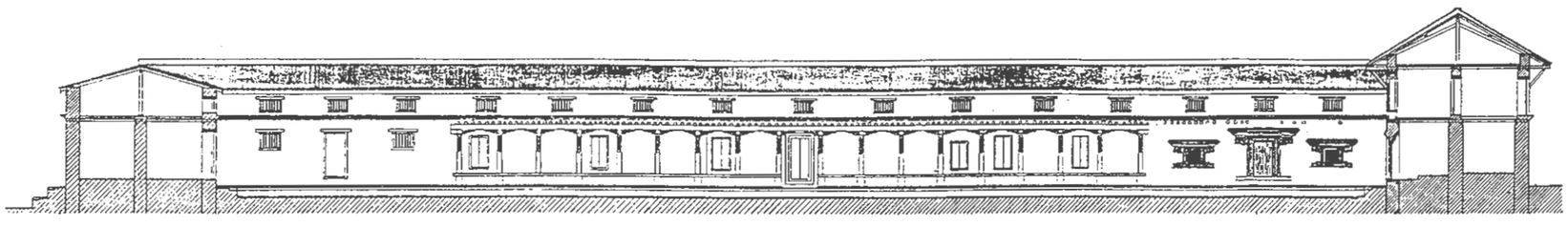
NORTH WING



SOUTH WING



EAST WING



WEST WING

Fig. 39. Existing Internal Elevations; Tripureshwar Temple *sattal*.

Existing Internal Elevations

North Wing

The North elevation has remained largely intact following the 1934 earthquake and is perhaps the most complete example today of the design and style of the original structure. The 14 bay *pati* has been given over completely to living space. At least 75% of the original traditional roof structure of this wing remained intact until August 1993 at which time a fire destroyed a further 25%.

The central *paanch jyaal* (five bay carved window) and two smaller windows which previously dominated this facade have been replaced with three, more simple carved timber windows, (two of which were destroyed in the recent fire).

South Wing

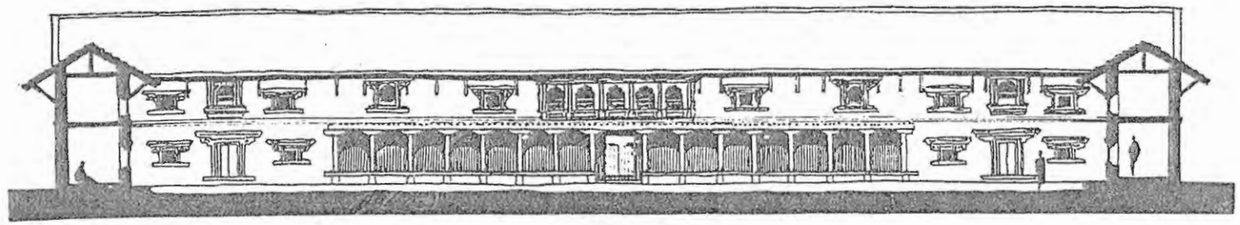
This wing was largely destroyed by the earthquake in 1934, leaving only one original door and two windows at the western end. A small section of adjoining *pati* has been partially rebuilt to provide half-height storage space on the upper level where religious objects connected with temple's rituals are stored. Both the *pati* and the ruined section have been commandeered for living space.

East Wing

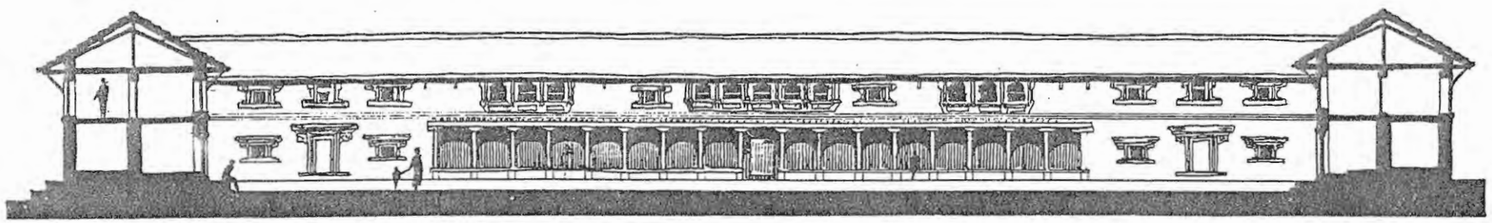
This wing is undoubtedly the most intact. While a large part of the existing roof is of the original design, it is in a severe state of dilapidation - whilst an attempt has been made to depict the present condition of these elevations the collapse of the central section has continued throughout the production of this report. Apart from replacing the northern balcony window with a simple timber one, much of the timber and brickwork is original. For the most part the *pati* has been commandeered and bricked up to provide accommodation.

