

# MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

## DOCUMENTATION & URBAN GUIDELINES

### VOL. I – DOCUMENTATION & ANALYSIS

#### PREPARED BY

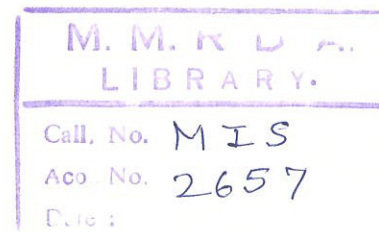
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SHREE MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE CHARITIES

#### SPONSORED BY

MMR- HERITAGE CONSERVATION SOCIETY, MMRDA





## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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**March 2001**



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## INTRODUCTION

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

The project aims at creating a database and documentation of the Mahalakshmi Temple precinct with reference to buildings, streetscapes and use patterns. It aims at generating accurate base maps, street sections and photo documentation of the entire precinct and its landmark heritage structures and shrines. This would be followed by mapping all the present functions, landuses, encroachments, hawker locations and other issues that have presently created an overlay over the historic precinct. The condition of individual structures as well as the open spaces within the precinct would be evaluated. This issues would be analysed and then followed up with detailed guidelines both at the level of recommendations for traffic routing, parking zones, service areas and hawker locations, as well as facilities for pilgrims and improved signage.

The project aims at creating a data base for the future implementation works as well as suggest guidelines for beautification of the precinct. It would be a fundamental aim in the preparation of the Handbook, to generate public involvement at both the planning and implementation level.

Below : The Shree Mahalakshmi Temple





## INTRODUCTION

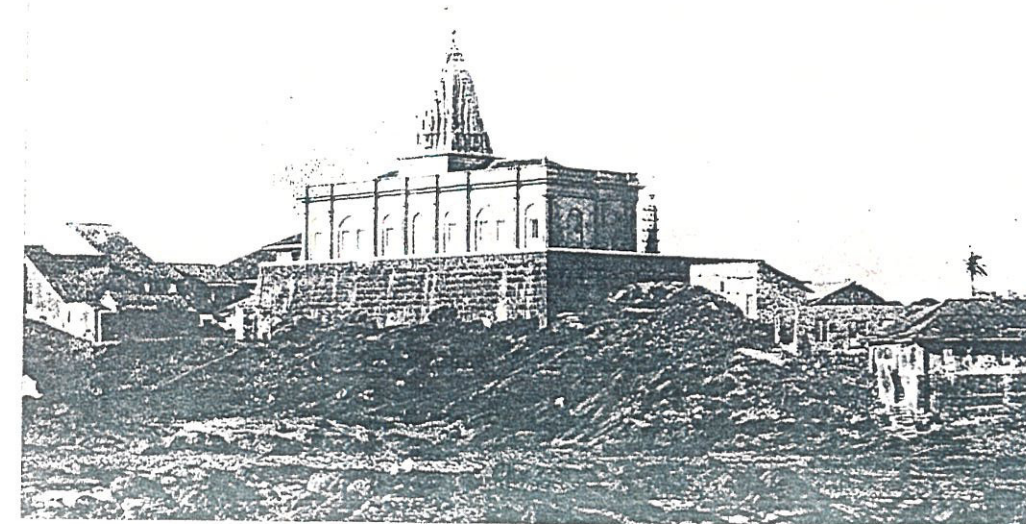
### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Situated on a rocky outcrop along the sea face off Breach Candy, the Mahalakshmi temple is among the most pious and holy sites in the city of Mumbai. Its historical associations date back to the early growth of the city and its immense urban significance is borne out by the fact of an entire neighbourhood being named after it. Believed to be the reason for Mumbai's financial prosperity, Mahalakshmi temple is dedicated to the Hindu goddess of wealth and is visited by throngs of devotees to seek blessings of wealth and prosperity.

What the English received in the lavish dowry of Bombay from the Portuguese in the 1660s, was a group of seven islands. The Great Breach, north of Malabar Hill, was the most difficult to reclaim. In 1712, work on this commenced, in a foiled bid to close up this breach in a straight line. A decade later, during the construction of the stone wall following the natural line of the bay, a Hindu contractor, Ramji Shivji dreamed that if the temple of Mahalakshmi was re-built, the wall would hold. An idol of the goddess was found in the excavations and installed in the new temple.

Below: Archival view of the Shree Trambakeshwar Mahadeo Temple. Source : "*Banganga*"  
Sharada Dwivedi and Rahul Mehrotra





## INTRODUCTION

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### THE URBAN CONTEXT

Situated off the old Bombay Breach, the *Mahalakshmi Temple* is located on a rocky outcrop along the sea facing Breach Candy on one end and Haji Ali on the other. Accessed from the Bhulabhai Desai Road, the *Mahalakshmi Temple* is visible only after turning the narrow temple lane behind the *Trambakeshwar Mahadeo Mandir*, a marble structure located at the junction of Pedder Road and Bhulabhai Desai Road.

Below: View of the coastline as seen from Haji Ali, with the Shree Mahalakshmi Temple at the edge of the land strip projecting into the sea.

Right: View of the Trambakeshwar Mahdeo temple, marking the entrance to the precinct



Though the major access route to the temple is from Bhulabhai Desai Road behind the *Trambakeshwar Mahadeo Mandir*, the road is a single lane route for vehicular traffic and turns out towards the main road in a loop. Other pedestrian routes leading to the temple are those from Ghettos off Bhulabhai Desai Road, winding past the *Dhakleshwar Mahadeo Temple* to the left and the rocky outcrop along the sea front. The heritage precinct falls within “D” Ward of the B.M.C. and is among the first listed precincts as per the 1995 Heritage Regulations for Greater Bombay.



## INTRODUCTION

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### THE URBAN CONTEXT

Below: Landmarks like this entry gate dot the main entry spine leading to the Shree Mahalakshmi Temple

Right: The main arterial spine leading from the Trambakeshwar Mahadeo Temple to the Sree Mahalakshmi Temple .



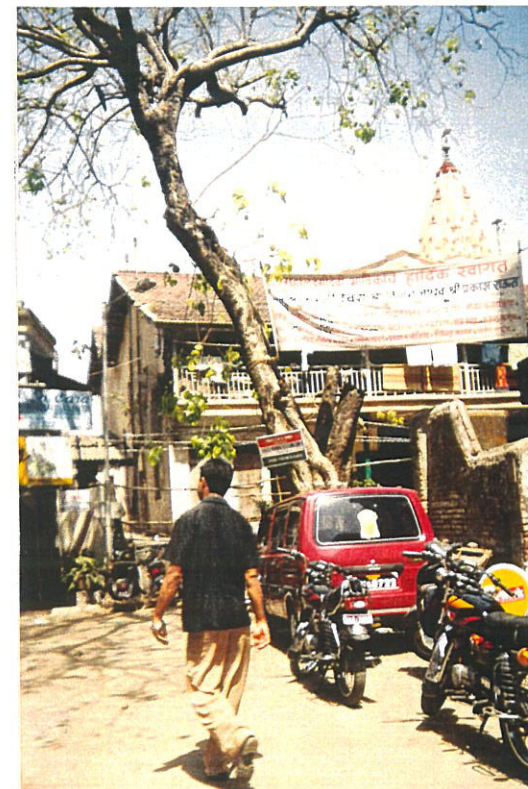
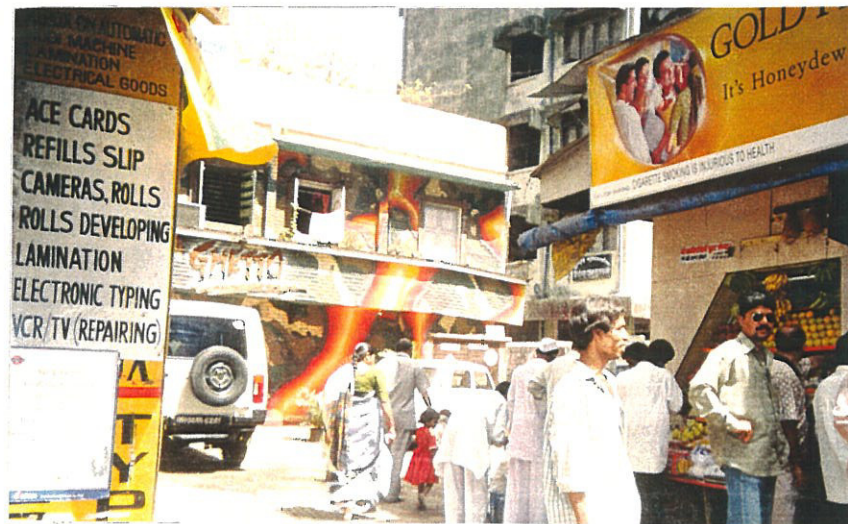


## INTRODUCTION

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### THE URBAN CONTEXT

Below: Views of the sequential access to the Temple from the alternate entry to the temple precinct through "The Ghetto" nightclub on Bhulabhai Desai Road





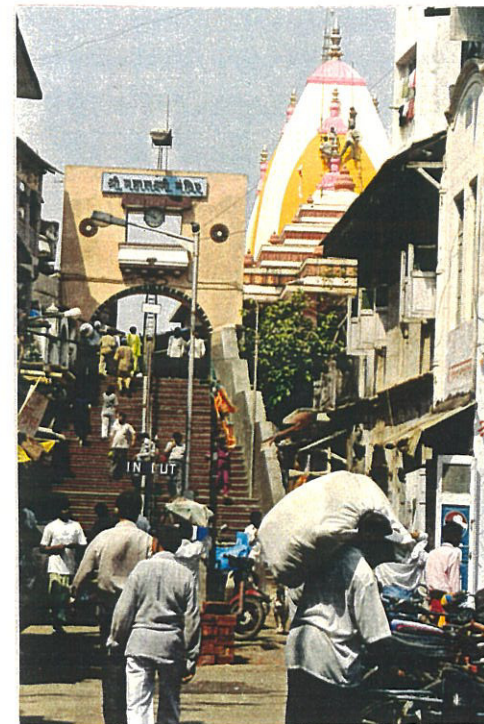
## INTRODUCTION

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### THE URBAN CONTEXT

The temple in fact is really a large complex of temples and shrines, with a ritual pathway threading its way through narrow streets and linking it to other shrines like the Ganapati, Mahadev temple and Hanuman mandir within walking distance. These streets, of a distinctly pedestrian nature, are today abounding with flower sellers, prasad and garland shops along with other ancillary structures and residential buildings.

Below and Right: Sequential views while walking towards the Shree Mahalakshmi Temple





## INTRODUCTION

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### HERITAGE PRECINCT DELINEATION

Mahalakshmi temple has the distinction of being designated as a special heritage precinct as per the Heritage Guidelines for Greater Bombay 1995. This regulation has granted it the legal protection of a heritage area, giving it a special significance as an invaluable area within the city.

The present precinct boundaries identify a linear area, leading from the Bhulabhai Desai Road and Pedder Road junction, towards the Mahalakshmi Temple located at the edge of the sea. This is defined by a long main street that bifurcates the precinct, acting as its central pedestrian spine and primary artery. This delineation is distinctly marked by the sea at the northern and western edges while the southern and eastern edges are marked by Bhulabhai Desai Road.

Right: Map showing the precinct demarcation of the Mahalakshmi Temple Precinct as per the 1995 Heritage Regulations for Greater Bombay.





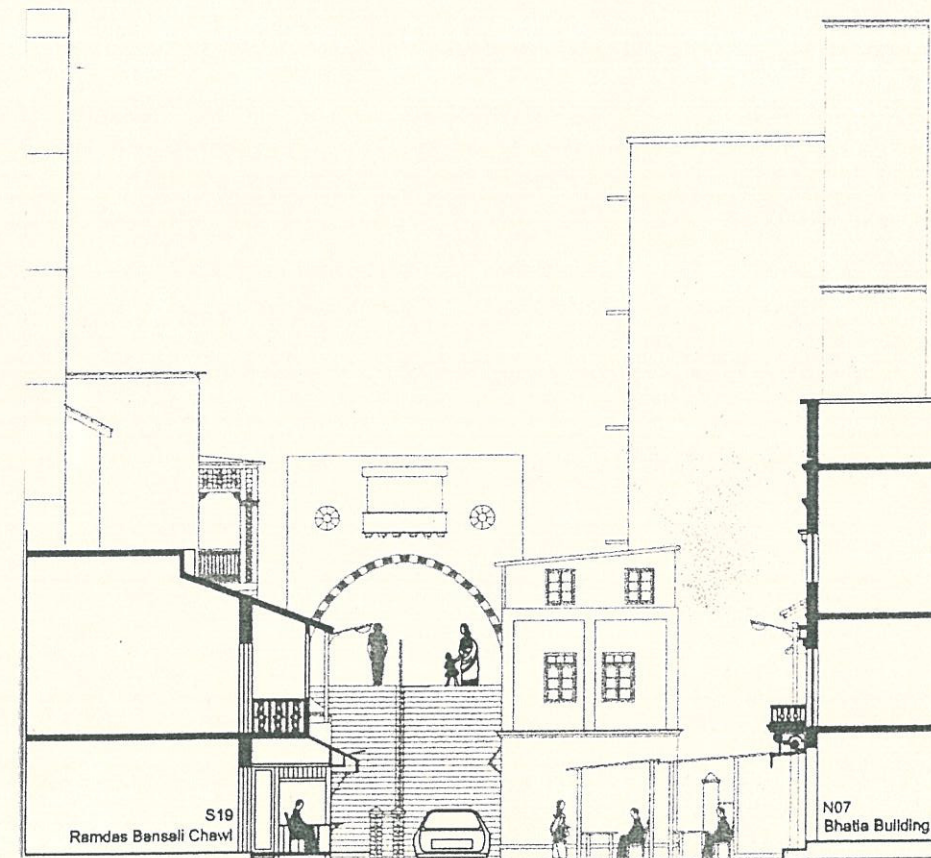
## INTRODUCTION

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### HERITAGE PRECINCT DELINEATION

Apart from individually listed buildings and the main temple, the heritage regulation recognises the immense value of the architectural fabric of the area, its pedestrian scale and intrinsic character. It therefore, not only protects within its ambit the main temple, but also the development around it and the more modest houses and buildings within the demarcated area. As per the heritage regulations, all development within the delineated area has to be strictly monitored as approved by the heritage committee. The regulation also allows for the provision of special architectural controls and guidelines being implemented for the precinct, for the general improvement of the area as well as the continued preservation of its architectural character.

Right: : A typical street section showing the vernacular houses and the pedestrian scale of the precinct





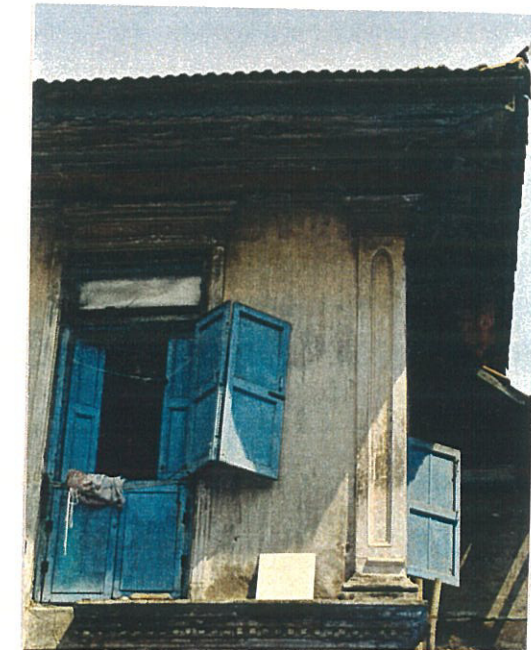
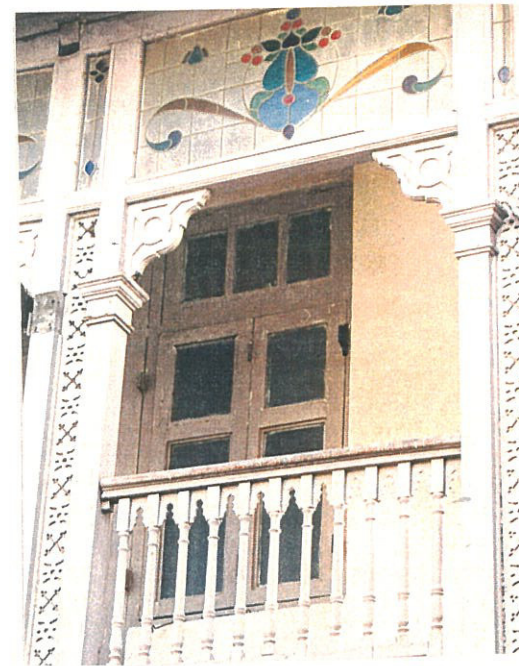
## INTRODUCTION

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### HERITAGE PRECINCT DELINEATION

Mahalakshmi is not only significant as a streetscape of valuable vernacular buildings, but also represents one of the most picturesque historic residential areas, with a unique pedestrian scale and neighbourhood quality. Mahalakshmi precinct comprises a fragile collection of charming vernacular dwellings that have largely survived the onslaught of the modern construction. The neighbourhood has an immense wealth of architectural heritage in the form of quaint vernacular houses with interesting architectural features like wooden fretwork balustrades, wrought iron work and stone pediments and sloping terracotta tiled roofs.

Below and Right: Some typical architectural details that are characteristic of the precinct



In the absence of any specific controls however, the architectural heritage of the Mahalakshmi Temple precinct is in a very fragile state, vulnerable to modern construction and incongruous development. Any activity aimed at revitalizing this heritage area through documentation and conservation proposals would not only reinforce the heritage value of this area, but also contribute to the general beautification of the temple precinct and the conservation movement in the city.



## INTRODUCTION

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### THE PRESENT SCENARIO

Sadly today, much of the area has suffered due to rapid urban transformations as well as a breakdown of civic infrastructure. In the absence of any defined conservation guidelines or specific architectural controls for the area, there has been rampant transformation that is incongruous with the essence of a historic precinct. Many historic buildings have been replaced by tall concrete blocks, or have been left to neglect and decay. Encroachments have sprung up all over the area, specially the main temple street, greatly detracting from its original character. The access roads too are in need of upgradation, as well as better cleanliness.



Images: Rampant encroachment and slums threaten the integrity of this heritage precinct

Apart from the built form, the environment around this historic temple precinct too is under threat. Rampant slum development has over run a substantial portion along the northern water front. The rocky outcrops have been greatly damaged and used as garbage dumps by the local residents. Public infrastructure like parking too is under stress with the teeming number of temple pilgrims competing for parking space with the residents of the area.



## DOCUMENTING THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### LISTING OF BUILDINGS

In order to create a numbering system, the buildings have been given a number prefixed with S for those to the south of the Temple Street, or N for those to the north of the Temple Street.

#### South Side Buildings

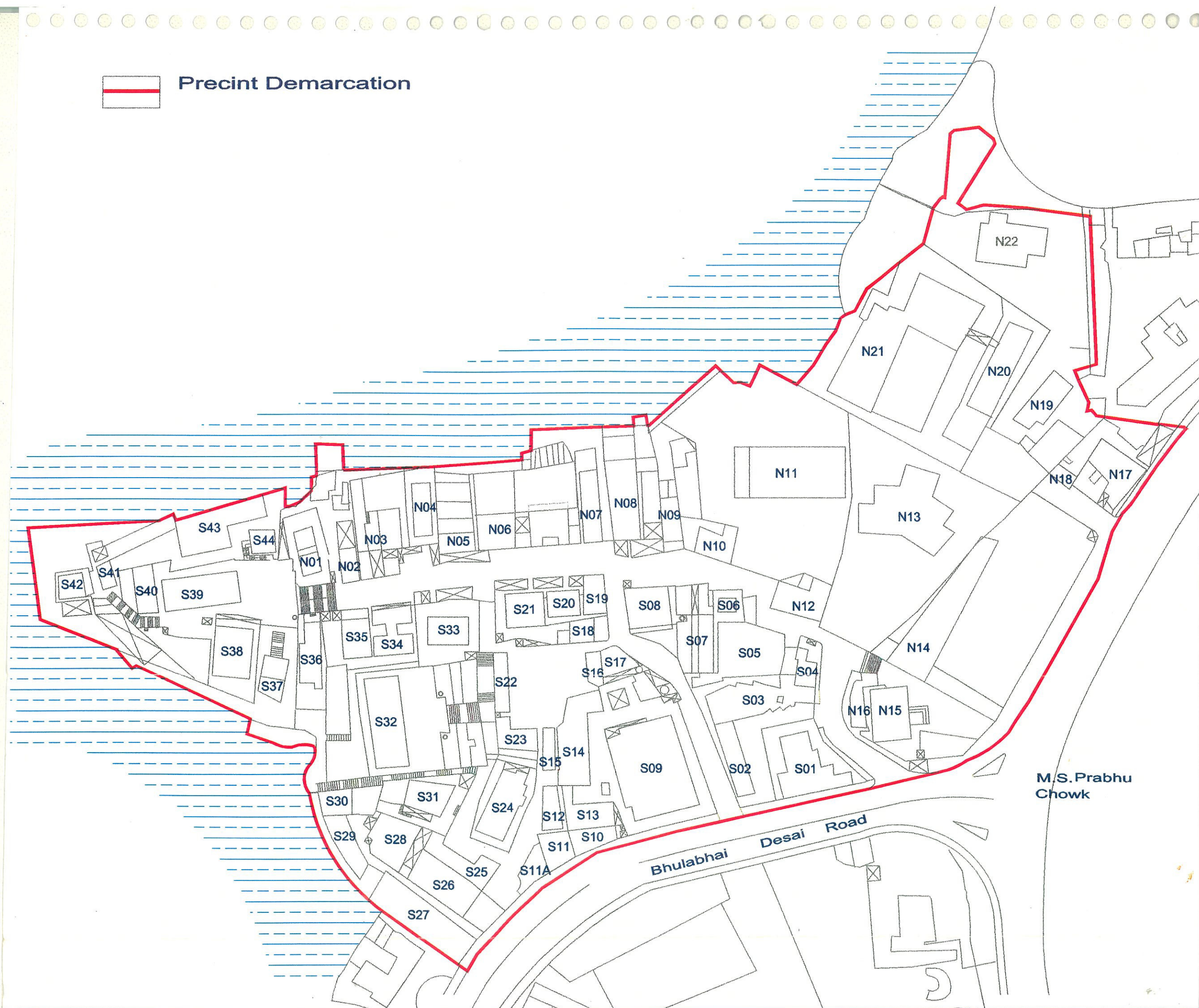
BUILDING NO.	BUILDING NAME
S01	SMRUTI
S02	SHREE SWAMI NARAYAN MANDIR
S03	SHREE MUKTAJEEVAN SWAMI BAPA SEVASHRAM
S04	GANGA
S05	SADHUBELA UDASIN ASHRAM
S06	PARAMRAMESHWAR MAHADEO MANDIR
S07	RAMDAS BANSALI CHAWL
S08	MAHAKALIMATA MANDIR
S09	MAHALAKSHMI CHAMBER
S10	SORKHADE BUILDING

S11	NAVALKAR BUILDING
S11A	NAVALKAR BUILDING
S12	KUSUM SADAN
S13	PARADISE
S14	PARADISE
S15	JAWAJI NIWAS
S16	HARISH NIWAS
S17	PADAM BUILDING
S18	KUSUM SADAN
S19	RAMDAS BANSALI CHAWL
S20	GOVIND BHAVAN
S21	KETKAR MOTIWALA BUNGALOW
S22	THAKARSEE SANATORIUM
S23	ASHOK NIWAS
S24	MUNICIPAL PRIMARY SCHOOL
S25	SUNDERDASS
S26	KHETSEE PREMJEE CHARITABLE TRUST



