CHAPTER - XII

DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED TEMPLES

In this chapter an attempt has been made to describe a few temples of the region. There are about ninety-five temples, all of which have been surveyed and studied in the region of our study. But only twelve temples are taken for the description here. They are described on the basis of the type of plan, chronological order and the pattern adopted in their construction. Temples, which have had additions in the subsequent periods, are described here for the understanding of the development of architectural styles. Some of these temples mark the culmination of various architectural styles. Likewise, some temples help us to understand the form of temple construction during the transition periods. Based on these factors twelve temples of the region are chosen for a detailed description.

ROCK CUT SHRINES OF NAMAKKAL

The earliest edifices of this region known till date are the two rock-cut shrines of Namakkal. These two rock-cut shrines are excavated on either side of a huge monolithic hillock. One rock-cut shrine is dedicated to Śēṣāśāyi and the other to Narasimha. The Śēṣāśāyi rock-cut shrine has been excavated at higher level, while Narasimha rock-cut shrine is at a lower level. The Śēṣāśāyi rock-cut shrine has many inscriptions in Pallava grantha characters. One of these inscriptions mentions that the rock-cut shrine was excavated by an Adhigaman ruler whose name is not known definitely. It also mentions the name of the rock-cut shrine as ‘adhiyanāthaviṣṇugrham'\(^1\). The other inscriptions over the pillars mention the epithets of the ruler. This ruler has followed the common practice of Pallavas, to whom he was, probably, a subordinate. Consecration inscription of the Narasimha rock-cut shrine is not found. There are a few faded inscriptions probably mentioning the epithets. On the basis of Paleographic studies, this rock-cut shrine has been dated to middle 7\(^{th}\) Century A.D. Both the rock-cut shrines
Fig 49. Sheshashayi shrine -Namakkal
have structural additions of later Vijayanagar Period. The additions are more in the rock-cut shrine of Narasimha than in the Śēṣaśāyi shrine.

ŚĒṢAŚĀYI ROCK-CUT SHRINE

The Śēṣaśāyi rock-cut shrine (Fig 49) has been built in an elevated place and has a flight of steps leading to the shrine. In between the hastihastas of the sōpānas, there is a figure of a squatting yakṣa, which is locally referred to as ‘Vishvakarma’. Originally, the rock-cut shrine had an open porch with four pillars in a row. A modern wall has been built between the pillars. This porch is about four feet wide and is narrow. The porch leads to an elevated platform which is about three feet high. The platform possesses a pādabandha adhiṣṭhāna. This platform is provided with a flight of steps which have a plain hastihasta. On the rear wall of this platform the relief of Śēṣaśāyi is sculpted. Śēṣaśāyi sculpture depicts Vishnu as reclining on his back over a seven-hooded serpent. This sculpture resembles the Śēṣaśāyi sculpture of Mahişamardhini rock-cut shrine at Mahabalipuram.

Āyudhas are represented in human forms. Reliefs of sages and celestials have been carved around the Śēṣaśāyi sculpture. Two huge sculptures of the demons, Madhu and Kaiṭabha are carved near the feet of main deity. On either sides of the wall the sculptures of Śūrya and Candra are carved. This sculpture belong to the uttamaśayanamūrti class.

On the two walls of the porch, the sculptures of Harihara and Trivikrama are carved. In the Trivikrama panel, Trivikrama stands on his left leg and the right leg is raised towards the heavens. Of the four hands, the lower right hand is lifted parallel to the leg showing ādēśamudra or the tarjanimudra. The upper right hand is in katihastamudra. The lower left hand is placed on his thigh, upper left hand exhibits dhāraṇamudra. The āyudhapuruṣas are shown at a higher level on both sides of Trivikrama. On the left side of this panel, Bali and Vāmana are carved. Vāmana sculpture is depicted as holding an umbrella and draped in a
cloth up to the anklet. Due to scarcity of space, Bali's relief is carved on the side wall.