West Wing

The 1934 earthquake caused extensive damage to the northern section of this *sattal*. As a result the upper floor was poorly reconstructed to form a half height space with rough brickwork, and primitive window details. A mono-pitched timber roof structure is covered with corrugated tin sheeting. This cramped and poorly lit upper level makes for intolerable living conditions with the added disadvantage of having to minimise habitable space with the provision of a corridor linking four separate living quarters to corner staircases. There remain two sections of original construction in the north corner at ground floor level as well as the central section of the *pati*, both of which have been bricked up and occupied by individual families. The southern section of the *sattal* was reconstructed at the same time as the upper floor level using primitive door and window details.



NORTH & SOUTH WING



EAST & WEST WING

Fig. 40. Sketch Proposal for Internal Elevations following restoration.

Proposed Internal Elevations

North & South Wings

After a careful study of the remaining original sections and following the precept that traditional architecture strongly adhered to symmetry, it has been possible to reconstruct measured drawings of the original north and south facades. As a result of its research and discussions with the Guthi Sansthan and the Department of Archaeology, TTRG has developed a brief to reconstruct the traditional *sattal* around the temple making only a few necessary modernisations and adaptions to contemporary life. The north facade requires partial reconstruction which includes the replacement of the highly carved windows on the upper level and the reconstruction of the eastern half of the roof to match the existing section. The South Wing requires major rebuilding following the proposed drawing which includes several carved windows, the reconstruction of the original roof form and the re-establishment of the former *pati* space.

East & West Wings

Although in a state of imminent collapse, the East Wing still retains its original composition. This has served as a guide for the reconstruction of both the east and west elevations. General repairs to the East Wing are comparatively straight forward requiring the replacement and partial reconstruction of two carved windows and the opening up of the public *pati* space. The roof will require partial replacement and a total renovation. The upper level of the West Wing, including the roof will require total reconstruction with the provision of the replacement of a carved doorway and two flanking windows at the lower level. The public *pati* space will be restored to its original condition (See Fig. 40).

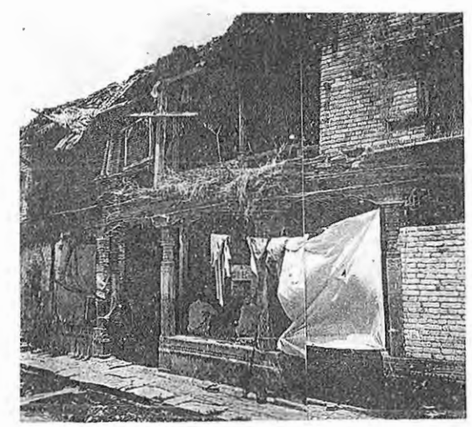


Fig. 41. The poor condition of the East Wing.

Proposed External Elevations

North Wing

The external north facade was perhaps at the time of its original foundation an imposing elevation which gave onto the principle roadway and provided the main access to the temple complex. The heavy ground floor arches are indicative of the importance of the elevation and beneath the arches were no doubt easily accessible *patis* for pilgrims and travellers. The large doorways providing access to the courtyard would have been closed at night. Today, however, the scene looks very different with a modern seven storey block only 3 metres away. These buildings tower over the main entrance, denying it daylight or space. In recognition of the present condition of this former main entrance, it is recommended therefore to repair and consolidate only the present brick and timber structure without replacing the traditional window and door details (See Fig. 42).

South Wing

Due to the exigencies of time and the 1934 earthquake there remains little evidence to suggest how this facade originally looked. The upper floor has been changed beyond recognition and the poorly built additions do little to provide inspiration as to the original form of what must have been a striking facade. The dramatic approach to the temple uphill from the river makes it important to re-create the original concept of the facade as it is now used as the principle entrance. Using the existing column bays forming the original external *patis* as a starting point, Fig. 43 shows a sketch proposal of what it might have looked like as a guideline of how it could be rebuilt.