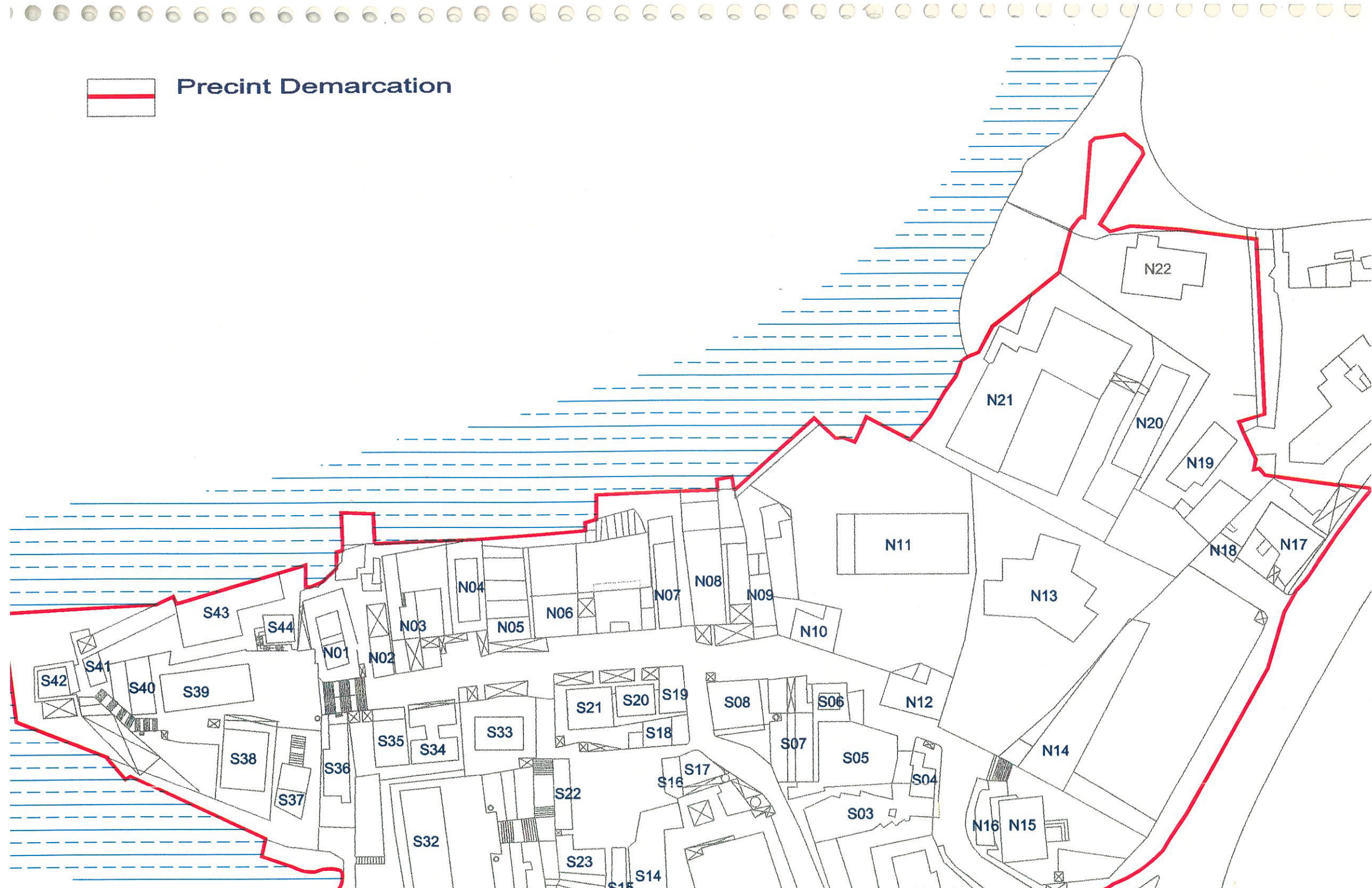


Precinct Demarcation



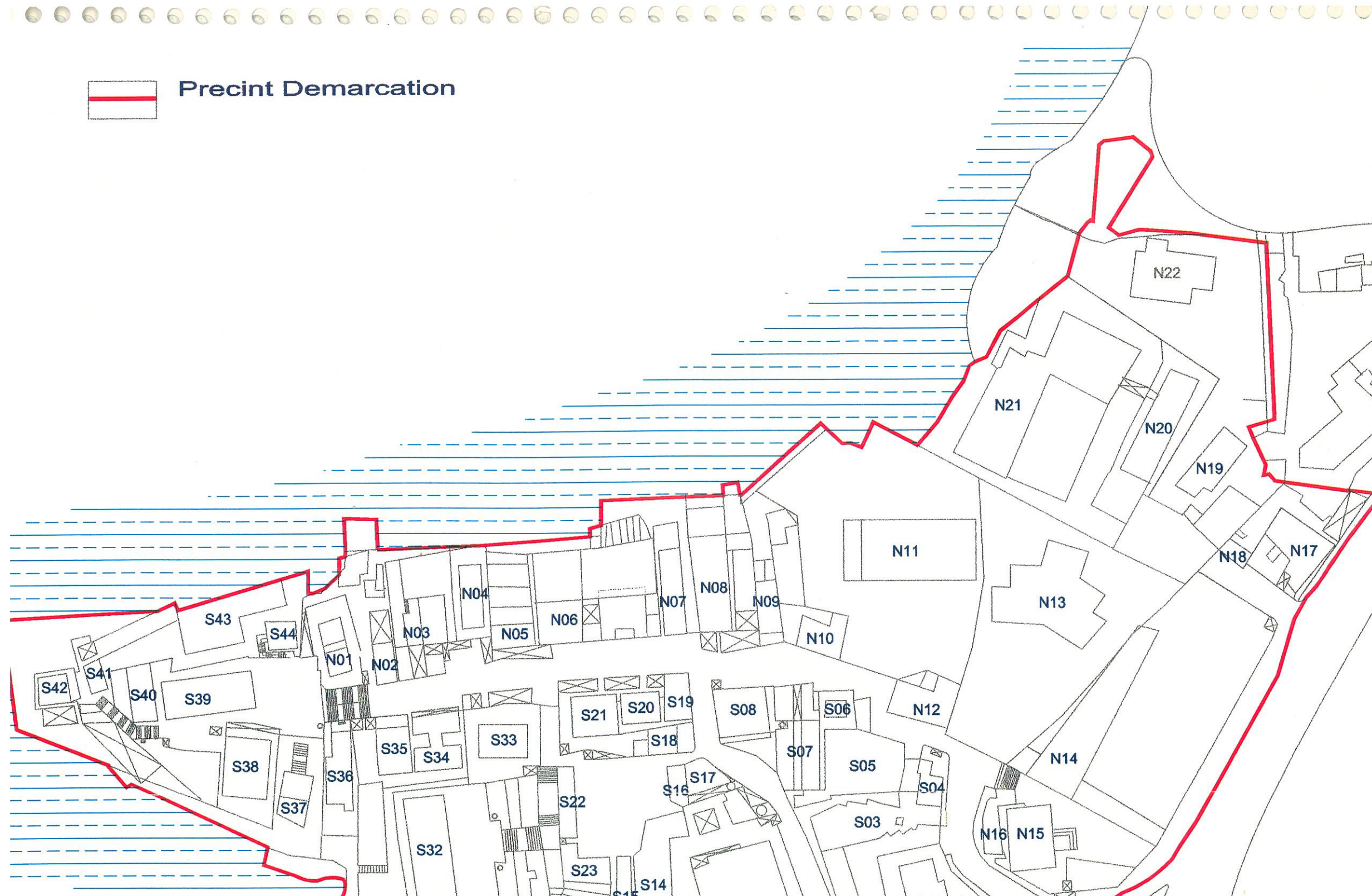


 Precint Demarcation



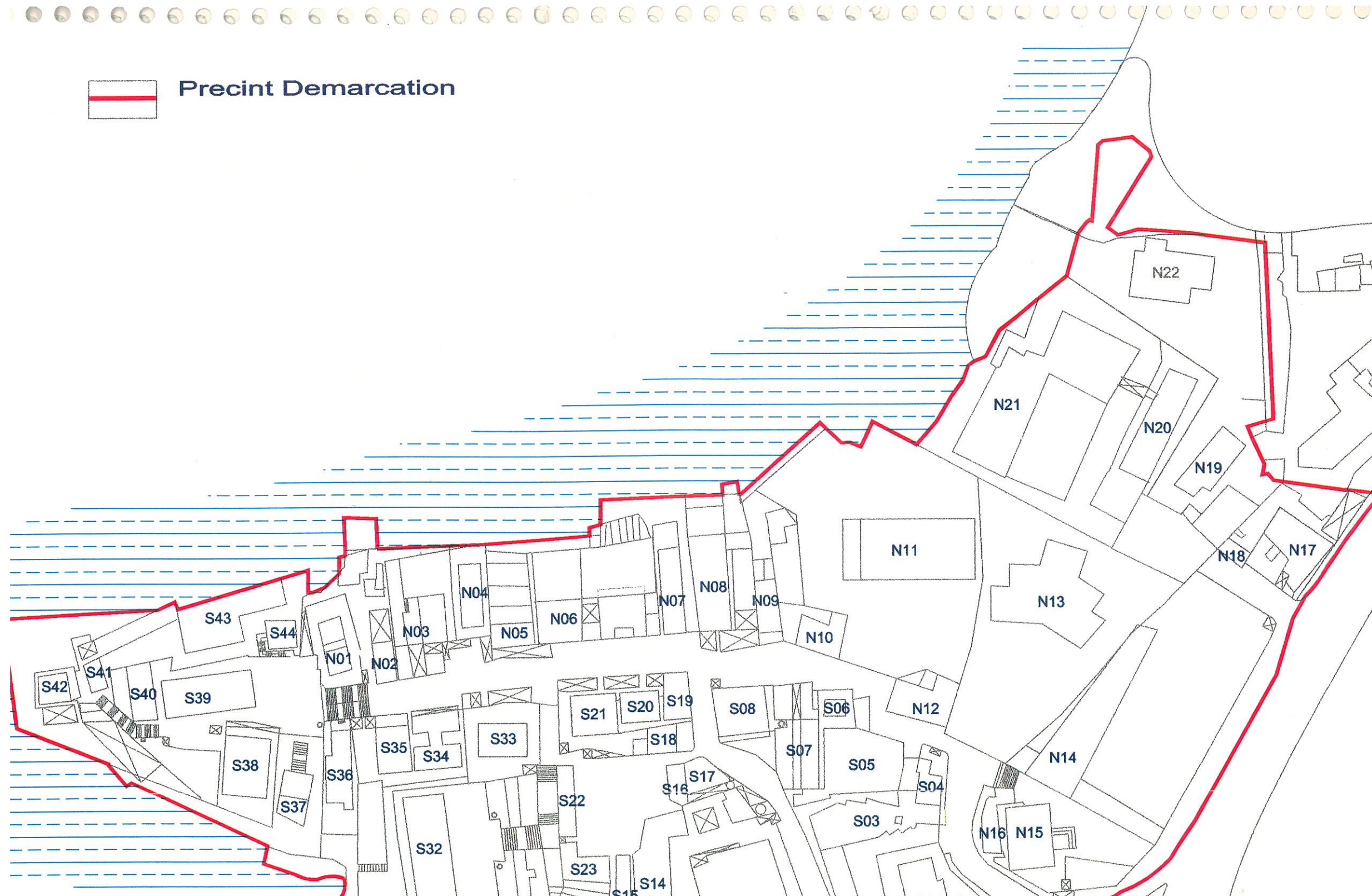


 Precint Demarcation

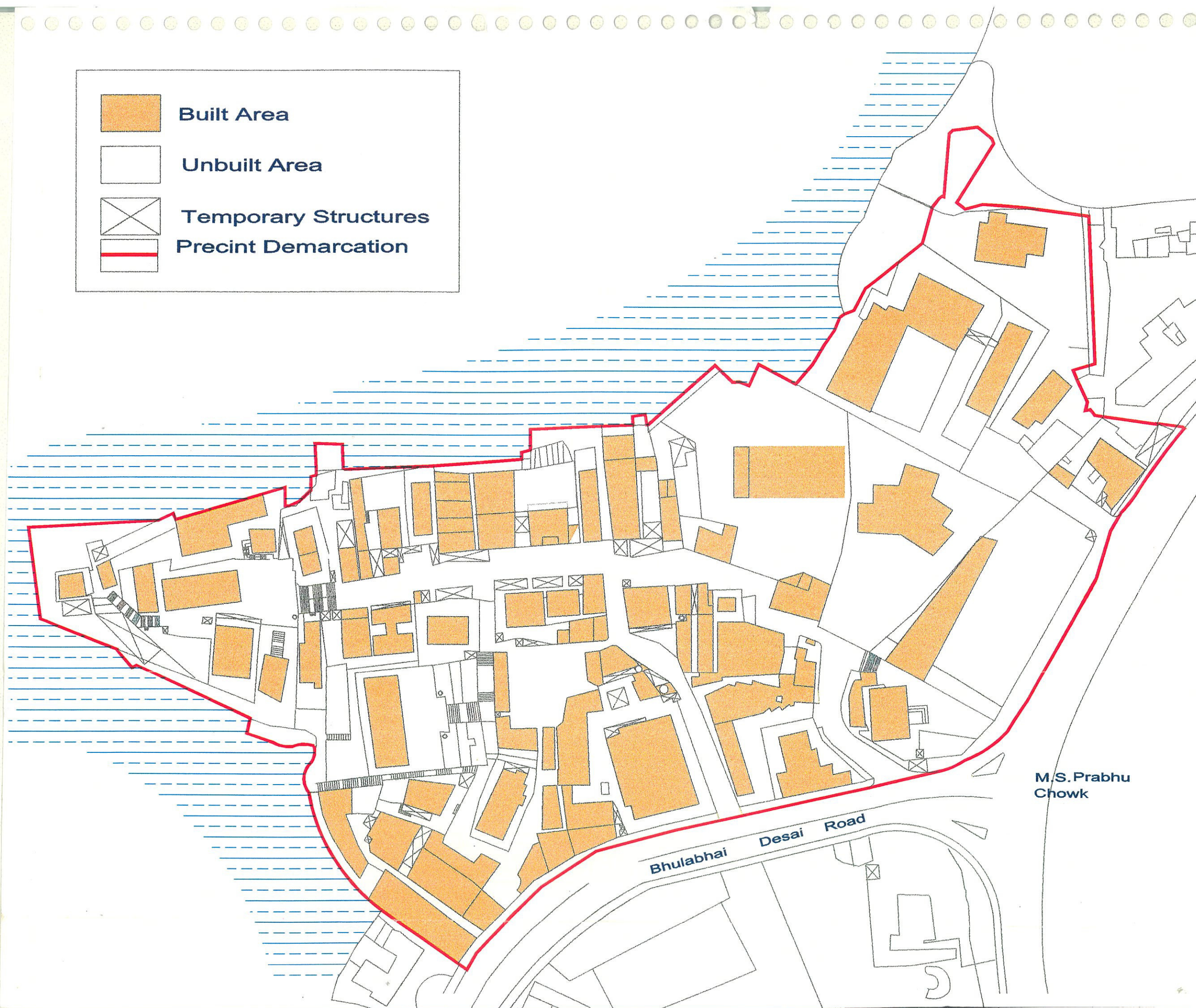
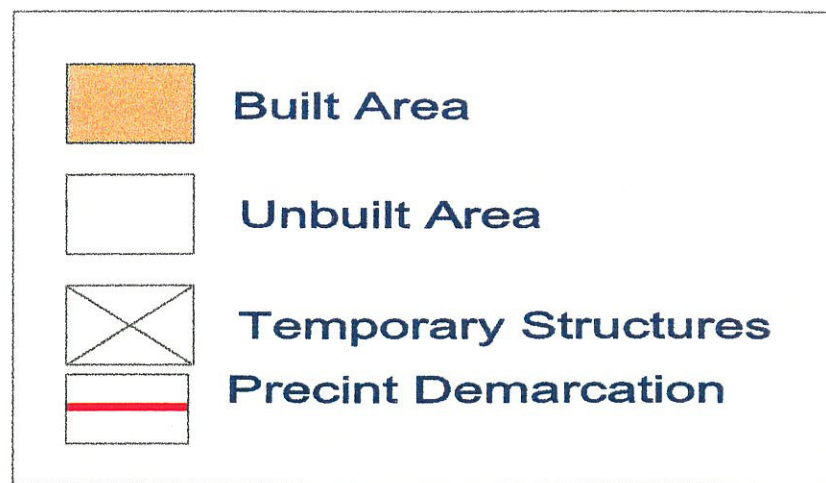




 Precint Demarcation









## DOCUMENTATING THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### MAP INDICATING ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

The majority of the buildings in this precinct are vernacular dwellings representative of the vernacular hybrid and multiple tenanted buildings seen in most of Mumbai's 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century domestic architecture.

Below: Examples of some architectural types found in the precinct



Dotting this precinct, are also a conglomeration of temple shrines and shikhars, depicting a religious neighbourhood not very unlike that of Banganga or Bhuleshwar.

Though there is a growing number of modern infill blocks and concrete buildings, these are either those of apartment blocks lying towards the eastern edge of the precinct, or reconstructed structures over former dilapidated buildings after their demolition. Cess rebuilding is also one of the factors instrumental in this transformation. There is one distinct Art Deco structure in the form of the *Sadhubela Ashram* and the only surviving remnants of the neo-Gothic style are the gateposts and railings near the *Param Rameshwar Mahadeo Mandir*.

The neighbourhood has an immense architectural heritage of quaint vernacular houses and interesting architectural features in the form of sloping tiled roofs, stained glass panels, wooden fretwork balustrades, wrought iron work and stone arches.



## DOCUMENTING THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

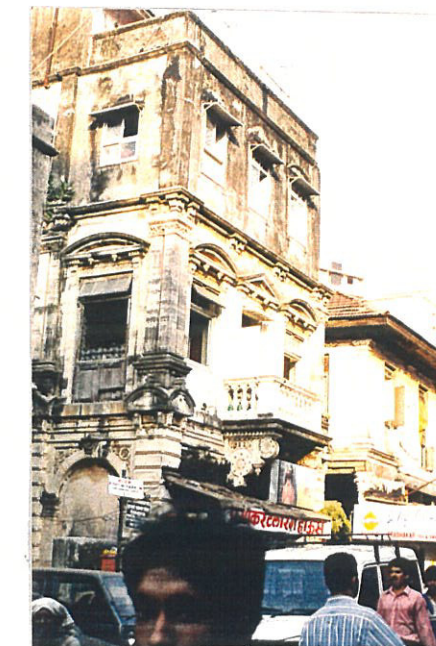
#### BUILDINGS OF HERITAGE INTEREST & LANDMARKS

Scattered through the precinct, are some fantastic examples of temple shrines typical to the city of Mumbai. Ranging from tall temple shikhars flanked by “deepastambhas” like those of the *Shree Dhakleshwar Mahadeo Mandir*, to the ornately carved “urusingas” and “nandi” sculpture of the *Param Rameshwaram Mahadeo Mandir* and the more modern construction of the *shikhar* of the temple of *Rani Sati*, there is a rich variety of temple forms visible in the precinct.

Apart from the religious structures, there is also a rich architectural heritage of residential buildings. Ranging from the traditional vernacular types with long verandas and sloping roofs, to the Portuguese influenced houses with neo-classical ornamentation along the main street or the vernacular Gujarati house forms with ornately carved timber brackets, the house typologies exhibit a rich variety.

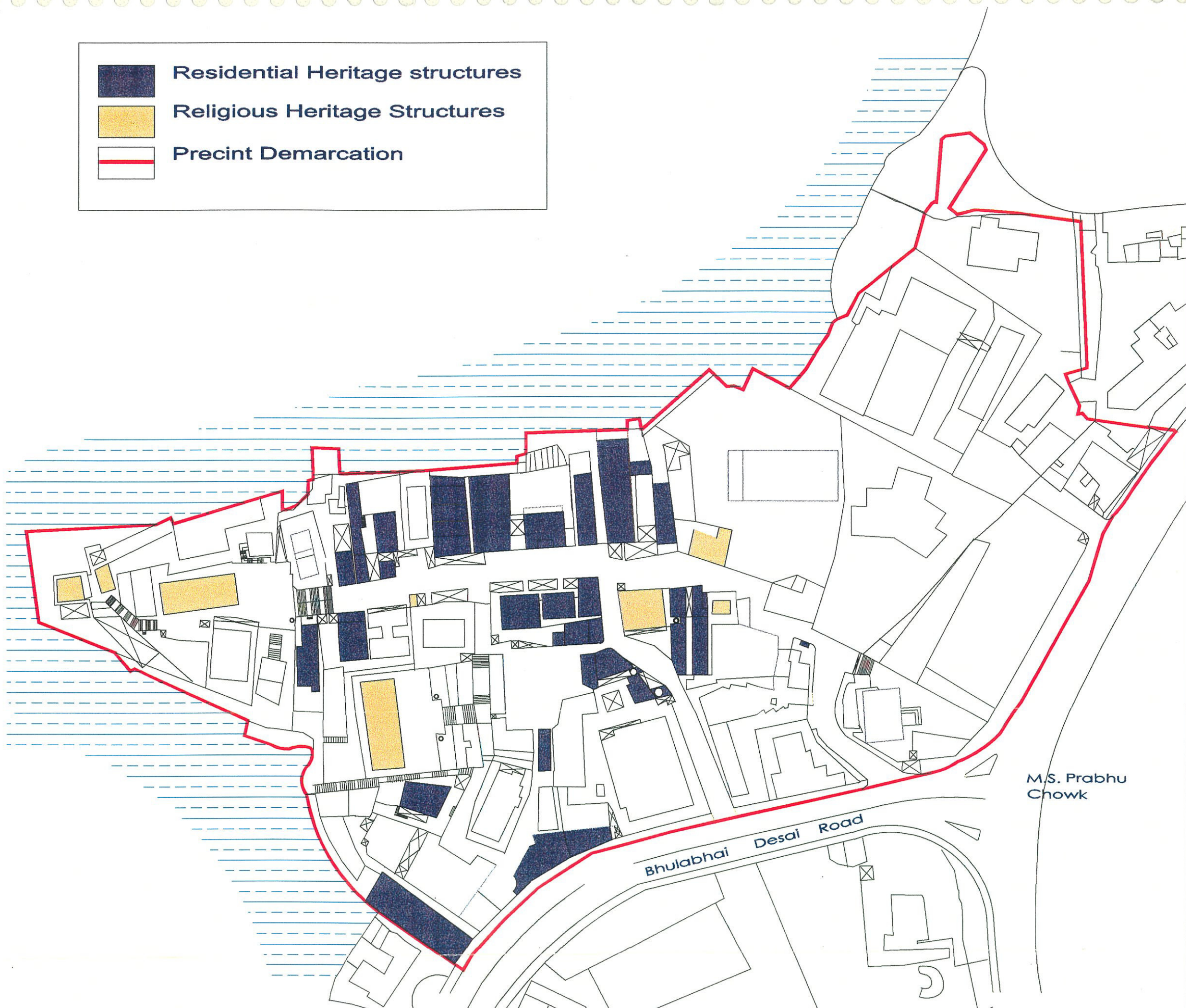
In addition to these structures, the precinct is also dotted with some remnants of neo-Gothic railings and gateposts, along with a neo classical gateway marking the entrance of the Temple street.

Below: Images of some buildings of heritage value in need of protection



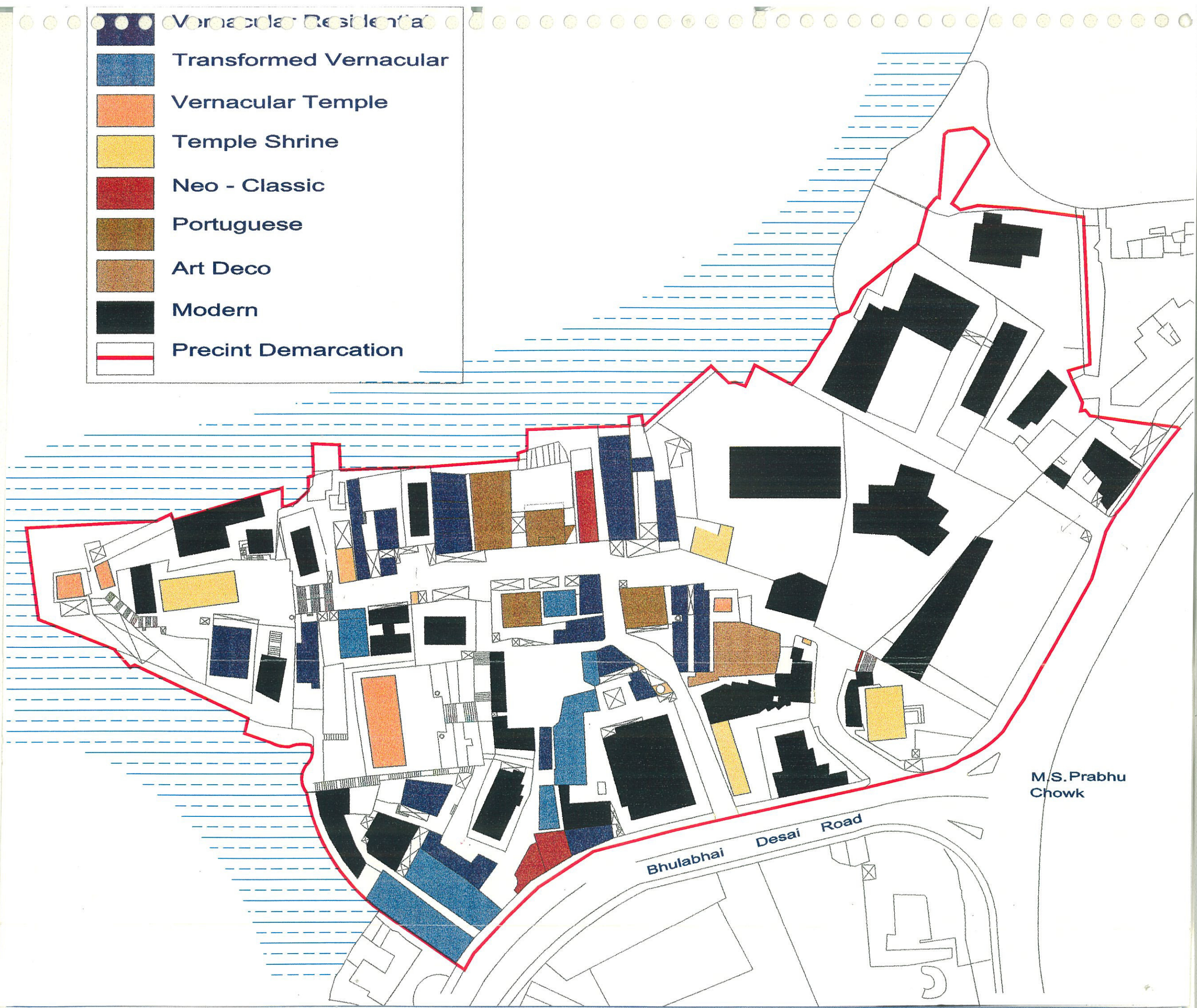


-  Residential Heritage structures
-  Religious Heritage Structures
-  Precint Demarcation





- Vernacular Residential
- Transformed Vernacular
- Vernacular Temple
- Temple Shrine
- Neo - Classic
- Portuguese
- Art Deco
- Modern
- Precint Demarcation





## DOCUMENTING THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

BUILDINGS OF HERITAGE INTEREST & LANDMARKS

Below: Elevations of some buildings that are worthy of preservation



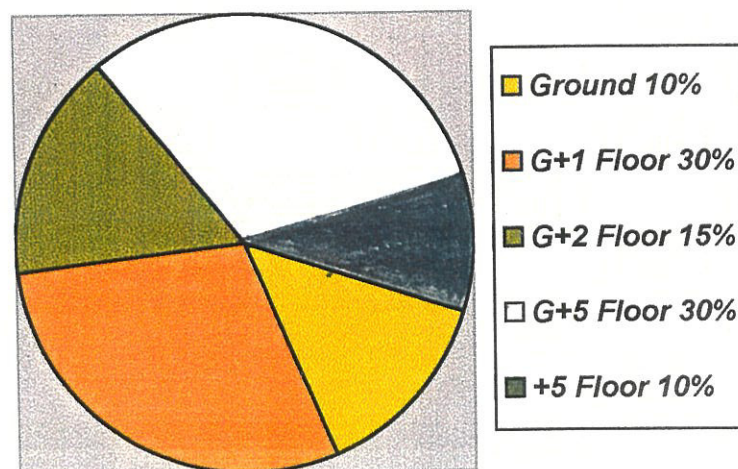


## DOCUMENTING THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### MAP INDICATING BUILDING HEIGHTS

Though the precinct is threatened by rampant transformation, the majority of buildings even today are of two storied structures. This is typically seen along the core area of the buildings flanking the main temple street.





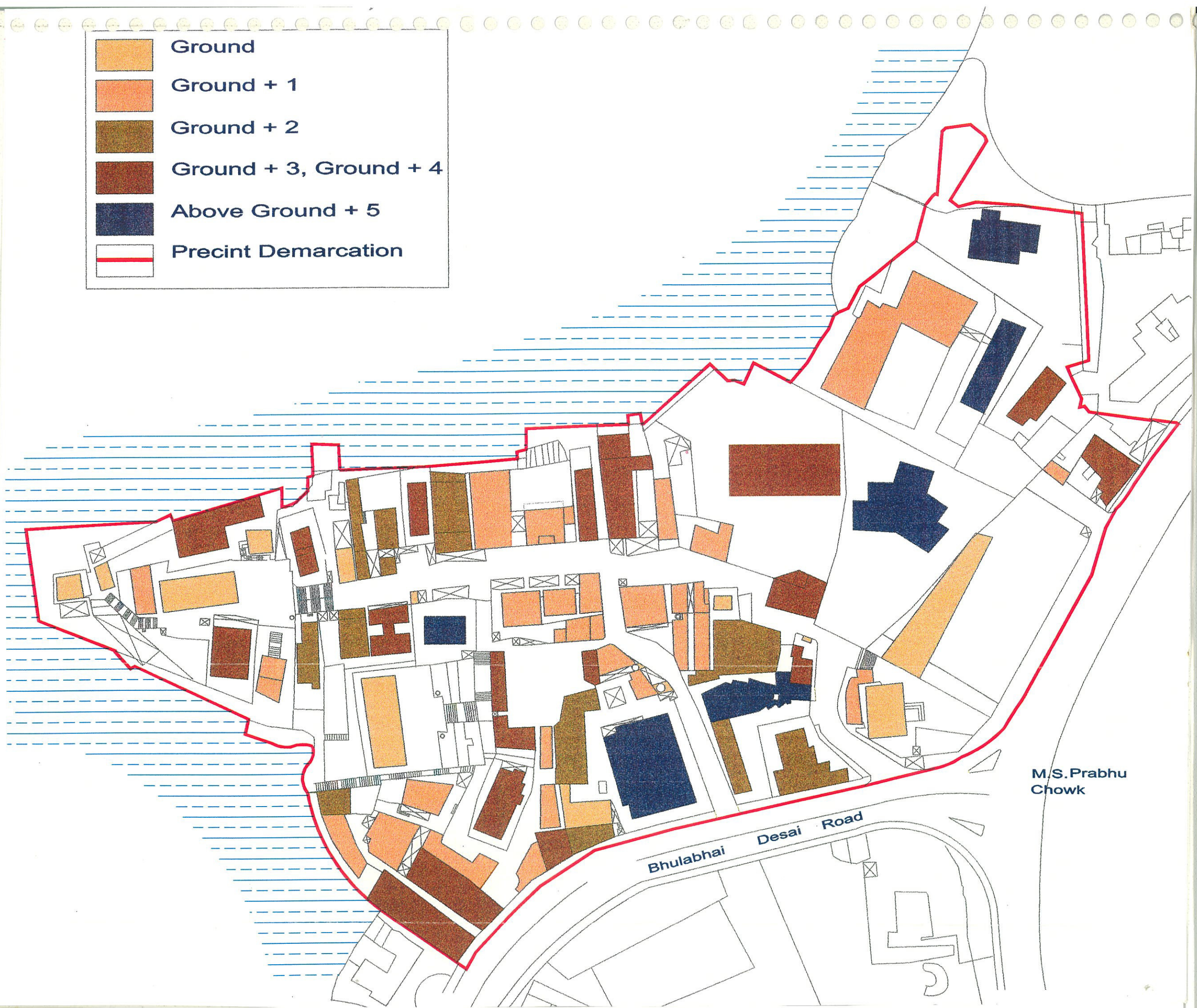
Right: Tall infill structures disturb the once harmonious skyline of the temple precinct  
Above: Statistical data on the building heights in the area

Increasingly in the past however, there have been some infill structures in modern blocks, that are incongruous to the character of the historic precinct and disturb the skyline and scale of the neighbourhood. Along the peripheral areas, there are higher structures, primarily because of the removal of older buildings to construct tall concrete apartment blocks. This is true in the case of apartment blocks to the north of the temple street, such as Rewa Apartments, Sheela and Summerville.





	Ground
	Ground + 1
	Ground + 2
	Ground + 3, Ground + 4
	Above Ground + 5
	Precint Demarcation





## DOCUMENTING THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### MAP INDICATING LANDUSE

Predominantly a residential precinct, the neighbourhood is so dotted with temple shrines and religious structures, that it gives rise to a host of ancillary activities and commercial establishments that thrive on the great influx of pilgrims to the area. These include commercial establishments lining the temple streets, that sell items for puja, flowers, prasad and music cassettes of religious “artis”. Also supporting these religious buildings, are ancillary structures that serve the functions of marriage and community halls.

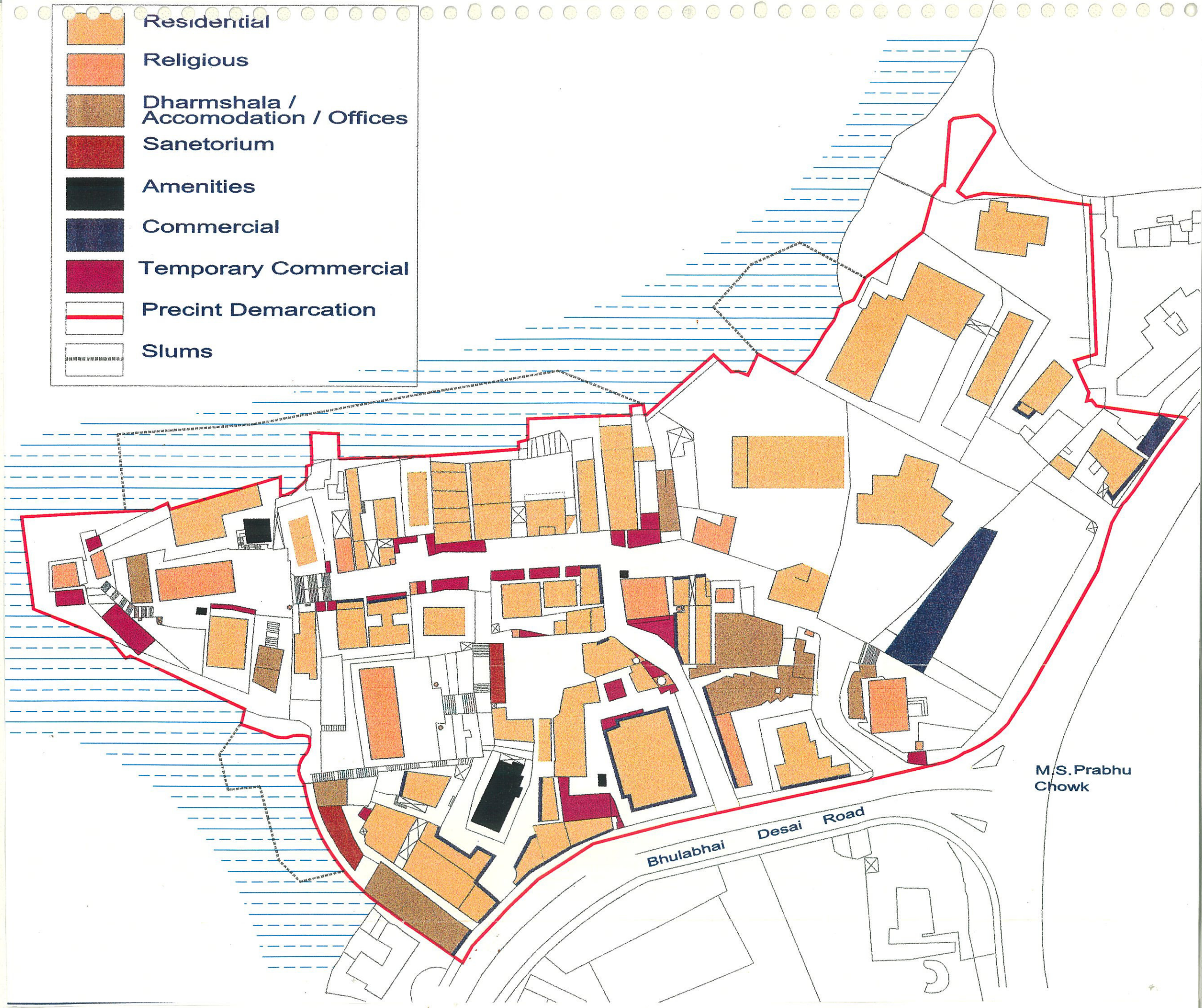
In addition to these commercial establishments and hawkers, there are tea stalls, a primary municipal school and other structures that service the residential population of the area. Due to the high density of temple shrines and the symbolic association of this area to religious purposes, there is also a proliferation of structures like *dharamshalas* and charitable sanatoriums that are linked to the religious character of the area.

Right: The variety of landuses in the area range from small commercial shops to residential buildings, a night club, temples and a school.





	Residential
	Religious
	Dharmshala / Accomodation / Offices
	Sanetorium
	Amenities
	Commercial
	Temporary Commercial
	Precint Demarcation
	Slums



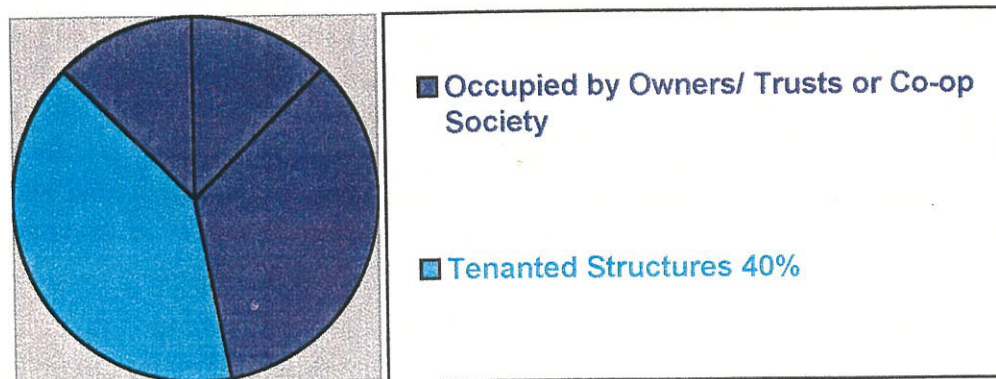


## DOCUMENTING THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### OWNERSHIP & TENANCY

The *Shree Mahalakshmi temple*, owned by the *Shree Mahalakshmi Temple Charities*, is run by a temple trust, like most of the other religious structures in the precinct. This is also true of other temples and charitable institutions such as the *Shree Muktajeevan Swami Bapa Sevashram*, *Sadhubela Udasin Ashram* and *Trambakeshwar Mahadeo Mandir*.



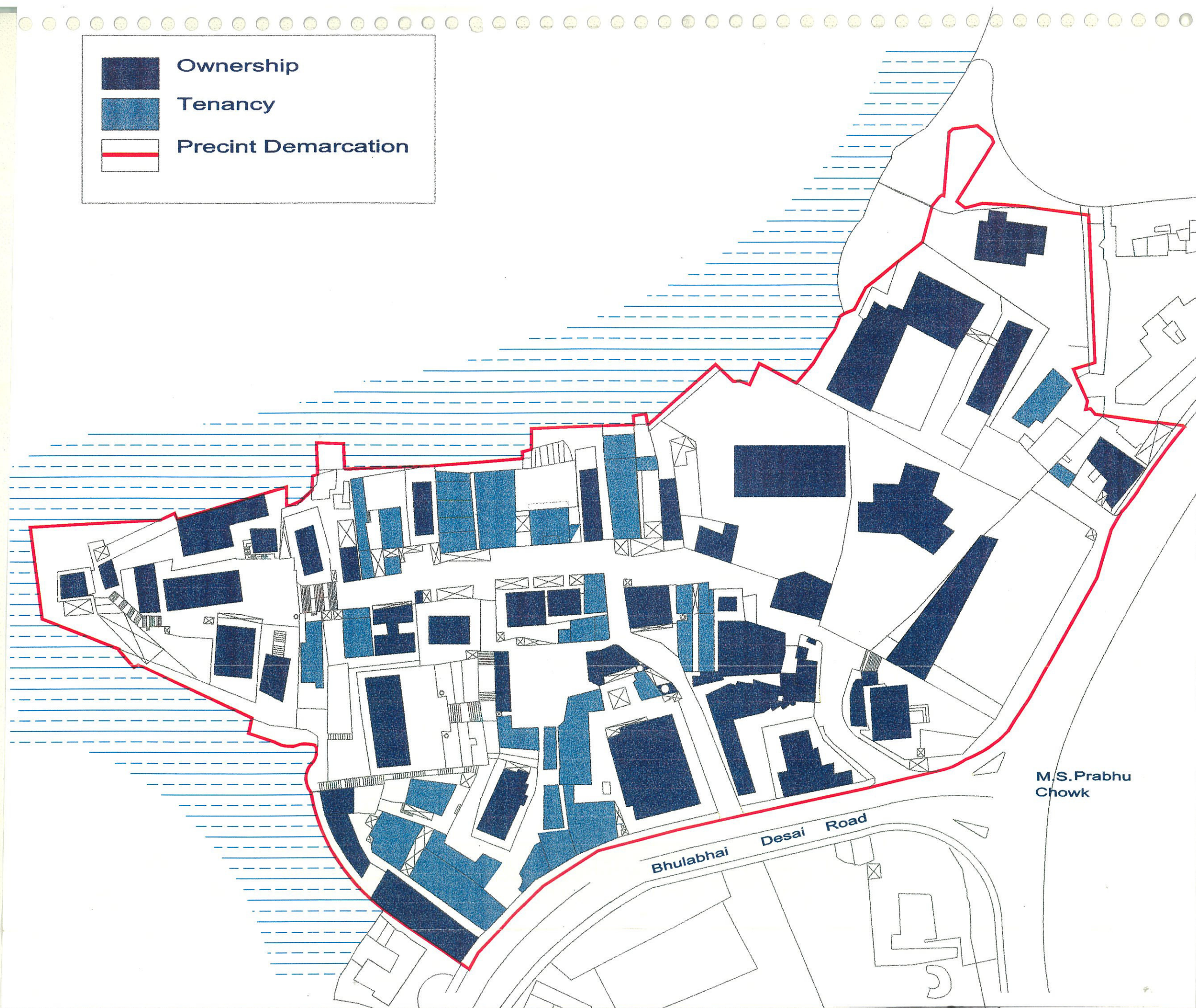
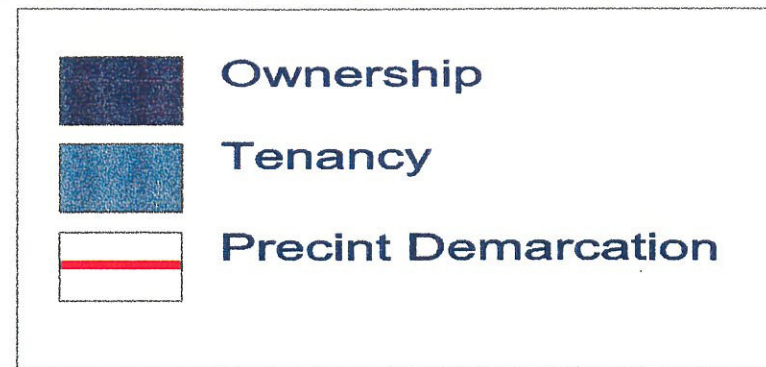
Above: Statistical data on the owner occupied houses compared to tenanted dwellings

Apart from these, most of the modern high rise apartment consist of ownership flats or a co-operative. There is however, a large housing stock of multiple tenanted structures and other residential buildings that have one or more tenants. Examples of these are Kusum Sadan, Ramdas Bansali Chawl, Premji Keshtee Building and Lohar Panchganga Chawl, among others. Thus, leaving out the religious and institutional buildings, a large chunk of the residential structures are tenanted and thus suffer from typical issues such as lack of maintenance, Cess rules and Rent Control issues as per the existing legislation.