The Harihara sculpture is standing in samabhaṅga. The right half, which depicts 'Hara', holds two Serpents in both the hands. The left half depicting Vishnu holds a conch in the upper hand and the lower hand is in katihastamudra. The relief of Ganga is carved on the upper side of the panel. Two standing male attendants are shown on either sides and above these two figures, flying celestial figures are carved. In between these figures a male figure to the left and a female figure to the right are carved. It is difficult to say whether these sculptures are of āyudhapuruṣas. To the right side of this panel, is the relief of sthānaka Vishnu.

NARASIMHA ROCK-CUT SHRINE: Narasimha rock-cut shrine is rectangular on plan. An elevated square platform projects from the rear wall. This platform has a pādabandha adhiṣṭhāna and four pillars. In between the pilasters on the rear wall, the main deity is sculpted. This is a seated figure of Kevala Narasimha shown in abhayamudra. The left hand is stretched and rests on the knee. On the two sides of the main deity, sculptures of Sūrya, Chandra, Shiva and Brahma are carved. There are two celestial figures carved near the ears of Narasimha, who are identified as Sanaka and Sanandana. The sculptures in Narasimha rock-cut shrine are more elaborate and more in number than in Śeṣaśāyi rock-cut shrine. The sculpture of the Vaikuṇṭha Nārāyana on the left wall shows Vishnu seated in bhūgāsana over a coiled serpent having five hoods. Brahma and Shiva are sculptured on either side. Beside this is the panel of Ugra Narasimha annihilating Hiranya Kashipu. This is an eight armed figure having fierce expression. He is shown as holding a bow which is unusual for this form. In his lower hands, he holds Hiranya Kashipu in two hands and annihilating his belly with the other two. This is a standing figure.

On the right wall a sculpture of Bhūvarāha is carved. This is a simple sculpture showing Varaha lifting Bhūdēvi, who is depicted in aṇjalimudra. Four
celestial figures are shown behind clouds and a five hooded serpent king is shown near the right leg, representing the ocean. The last panel in this rock-cut shrine is of Trivikrama which resembles the panel of Trivikrama in Śeṣaśāyi rock-cut shrine except for two details. In this panel, Trivikrama holds a sword in his right hand and the sacrificial horse of Bali has been depicted. A relief of Śukrācārya, stopping Bali, is also depicted.

**MONO CELLED SHRINE:** Few structures with just a *garbhagrha* where deity is enshrined are noticed in the region. One such Shrine is noticed in the premises of the Chandrachudeshwara Temple at Hosur (pl-259). This shrine is earlier in date than the main shrine. An image of Ganesha is installed in it now. This shrine must probably have had a Linga. The shrine is facing east. It has *pādadanda* adhiṣṭhāna with upāna, jagati, tripāṭṭakumuda, gala and a paṭṭika. This *adhiṣṭhāna* possesses a single gala, which is a feature of early *adhiṣṭhānas* datable to 10th century. The *bhitti* has four *bhittipādas*, in between the two central *bhittipādas* relief sculptures are inserted. These three relief sculptures are of Shiva (southern wall), Vishnu (rear wall) and Mahishamardhini (northern wall). The carving of Mahishamardhini resembles those of the same theme found in Karnataka. They have a framework of a *tōraṇa*. This framework has two split pilasters of *brāmaḥkānta* variety. Over this a *śāla* canopy is carved. The stylistic features of these sculptures exhibit the features of the Chola sculptures datable to 10th century A.D. The *prastara* consists of a *valabhi* with *bhūtamāla*, *kapōta* of the ordinary variety with *nāsis* at regular intervals. The *nāsis* have *kīrtimukhas* with elongated neck and creeper scrolls coming out of them forming a semi-circular *gāthā*. The details of the *vājana* are not clearly visible as the modern roofing provided for the entire temple complex covers it. This structure had a stone *śikhara*, which has been replaced in recent years. An ordinary *pranāla* without any ornamentation is provided for this shrine on the northern side. This *pranāla* is fixed to the *jagati* of the *adhiṣṭhāna*. The structure, in its over all presentation, is quite simple and non-ornate. The features of all the architectural
members are quite archaic in nature. Therefore, this shrine can be dated to 10\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.