East & West Wings

The east elevation of the East Wing overlooks a pedestrian lane to the river and has remained virtually intact. It needs only minor interventions to repair the original carved windows, central doorway and to consolidate the brickwork.

It is recommended that the external west elevation is remodelled and the fact that it overlooks the police barracks should be taken into consideration. Fenestration on this elevation should be discrete and provide sufficient daylight to the internal spaces.

Fig. 42. View of Tripureshwar Temple Complex from Tripureshwar Marg showing modern encroachment.

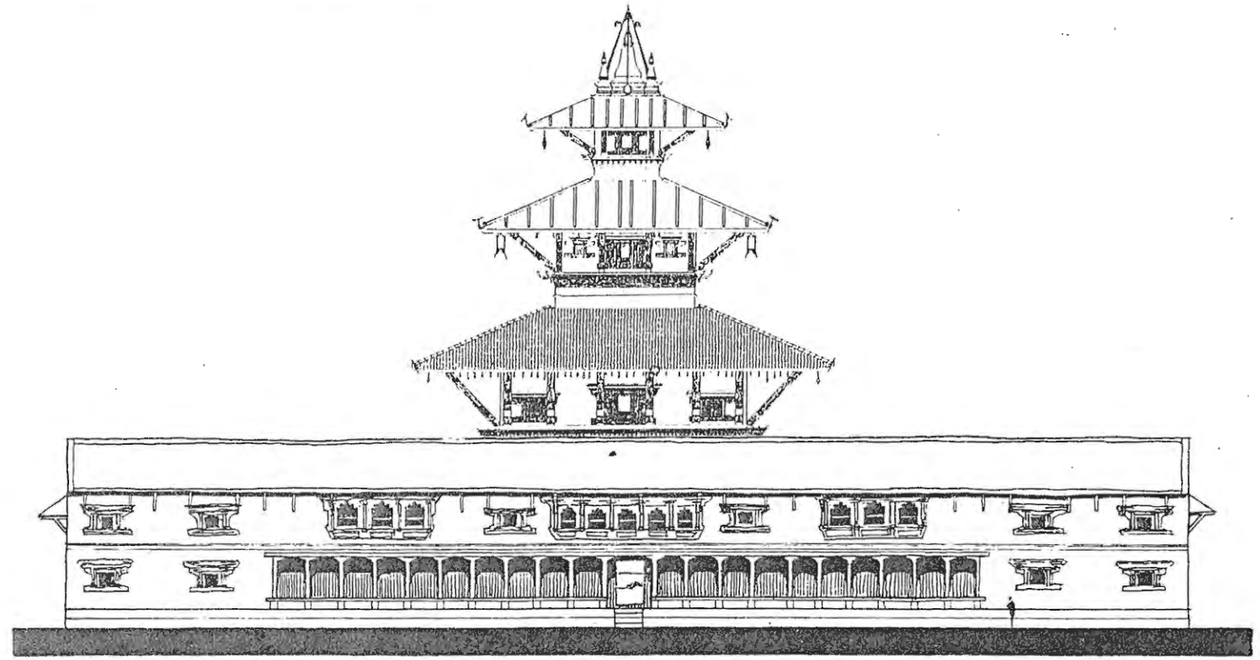


Fig. 43. Sketch Proposal for South Elevation following restoration.

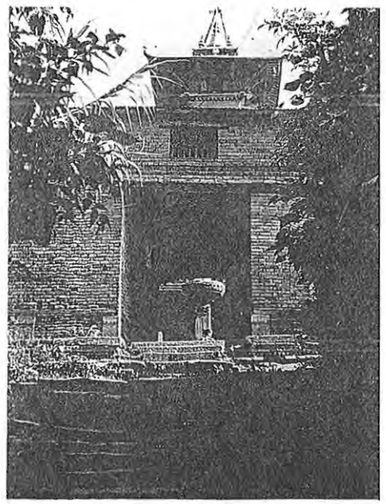


Fig. 44. View of South Entrance to Tripureshwar Temple Complex.