Below: View of a typical multiple tenanted structure









## DOCUMENTING THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### COMMUNITY PATTERNS

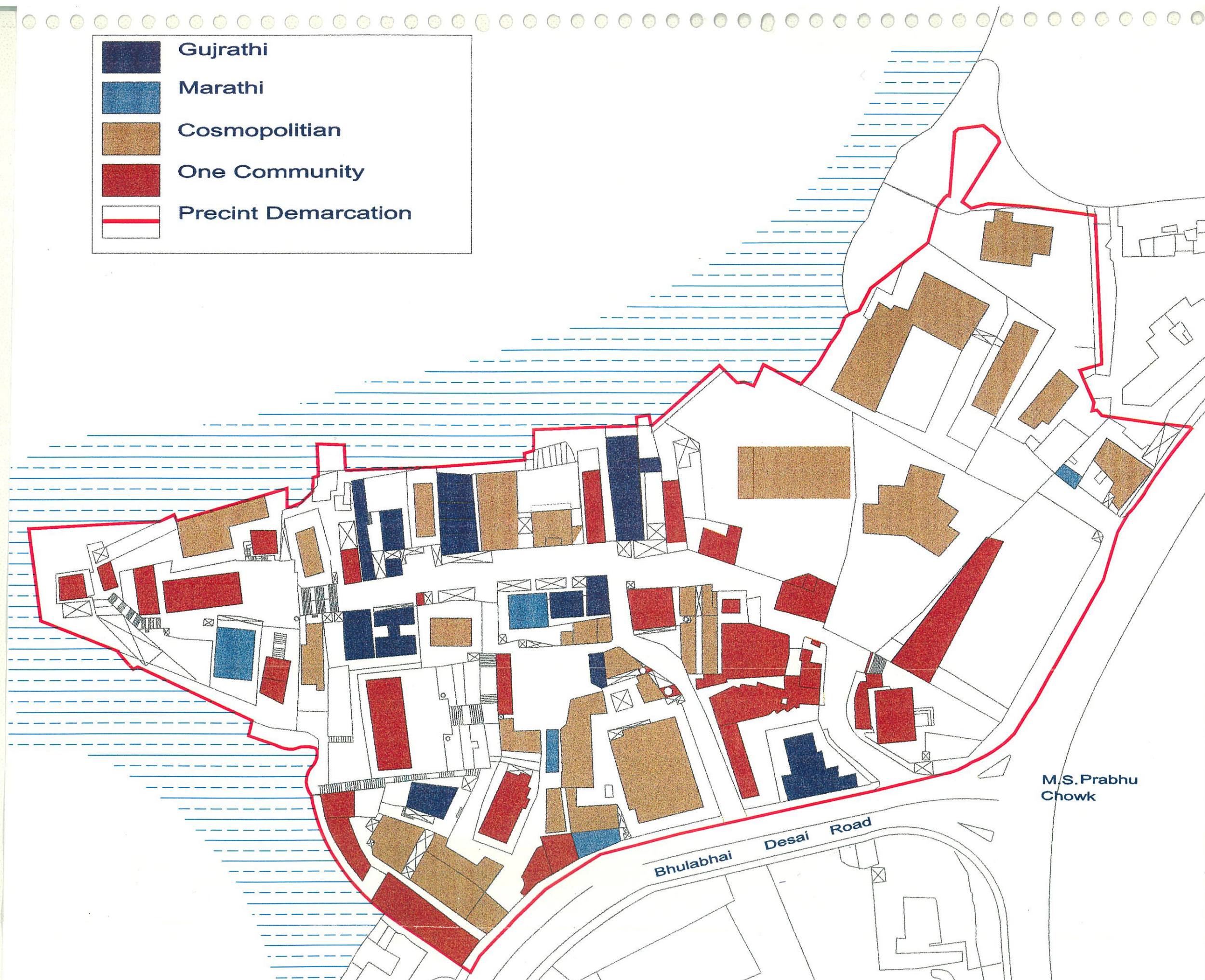
The majority of houses in the neighbourhood are owned and occupied by members of the Hindu community. Comprising mainly of Gujaratis, Maharashtrians as well as some cosmopolitan constituents represented by the larger housing societies, this precinct also has a large percentage of buildings owned and run by religious and charitable trusts.

This representation is however, changing in the case of the slum encroachments however, which have brought in a new set of communities into the area and though they do occupy the low lying fringe areas, the social interaction between these two groups of people is limited to the bare minimum.

Images of the buzzing community life within the precinct.









## STREETSCAPE STUDIES

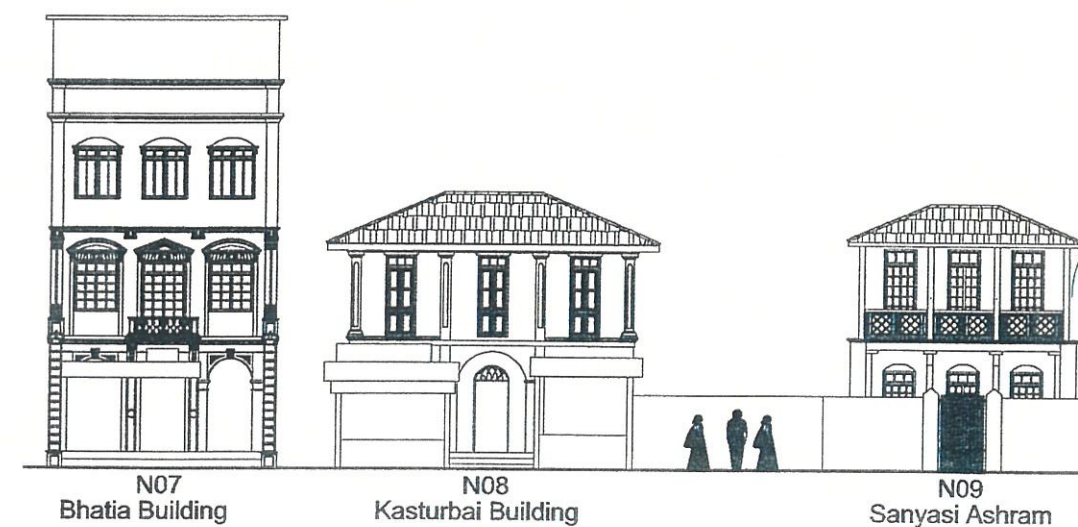
### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### STREETSCAPE STUDIES: STREET ELEVATIONS & SECTIONS

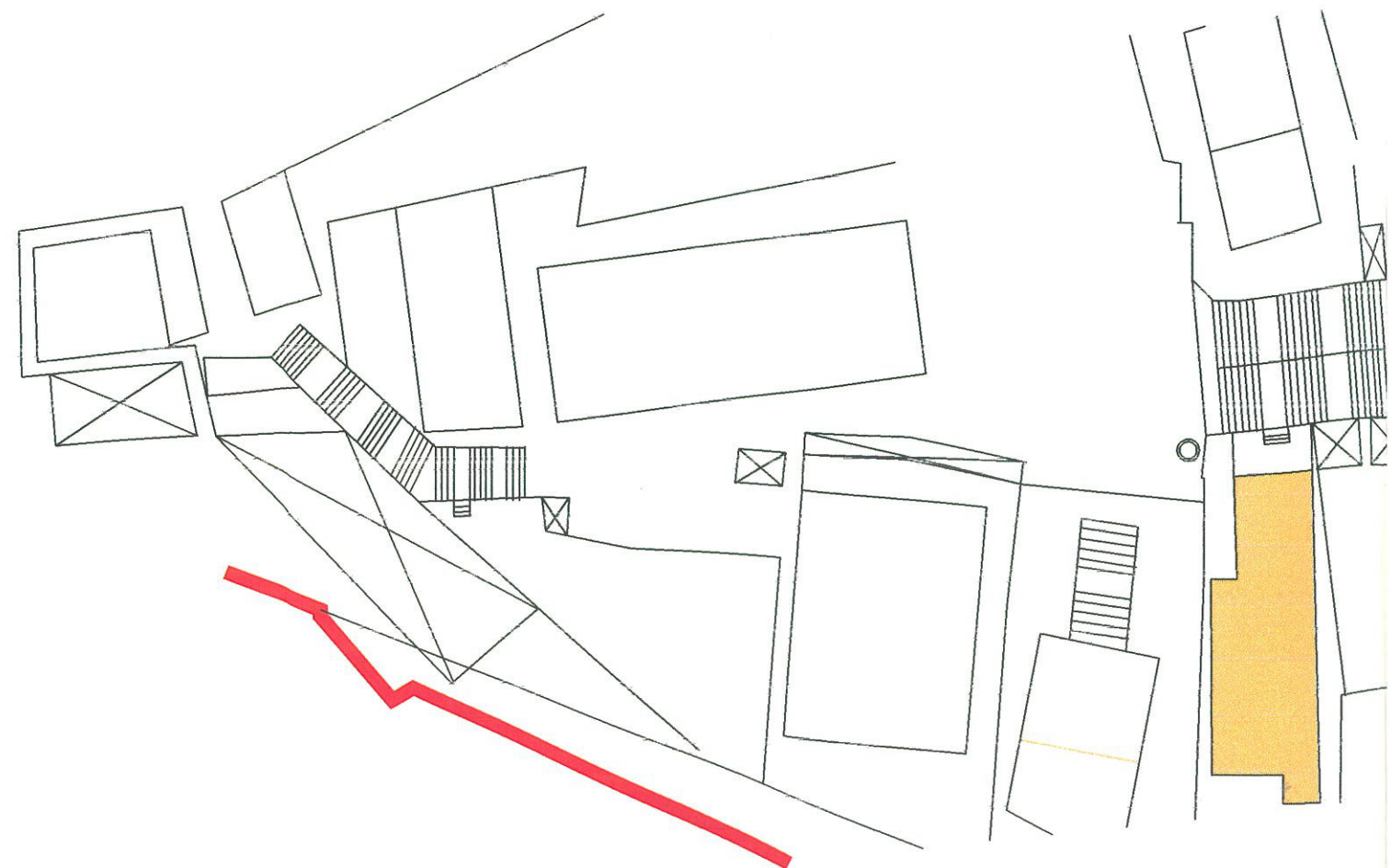
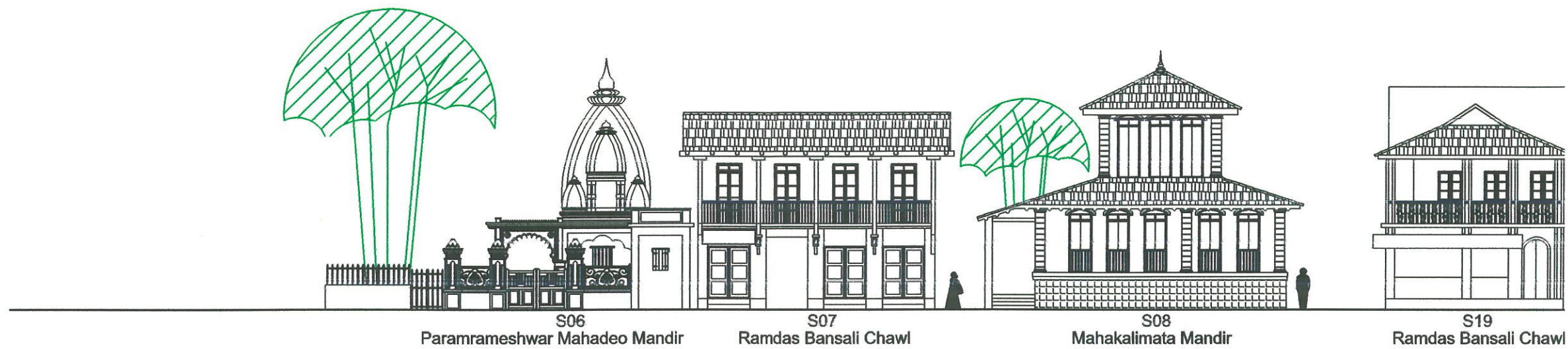
In order to create an accurate documentation base of the character of the street scape and heritage buildings, a detailed measured drawing exercise was conducted to prepare a set of elevation drawings of each building along the central temple spine. These measured drawings, painstakingly prepared and digitized on computer, include all elevational features like barge boards, eaves, tiled roofs and baluster designs and have been computer drafted, so as to be able to allow for high resolution and printing quality.

These street sections and elevation drawings not only allow for a visual study of the existing skyline and height patterns in the precinct, but also exhibit graphically, the glaring incongruity of some new modern block additions that have greatly detracted from the low rise character of the precinct. They also help establish a documentary proof of the height of existing buildings, to prevent future additions and incongruous development at a later date.