**Vīrattāneshwara Temple at Pillur**

Pillur is a small village situated about 18 kms from Namakkal, in the taluk of Paramatti. In this village is the temple of Virattaneshwara, (Fig 50, pl 274) which is an east facing shrine. This temple is datable to 10\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. on stylistic grounds. The paleographic evidence of the earliest inscription also corresponds to this date\textsuperscript{2}.

On plan, this temple possesses a square *garbhagṛha* and an *ardhamanṭapa*. The *ardhamanṭapa* is narrower than the *garbhagṛha*. A flight of three steps is provided for entering the *ardhamanṭapa*. This is provided with a simple masonry *hastihasta* on both sides. The *pranāla* cuts through the *gala* and the *paṭṭika*. This is of the *makaramukha* variety and the earliest of its kind found in the region. The contour of the plan is plain with out any indentations.

This temple is a good example for *ēkatala vimāṇa* class of temples (pl-260). The temple has all the *saḍvargas*. On elevation, it has a *pādabandha* *adhiṣṭhāna* with single *gala*. The *bhitti* has four *bhittipādas* of *brahmakānta* variety. These *bhittipādas* possess an *ādīhārapōṭika*. The *prastara* above has a *valabhi* decorated with a *bhūtamāla*. The *bhūtas* are shown in various postures as squatting, dancing, playing, frisking and playing on musical instruments. It is interesting to note that one of the *bhūta* has an elephant face. These *bhūtas* are relieved in high relief, to appear almost in the round. The *kapōta* above this *valabhi* is of quadrant shape. It possesses *nāsis* at regular intervals but these *nāsis* are not well treated with decorative details. A row of knobs is carved above the *nīvu* (the lower edge) of the *kapōta*. The *nāsis* of the *kapōta* have *kīrtimukha* with elongated neck. The *vājana* above has a row of *simhas*, *vyālas*, birds etc. The *śikhara* above has a square *grīva*. The sculptures of Daksināmūrthi, Mahavishnu, Brahma and Umāmahēśwara are enshrined as *grīvadēvatas* in the
Fig 50. Tiruvirattaneswara temple - Pillur

Not to Scale
respective directions as prescribed in the Texts. The śikhara is also square and is of śrīkara type. The stūpi above this śikhara is also of stone. It has a padmapītha, a ghatā with elongated neck and a lotus bud on its top.

There are three other structures in the premises of the temple which are all identical. But they are all of a later date. They are datable to 16th century. Of these, two are dedicated to Vishnu and one to Shiva. One of these shrines possesses a mukhamati. The mukhamati has four pillars of citrakhaṇḍa variety. The kapōta of this mukhamati is of the double flexured, S shaped variety. A nandimaṇṭapa of the 16th century is constructed in front of the main shrine. The nandimaṇṭapa possesses a śrībandha adhīṣṭhāna. Above this, four citrakhaṇḍa pillars are placed. The prastara of the nandimaṇṭapa is very simple. A dwajasthambha is placed outside the ruined prākāra surrounding these temples.

ARAPALLIŚVARA TEMPLE AT VALARPURNADU (KOLLIHILLS)

Kollihills is one of the famous hill stations of Tamilnadu. The reference of Kollihills is found in the Sangam literature itself. These ranges have some nadu divisions, of which the Valarpurnadu has been an important centre from the days of the Cholas. Valarpurnadu is also famous for its natural resources and scenic beauty of its rivulets and waterfalls. Amidst this environment stands the ancient temple of Arapallishwara. (Fig 51) The temple has a dated inscription of 10th century A.D. It records a grant by Uttama Chola and his mother Sembian Mahadevi.

This temple is later by few decades than the temple described above. This is another good example for the temples of ēkatala vimāna class consecrated by the Cholas. This temple also possesses the saḍvargas, but the original śikhara is lost and replaced with a modern śikhara. The temple possesses a pādabandha adhīṣṭhāna with single gala. The bhitti has pilasters of viṣṇukānta variety. The bhadras have dēvakōṭas enshrining Ganesha and Dakṣināmūrti on the
Fig 51. Arppallishwara temple - Valarpurnadu (Kollihills)

Not to Scale
southern wall and Brahma and Durga on the northern wall. The dēvakōśta on the rear wall has the sculpture of Lingodbhava. The prastara has valabhi with bhūtamāla, kapōta of the quadrant variety with nāsis and a vājana decorated with a vyālamāla.