Sattal Sections - A Comparison

It is interesting to compare the construction techniques of the original style *sattal* and its alteration and adaptation after the damage caused by the 1934 earthquake. The North and South Wings are of a double bay construction with a central supporting wall, whereas the East and West Wings are of a single bay construction. The adaptation of the roof profile on the West and South Wings has made living in the upper storeys difficult - there is virtually no headroom for accommodation in either of these wings. By returning to the original profiles as seen in the North and East wings it will be possible to expand accommodation on the upper levels and re-establish the public *pati* spaces for communal use.

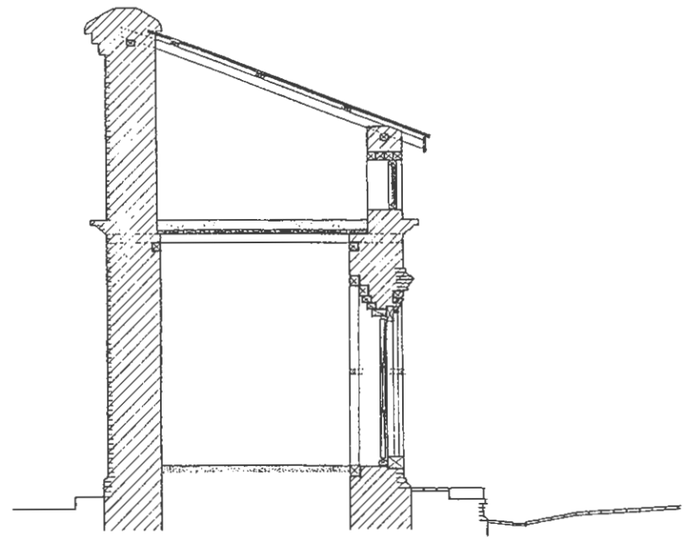


Fig. 45. Existing *sattal* Section through the West Wing; showing lack of space in Upper levels following inadequate reconstruction after the 1934 Earthquake.

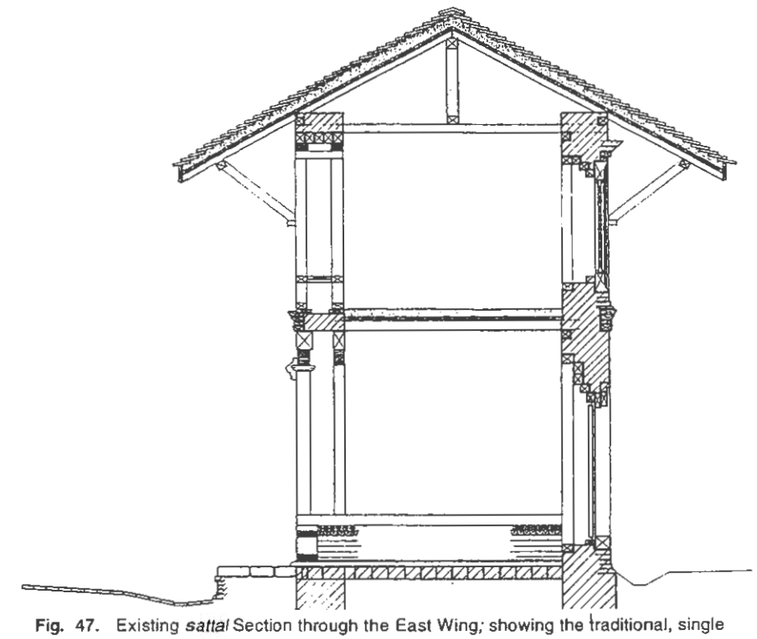


Fig. 47. Existing *sattal* Section through the East Wing; showing the traditional, single bay construction with a large upper level space.