Right: Example of a typical street section through the main spine



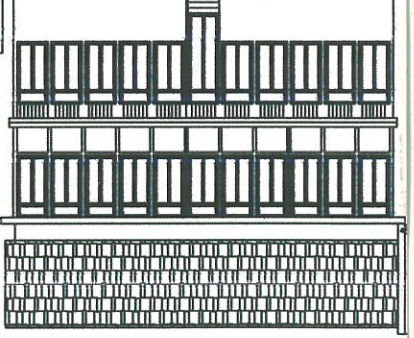




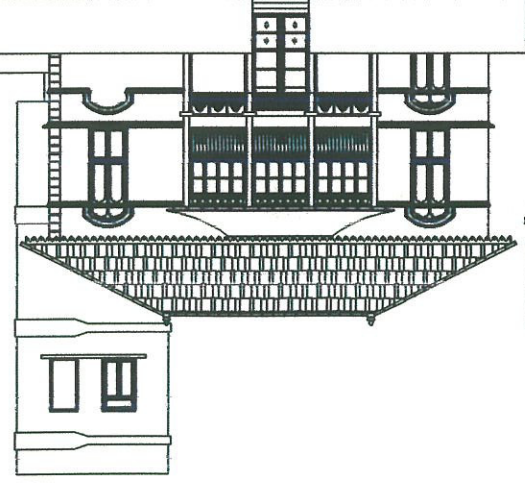




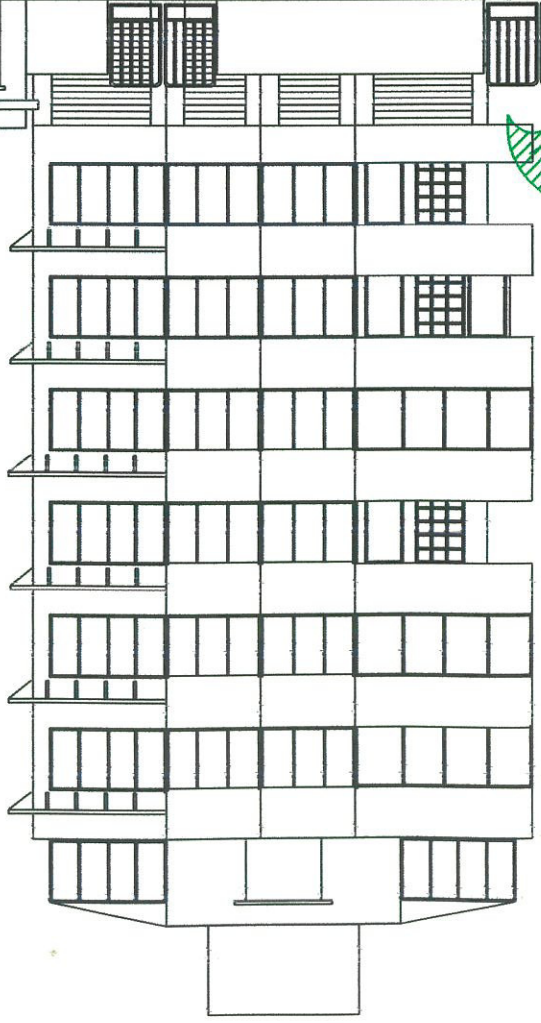
S20  
Govind Bhavan



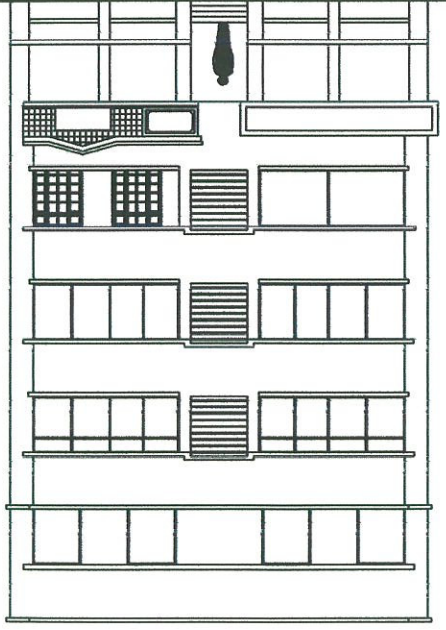
S21  
Ketkar Motilwala Bunglow



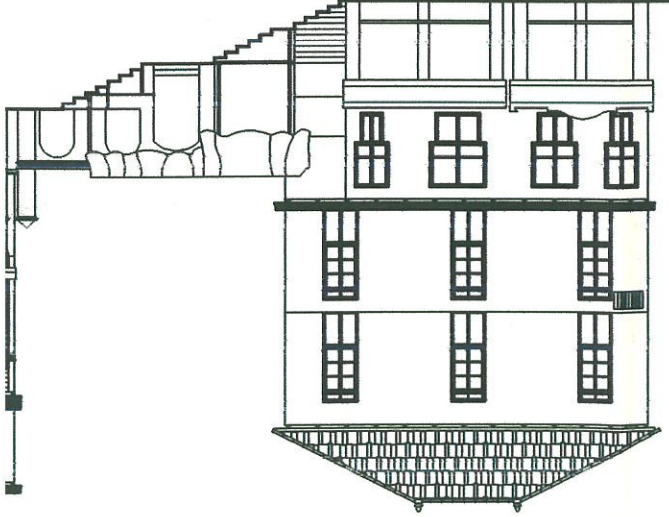
S33  
Ashiana



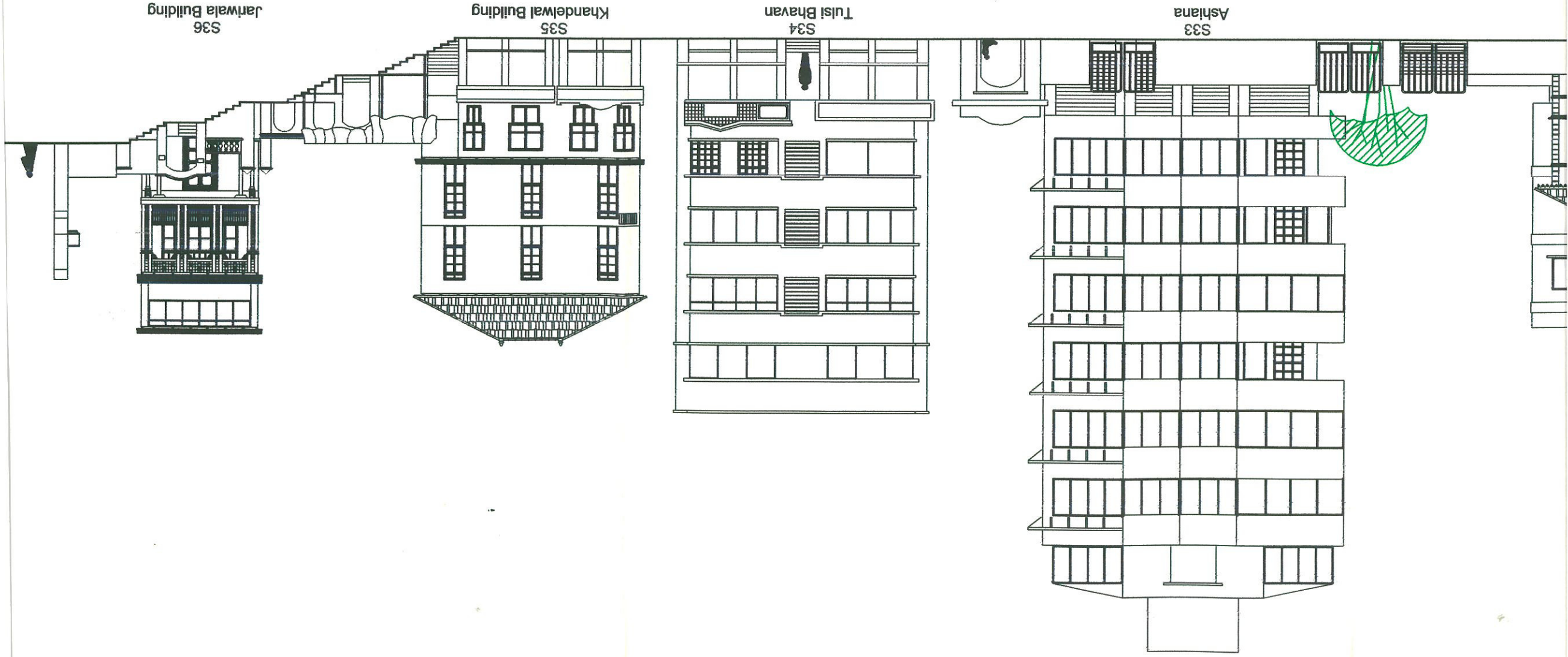
S34  
Tulsi Bhavan



S35  
Khandelwal Building

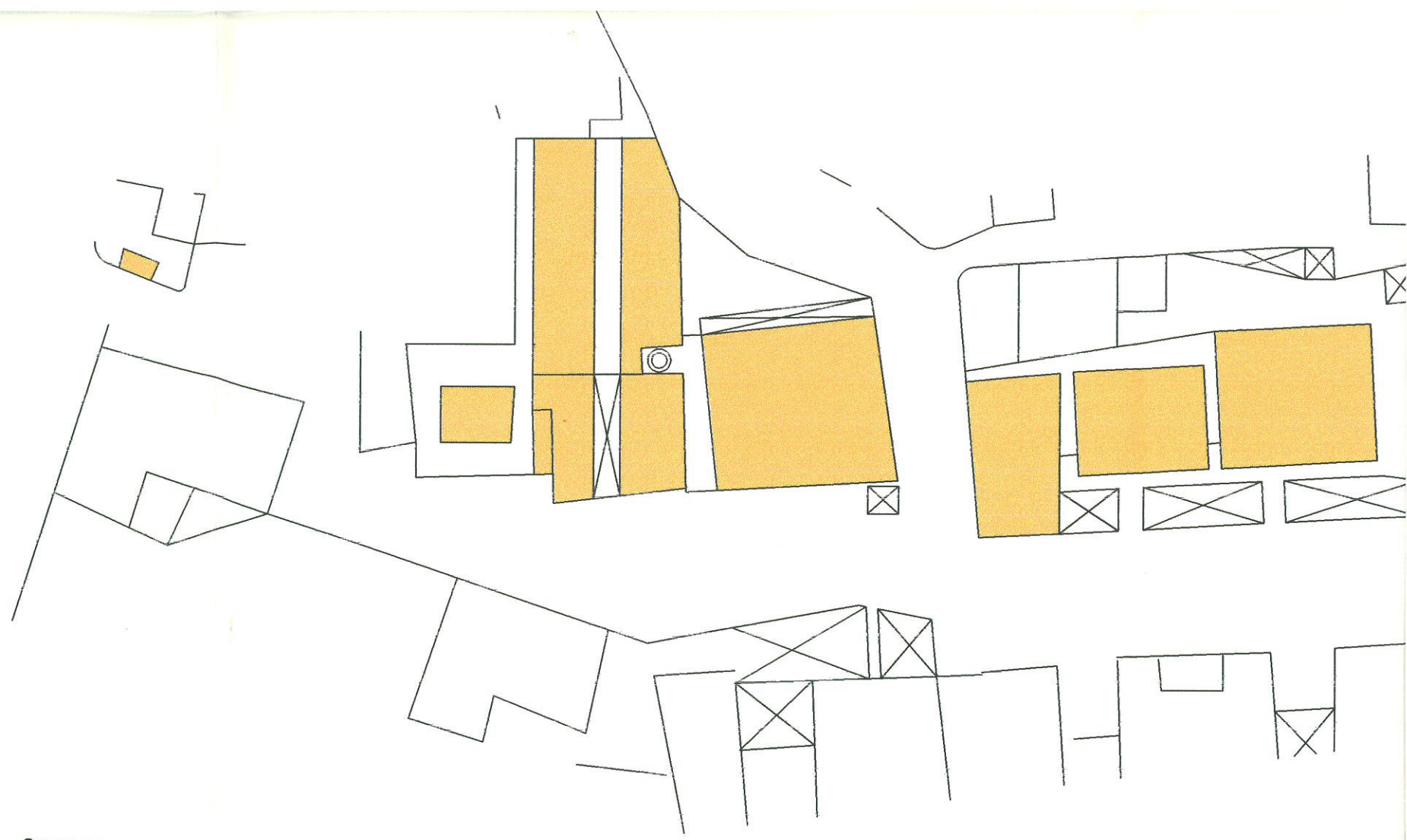




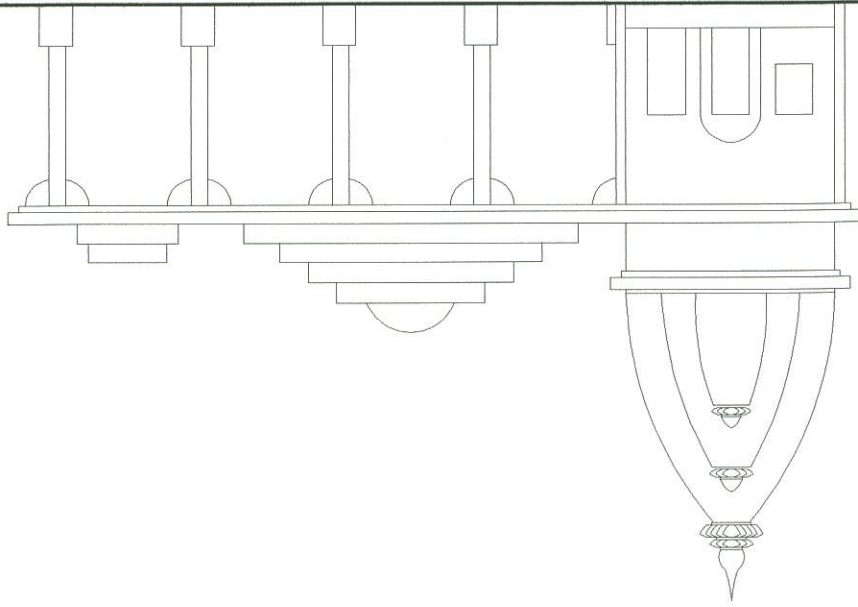


South Side

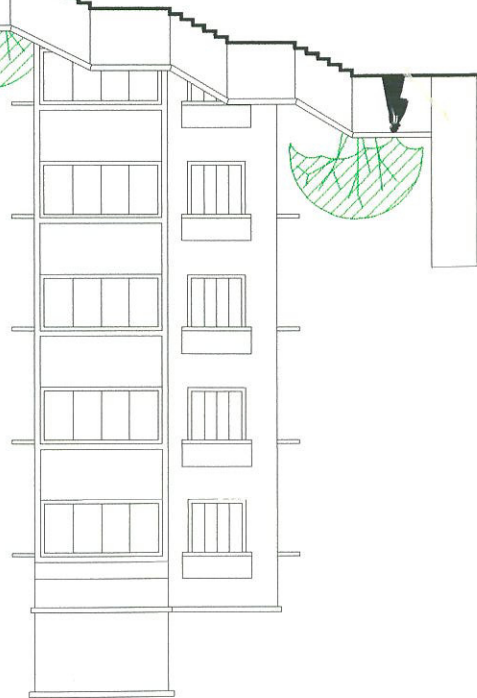
Detail Plan



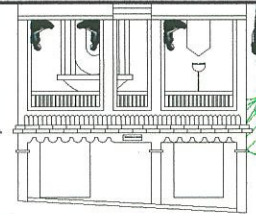




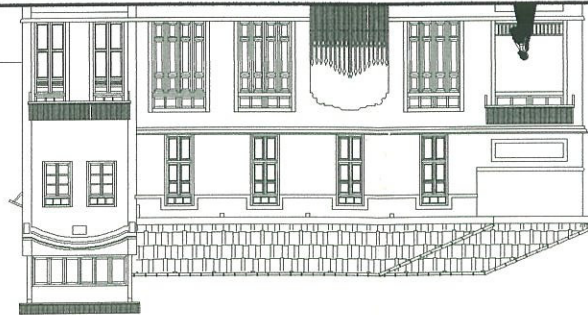
S43  
Shree Mahalakshmi Temple



N01  
Darshan Apartment



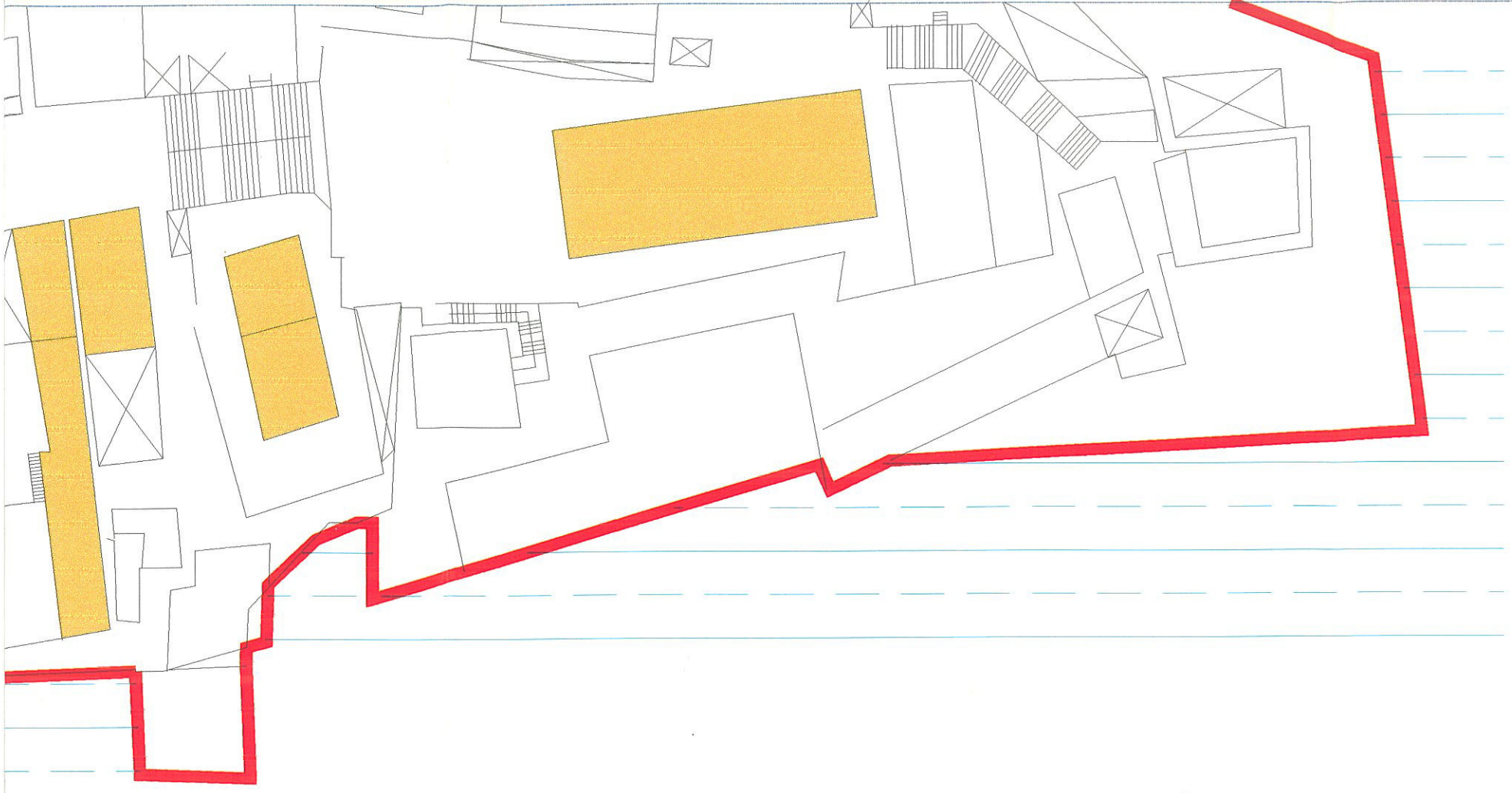
N02  
Shree Ram Mandir



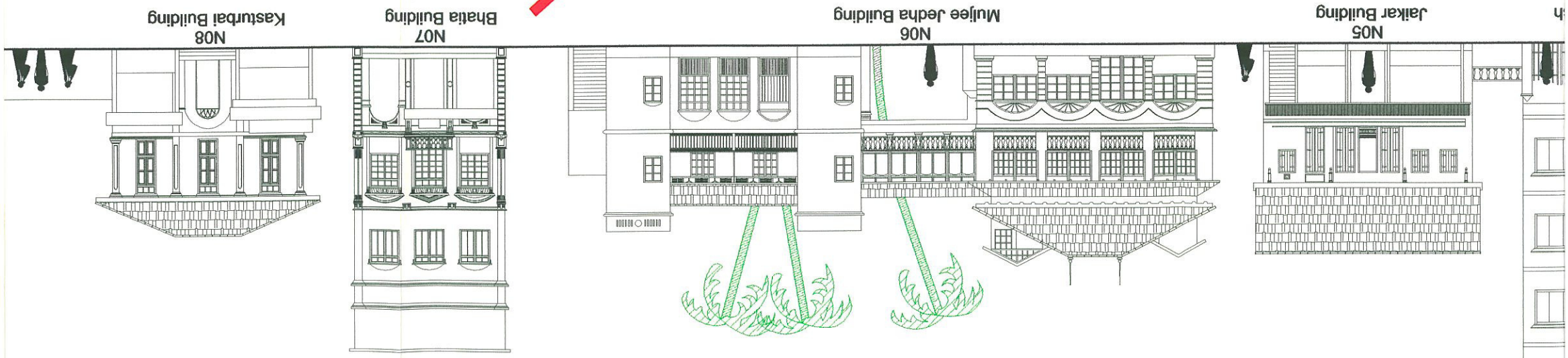
N03  
Bhagwan Bhavan



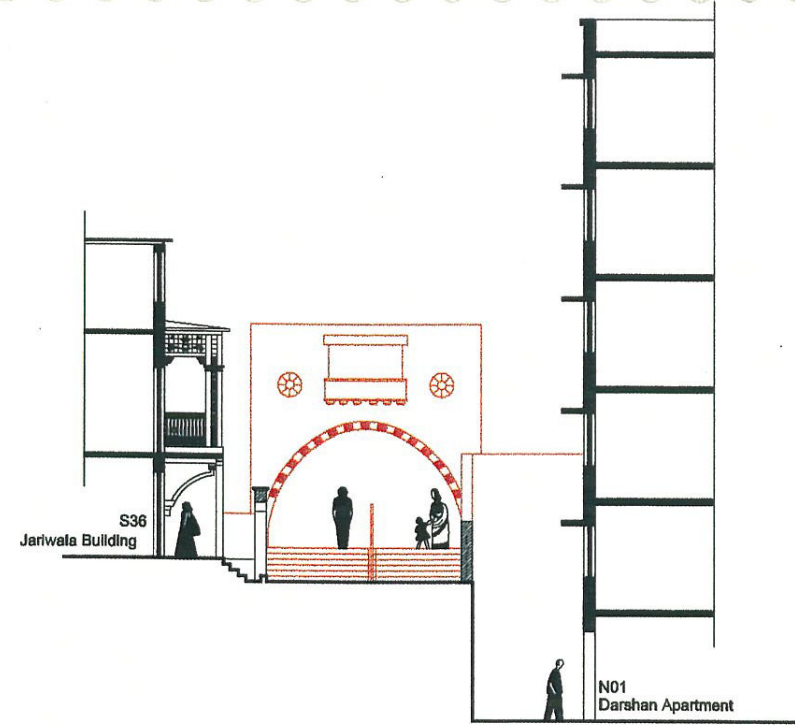
N04  
Ma Ash



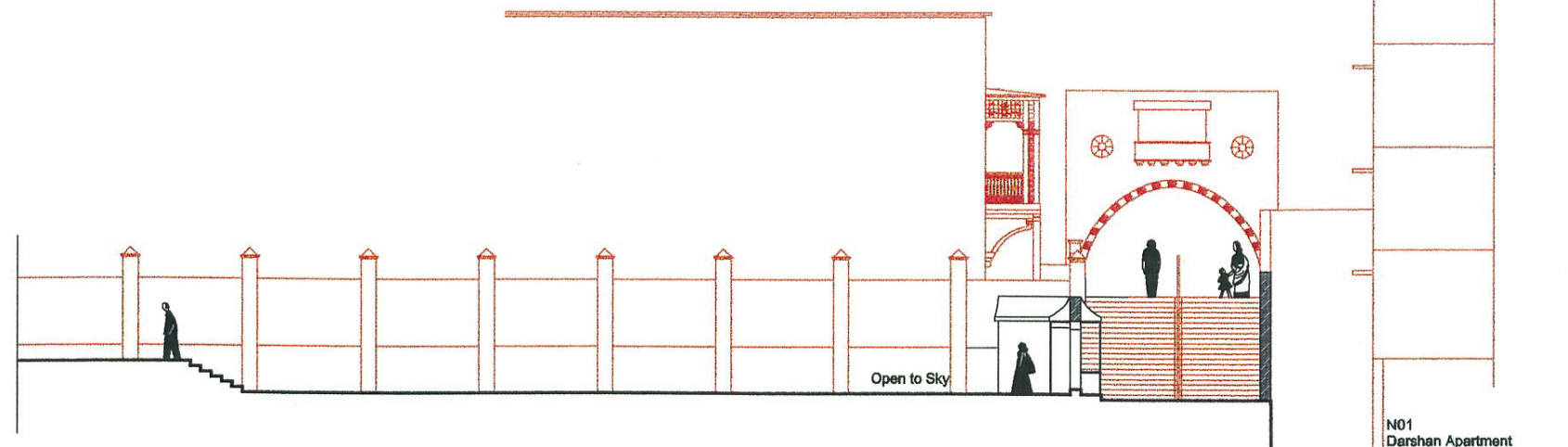




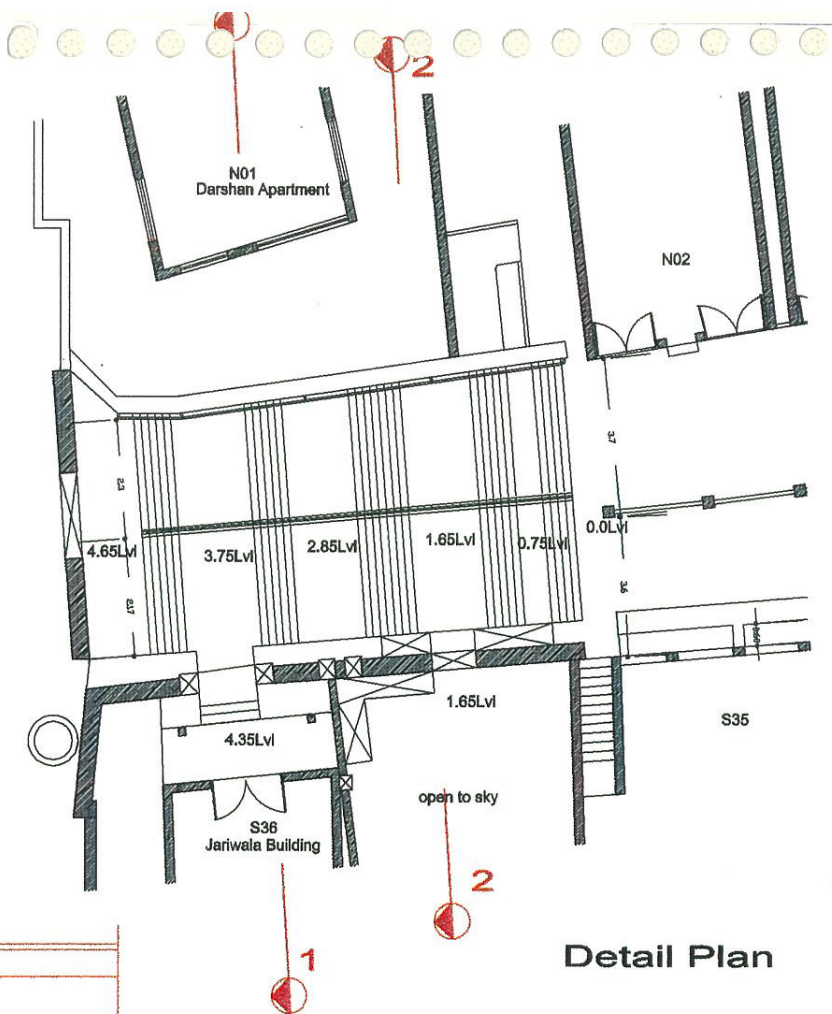




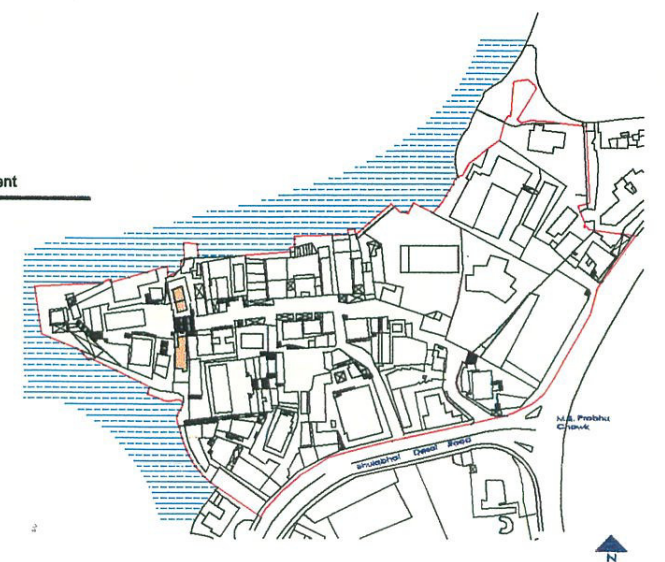
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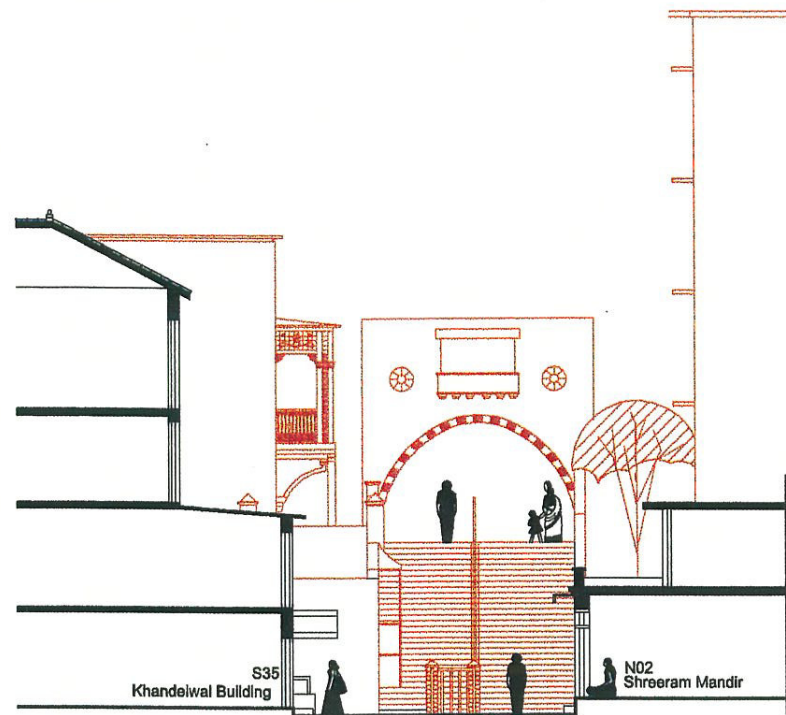
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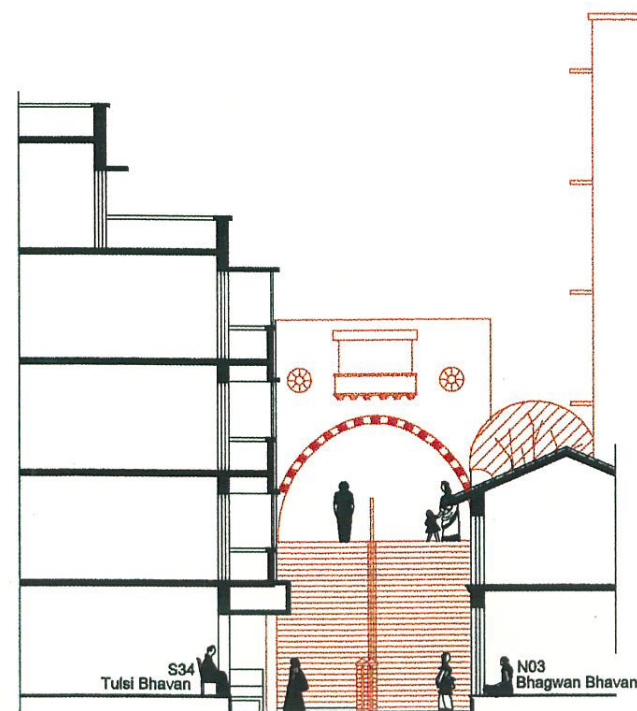
Detail Plan



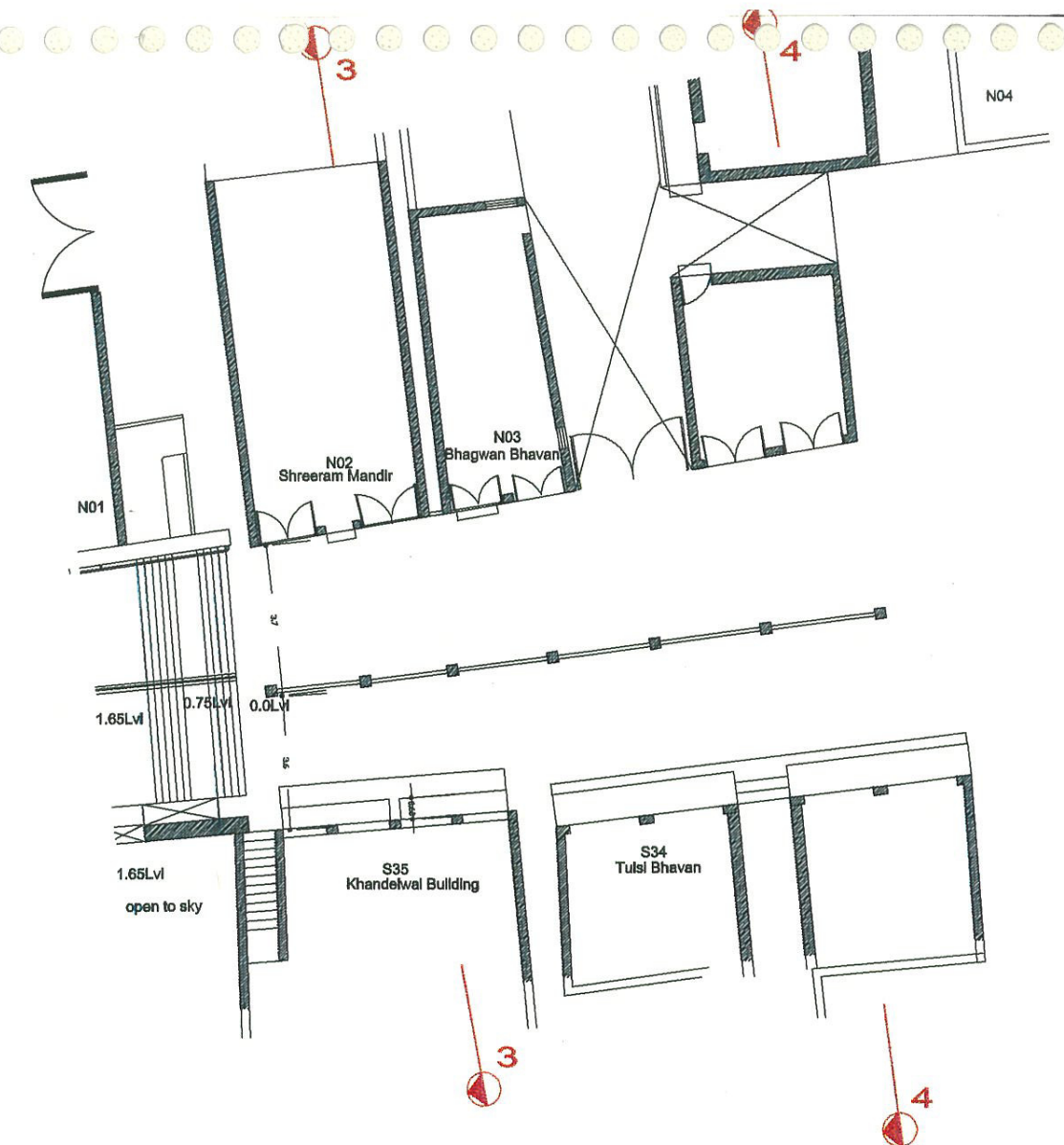




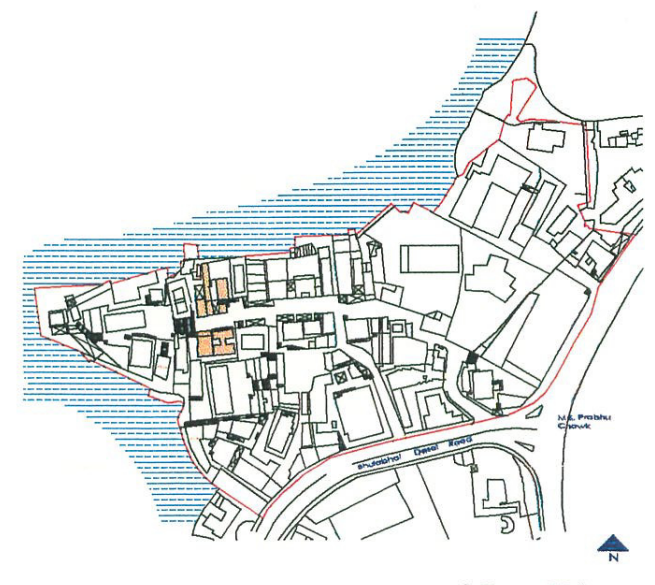
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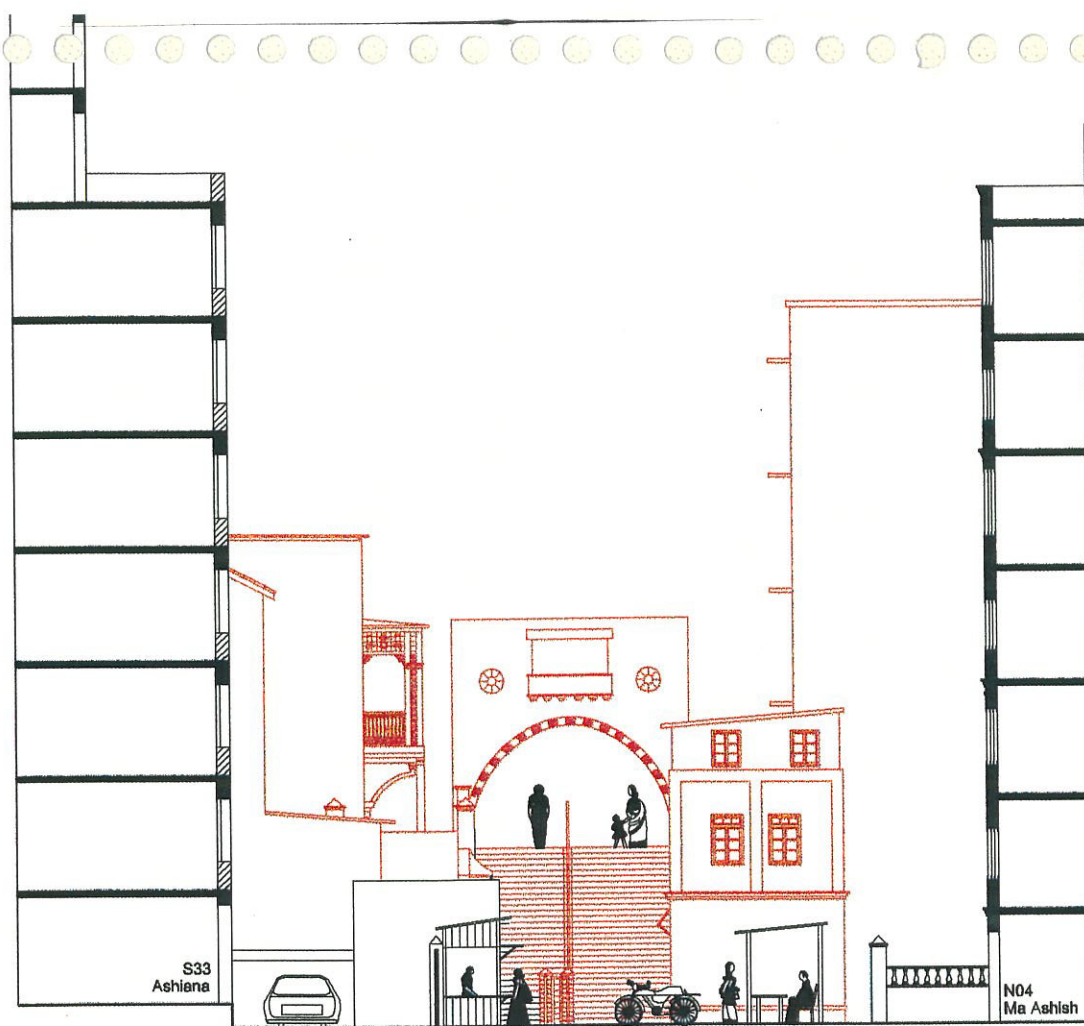
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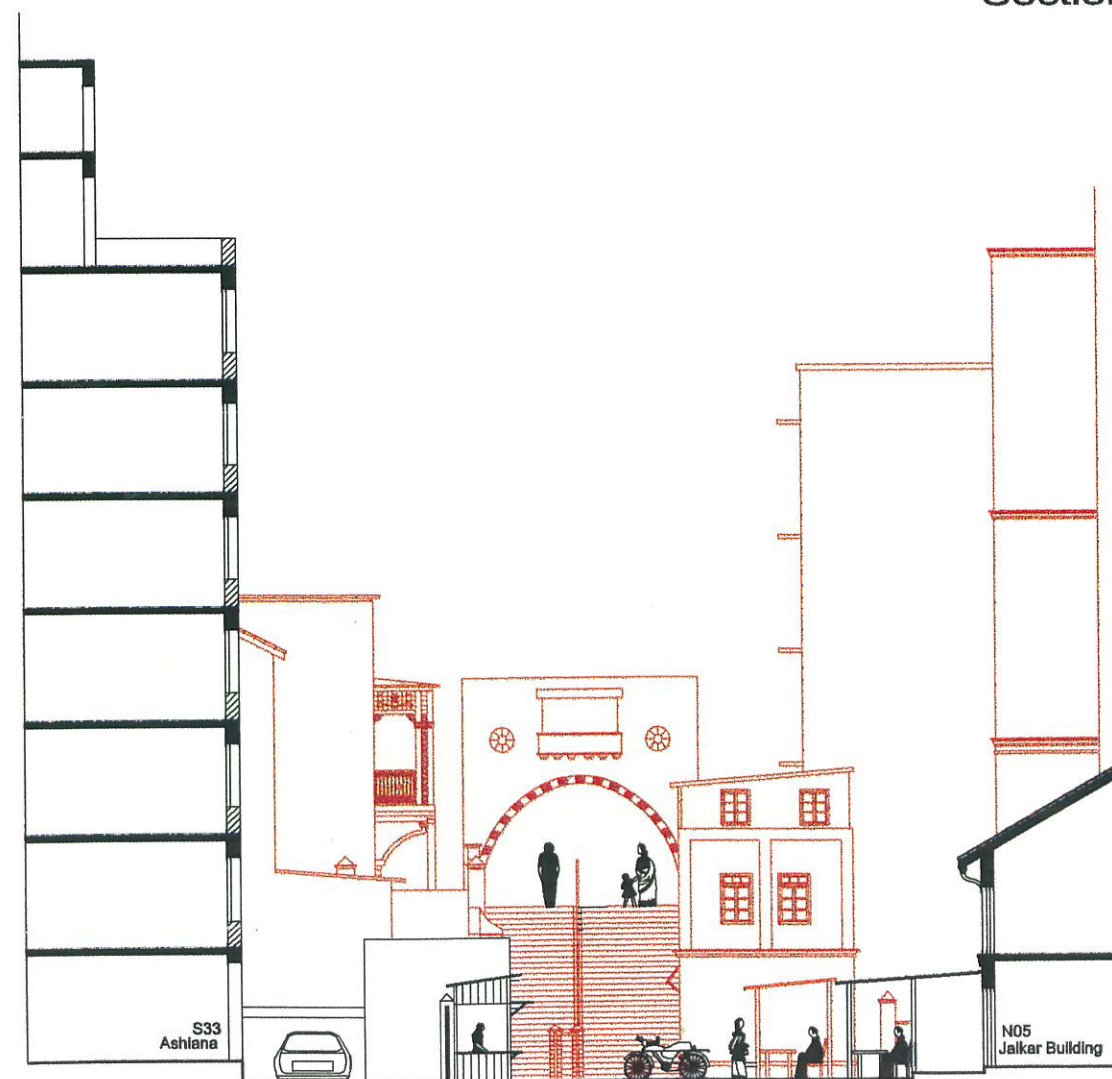
Detail Plan