On plan, this temple also has only a square garbhagrha and an ardhamantapa. A modern structure of recent years is constructed attached to this temple. The contour of the plan has bhādras and karnas. The salilāntaras are deeply recessed. An Amman shrine datable to 16th century is built in front towards the left side of the main shrine facing south. This resembles the main shrine in all respects, the difference being that the pādabandha adhisthāna possesses double gala and the nāsis are decorated with sculptures of divinities in its gādha. Sculpture of Jyēṣṭhā dēvi is placed in the north west corner of the prākāra. The prākāra is also a construction of very recent times.

**TEMPLES OF MALLIKĀRJUNA AND KĀMĀKṢIAMMAN**

Dharmapuri is a district head quarters. It is situated about 40 kms from Salem. This place is of great antiquity. Many megaliths have been reported from here. The earlier name of this place was Tagadur, the mention of which is found in the Sangam literature itself. In the fort area of this town stand the Nolamba temples of Mallikarjuna and Kamakshiamman, which are the earliest structural temples of the region. They are built in the Nolamba style. These temples are known to have been constructed in the last quarter of 9th century.

**KĀMĀKṢIAMMAN TEMPLE**

In the elevation this temple (Fig 52) has an upapītha, adhiṣṭhāna, bhitti, prastara and śikhara. The upapītha and adhiṣṭhāna and the interiors are original while the rest are remodeled. The upapītha and adhiṣṭhāna are constructed of stone and the wall is built of brick and mortar. This is the earliest specimen of an upapītha in the region of our study. The upapītha appears to be of maṇcabhadra variety. This is partly hidden under the ground. The gala and the paṭṭka are
visible. The *upapīṭha*, at regular intervals, has sculptures of squatting elephants placed cardinally to the axis of the temple. There are eighteen elephants shown as bearers of this temple. Only the fore part of the elephants in the squatting posture with turned trunks is represented. These pachyderms are placed as if they are supporting the *upāna* of the plinth on their backs. The interspaces of these elephants are deeply recessed and flat. Where the narrative freezes depicting the important incidents of Ramayana are carved. The lower mouldings of this *upapīṭha* are hidden under the ground due to later renovation work.

Three varieties of *adhiṣṭhānas* are used alternatively for this temple. The *salilāntaras* possess *pādabandha adhiṣṭhāna*, while the *bhadras* possess *pratikrama adhiṣṭhāna* and *pratibandha adhiṣṭhāna* is provided for the *karnas* and *pratikarnas*. The *pratibandha adhiṣṭhāna* and *pratikrama adhiṣṭhāna* are highly decorated. The *padmajagati* has deeply scalloped lotus petals, which are quite tall. Lacing of lotus petals is provided for the *kumuda*. Creeper scrolls with *kubja* figures decorate the surface of the *kumuda*. The *gala* of the *adhiṣṭhāna* has a *vyālamāla*. The top most moulding possesses *vyālas* with lifted trunks on both its ends. The *bhitti* of this temple is re-plastered and varnished. There are four *jālakas*, which are also not original. They resemble the *jālakas* of later Chola temples. The *kapōta* and *śikhara* are of recent times.

Eight pillars of the Nolamba order are found in this temple. Four of them are in the *ardhamantapa* and four in the *gūḍhamantapa*. They are highly ornamented with horizontal rows of creeper scrolls with *kubja* sculptures carved in the scrolls. They have a plain cubical base. The shaft is octagonal. Dancing figures are carved in the *mālasthāna* of some pillars. Above the shaft, square panel with sculptures depicting mythological episodes and figures of divinities are carved. The vase motif is carved above this panel. The *kumbha* is also octagonal and decorated with floral patches. The *mandi* and *phalaka* support a *taraṅga pōtika*. 
Fig 52: Kamakshiamman temple – Dharmapuri
(Source: The Nolambas by Dr. M.S. Krishna Murthy)
The ceiling of the gūḍhamāṇṭapa, in the central bay possesses aṣṭadīkpaḷaka panel. Relief of Shiva and Parvathi seated on Nandi is carved in the central panel. In the surrounding panels, aṣṭadīkpaḷakas, with their consorts, are carved as seated on their respective vāhanas.