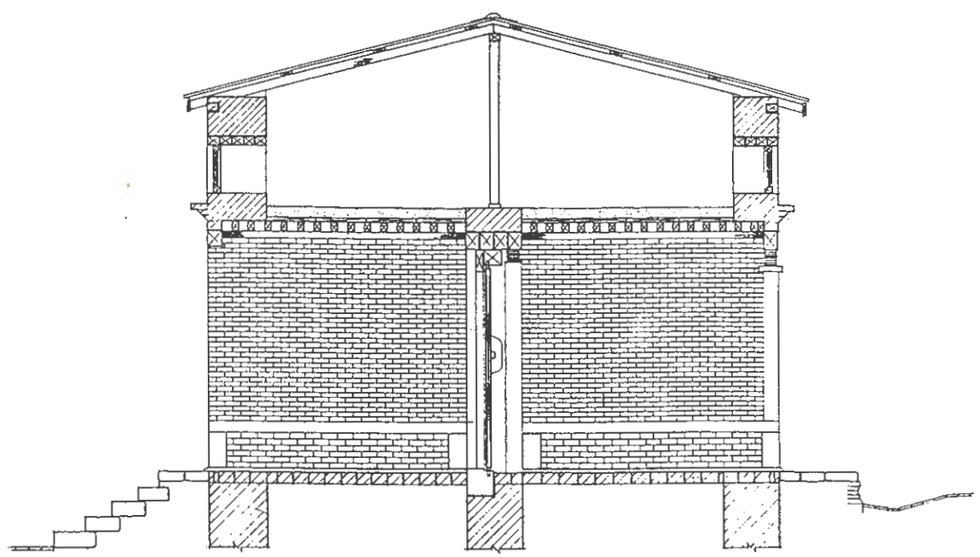


Fig. 46. Existing *sattal* Section through the South Wing; following inadequate reconstruction after the 1934 Earthquake.

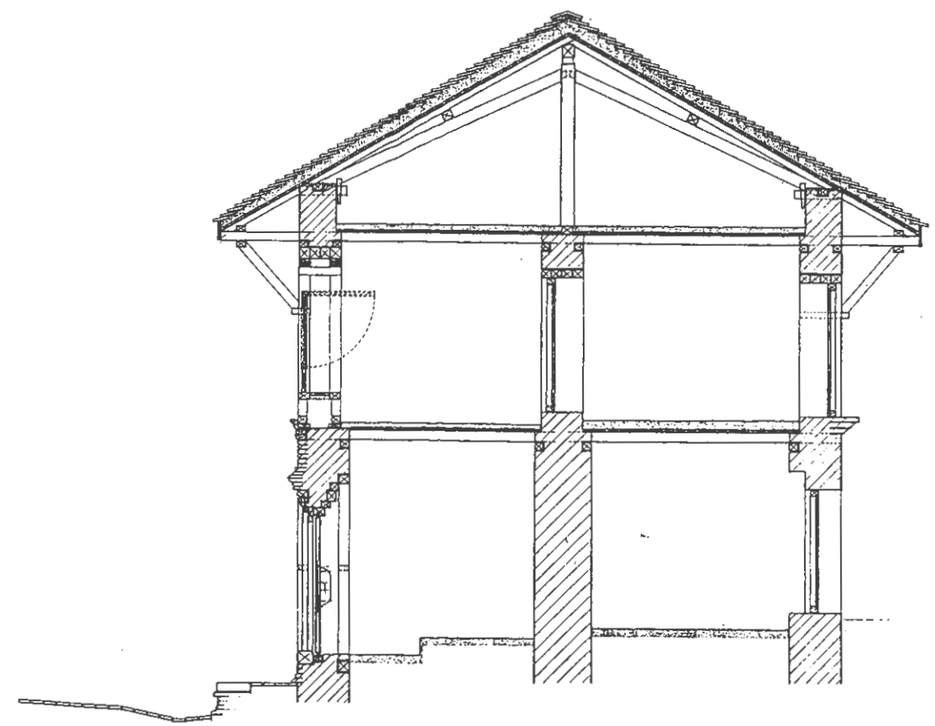


Fig. 48. Existing *sattal* Section through the North Wing; showing the traditional, double bay construction with enclosed space facing the courtyard at ground level.