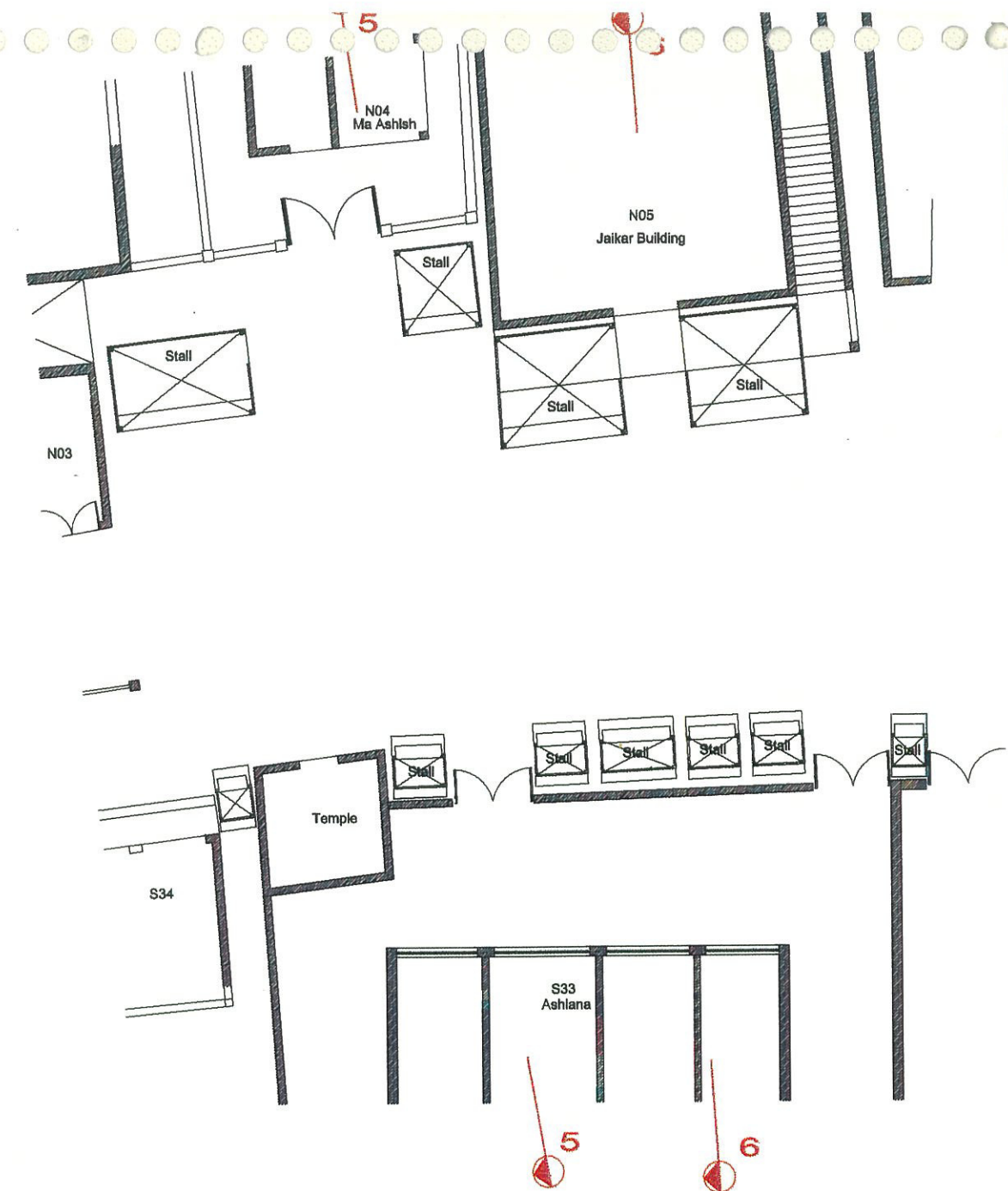




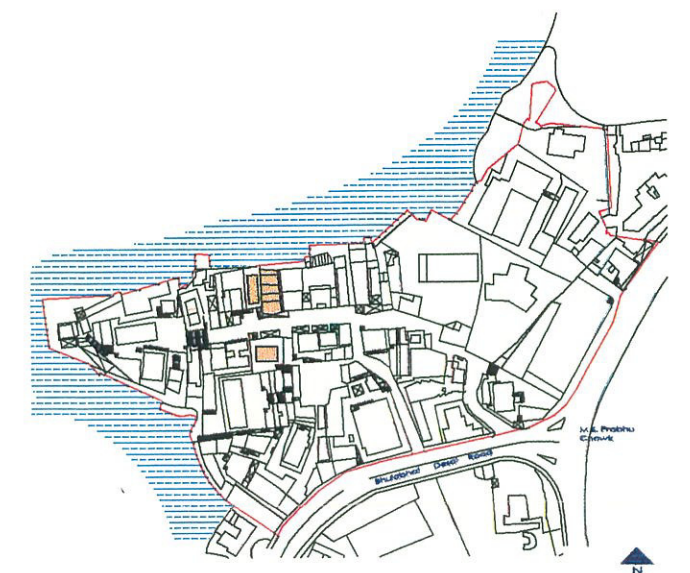
Section 5-5



Section 6-6

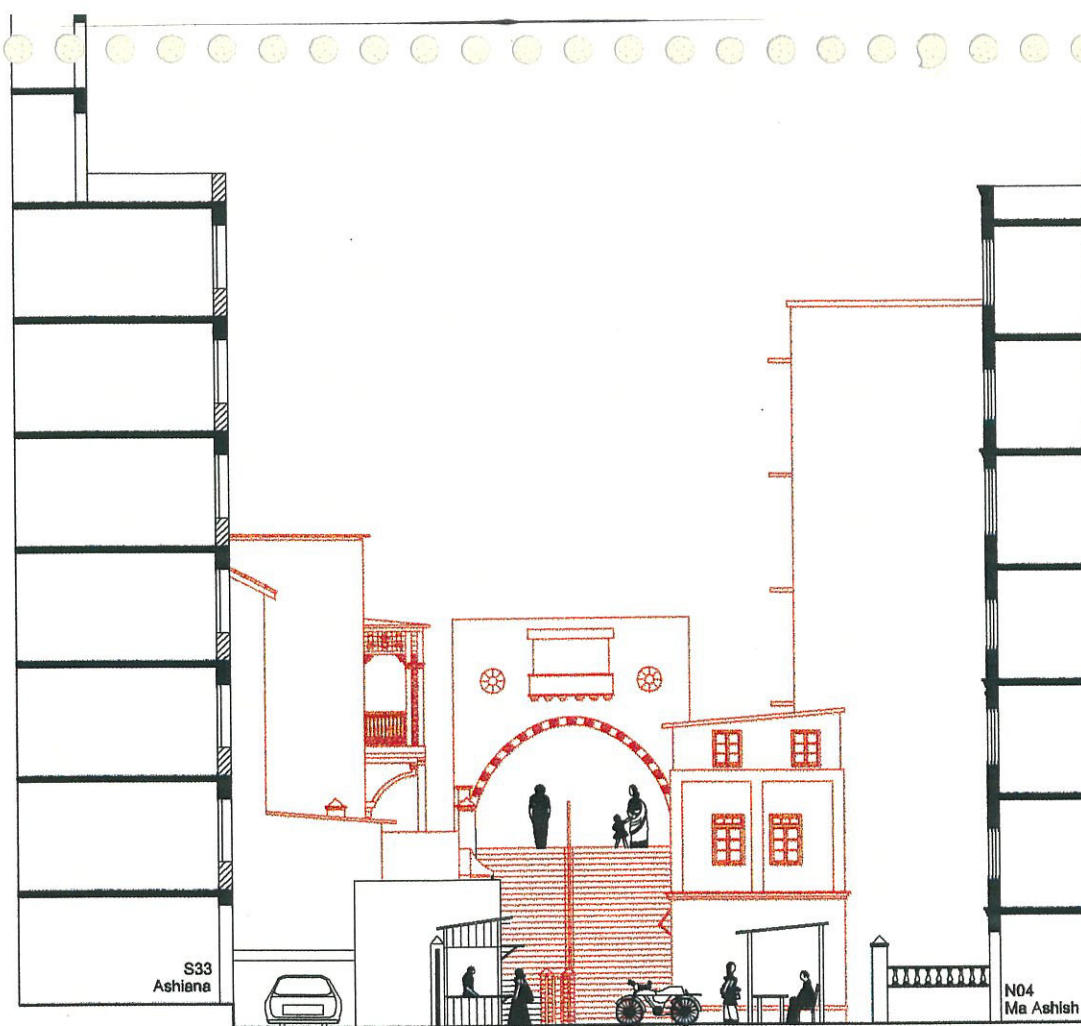


Detail Plan

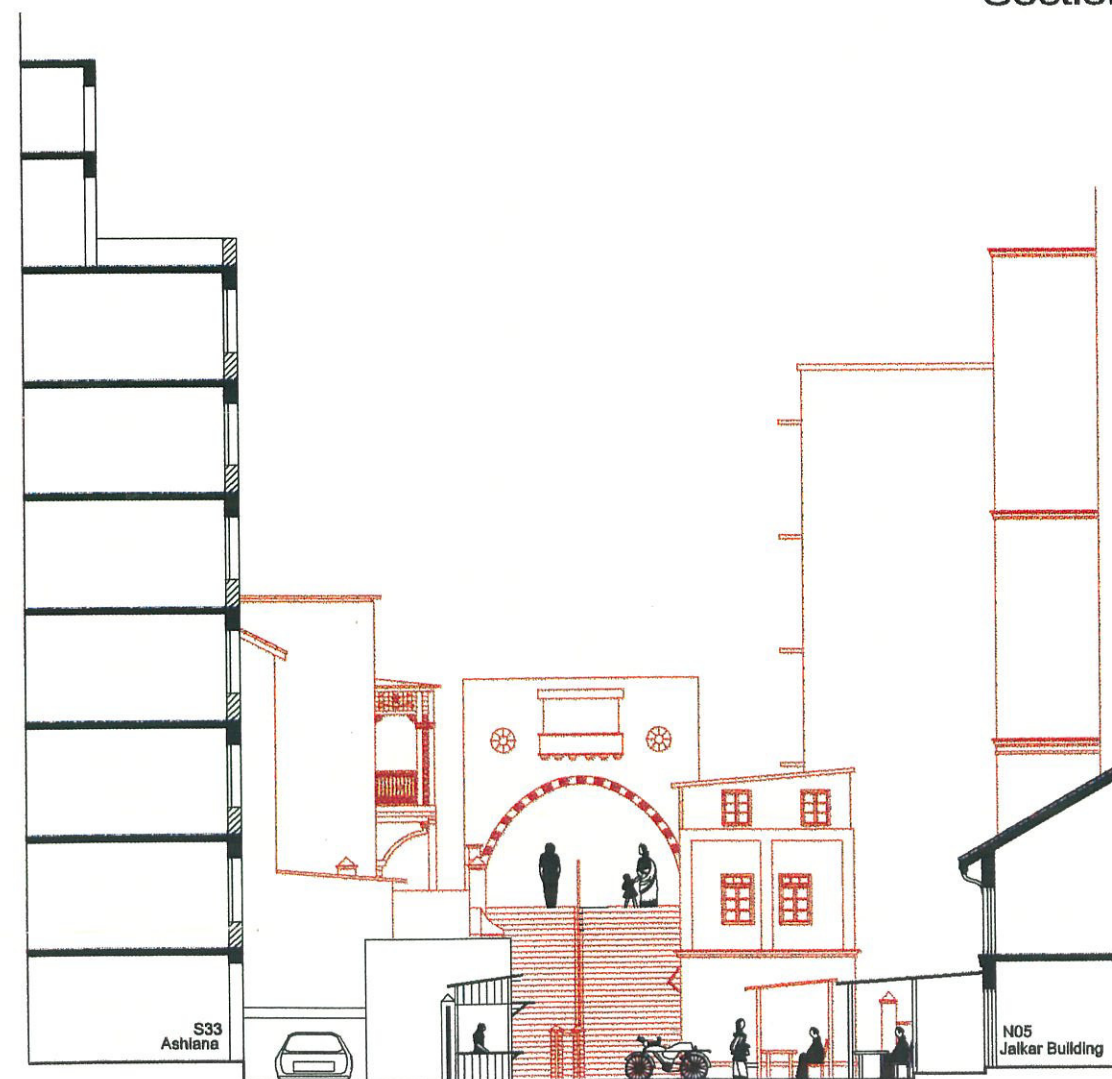


Key Plan

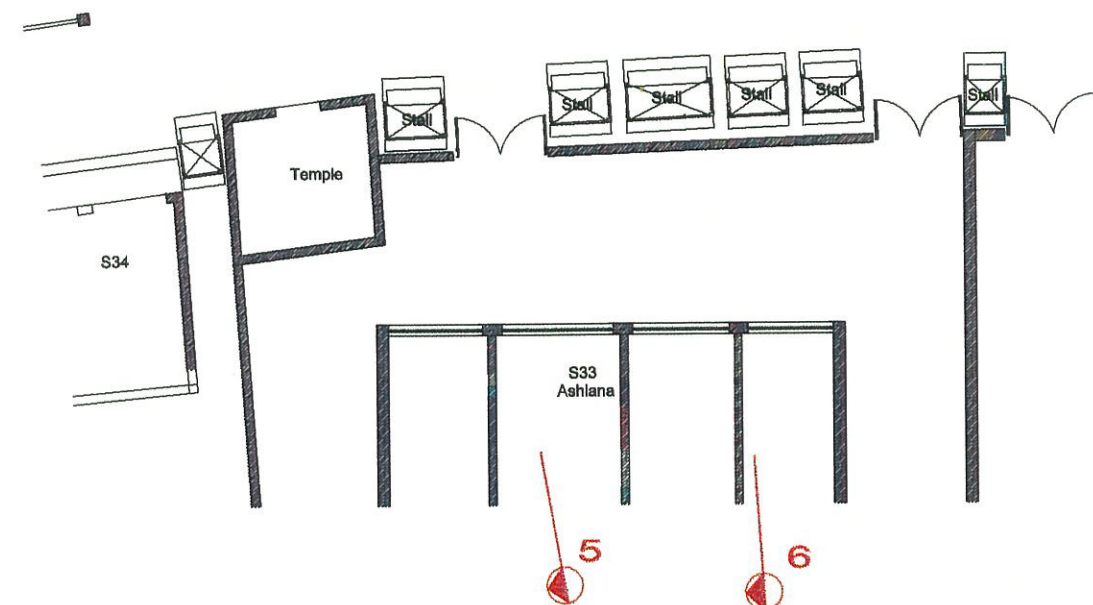
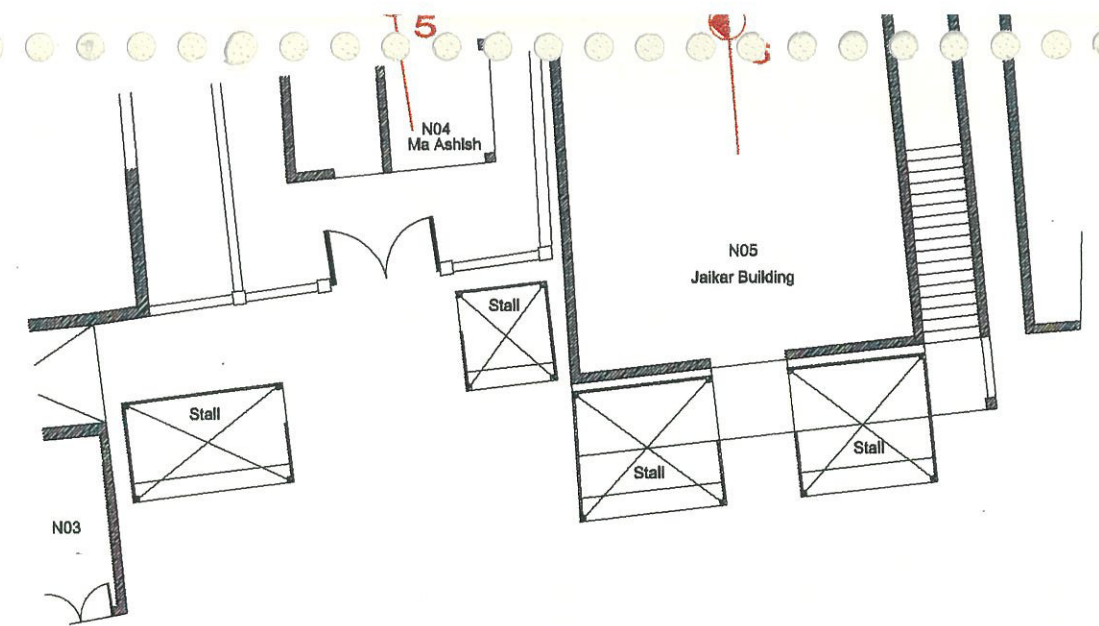




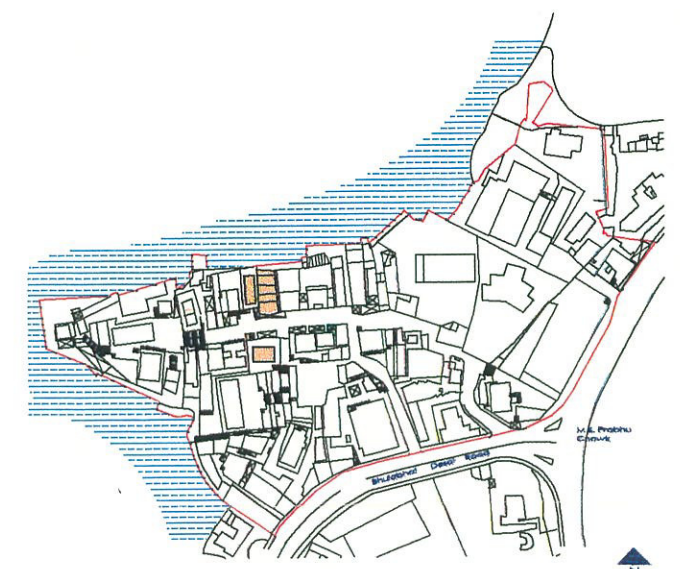
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Section 6-6

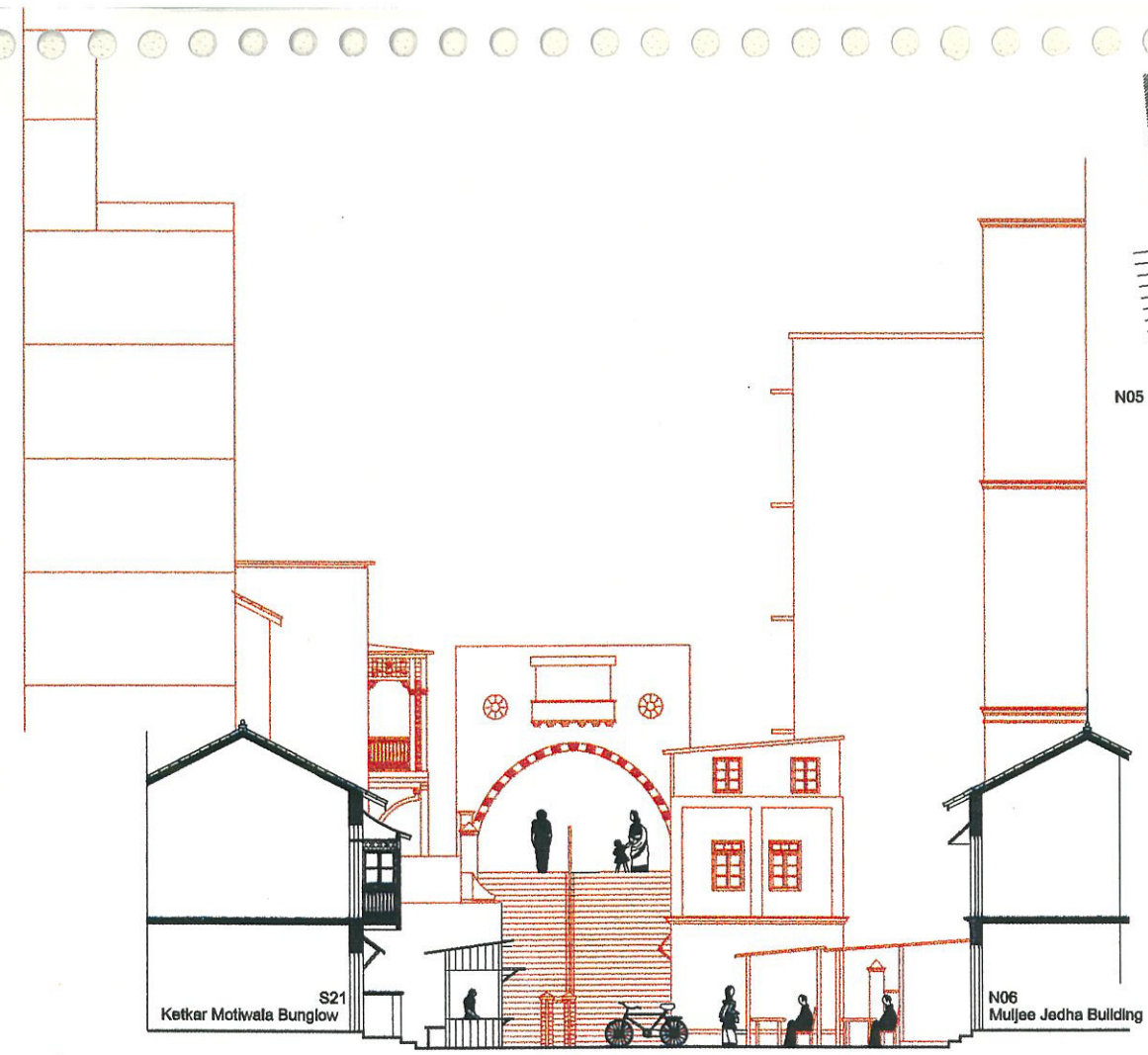


Detail Plan

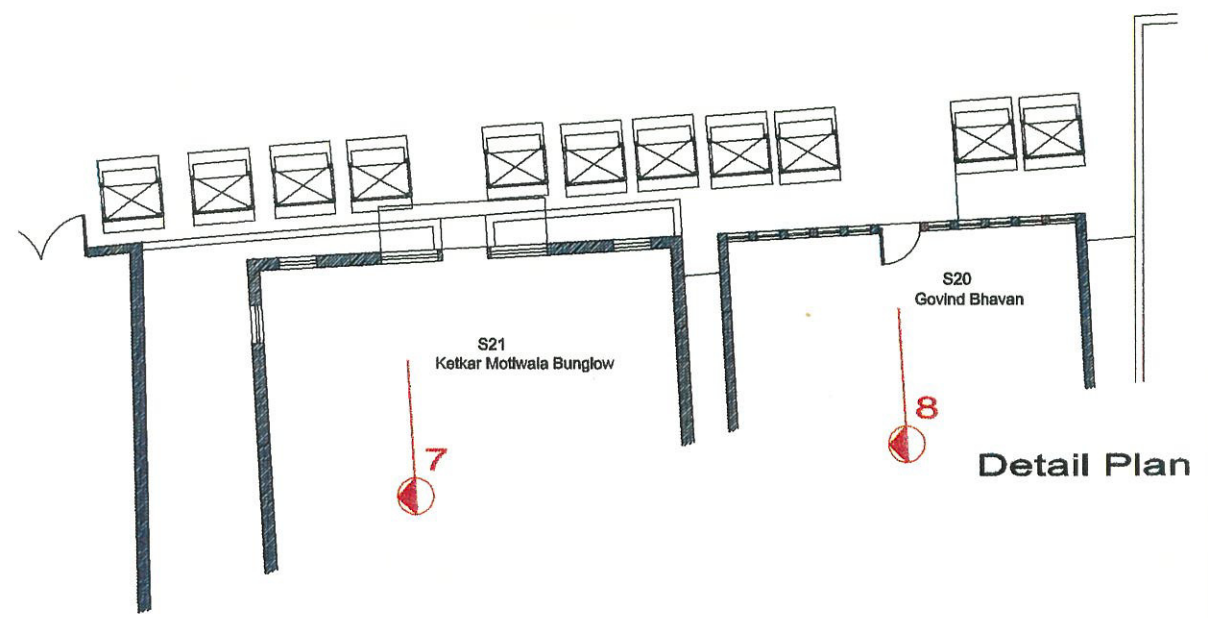
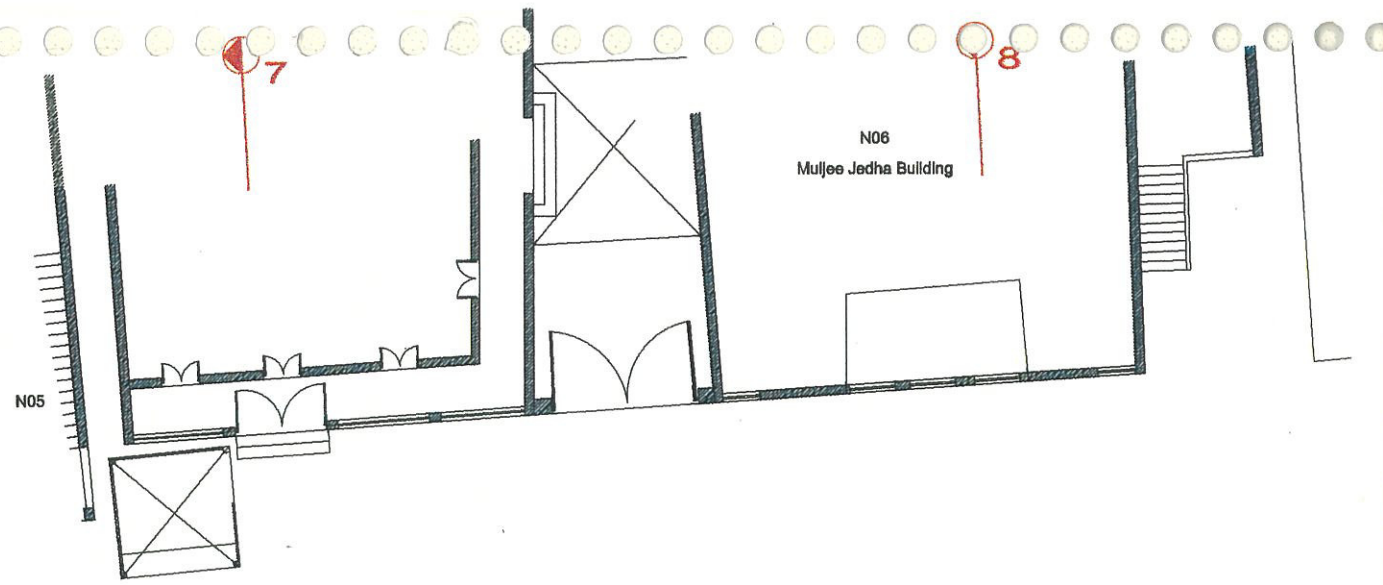


Key Plan

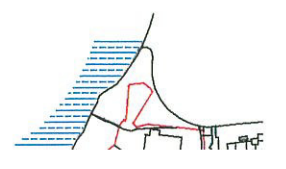




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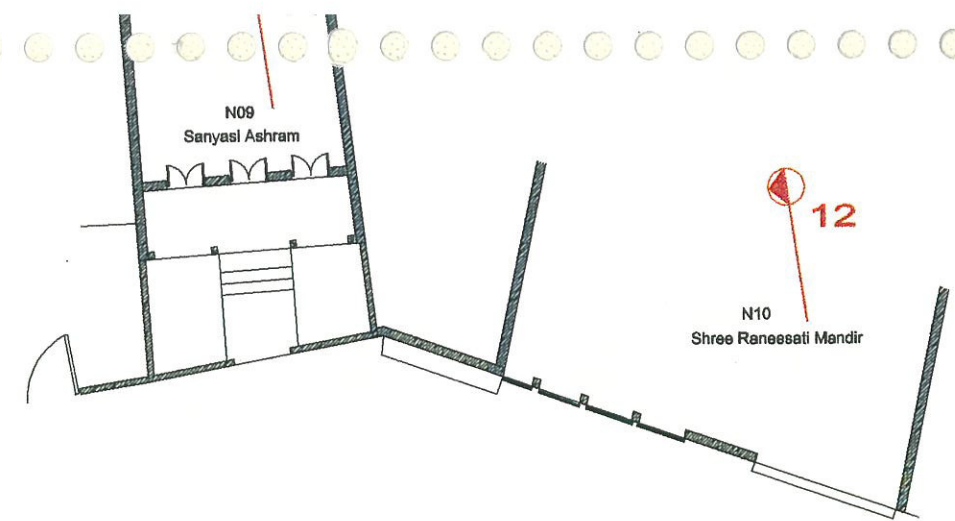
Detail Plan



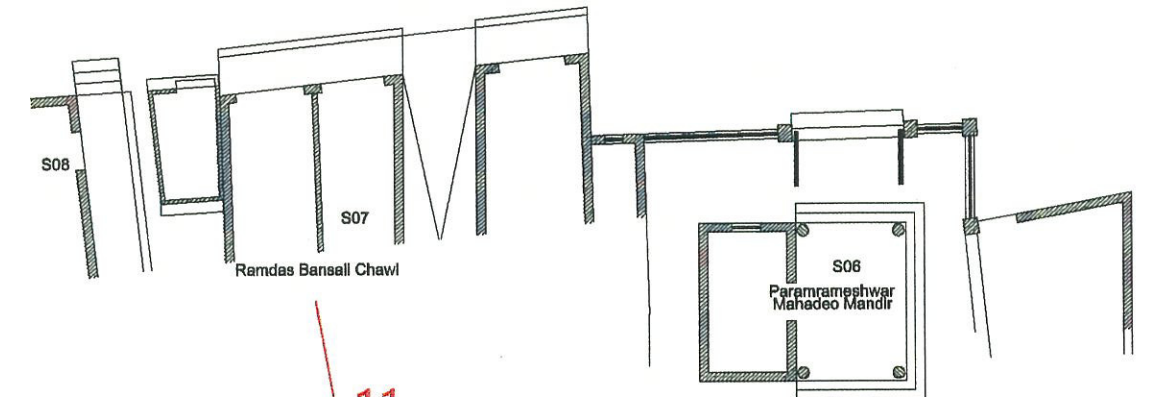




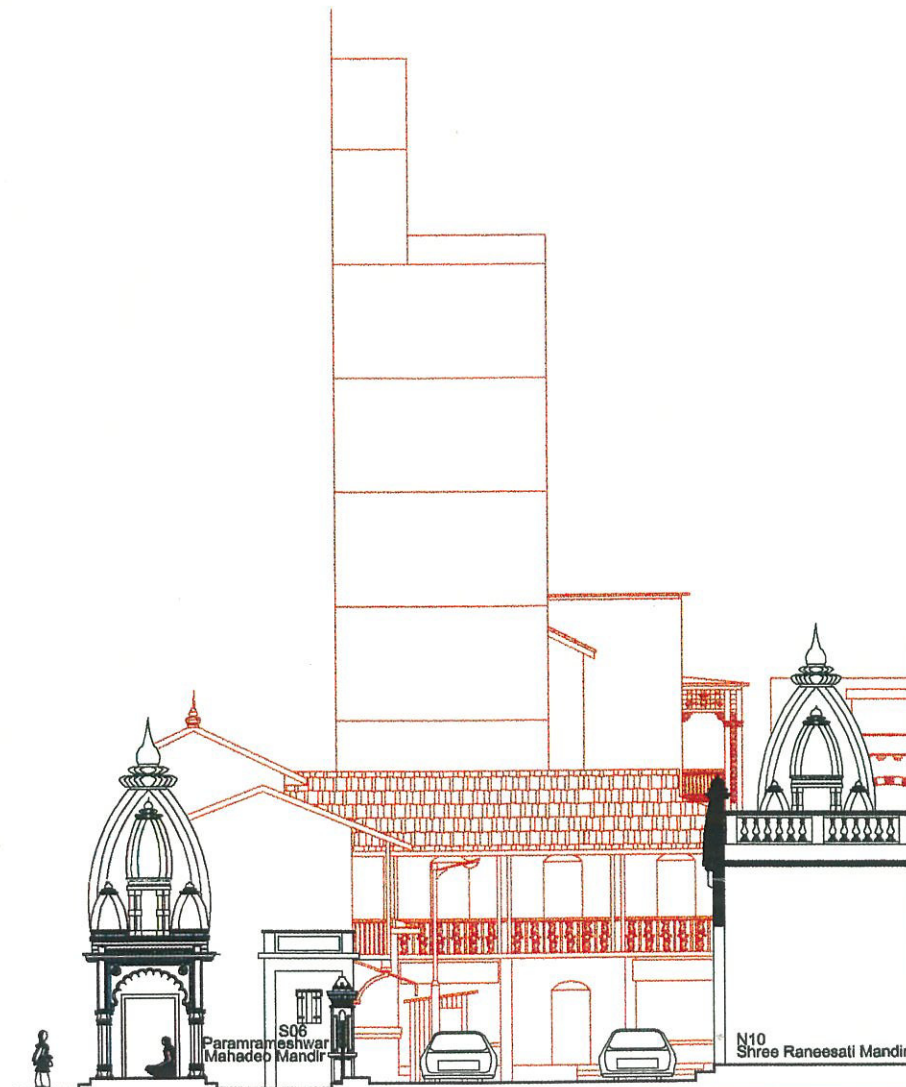
Section 11-11



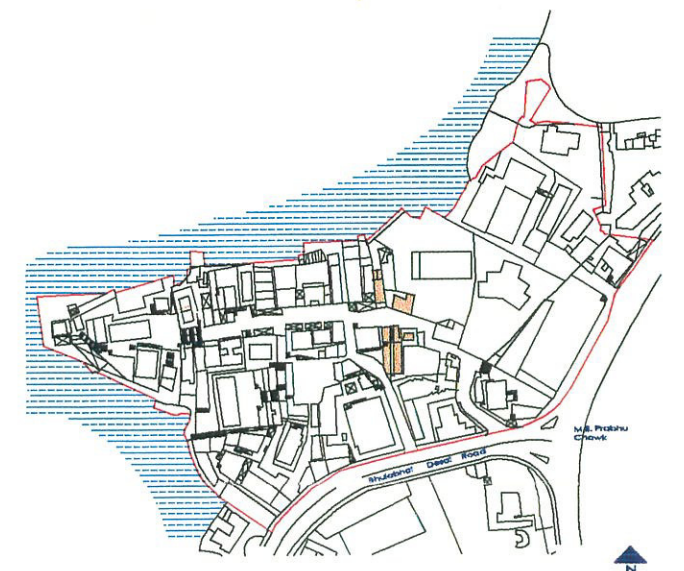
Section 12-12



Detail Plan



Section 12-12



Key Plan

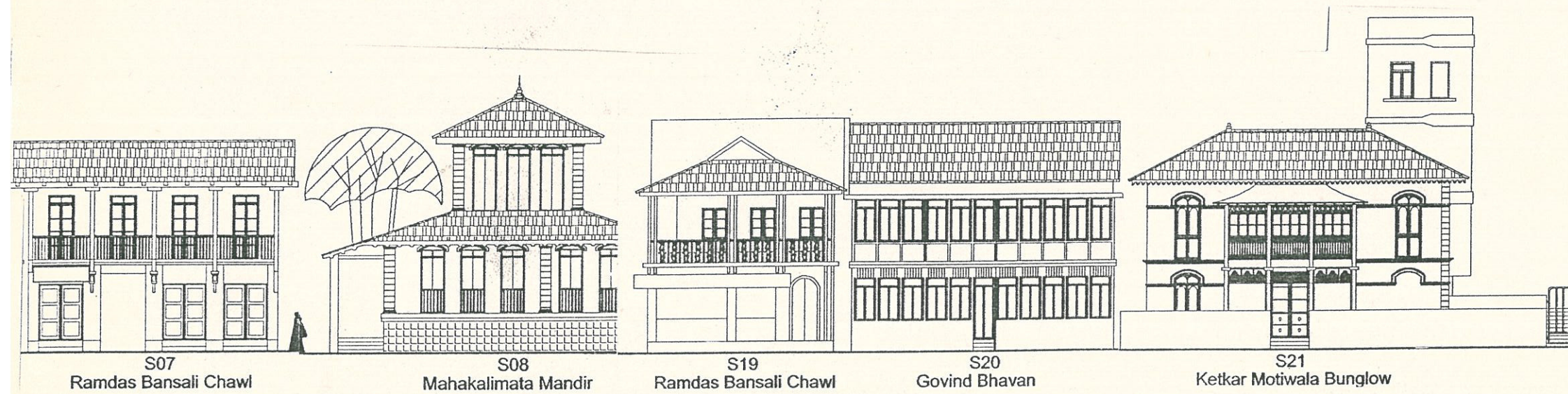


## STREETSCAPE STUDIES

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

STREETSCAPE STUDIES: STREET ELEVATIONS & SECTIONS

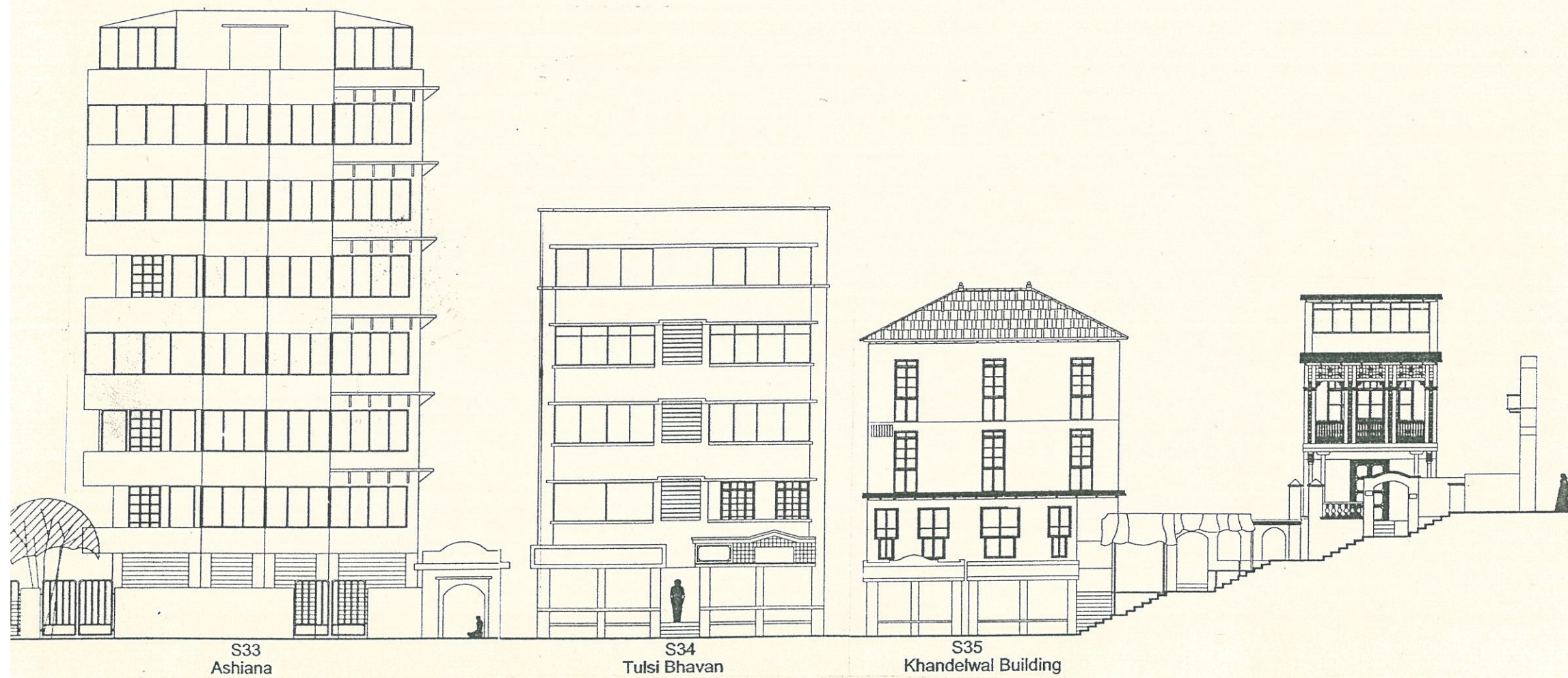
Below: A typical street elevation depicting the unique character of the temple lane





# STREETSCAPE STUDIES

## MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT





## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### THE SHREE MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE COMPLEX

Located at an elevated plain, overlooking the entire precinct, the temple complex dominates over the entire precinct, forming the main focus at the western end of the main street. Dedicated to the goddess *Lakshmi* and housing the idols of *Lakshmi*, *Saraswati* and *Durga*, the temple has a vast following among the Hindus of the city, who consider it amongst the most pious of all temples. It is specially visited by throngs of devotees during *Navratri*, *Diwali* and for the Hindu New Year, as well as during some holy thursdays of the months of november and december.

Accessed through a lively street flanked by smaller temples, puja shops, flower sellers and *mithai* shops for the holy *prasad*, the temple sits at the heart of the urban fabric of the precinct as is a vital focus of the entire neighbourhood. Its tall *shikhar* dominates over the seafronting skyline and is visible as far as Worli along the sea front. Its various pilgrims, hawkers and priests create a lively scene on any given day, adding to the throbbing vitality and dynamism of this neighbourhood.