An impressive sculpture of Mahiṣamardini, locally called as Samhāradurga is placed in the gūḍhamāṇṭapa. She is shown as trampling the demon Mahiṣa and piercing him with a sword. She holds the buffalo face of the demon in her left hand and sword in the right hand. In the upper hands, she holds śaṅkha and cakra. The demon is depicted as stamped by the goddess with her left foot and he is also shown as holding a sword in his hands. The carving is very natural and dynamic.

The panels carved in the pillars are also interesting. Reliefs of Dakṣiṇāmūrti, Bhikṣṭāṇāmūrti, Gajāntakamūrti, Kālabhairavi (Kāli) and scenes from Kirātārjunīya etc. are carved. The themes of Bhikṣṭāṇāmūrti and has been repeated. Bhikṣṭāṇāmūrti is shown as a nude figure holding kapala and a cāmara in his left hands and a dāmaru in his upper right hand. A dog is shown as licking his lower right hand. A gana follows him with a bowl over his head. A lady (Parvathi) is shown as giving alms. In another panel, the relief, of a fierceful form of dancing kali is depicted. She is shown as dancing over a corpse and a bētāla is shown accompanying her.

On plan this temple possesses a garbhagriha, ardhamāṇṭapa and a gūḍhamāṇṭapa. (Fig 1) The wall line has bhādras, karnas and pratikarnas. The temple stands on a tall upapīṭha and adhīsthāna. This temple is provided with a flight of steps of the modern times. But this must have possessed original staircase, which is lost now.

THE MALLIKĀRJUNA TEMPLE

In the elevation, Mallikarjuna temple possesses an adhīsthāna, bhītti, prastara and śikhara. The temple is built out of stone except for the śikhara,
which is replaced now. The adhiśṭhāna is sub-merged in the modern flooring of the courtyard as a result of renovations. On the outer wall, to the left of the garbhagṛha, kōṣṭas housing the images of Brahma and Durga are noticed. The height of these images is about one foot tall. They have an archaic look, but they are highly eroded. The Durga image in this kōṣta, resembles the one found in the gūḍhamaṇṭapa of the Kamakshiamman temple.

There are two pillars in the ardhamamaṇṭapa and four in the gūḍhamaṇṭapa. All these pillars have ornate pedestals. The pillars in the ardhamamaṇṭapa are very good examples of the rudrakānta variety of pillars. They possess a square base and a cylindrical shaft. Tiny figures of squatting lions are carved in the four corners of the base. The upper portion of these pillars possesses mālāsthāna with tiny dancing figures carved in the loops. Above this mālāsthāna, the vase motif is carved. The taraṅga pōṭika is placed directly above the kumbha. The sides of the kumbha are smootherned and rounded.

The pillars of the gūḍhamaṇṭapa have a square base with narrative panels carved on them. Reliefs of Nataraja, trimurthis, Yōgis and ganas can be seen. Tiny images of warriors seated on lions are carved at the four corners of the base of the pillar. The shaft is octagonal, vertical rows of (bandwith) creeper scrolls carved on them. Reliefs of celestial dancers, instrumentalists, divine figures, etc., are carved in the scrolls of these creepers. The vase motif is also octagonal and is decorated with releifs of flying gandharvas. The kumbha above is octagonal with decorations of patra motifs. This kumbha supports the taraṅga pōṭika. An interesting feature of these pillars is that have no maṇḍi and phalaka. The reason is obvious because they are optional members of the pillar order.

In the ceiling of the ardhamamaṇṭapa, figures of dancing maidens and instrumentalists are carved. In the central bay of the gūḍhamaṇṭapa, the astadikpālaka panel is carved. In the central panel, figure of an eight-handed Nataraja is carved. He is depicted as dancing over the demon apasmāra. The
dwārabandha of this temple is very elegantly decorated with intricate carvings. The dwārabandha has three śākas. Reliefs of kubjas are carved on the doorjambs, while the lintel has the carving of āstmaṅgalas and the nidhis. The threshold is dadoed and has a bhadra projection.