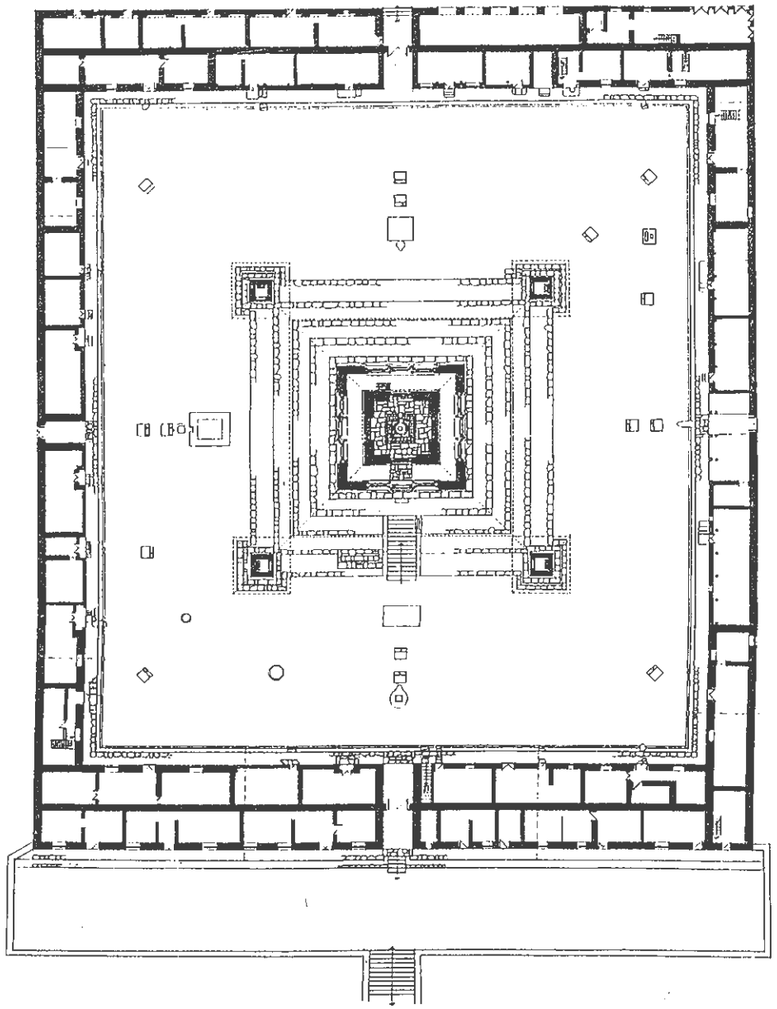


Fig. 49. Existing Ground Floor Plan; showing encroachment of the once open, public *pati* spaces.

Existing Sattal Floor Plans

Two hundred and ten people live in the *sattal* and the existing floor plans show the exceedingly cramped living space available to each family. Under present conditions the average space available per person amounts to just over four square metres. Almost all of the former public spaces used for communal activities have been commandeered by the present occupants by creating makeshift walls of brick or polythene sheeting to block the openings between the carved wooden columns.

The living conditions at present in the *sattal* are appalling. Most of the occupants complain of dampness on the ground floors, rainwater penetration through the roofs; infestation of vermin and a lack of any basic services. All amenities are located outside the compound but the water supply is insufficient and the only toilet facilities are poorly maintained. The stormwater and kitchen water drainage is persistently blocked, causing the retention of stagnant water in the courtyard.

Accommodation on the upper level is limited by the partial collapse of the South Wing and the deteriorating conditions and poor reconstruction of the remaining wings.

It is worth noting that a commercial enterprise - a *momo* and tea shop - occupies the north east outer corner of the *sattal*. The proprietor and his family live in the *sattal* and pay rent to the Guthi Sansthan. It is likely, due to the quality of its construction, that this space has always served this function.

The guardian lions which originally flanked the entrance staircase to the south elevation were at some time removed. Casual enquiries have led the TTRG to believe that the lions are now guarding the entrance to the House of Representatives and it is hoped as a goodwill gesture they will be returned to their original location.