Right: Flower sellers and hawkers lining the temple street



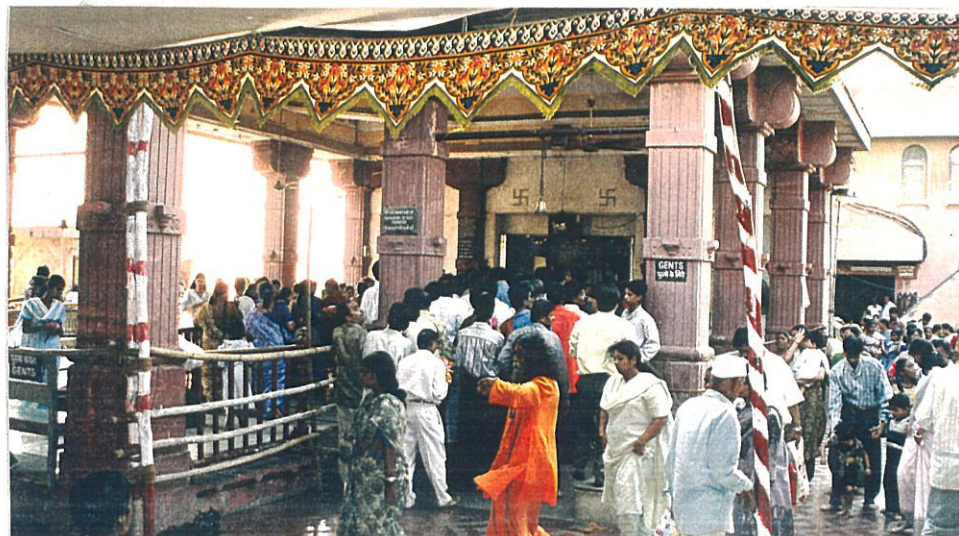


## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

THE SHREE MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE COMPLEX

Below: Throngs of devotees in and around the temple complex





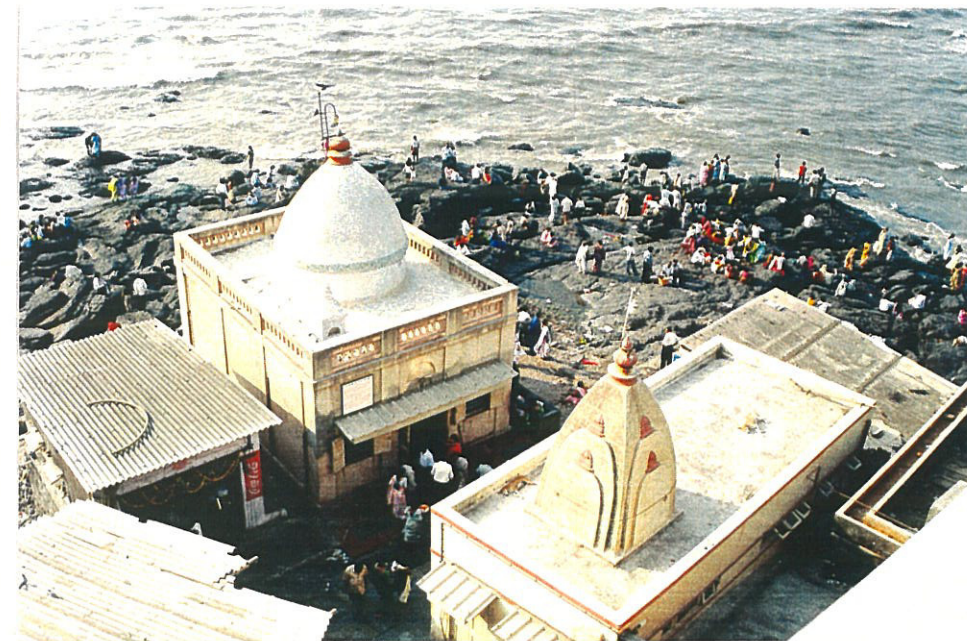
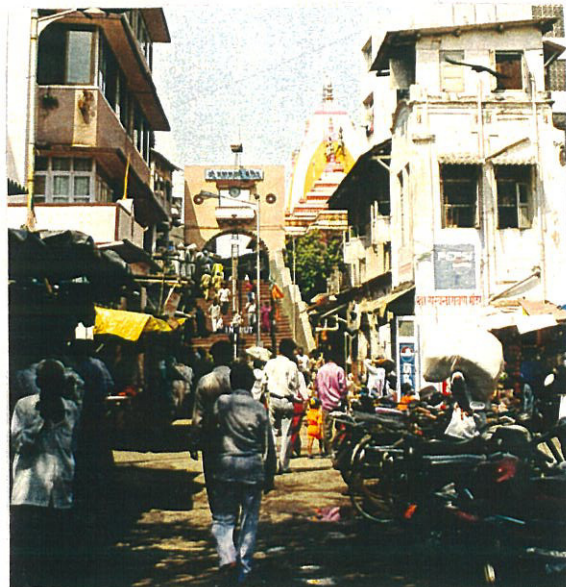
## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### THE SHREE MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE COMPLEX

The Temple is managed and run by the Shree Mahalakshmi Temple Charities that looks after the day to day maintenance of the temple, as well as organising all religious festivities and devotee facilities. There have been however, some additions to the area in the past, that are not in the best interest of the heritage precinct.

Below and Right: View of the area around the temple shrine





## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### AFFILIATED USES: FLOWER SHOPS, PRASAD, VISITOR FACILITIES

Lining the main street leading to the temple, are a host of shops selling prasad, flowers and mithai for the devotees. These are largely on private land as extensions to the houses lining the street, or encroaching upon the public spaces to create maximum floor area for the commercial establishments.

Apart from the regular shops, there are also a host of hawkers selling things along the way. Though these activities do add to the flavour of a temple street and are inherent to the character of the Shree Mahalakshmi Temple precinct, they do need to be regulated and future development controlled. There are also a host of beggars that line the street, asking for alms from the devotees. Apart from one toilet and a pay and park, the visitors facilities are quite inadequate and need to be improved.

Right: Images of the host of ancillary activities around the temple





## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### TYOLOGY OF BUILDINGS

A range of structural and architectural typologies co-exist in this small precinct. The historic housing stock ranges from two storied residential buildings with a strong Portuguese influence, not unlike the houses of Khotachiwadi and Bandra village, to house forms that are strongly representative of local Hindu building traditions, with carved timber brackets supporting tiled roofs and a front “otla” at the entry level porch.

A range of multi tenanted community housing forms too exist in this neighbourhood, more frequently seen in the interiors of the precinct. These derive from a mix of domestic residential architecture seen in the city and use a largely linear plan form with front verandas acting as connecting spaces between individual tenements.

Right: Building typologies range from multiple tenanted houses (above), to temples and smaller cottage structures.





## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

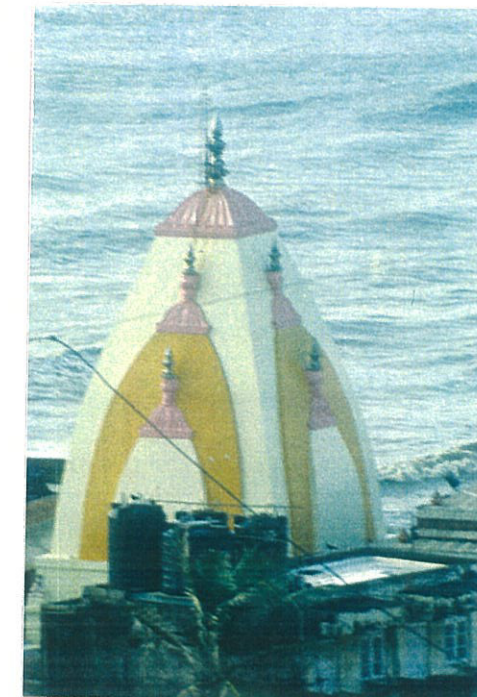
### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### Religious structures

Among the religious temple forms, there is quite a variety of architectural styles adopted. Though each one belongs to the Hindu temple traditions, there is a distinct variation in the architectural nuances, skyline and massing adopted. While the *Shree Dhakleshwar Mandir* is located on an elevated plateau and accessed by a series of steps much like the *Shree Mahalakshmi Mandir*, it differs from the latter in its architectural vocabulary. With its towering “shikhar” formed of myriad “urusringas”, multifoil arched entrances and flanked by two “deepastambhas”, this temple structure is representative of an earlier genre of building than the present edifice of the Shree Mahalakshmi Temple, with a concrete shikhar that is much less ornate.

Among the other temple forms in the precinct are the *Ma Kalimata* temple, with an almost domestic vernacular character, the newly re-constructed concrete structure of the *Rani Sati Mandir* and the elegant *ParamRameshwar Mahadeo Mandir* which though much smaller, is by far the most well crafted temple shrine with its stone columns, well proportioned “shikhar” and the graceful stone “nandi” marking the entrance to the Shiva temple.

Below: The range of temple forms dotting the Mahalakshmi Temple precinct





## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

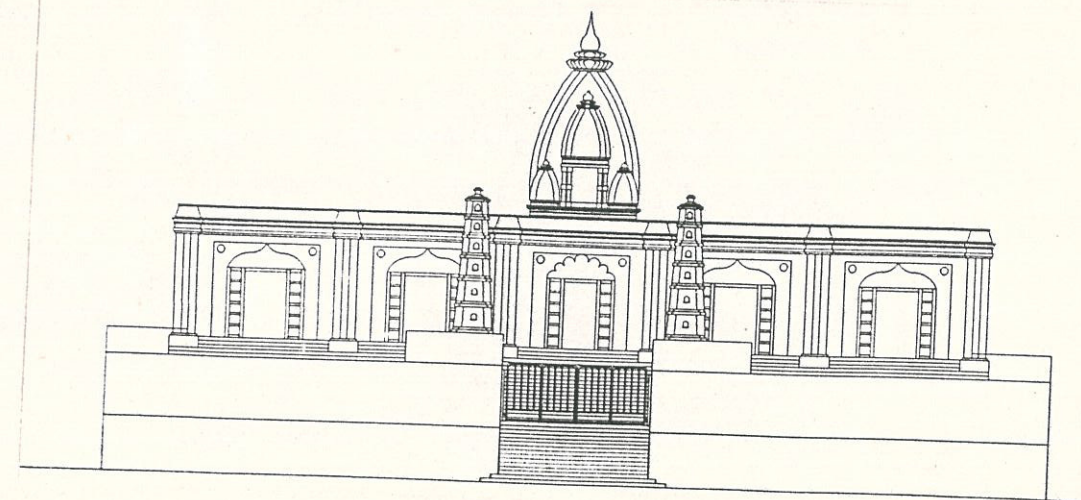
### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### INVENTORY OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS: TEMPLE SHRINES

The Mahalakshmi Temple precinct is dotted with a myriad large and small temples that lend it a unique character. Unlike the Banganga precinct which is planed around a central tank, the main focus of the Mahalakshmi Temple precinct is the narrow winding main street that threads through most of the temples. Beginning at the Trambakeshwar temple on the main Bhulabhai Desai road, this lane winds along to end at the Shree Mahalakshmi Temple steps.

At present, other than the main Mahalakshmi Temple, the other listed temple building protected by the heritage legislation is the *Shree Dhakleshwar Mandir* which is accessed through a narrow bye lane off the main street and located on an elevated plateau. Other temples like the *Shree Mahalakshmi Mandir*, *Rani Sati Mandir* and *Param Rameshwar Mahadeo Mandir* are located along the main spine.

Right: Images of the Sree Dhakleshwar Mahadeo Temple, as listed Grade II heritage structure



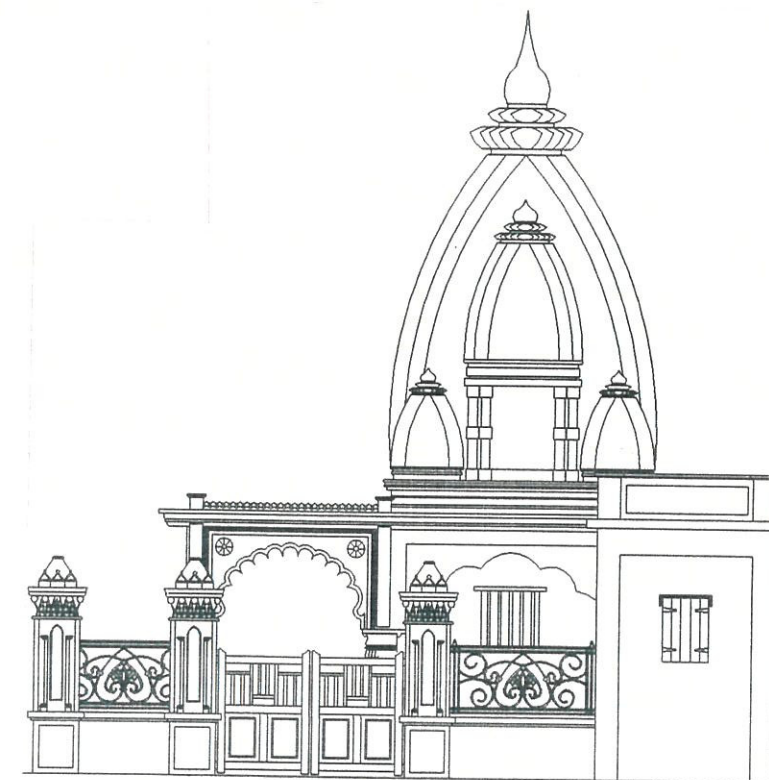
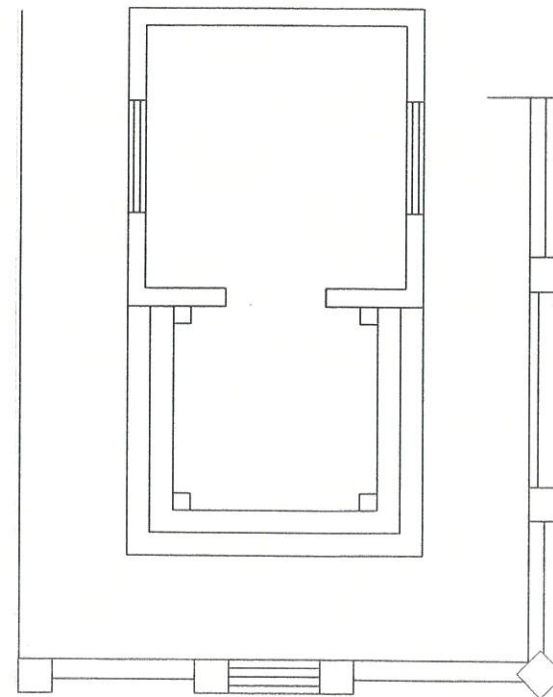


## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

INVENTORY OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS: TEMPLE SHRINES

S 06 SHREE PARAM RAMESHWAR MAHADEO MANDIR



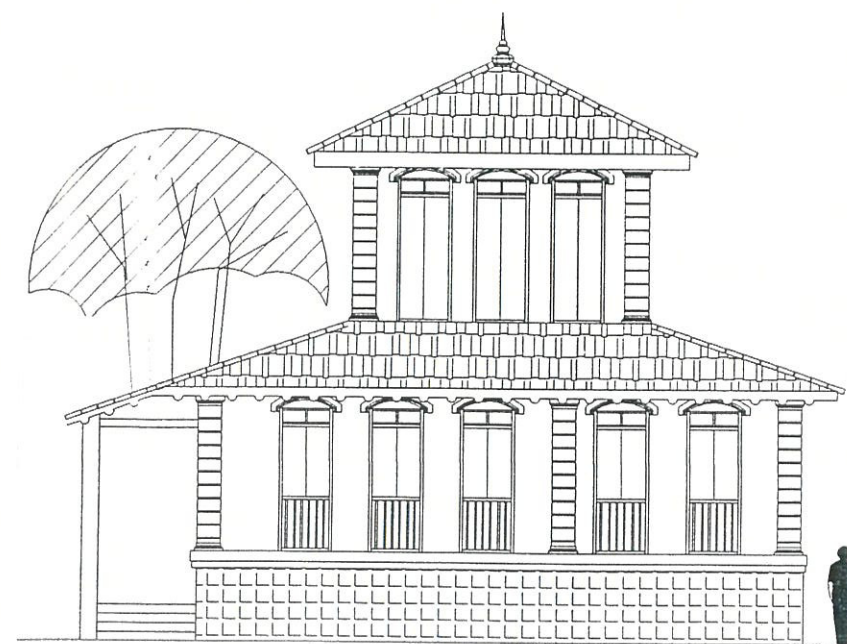


## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

INVENTORY OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS: TEMPLE SHRINES

S08 MAKALIMATA MANDIR



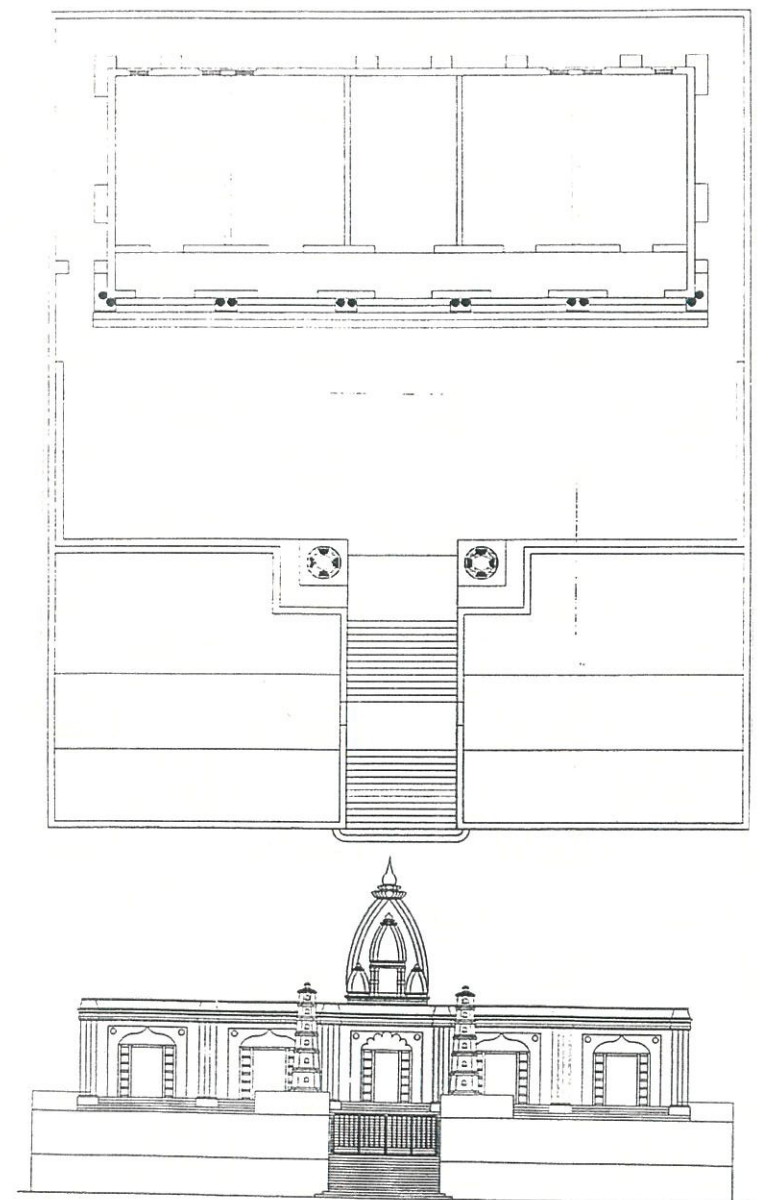
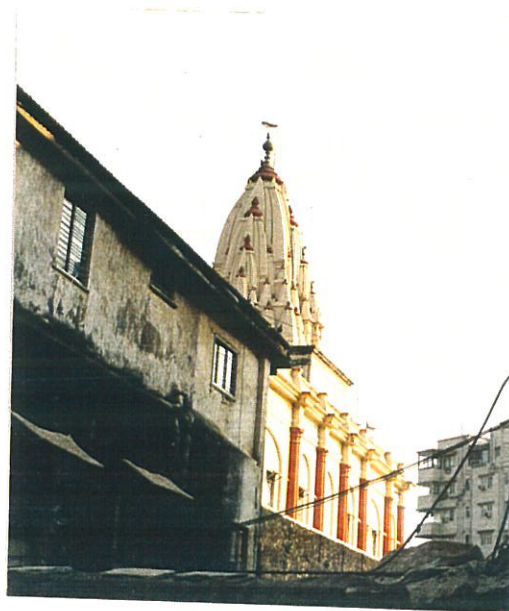


## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

INVENTORY OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS: TEMPLE SHRINES

S32 SHREE DHAKLESHWAR MAHADEO MANDIR



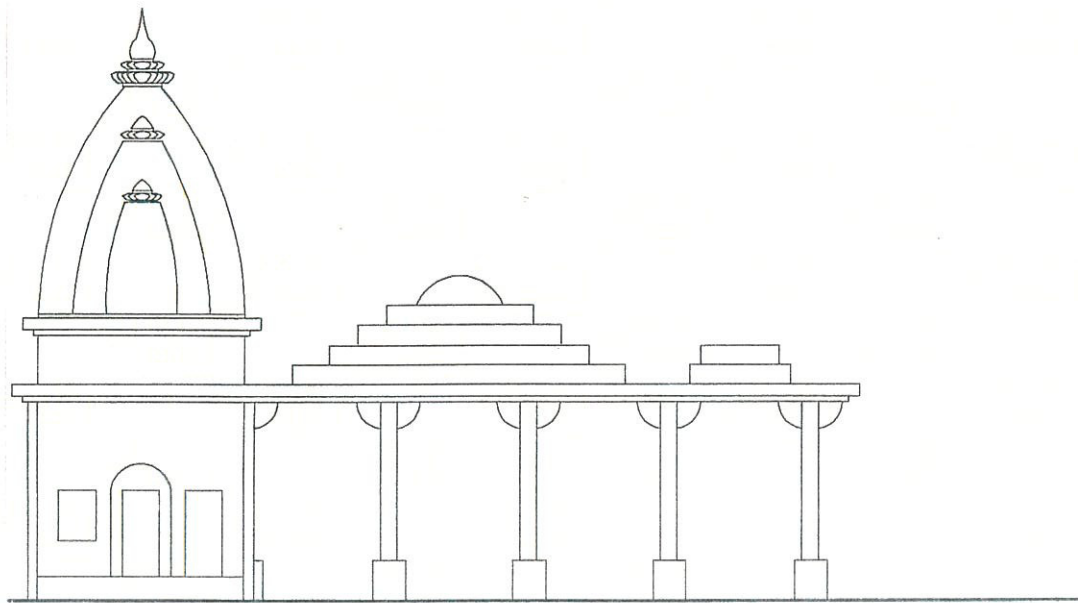


## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

INVENTORY OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS: TEMPLE SHRINES

S 39 SHREE MAHALAKSHMI MANDIR



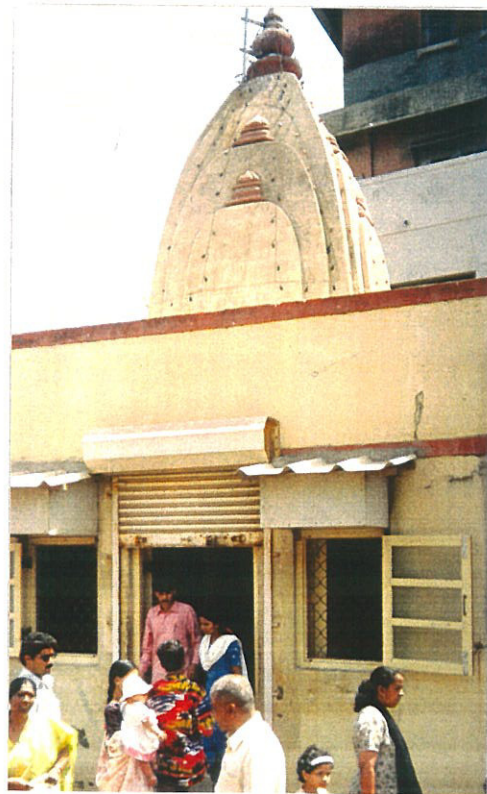


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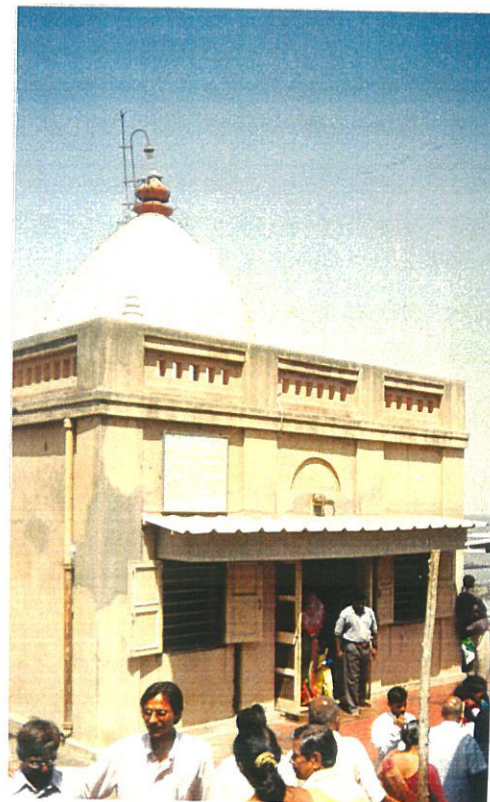
### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

INVENTORY OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS: TEMPLE SHRINES

S 41 GANESH MANDIR



S 42 MARUTEE MANDIR



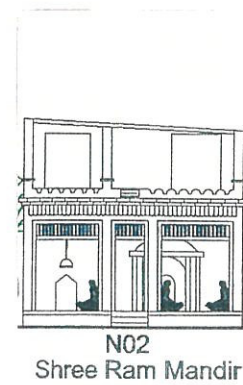


## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

INVENTORY OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS: TEMPLE SHRINES

N02 SHREE RAM MANDIR / HANUMAN MANDIR



N02  
Shree Ram Mandir

N03 SHREE SANATAN SATYA NARAYAN MANDIR





## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

INVENTORY OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS: TEMPLE SHRINES

N09 SHREE RANI SATI MANDIR



N10  
Shree Ranee Sati Mandir



## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

INVENTORY OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS: TEMPLE SHRINES

SAI BABA MANDIR



N 15 SHREE TRAMBAKESHWAR MAHADEO MANDIR





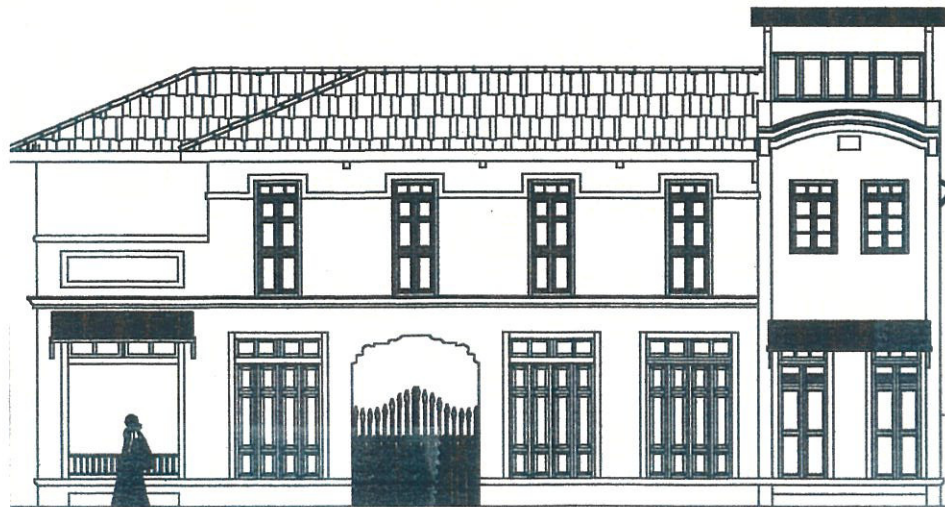
## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### INVENTORY OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS: RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

##### N 03 BHAGWAN BHAWAN

BUILDING NAME : Bhagwan Bhawan  
HEIGHT : Ground + 1 storey  
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE : Hybrid Neo-Classical with Hindu door brackets  
PRESENT LISTING : None  
PROPOSED LISTING : Grade III





## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### INVENTORY OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS: RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

##### N 06 MULJEE JETHA BUILDING

**BUILDING NAME** : Muljee Jetha Building  
**HEIGHT** : Ground + 1 storey  
**ARCHITECTURAL STYLE** : Portuguese influenced vernacular domestic  
**PRESENT LISTING** : None  
**PROPOSED LISTING** : Grade III



N06  
Muljee Jedha Building





## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### INVENTORY OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS: RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

##### N 07 BHATIA BUILDING

BUILDING NAME	: Bhatia Building
HEIGHT	: Ground + 2 storey and half of third floor with setback
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	: Neo Classical
PRESENT LISTING	: None
PROPOSED LISTING	: Grade III





## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### INVENTORY OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS: RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

##### N 08 KASTURBAI BUILDING

BUILDING NAME : Kasturbai Building  
HEIGHT : Ground + 1 storey  
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE : Portuguese influenced  
PRESENT LISTING : None  
PROPOSED LISTING : Grade III



N08  
Kasturbai Building



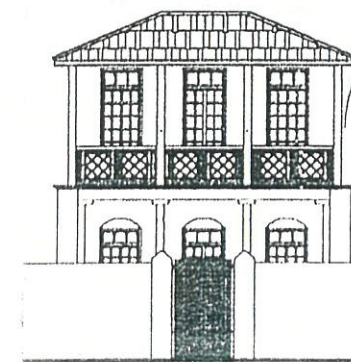
## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### INVENTORY OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS: RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

##### N 09 SANYASI ASHRAM

BUILDING NAME : Sanyasi Ashram  
HEIGHT : Ground + 1 storey  
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE : Hindu Vernacular  
PRESENT LISTING : None  
PROPOSED LISTING : Grade III



N09  
Sanyasi Ashram



## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### INVENTORY OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS: RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

##### S 05 SADHUBELA UDASIN ASHRAM

BUILDING NAME : Sadhubela Udasin Ashram  
HEIGHT : Ground + 2 storeys  
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE : Art Deco  
PRESENT LISTING : None  
PROPOSED LISTING : Grade III





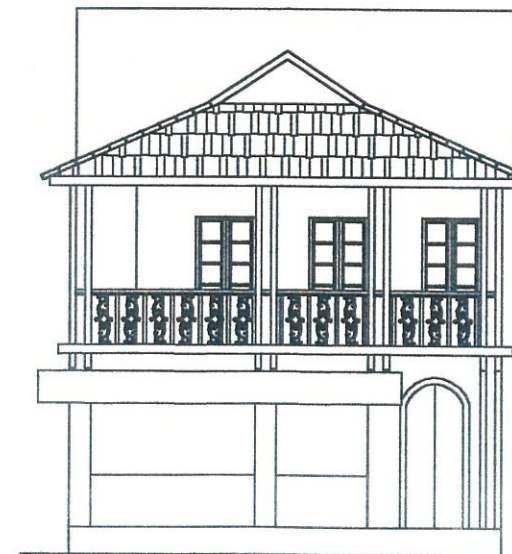
## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### INVENTORY OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS: RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

##### S 19 RAMDAS BANSALI CHAWL

BUILDING NAME : Ramdas Bansali Chawl  
HEIGHT : Ground + 1 storey  
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE : Vernacular Chawl structure  
PRESENT LISTING : None  
PROPOSED LISTING : Grade III





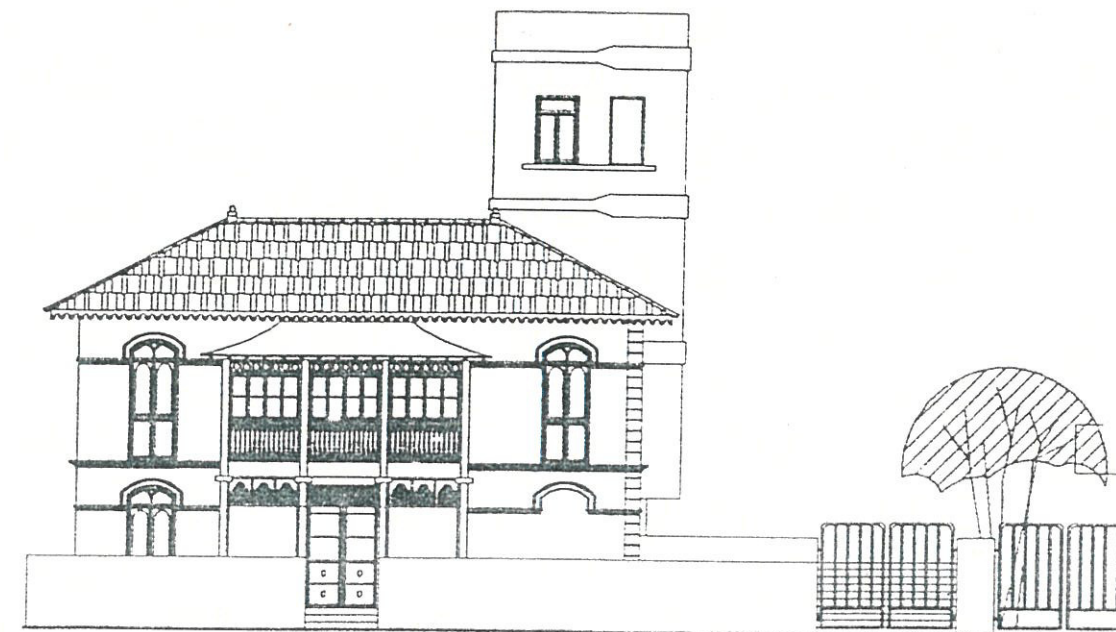
## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### INVENTORY OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS: RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

##### S 21 KETKAR MOTIWALA BUNGALOW

**BUILDING NAME** : Ketkar Motiwala Bungalow  
**HEIGHT** : Ground + 1 storey  
**ARCHITECTURAL STYLE** : Portuguese influenced  
**PRESENT LISTING** : None  
**PROPOSED LISTING** : Grade III





## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### INVENTORY OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS: RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

##### S 36 JARIWALA BUILDING

BUILDING NAME : Jariwala Building  
HEIGHT : Ground + 2 storeys  
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE : Vernacular residential  
PRESENT LISTING : None  
PROPOSED LISTING : Grade III





## CHARACTER OF THE PRECINCT

### MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

#### INVENTORY OF HERITAGE STRUCTURES: URBAN ARTIFACTS

S 19 GATEWAY TO TRAMBAKESHWAR MAHADEO MANDIR



RAILINGS AND GATEPOSTS AROUND PARASRAM MAHADEO MANDUIR







## ISSUES

### HERITAGE DELINEATION & GRADING

#### EXISTING HERITAGE LEGISLATION

In 1995, the Government of Maharashtra adopted the Heritage Regulations for Greater Bombay, enlisting over six hundred buildings as heritage structures worthy of protection and also declaring some urban neighbourhoods as heritage precincts. The Mahalakshmi Temple precinct, with its unique pedestrian quality and ensemble of residential and religious structures, was delineated as a heritage precinct under this regulation.

Though the list initially listed 8 structures, most of these were subsequently deleted from the list and the final notification included the names of just the Mahalakshmi Temple complex, MahaKali Temple as Grade III structures and the Shree Dhakleshwar Temple as a Grade II A structure.