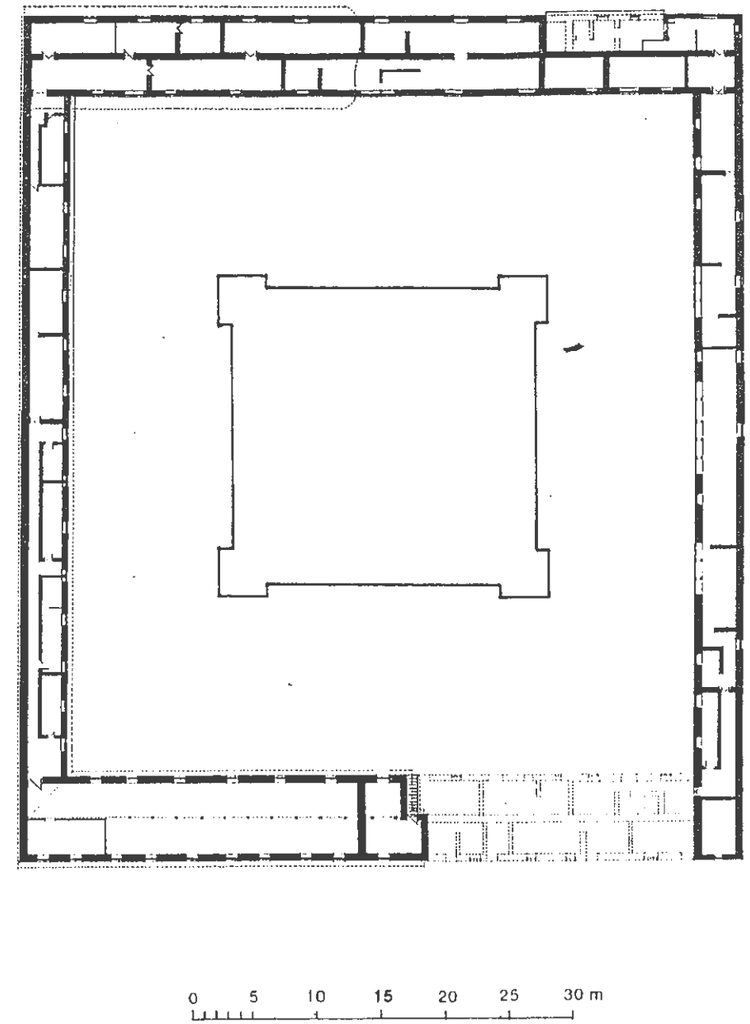


Fig. 50. Existing First Floor Plan; much of this level is at present unusable, due to roof damage, lack of space and instability of the structure.

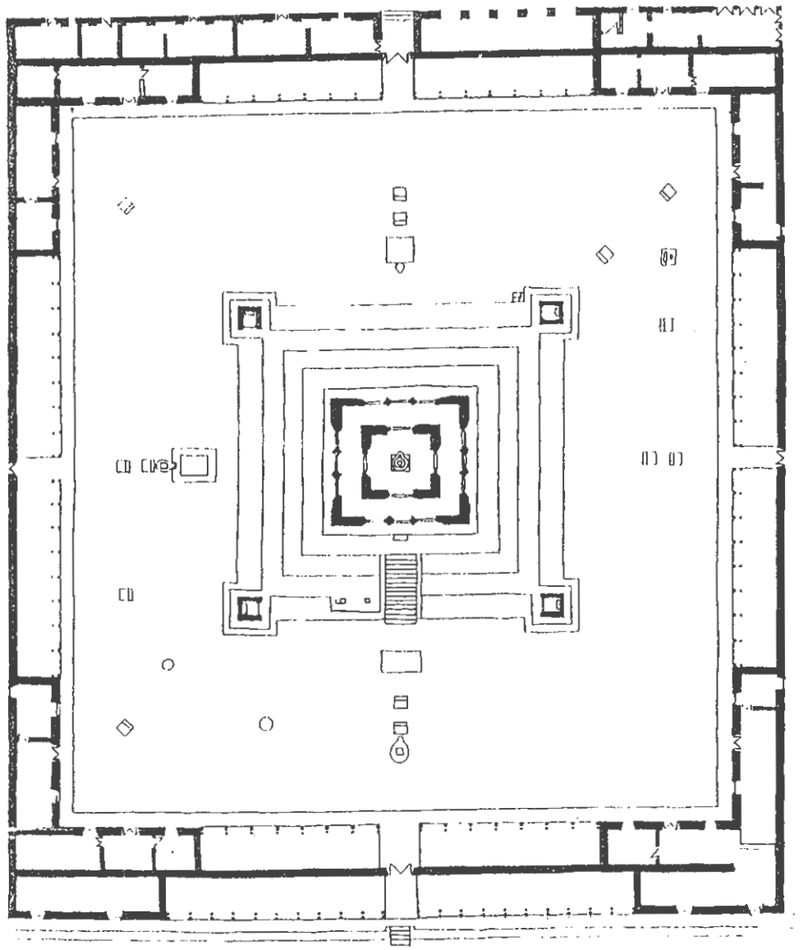


Fig. 51. Sketch Proposal for the Ground Floor Plan; families occupying *pati* space on the ground floor have been relocated in the now restored upper level. Public *pati* space is reclaimed for traditional and possibly new community uses.

Recommended Space Planning

By replanning the interior spaces to more or less their original plan, it is possible to provide a much larger area of living space. The corner sections will be refurbished and used for living space at ground floor level and the rehabilitated upper floor level will provide alternative accommodation to those at present occupying the lower *pati* space. This space will then become available for its traditional use by the community and provide temporary night shelter once again for pilgrims, travellers, and the homeless.

The addition of new staircases located within the *pati* will provide access to newly planned living quarters on the upper level. As can be seen on the accompanying drawings these spaces can be easily separated with traditional, demountable stud wall partitions. These simple interventions have been designed to cause minimal interference to the original *sattal* design and structure, whilst maximising the use of the upper floor space. These design recommendations are tentative and will be developed with the residents and the Guthi Sansthan.

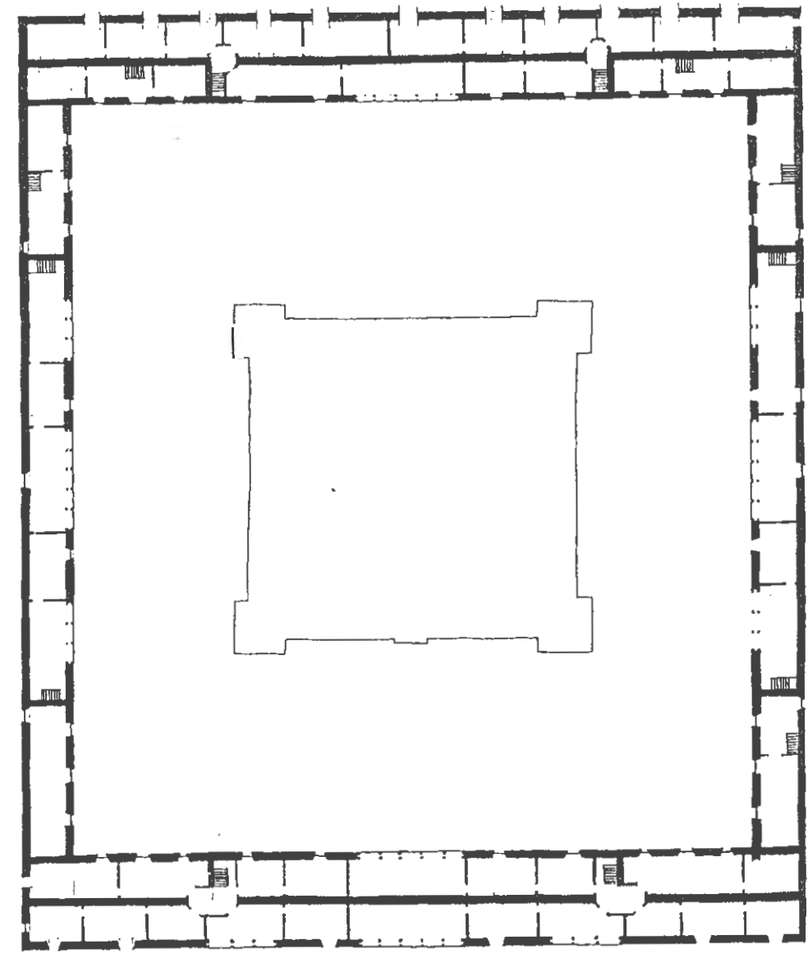


Fig. 52. Sketch Proposal for the First Floor Plan; following restoration, the whole of the upper level can be used to provide improved accommodation for the existing residents and better storage for the traditional paraphernalia. Traditional stairladders provide direct access to the upper level, reducing the need for corridors. Living space will be created using traditional partitions.