The following list exhibits the status of listed structures in the precinct

Number	Name	Special Features	Grading
441	Mahakali Temple	Religious Shrine 19 <sup>th</sup> C	III
442	Muljee Jetha Sanatorium		Deleted
442 (ii)	Ketkar Motiwala Residence		Deleted
(iii)	Jaykar Building		Deleted
(iv)	Rukshmani Bhavan (Jhaveri House)		Deleted
(v)	Mahalakshmi Temple Complex	Temple Architecture and deep stambhas	III
(vi)	Dhakleshwar Temple	Brick Plaster Maharashtra (Wai) style temple architecture. Deep Stambhas at entrance Terraced garden requires to be restored. Dedication marble plaques, wooden pavillions in which deities are placed. No high rise building should be allowed around to obstruct the view of the temple.	II A



## ISSUES

### HERITAGE DELINEATION & GRADING

#### ANALYSIS OF EXISTING HERITAGE LEGISLATION & IMPLICATIONS

Based on the list in the preceeding page, it is visible that the listing was altered at some stage, removing from the original list, all residential structures like the Muljee Jetha Sanatorium, Ketkar Motiwala Residence, Jaykar Building, and Rukshmani Bhawan. What was allowed to continue in the heritage list, was therefore a truncated version of the earlier listing, keeping only temple structures like those of the MahaKali Temple, Dhakleshwar Temple and Mahalakshmi Temple.

#### Exclusion of residential buildings

An analysis of the heritage listing pertaining to the Mahalakshmi precinct shows up a lot of anomalies in the selection of heritage structures. The entire bulk of historic housing stock has been left out of the list, with even the few buildings that were originally listed, having been subsequently deleted. This leaves the entire fabric of residential structures comprising the precinct, extremely vulnerable to rapid transformation and future re-building.

Right: Some historic structures that are vulnerable due to their exclusion from the heritage list





## ISSUES

### HERITAGE DELINEATION & GRADING

#### ANALYSIS OF EXISTING HERITAGE LEGISLATION & IMPLICATIONS

##### **Anomalies in listing of temples**

Even within the listing of temples, there seems to be anomalies, with beautiful examples of temple architecture such as the *Param Rameshwar Mahadeo Mandir* being left out of the listing. Similarly, though the entire complex of the *Mahalakshmi Mandir* has been declared Grade III, this does not allow any freezing of development in the complex, since Grade III allows for un-built F.S.I. to be consumed in the plot, through addition of new structures.

Right: The *Param Rameshwar Mahadeo* temple, a fine example of nineteenth century temple traditions that has been excluded from the list





## ISSUES

### HERITAGE DELINEATION & GRADING

#### ANALYSIS OF EXISTING HERITAGE LEGISLATION & IMPLICATIONS

##### **Restrictions against high rise development**

What is critical in this listing and should be strictly adhered to, is the sentence qualifying the *Dhakleshwar Mandir* as Grade II A, stating, “*No high rise building should be allowed around to obstruct the view of the temple*”. This could really be applied to the entire neighbourhood, including the view corridors to the temple that could be affected by high rise construction. This has sadly been already quite badly affected, with modern infills like the Ashiana, Mahalakshmi Chambers and Municipal Primary School obstructing the view to the temple structure along various routes.

##### **No preservation of special features**

The Mahalakshmi temple precinct is significant in terms of its architectural features such as ornate balusters, tiled roofs, timber barge boards, wrought iron railings and stucco mouldings that lend it a quaint character. Unfortunately, these structures are not protected by listing and even the blanket protection offered by their inclusion in a heritage precinct, does not protect their unique architectural features or details, thus making them entirely at risk of incongruous additions and alterations.



Above: Elegant detailing that would soon be lost if specific architectural controls are not soon implemented in the area.



## ISSUES

### BUILDING CONDITION & TRANSFORMATIONS

#### CONDITION OF STRUCTURES

The structures in the precinct range from old stone structures, to vernacular brick and stone construction with timber elements and even modern concrete and brick buildings. Though the structural condition varies, it is largely seen that most of the old structures of heritage value face some threat to their integrity. Largely under the category of tenanted buildings, a large number of structures are already included in the Cess list, making it imperative to view their future preservation from the point of view of MHADA Repair Board practices.

Even in the case of relatively well stable buildings, threats are posed due to a variety of issues ranging from over loading due to incremental changes and alterations to the structure, to ficus growth, roof leakage and such issues.

Right: Issues ranging from roof leakage, to ficus growth, structural overloading arising out of age and sheer neglect threaten to damage the architectural fabric of the precinct.





## ISSUES

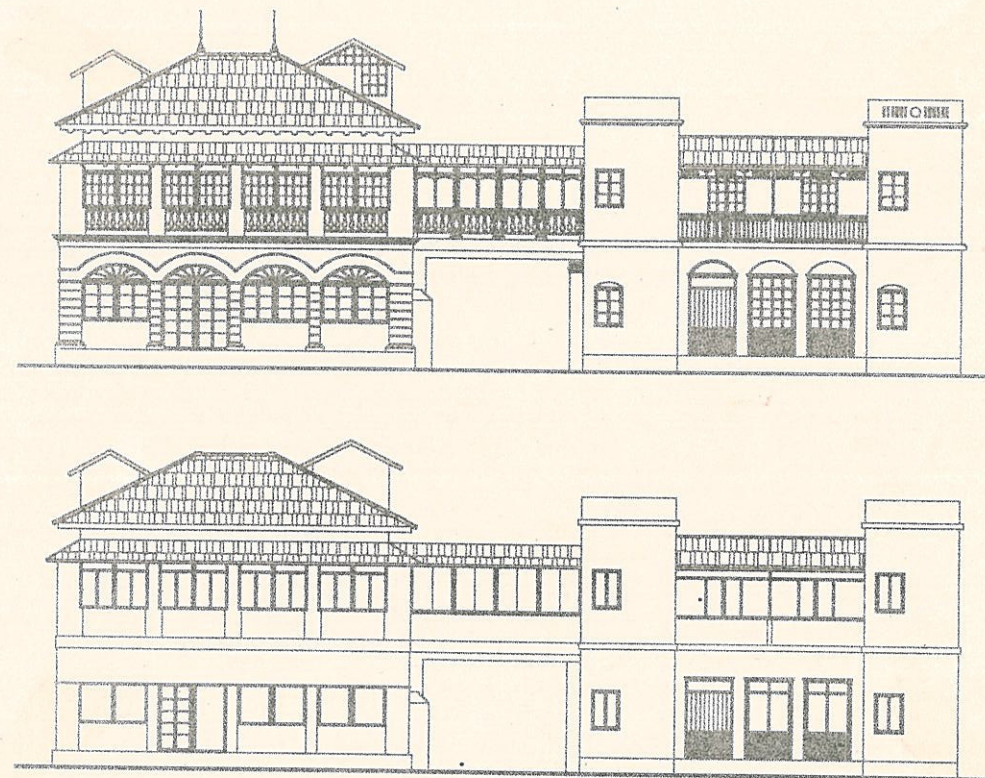
### BUILDING CONDITION & TRANSFORMATIONS

#### OBLITERATION OF ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Though in many cases of Cessed buildings, the structural integrity of the dwelling is maintained through repairs, an aspect that remains vulnerable to decay and damage, is the architectural integrity. Elements like stone brackets are often replaced by concrete or mild steel elements in repair and the case of timber bargeboards and balustrades is no different. Stained glass panels too have been originally employed in some of the structures and since such elements require specialist care in their restoration, replacement with similar elements in case of damage become uneconomical.

In many cases, some of the original details have already been lost or obliterated due to façade accretions or insensitive repair and unless these are identified and separately protected under a set of architectural controls, the architectural character of the precinct would remain vulnerable.

Right Images indicating how the architectural integrity of a building can be destroyed due to the obliteration of its decorative features, in a post Cess Repair scenario





## ISSUES

### BUILDING CONDITION & TRANSFORMATIONS

#### MODERN INFILLS & TRANSFORMATION OF THE SKYLINE

The unique architectural character of the central temple spine would have once been reflected in the rest of the precinct. This has however been lost due to rampant transformations caused as a result of heavy urbanization and densification of this precinct, given its high real estate value. What we have left today, is just a fraction of what the precinct quality would have been a century ago and even that is threatened today by incongruous high rise concrete blocks that have sprung up.

These modern constructions are not only wholly insensitive to the scale of the neighbouring buildings, but disturb the once harmonious skyline. Even in their architectural vocabulary, they contrast with the original vernacular genre. In order to salvage what is left of the precinct, it is imperative to create mandatory height restrictions and skyline controls as well as directive guidelines that would guide the future course of building in the precinct, such that the architectural character of this heritage precinct is maintained.

Right: Image indicating how the architectural character of the streetscape is damaged due to insensitive infill constructions.





## ISSUES

### BUILDING CONDITION & TRANSFORMATIONS

#### INCONGRUOUS ACCRETIONS

Over the decades, a range of incongruous additions have accumulated over the once beautiful facades, threatening to obliterate the architectural features of the precinct. These include window shutters and chajjas added as ad-hoc solutions, addition of shop fronts and sun shades in cases where the existing building line has been projected to include sweet shops and flower sellers, as well as additional floors and lean to roofs.

All these additions detract from the heritage value of the temple precinct and even if the shop line is retained, care needs to be taken to create guidelines for regulating the front projection, the signage patterns and designs of sun shade projections.

Incongruous signage needs to be strictly dealt with and all commercial establishments should be made to conform to a set of signage guidelines to ensure that the architectural integrity of the buildings is not obliterated.

Right: Incongruous accretions destroy the architectural integrity of the heritage buildings





## ISSUES

### BUILDING CONDITION & TRANSFORMATIONS

#### SHOPFRONTS AND SIGNAGE

Along with the commercialization of the precinct, a growing trend has been that of the proliferation of shop fronts and brightly painted shop signs to attract the visitors to the precinct. This has been adopted by most of the prasad and sweet sellers in the precinct as well as the small tea stall and general store, adding to the visual clutter in the area. There is a strong need for aligning these shop fronts and making them conform to some specific guidelines laid out for the area.

Below and Right: A proliferation of sign boards and shopfronts add to the visual chaos.



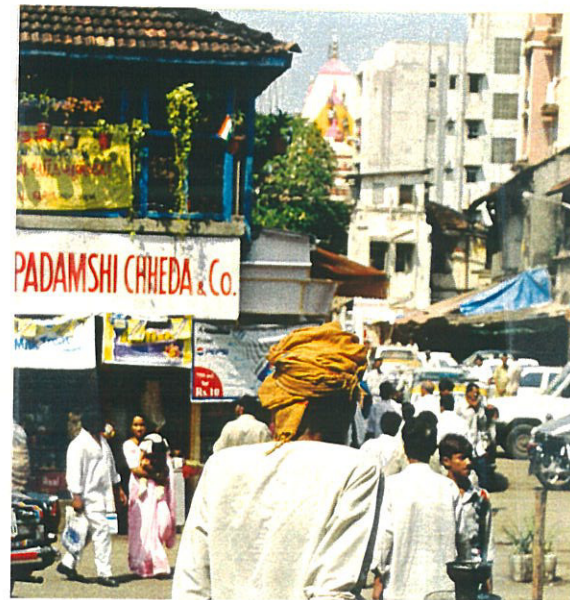


## ISSUES

### BUILDING CONDITION & TRANSFORMATIONS

#### SHOPFRONTS AND SIGNAGE

Below and Right: A proliferation of sign boards and shopfronts add to the visual chaos. There is a strong need for aligning these shop fronts and making them conform to specific guidelines laid out for the area.





## ISSUES

### CESS LEGISLATION & ITS IMPLICATION

#### A BACK GROUND OF THE LEGISLATION

The Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Act 1976 states as its preamble, *"It is an Act to unify, consolidate and amend the laws relating to housing, repairing and reconstructing dangerous buildings and carrying out improvement works in slum areas"*. The Bombay Housing and Area Development Board was established under this act to supervise and carry out structural repairs to buildings, in such order of priority as the Board, having regard to the exigencies of the case and resources.

#### The Economics of Cess

Before the incorporation of the Act, the onus of tenantable as well as structural repairs was solely on the landlord. Due to the freezing of rentals at the economic levels of 1940 (enactment of Bombay Rents, Hotels and Lodging Houses Rates Control Act, 1947), it became highly uneconomical for the landlord to carry out the burden of repairs in the meagre rentals obtained from the tenants, while the tenants contended that the responsibility of repairs was legally that of the owner. Such a deadlock in most cases led to the disrepair and degradation of the structures, often resulting in total collapse. In order to resolve this issue, the Repair Board instituted by the MHADA undertook the task of the repair of such distressed structures.

Under this Act, a certain tax called "Repair Cess" is levied by the state government. The quantum of cess collected depends on the rateable value of the property. The owner's share is 10% of the rateable value and he is entitled to recover the remaining amount of cess by making a proportionate increase in the rentals. The Municipal Corporation collects Cess in the same manner as other property taxes. This is in turn recovered by MHADA after a deduction of 5% payable to the B.M.C.

The Repair Board has been functioning in Mumbai from 1969 and carries out repairs and reconstruction of tenanted buildings within the permissible financial limit, which in 1983 was Rs. 750/- per sq. mt. Of total floor area. This was later inflated to an amount of Rs. 1000/- per sq. mt. The Board carries out repairs even if the financial limit crosses the Rs. 1000/- figure if the tenants bear the additional cost incurred. The Repair Board is further assisted by financial aid from the following three sources:

- |    |                  |                                       |
|----|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. | B.M.C.           | - 3.6 to 10 crores                    |
| 2. | State Government | - 12 to 22 crores                     |
| 3. | MHADA            | - 10 crores (only for reconstruction) |



## ISSUES

### CESS LEGISLATION & ITS IMPLICATION

#### SURVEY & REPAIR POLICY

The board carries out periodic surveys ( pre-monsoon in Feb-May and post monsoon) to ascertain the condition of structures. The inferences are tabulated in a proforma stating each building component, its condition and nature of repairs needed. On the basis of these surveys, the Board prioritizes cases for repair. A panel of about 300 architects is maintained by MHADA, from which an architect is appointed and tenders are invited from a panel of contractors. The work is awarded on the basis of the lowest bid.

Based on MHADA policy, the replacement of existing materials is carried out after deducting the cost of new materials and so technically the materials become the property of the authorities. However, in practice these materials (very often historic Minton tiles, timber rafters and cast iron balustrades) are carted off as debris by the contractors and sold as scrap.

#### ISSUES CONCERNING HERITAGE BUILDINGS

- There are over 19,642 cessed buildings in the island city, of which 114 buildings are Grade III heritage structures and listed as Category A. This makes them all subject to MHADA Repair Board rules, which sadly do not differentiate heritage buildings from the other housing stock and are not geared to sensitive conservation practices.
- Though MHADA enlists about 300 architects, there are no conservation specialists on the panel of the Repair board, resulting in a lack of conservation awareness in the repair policy.
- The specifications for repair are often based on strict financial constraints, resulting very often in valuable historic material like teak wood rafters being replaced by mild steel sections, or Minton tiles being replaced by plain cement flooring, thus resulting in an unfortunate depletion of the historic materials.
- The present Cess Policy overrides the Grade III heritage listing, making it possible for listed Grade III structures to be reconstructed in case of cess re-building. This renders Grade III listing practically useless in case of cessed structures, making them subject to total demolition and re-building upto an allowable FSI of 4.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### RECOMMENDED POLICY ON CESS

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REPAIR BOARD POLICY

In the interest of the valuable residential heritage of the city, it is imperative that the MHADA policies be amended to include the provision of sensitive conservation of heritage structures and those located within heritage precincts.

Some of the recommended steps that could well be incorporated within MHADA's policy are as follows:

1. Provision of special category of cessed structures to allow for "sensitive conservation" of buildings of heritage interest, listed as Grade III, or within designated heritage precincts. This should be included as a separate category within the cess list.
2. Introduction of Conservation Specialists as empanelled architects, or at least on the advisory board of the Repair Board structure to ensure that the repair policies are in conjunction with sensitive conservation methods.
3. Creation of a Conservation Manual, instructing contractors and architects involved in Cess Repair, about sensitively handling repairs to heritage structures, authentic material usage and minimally invasive techniques of repair and restoration.

4. In case of heritage buildings or those falling within heritage precincts, dis-allowing any reconstruction to consume the prescribed FSI of 4 and only allowing it as a TDR, to be used outside the precinct.
5. Creation of a "Historic Materials Store", so that historic materials like Minton tiles, cast iron balustrades etc are not sold as scrap, but are stocked by the MHADA and offered at subsidised rates to occupants of other heritage structures.
6. Introduction of mid-career training to MHADA employees in conservation ethics and sensitive repair practices.
7. At present MHADA is the sole authority for undertaking repairs, but in cases of cessed heritage buildings, it should allow for a collaborative effort with NGOs and private organizations working towards heritage conservation.



## ISSUES

### CRZ LEGISLATION & ITS IMPLICATION

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS NOTIFICATION DATED 19<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 1991

Notification under section 3(1) and Section 3 (2) and Section 3 (2)(v) of the Environment Protection Act 1986 and Rule 5(3)(d) of Environment Protection Rules 1986, Declaring Coastal Stretches as Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) and regulating activities in the CRZ:

As per the Coastal Regulation Zone of the Central Government, the area that comes under the CRZ regulations is defined as *"the coastal stretches of seas, bays, estuaries, creeks, rivers and backwaters which are influenced by tidal action (in the landward side) upto 500 metres from the High Tide Line (HTL) and the land between the Low Tide Line (LTL) and the HTL as Coastal Regulation Zone ..... For purposes of this Notification, the High Tide Line (HTL) will be defined as the line upto which the highest high tide reaches at spring tides."*

In keeping with the above definition, the area of the Mahalakshmi precinct, specially the main spine comes under this regulation zone. Even though the Mahalakshmi Temple Precinct comes under the protective ambit of the Heritage Regulation of Greater Bombay 1995, the very fact of its existence as a part of the Coastal Regulation Zone, gives it a unique status of being offered extra protection, due to a

highly restricted set of construction and development options as is made mandatory under the CRZ notification. The following text analyses the CRZ Regulation and assesses its implications on the future growth and development of the Mahalakshmi Temple Precinct.



## ISSUES

### CRZ LEGISLATION & ITS IMPLICATION

#### REGULATION OF ACTIVITIES

As per the regulation, the following activities are not permitted in a CRZ area.

- (i) setting up of new industries and expansion of existing industries, except those directly related to water front or directly needing foreshore facilities
- (ii) manufacture or handling or storage or disposal of hazardous substances
- (iii) Setting up and expansion of fish processing units including warehousing (excluding hatchery and natural fish drying in permitted areas)
- (iv) setting up and expansion of units mechanisms for disposal of waste and effluents, except facilities required for discharging, treated effluents into the water course with approval under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974; and except for storm water drains
- (v) discharge of untreated wastes and effluents from industries cities or towns and other human settlements. Schemes shall be implemented by the concerned authorities for phasing out the existing practices, if any, within a reasonable time period not exceeding three years from the date of this notification
- (vi) dumping of city or town waste for the purposes of land filling or otherwise the existing practice, if any, shall be phased out within a reasonable time not exceeding three years from the date of this Notification

(vii) dumping of ash or any wastes from thermal power stations

(viii) land reclamation, bunding or disturbing the natural course of sea water with similar obstructions, except those required for control of coastal erosion and maintenance or clearing of waterways, channels and ports and for prevention of sandbars and also except for tidal regulators, storm water drains and structures for prevention of salinity increase and for sweet water recharge

(ix) mining of lands, rocks and other substrata materials except those rare mineral not available outside the CRZ areas

(x) harvesting or drawal of ground water and construction of mechanisms therefore within 200 m of HTL: in the 200 m to 500 m zone it shall be permitted only when done manually through ordinary wells for drinking, horticulture agriculture and fisheries

(xi) construction activities in ecologically sensitive areas as specified in Annexure-I of this Notification

(xii) any construction activity between the Low Tide Line and High Tide Line except facilities for carrying treated effluents and waste water discharges into the sea facilities for carrying sea water for cooling purposes. Oils gas and similar pipelines and facilities essential for activities permitted under this Notification

(xiii) dressing or altering of sand dunes hills, natural features including landscape changes for beautification, recreational and other such purpose, except as permissible under this Notification.

The Regulation further states that special environmental clearance is required from the Government of India for construction activities related to Defence requirements for which foreshore facilities are essential (e.g. slipways, jetties etc.); except for classified operational component of defence projects.



## ISSUES

### CRZ LEGISLATION & ITS IMPLICATION

#### DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS FOR CATEGORIES OF CRZ

The development or construction activities in different categories of CRZ areas shall be regulated by the concerned authorities at the State/Union Territory level, in accordance with the given norms. For regulating development activities, the coastal stretches within 500 metres of High Tide Line of the landward side are classified into four categories, of which the first two that may apply to an urban area are:

##### Category I (CRZ-I):

(i) Areas that are ecologically sensitive and important, such as national parks/marine parks, sanctuaries, reserve forests, wildlife habitats, mangroves, corals/coral reefs, areas close to breeding and spawning grounds of fish and other marine life, areas of outstanding natural beauty/historical/heritage areas, areas rich in genetic-diversity, areas likely to be inundated due to rise in sea level consequent upon global warming and such other areas as may be declared -by the Central Government or the concerned authorities at the State/Union Territory level from time to time.

(ii) Area between the Low Tide Line and the High Tide Line.

##### Development Controls pertaining to Category CRZ-I

No new construction shall be permitted within 500 metres of the High Tide Line. No construction activity, except as listed under 2(xii), will be permitted between the Low Tide Line and the High Tide Line.

##### Category-II (CRZ-II):

The areas that have already been developed upto or close to the shoreline. For this purpose, "developed area" is referred to as that area within the municipal limits or in other legally designated urban areas which is already substantially built up and which has been provided with drainage and approach roads and other infrastructural facilities, such as water supply and sewerage mains

##### Development Controls pertaining to Category CRZ-II

(i) Buildings shall be permitted neither on the seaward side of the existing road (or roads proposed in the approved Coastal Zone Management Plan of the area) nor on seaward side of existing authorised structures. Buildings permitted on the landward side of the existing and proposed roads/existing authorised structures shall be subject to the existing local Town and Country Planning Regulations including the existing norms of FSI/FAR.

(ii) Reconstruction of the authorised buildings to be permitted subject with the existing FSI/FAR norms and without change in the existing use.

(iii) The design and construction of buildings shall be consistent with the surrounding landscape and local architectural style.



## ISSUES

### CRZ LEGISLATION & ITS IMPLICATION

#### ANALYSING THE APPLICABILITY OF THE CRZ REGULATION WITH REFERENCE TO THE MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

In keeping with the above regulation as per the CRZ Legislation, it is clear that Mahalakshmi Temple, especially the area along the main spine come under the purview of this act, thus the following activities are restricted as a result of this act:

1. Land reclamation, bunding or disturbing the natural course of sea water with similar obstructions, except those required for control of coastal erosion and maintenance or clearing of waterways, channels and ports and for prevention of sandbars and also except for tidal regulators, storm water drains and structures for prevention of salinity increase and for sweet water recharge
2. Construction activities in ecologically sensitive areas as specified in Annexure-I
3. Any construction activity between the Low Tide Line and High Tide Line except facilities for carrying treated effluents and waste water discharges into the sea facilities for carrying sea water for cooling purposes.

Viewed from this perspective, this makes it amply clear that the slum encroachment that lies between the Low tide line and High tide line needs to be reviewed from the CRZ point of view. Moreover, it is important then to clearly assess whether Mahalakshmi Temple precinct falls within the purview of CRZ I or CRZII, since

the wording of CRZ I, includes the term "*areas of outstanding natural beauty/historical/heritage areas*". As a heritage precinct, it might qualify as CRZ I with stricter development controls. In the possibility of it being included as CRZ II, the development laws that are yet applicable are:

(i) Buildings shall be permitted neither on the seaward side of the existing road (or roads proposed in the approved Coastal Zone Management Plan of the area) nor on seaward side of existing authorised structures. Buildings permitted on the landward side of the existing and proposed roads/existing authorised structures shall be subject to the existing local Town and Country Planning Regulations including the existing norms of FSI/FAR.

(ii) Reconstruction of the authorised buildings to be permitted subject with the existing FSI/FAR norms and without change in the existing use.

(iii) The design and construction of buildings shall be consistent with the surrounding landscape and local architectural style.

This itself precludes the entire Cess Reconstruction FSI of any greater than 2 (at which it stood prior to 1991). It also therefore means that new construction of high rise concrete apartments can be severely restricted by the CRZ regulation which specifically states that "***The design and construction of buildings shall be consistent with the surrounding landscape and local architectural style***".

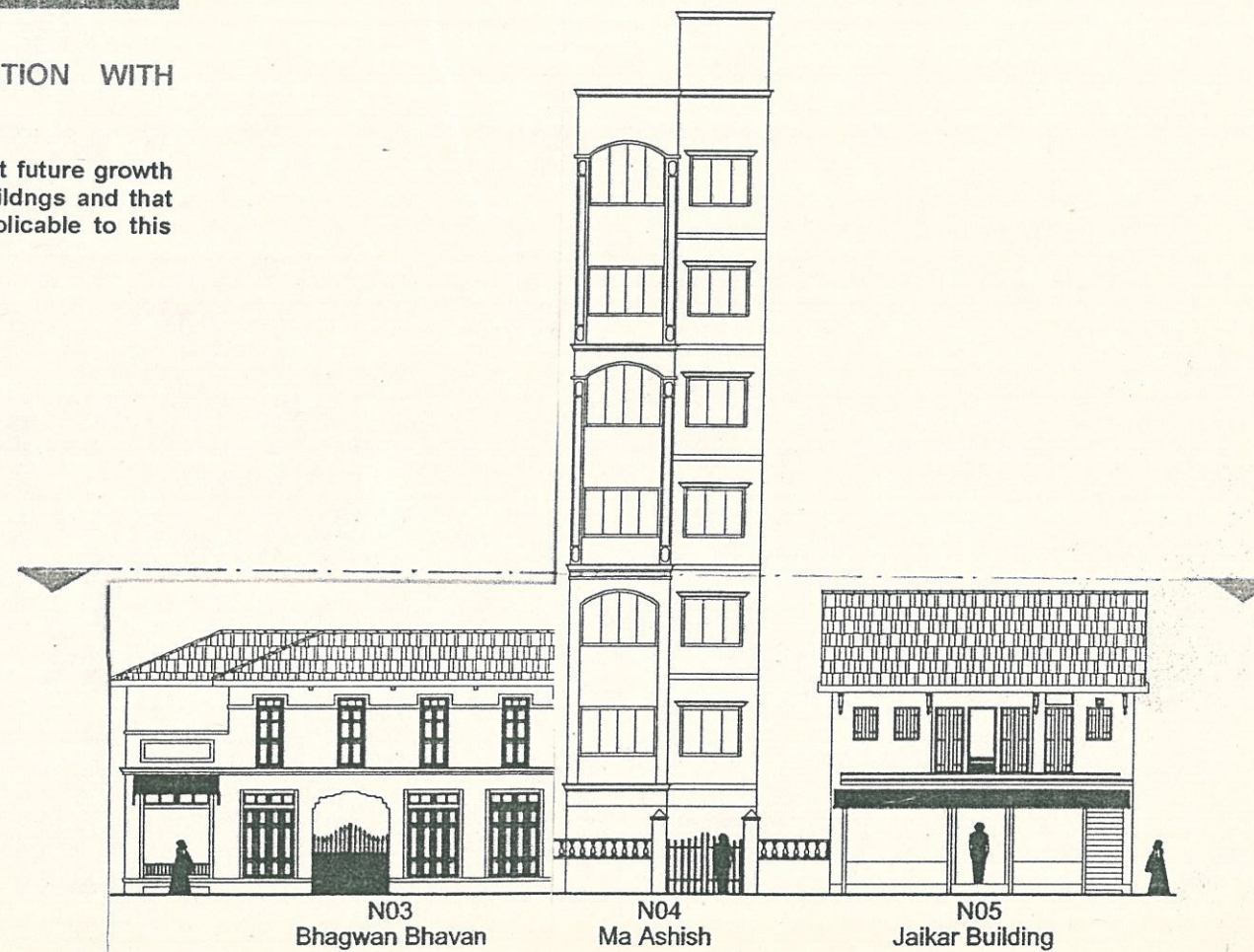


## ISSUES

### CRZ LEGISLATION & ITS IMPLICATION

ANALYSING THE APPLICABILITY OF THE CRZ REGULATION WITH REFERENCE TO THE MAHALAKSHMI TEMPLE PRECINCT

The CRZ Guidelines can be applied to the Mahalakshmi precinct to ensure that future growth does not take place in contrast with the prevailing heights of the existing buildings and that high FSI figures allowed for other cases of Cess reconstruction are not applicable to this heritage precinct.





## ISSUES

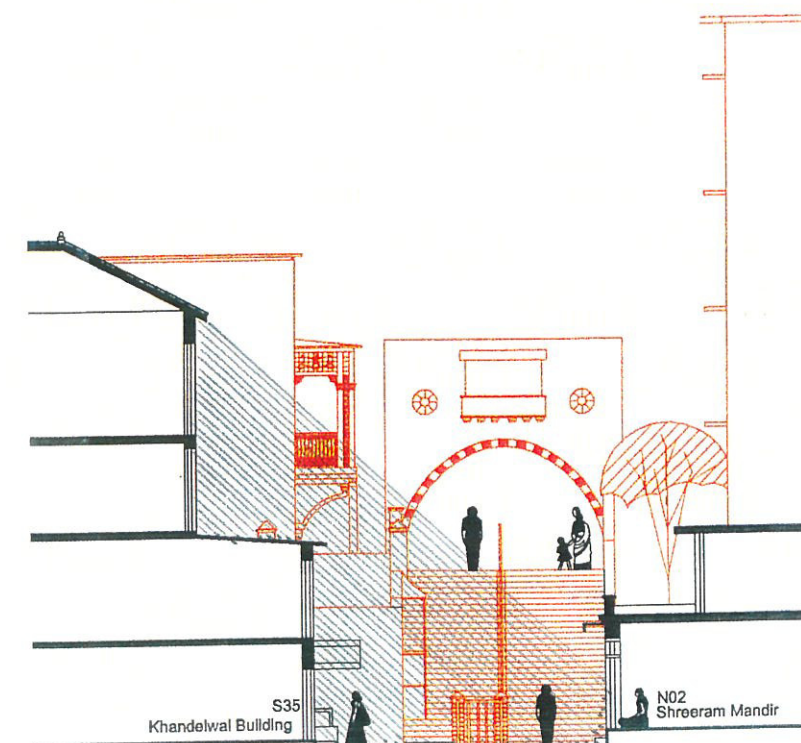
### PUBLIC SPACES & ENCROACHMENTS

#### OPEN SPACES AND NODES

In keeping with the historic fabric of most urban heritage precincts in Mumbai, the settlement around Mahalakshmi temple grew as organically with house fronts abutting pedestrian streets, in the absence of any formal setbacks. Within this densely packed urban mass, relief was provided by street nodes, a street corner or perhaps a flight of steps leading to temples such as the *Dhakleshwar Mahadeo Mandir* or the *Sree Mahalakshmi Mandir*. These spaces, along with the forecourts of the temples traditionally became the places for interaction in the neighbourhood.

Today however, these open spaces are constricted due to urban pressures. The once pedestrian streets have been affected by a proliferation of cars. Furthermore, with new construction of high rise buildings replacing older structures, the population density within the precinct has greatly increased, adding to the pressure on open spaces. Side alleys and streets that were meant for a largely pedestrian residential settlement have now become prone to vehicular traffic, as well as the narrowing of the existing street width due to encroachment by shop fronts and hawkers vying to cater to the phenomenal influx of visitors to the temple precinct.

Below: Image showing the shaded temple street that promotes pedestrian circulation. Temple steps and street corners became the traditional open spaces in a densely packed urban fabric.





## ISSUES

### PUBLIC SPACES & ENCROACHMENTS

#### THE SEAFRONT

Given the unique location of the Mahalakshmi precinct at the edge of the sea, the seafront too is an integral part of its essential spatial experience. Though accessed from a busy urban road, the temple stands at the veritable edge of the land, precariously positioned on a narrow strip of land jutting into the waters. Bounded by the sea on two sides, the temple precinct therefore enjoyed the openness of the immense water body for years of its settlement and this functioned as its open space and lungs.

Today however, it is this prime open space that is badly threatened. Encroachments of various kinds have taken place along the sea, with a mass of slum quarters, shanties and unauthorized structures having proliferated this once pristine coastline. Upto a distance of nearly 150 metres from the original building line, these slum settlements have encroached upon the seafront on the northern edge of the precinct, creating a veritable colony as an unplanned and unauthorized extension of this precinct and in the absence of any regulated waste disposal, litter the seafront

Below: The badly polluted sea front with a proliferation of slums and incongruous uses



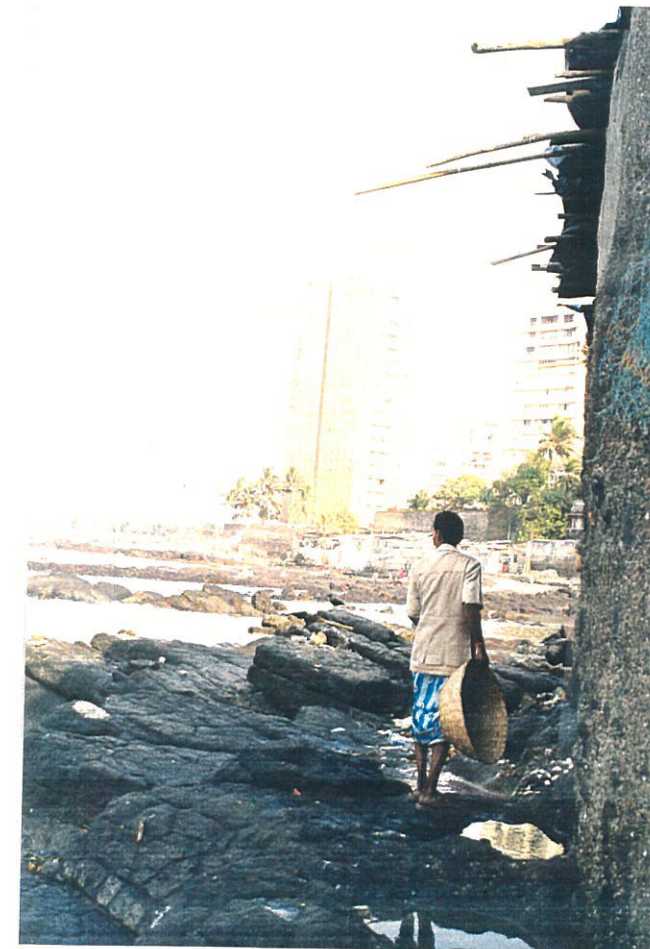
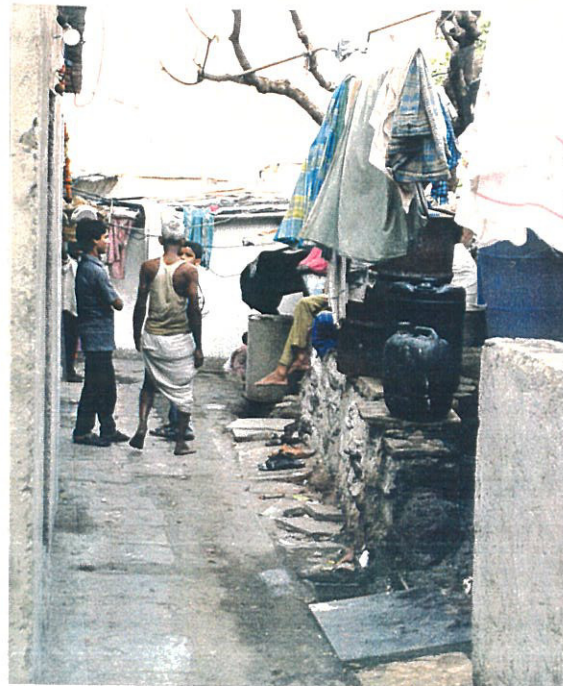


## ISSUES

### PUBLIC SPACES & ENCROACHMENTS

#### THE SEAFRONT

Images of the badly polluted sea front due to a lack of co-ordinated waste disposal combined with the proliferation of unauthorized construction along the sea front





## ISSUES

### PUBLIC SPACES & ENCROACHMENTS

#### SLUM SETTLEMENTS & OTHER ENCROACHMENTS

Over the years, the original building line to the north of the temple street has been extended way beyond its original limits. This is not due to an extension of the plot lines towards the coast, but due to a steady growth of slum development and shanties all along the sea coast.

Extending almost upto 30 metres beyond the original building line, these slum settlements can be seen to the northern as well as western fringes of the temple precinct.

In the absence of any infrastructural amenities such as sewage lines or proper solid waste disposal systems, these slums further pollute the coastline, littering the once pristine shore. Apart from residential tenements, there are some commercial establishments such as tailoring units working out of these settlements and even a small temple shrine in a street corner.

Right: The slums further add to the congestion of the precinct.





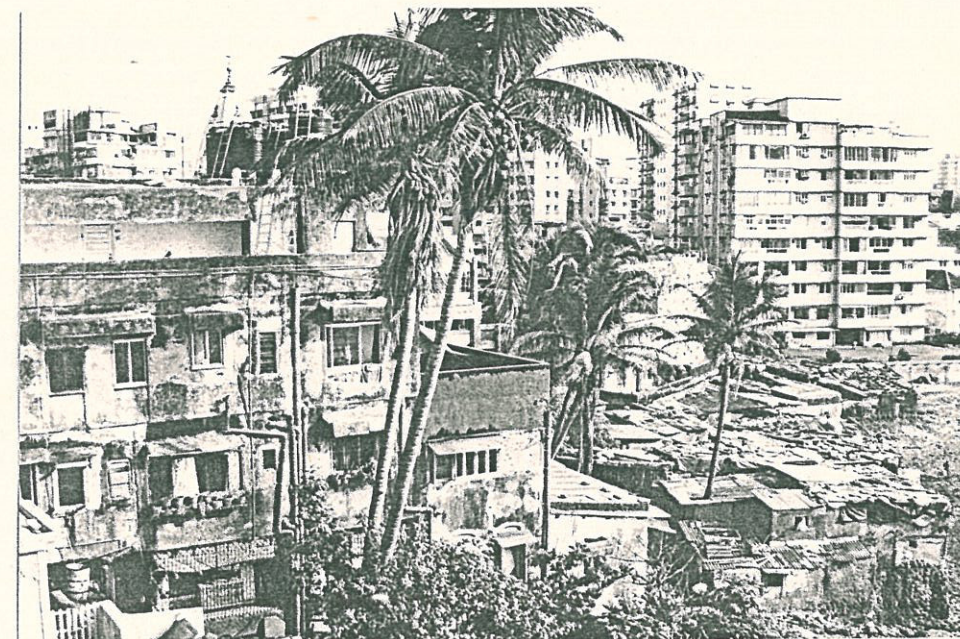
## ISSUES

### PUBLIC SPACES & ENCROACHMENTS

#### SLUM SETTLEMENTS & OTHER ENCROACHMENTS

Apart from the slum settlements along the coast, there is a range of encroachments visible in the precinct. Seen in cases of extension of building lines, to extension of shop fronts to allow for larger projections of the shop canopies and even some temporary shacks along the temple streets, there is no doubt that these encroachments detract from the heritage character of the precinct and at the same time further stress the existing infrastructure of narrow streets.

Views of encroachments that detract from the uniform character of the precinct.





## ISSUES

### HAWKERS AND STREET VENDORS

#### HAWKERS & STREET VENDORS

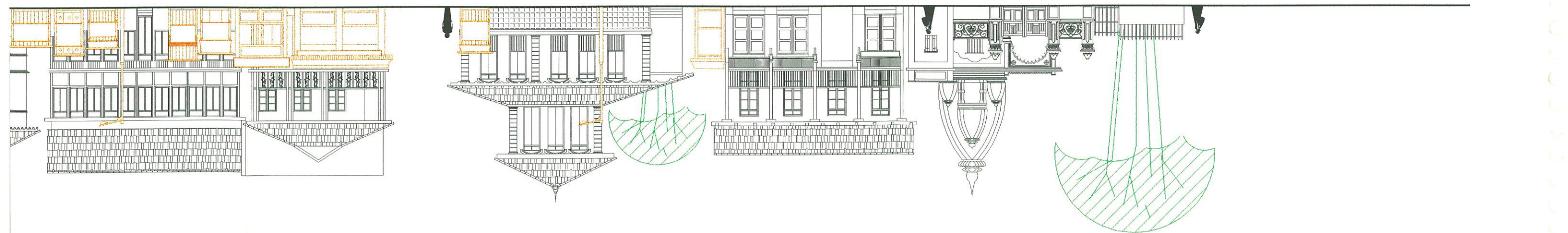
In keeping with the character of a traditional temple street, the Mahalakshmi Temple lane is buzzing with flower sellers, prasad sellers and a range of commercial establishments catering to the visitors to the temple. Over the years, a veritable shop line has developed along this main spine, consisting of small shop establishments abutting the front of the houses lining the street. Though a majority of these are licenced hawkker establishments, many today have extended their shop line and do not strictly conform to the size regulated for hawkker establishments. Moreover, there is another layer of street vendors on this entire scenario, consisting of many small time flower sellers, toy vendors and those hawking religious charms and knick knacks for the benefit of the temple pilgrim.

**Above Right:** A typical shop line of flower sellers, sweet shops and prasad vendors has developed along the main spine.

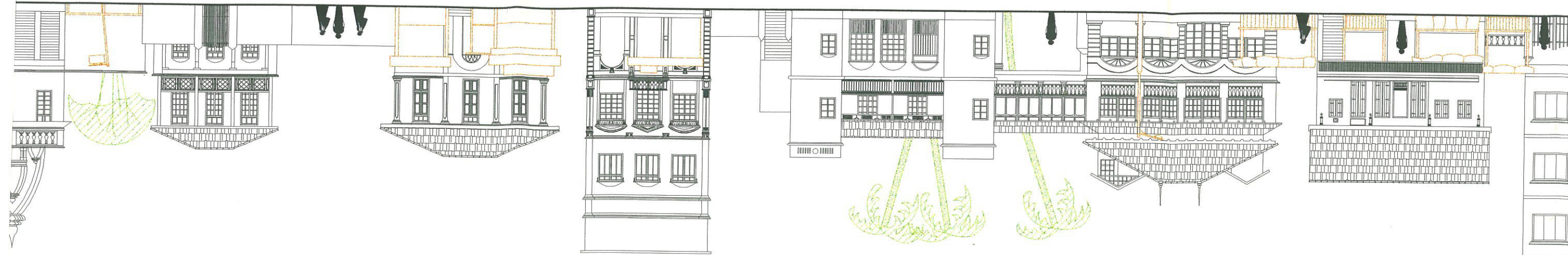
**Below:** A variety of hawking seen in the precinct.











South Side Elevation

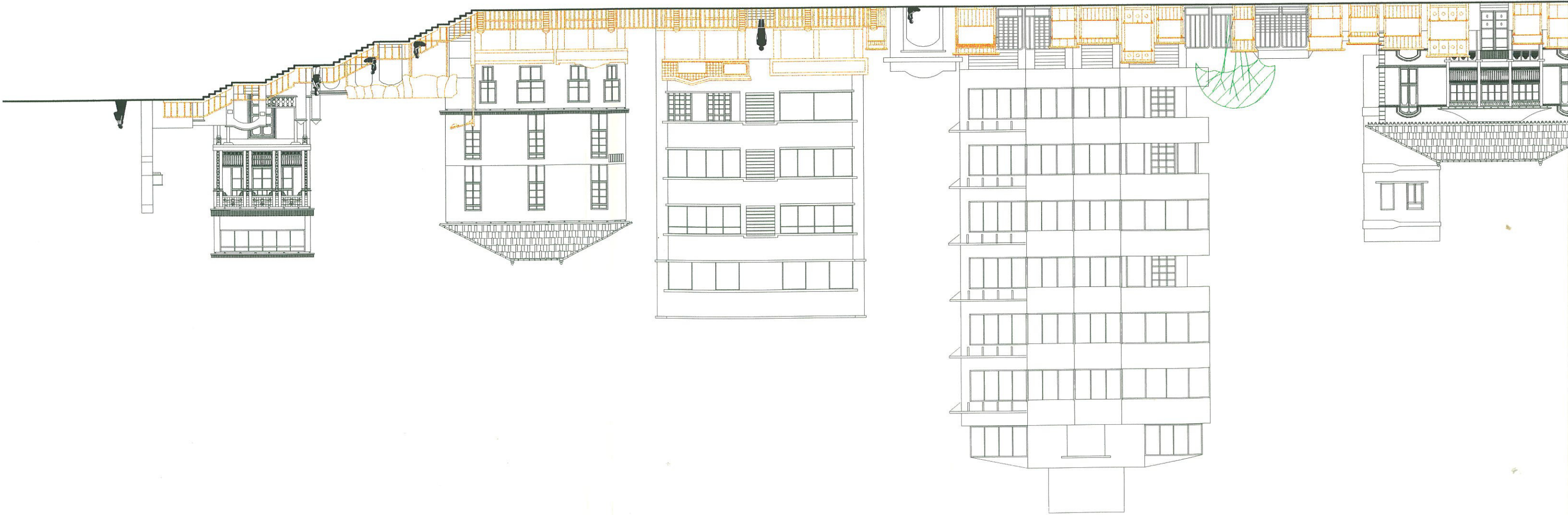




North Side E



South Side Elevation





## ISSUES

### HAWKERS AND STREET VENDORS

#### HAWKERS & STREET VENDORS

Below: A variety of hawking seen in the precinct, as well as beggars who flock to the pilgrims for alms.





## ISSUES

### HAWKERS AND STREET VENDORS

#### LIST OF LICENCED HAWKERS

The B.M.C. has drawn up a list of the licensed hawkers in the temple precinct. On close examination of this list, it is clear that only 27 small shops lining the temple street as a virtual extension of the building line to the north and south of the street are licensed establishments. Even of these, they only extend from the stretch between Ramdas Chawl to the temple staircase on the southern edge and between the Muljee Jetha building and the temple on the north.

NO.	NAME OF LICENSE	LICENSE NO.	AREA	COMMODITY
1.	Girish Omaish Cheda	4799	8'X4'	Aereated Water
2.	Kantilal Keshavji Cheda	11146	2.43MX1.21M	Coconut stall
3.	Shankar Karpal Yadav	11732	6'X4'	Chana Kurmure
4.	Yashoda Shankar Yadav	4781	6'X4'	Eatable
5.	Anusuya Anil Sawant	1822	1.83MX.91M	Coconut Water
6.	Smiti Suresh Shetye	757	1.83MX.91M	Panjakali
7.	Narayan S.Sawant	11195	1.37MX.91M	Coconut Water
8.	Hansaben Hemant Shah	796	1.37MX.91M	Bidi - Cigarette
9.	Devidas B. Kanujia	1299	1.51MX1.21M	Coconut flower
10.	Ravideo M. Barai	2336	1.2MX.9M	Panjkali
11.	Suhasini E. Sawant	3894	6'X4'	Coconut -flower
12.	Maleshwar L. Narani	11722	5'X4'3"	Coconut- flower
13.	Datreya S. Sarskhede	11701	.91MX.6M	Coconut- flower
14.	Vikas M. Ekhande	12445	6'X4'	Coconut- flower
15.	Ramji Lautoo	3934	6'X4'	Chana-kurmura
16.	Chandrakant Chotelal	3937	8'X4'	Sweet meat
17.	Kank B. Patil	12518	6'X4'	Coconut- flower
18.	Kishan Dattaren Gharat	3884	6'X4'	Coconut- flower
19.	Pandurang B. Rajgurun	11751	6'X4'	Coconut- flower
20.	Archana A. Ekhande	3739	6'X5'	Coconut- flower
21.	Vithal G. Gharat	12070	8'X4'	Coconut- flower
22.	Mahendra B. Role	11207	1.65MX1.06M	Coconut- flower
23.	V.D. Gholap	11142	2Mx1.4M	Coconut- flower
24.	Bultibai Pande		1MX1M	Pan Bidi
25.	Manilal L. Visaria	11737	6'X3'	Cutlery
26.	Harshad D. Asar	11194	1.23MX.91M	Cutlery
27.	Walji Fuchand Chaudhary	3881	16'X8'	Eatables



## ISSUES

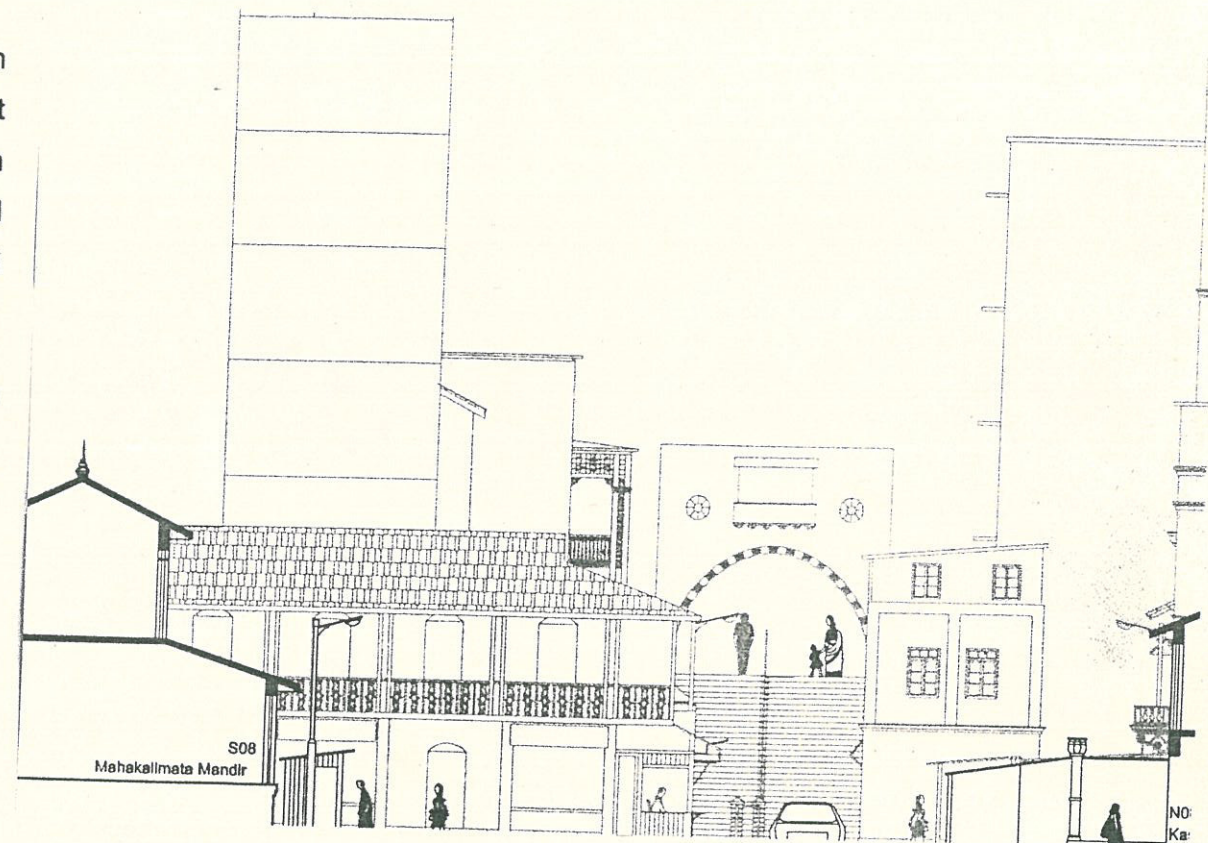
### HAWKERS AND STREET VENDORS

#### STREET ELEVATIONS SHOWING HAWKING ACTIVITY

For a clearer picture of the hawking, the street elevations have been marked with the shop fronts and hawkers on both sides of the temple lane and it is seen that there are two establishments along the northern side that are not licensed. On overlaying this list on to a street section, it is amply clear that even of these licensed hawkers, most extend beyond the required sizes as specified by the B.M.C. and need to be made to conform to the given areas.

Right: View of a street section showing a hawker shop line extending beyond the specified area as per the B.M.C. license list.

Following Page: Street Elevations marking the hawking establishments in a red colour. Licensed hawkers have been numbered and unlicensed shops are indicated with a cross.





## ISSUES

### TRAFFIC

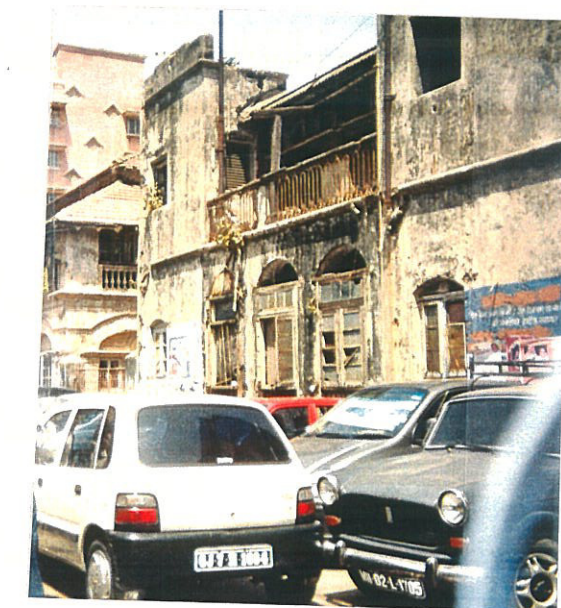
#### ENTRY POINTS AND TRAFFIC MOVEMENT

The precinct with its narrow streets and shaded pedestrian alleys was really never meant for heavy vehicular traffic and car parking. This modern intervention has, however affected the ambience of this once unhurried precinct that is today infiltrated by vehicular traffic, honking cars and a range of parked vehicles.

At present, the one main entry into the precinct is through Bhulabhai Desai Road, behind the Trambakeshwar Mahadeo Mandir. This entry point is today the main access route for both pedestrians, as well as vehicular traffic and acts as a one way lane, leading traffic upto the car parking lot on the main temple spine, and out through the left, turning a corner at Ma Kalimata Mandir. The traffic not only badly congests the street, but additional car parking requirements of the high rise modern buildings add to the density of cars in this precinct. It is imperative in the future good of the temple precinct, that a system of traffic routing and additional parking area be reviewed.

Right: The exit lane from the Ma Kalimata Mandir to Bhulabhai Desai Road, past Ghetto club.

Bottom: The congested main street clogged with vehicular parking.





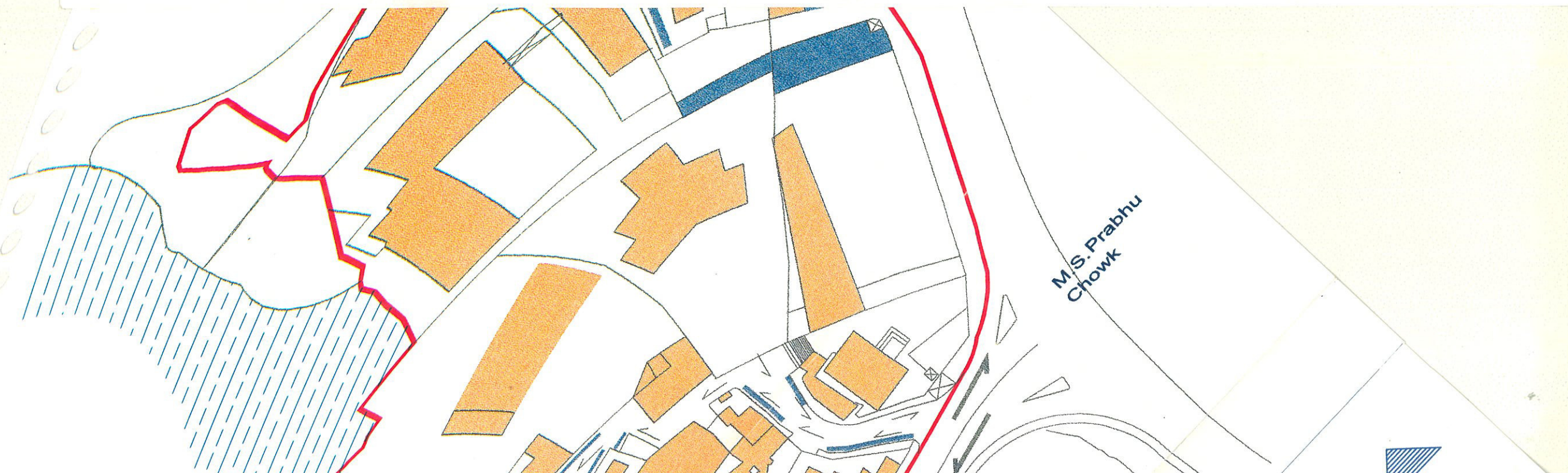
## ISSUES

### TRAFFIC

#### ENTRY POINTS AND TRAFFIC MOVEMENT

Below: The main Mahalaxmi Temple Lane that is the point for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic leading into the precinct.

Right: The pay and park stall at the corner of the Shree Ma Kalimata Mandir





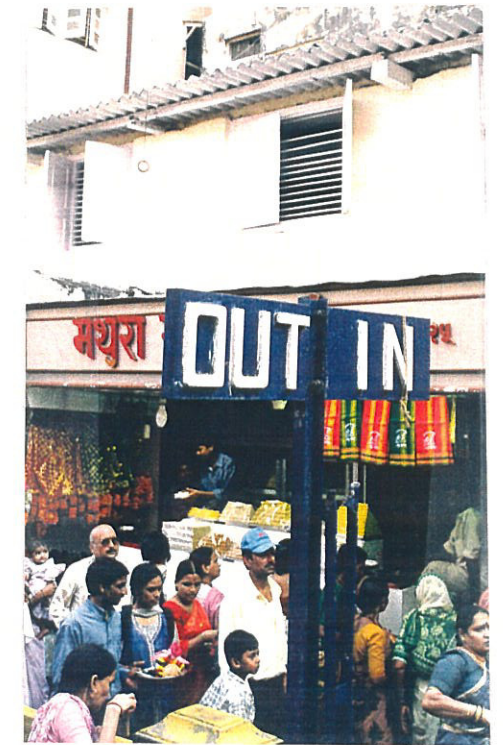
## ISSUES

### PUBLIC AMENITIES & STREET FURNITURE

#### PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE & STREET FURNITURE

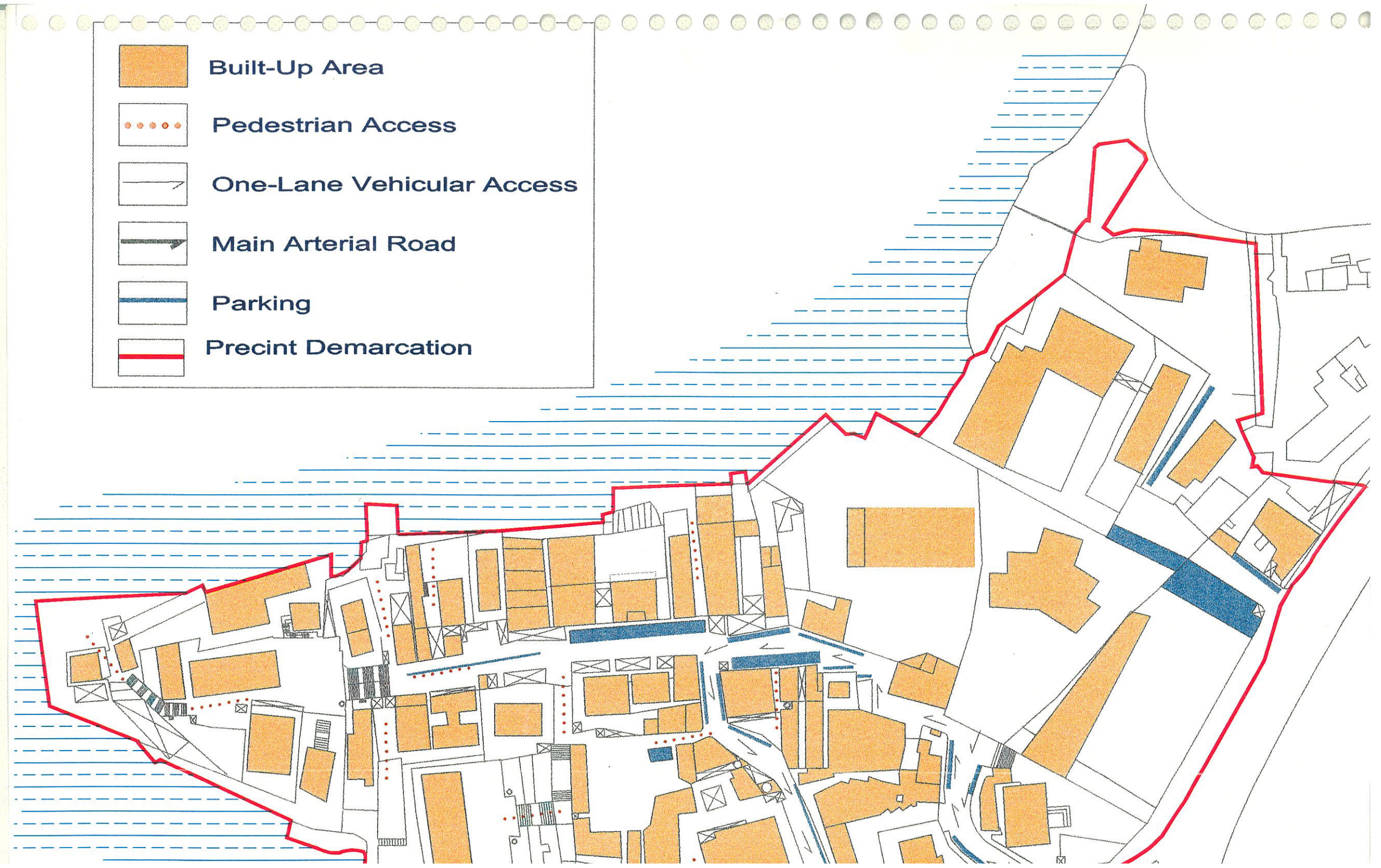
The pedestrian infrastructure today is highly threatened by the overlay of vehicular traffic. This results in cases of typical conflict where the pedestrian circulation in the main pedestrian street for example, has been reduced to a marginal strip as most of the road width is occupied by vehicular parking. In the absence of any properly defined zone or pavement stretch, the two traffic movements continue to overlap, causing much inconvenience. The pedestrian infrastructure therefore is quite inadequate with no proper pavement, or good surfacing for circulation. Neither is there any good distribution of street furniture like litterbins or benches which are much needed in a precinct which is a popular pilgrim destination.

Right: A sign board indicating that the road belongs to the Municipal Corporation. Another image showing the division of pedestrian traffic through the In and Out signs placed on the temple steps.

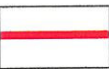





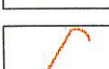

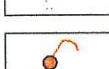




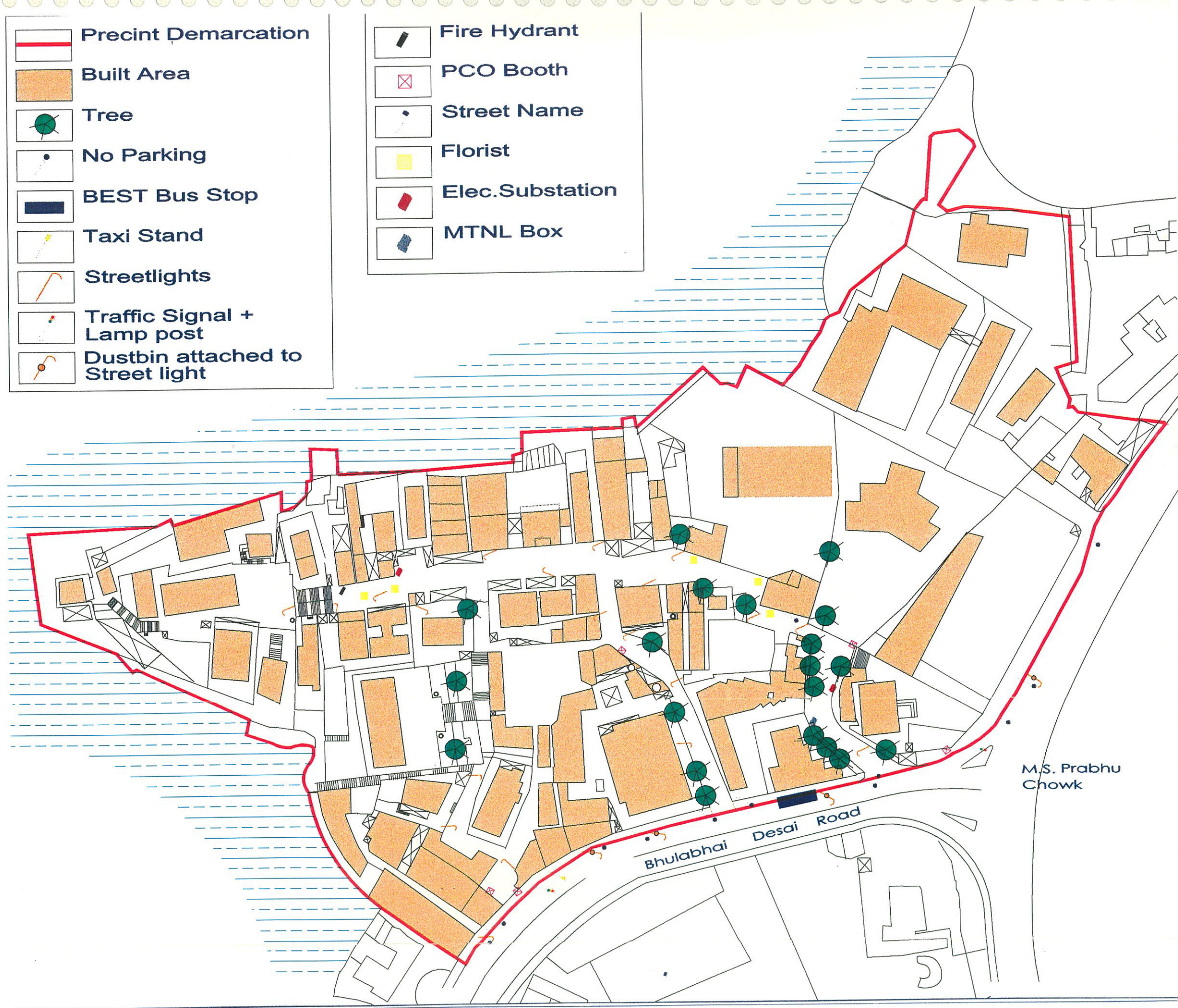
	Built-Up Area
	Pedestrian Access
	One-Lane Vehicular Access
	Main Arterial Road
	Parking
	Precint Demarcation





	Precint Demarcation
	Built Area
	Tree
	No Parking
	BEST Bus Stop
	Taxi Stand
	Streetlights
	Traffic Signal + Lamp post
	Dustbin attached to Street light

	Fire Hydrant
	PCO Booth
	Street Name
	Florist
	Elec.Substation
	MTNL Box





## ISSUES

### PUBLIC AMENITIES & STREET FURNITURE

#### URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE & STREET FURNITURE

is limited to some road signs and an IN and OUT sign marked at the temple direct visitor circulation. There is a central divider railing along the stretch from temple steps to further divide the visitor movement into the required direction. There are some seating arrangements at the upper platform level in Shree Mahalakshmi Mandir for the devotees, along with lamp fixtures, benches for drinking water and toilets. These however are directly provided and managed by the Temple Trust.

the temple platform with visitor amenities like benches for seating. During the hot festivals, canopies are placed to shade the devotees from the hot sun.