A closed mahāmaṇṭapā and a mukhamantaṇḍapā of a later date is added to this temple. The features of these maṇṭapas can be assigned to late Vijayanagara period and datable to 16th century. A sculpture of sthānaka Virabhadra is kept in the mukhamantaṇḍapā. In front of this mukhamantaṇḍapā is the nandimaṇṭapā of the Nolamba period. There are āvṛtamantaṇḍapās on the two inner walls of the prākāra. One of the maṇṭapas is converted in to an office room and the other is ruined.

A notable feature of this temple is the use of the kubja figures as decorative motifs. The kubja figures are relieved on almost all the architectural members (built of stone), like the kumuda of the adhiṣṭhāna, dwārabandha and pillars.

CANDRACŪDEŚVARA TEMPLE AT HOSUR

Hosur is situated about 160 kms from Salem. This is an important commercial town in Krishnagiri district. This town belonged to the territory ruled by Purvadhirajas, the feudatories of Hoysala king Ballala III. On top of a hillock in the heart of Hosur, is the Chandrachudeshvara temple (Fig 53) This temple is architecturally very interesting. The mono celled shrine discussed in the beginning of this chapter is located in the premises of this temple. This temple stands as the best example for the culmination of architectural styles of the region. Influence of both Tamil and Kannada idioms are clearly discernible in this temple.

In the elevation, this temple possesses an adhiṣṭhāna, bhitti, prastara and śikhara. This temple is built out of stone except for the śikhara, which is renovated in the modern days.
Fig 53. Chandrachudeshwara temple – Hosur

Not to Scale
The *adhiśṭhāna* is of *pādabandha* variety with the carving of two galas. These *galas* are relieved with plain *galapādas*. The *bhittī* of the temple has *bhittipādas* of the *bramhakāṇṭa* type, which are provided with pedestals. There are *dēvakōṣtas* on the outer walls of the *garbhagrha* and *antarāla*. The sculptures of Ganesha and *Dakṣināmūrti* (south), Vishnu (west) and Bramha and Durga (north) are enshrined in these *dēvakōṣtas*. There is another sculpture of Durga enshrined in the *dēvakōṣṭa* of the outer wall of the *gūḍhamāṇṭapa*. Up to this portion, the temple belongs to 11th century. A closed *mahāmāṇṭapa* is added to it during the time of Hoysala king Ballala III, in the 13th century.

On plan, this temple has a *garbhagrha*, *antarāla*, *gūḍhamāṇṭapa* and *mahāmāṇṭapa*. This reflects the influence of Karnataka style. The *ardhamāṇṭapa*, which is a concept found in the Tamil tradition is absent in this temple. The *contouris* straight with out any indentations. The *garbhagrha* has a Linga installed in it. The *antarāla* is narrower than the *garbhagrha*. The *gūḍhamāṇṭapa* possesses four pillars, which are highly ornate. These pillars have ornate pedestals, over which a cubical base is carved. Above this base an octagonal shaft designed like a rope is carved in two tiers. The shaft proper above this is fluted and these flutings are made sharp edged alternatively. The shaft becomes cubical again with the decoration of *muktāgrāsas*. Above the vase moulding with lacing of lotus petals is carved. The *kumbha* is three faceted. The *māṇḍi* is in the shape of a fully blossomed lotus and the *phalaka* is a thick square plank above the *māṇḍi*. The corbels of these pillars have projecting patras resembling the *muṣṭibandha* type, feature of Hoysala corbels.

The closed *mahāmāṇṭapa* constructed during the late Hoysala period is oblong. This *māṇṭapa* possesses six pillars of the Hoysala order. They resemble the Hoysala lathe turned pillars. These pillars contain a separate carved pedestal. The base of the pillar is cubical and slightly taller. Above this is a cylindrical shaft. This portion consists of closely spaced concave, convex, cable and flat mouldings, which are parallel throughout. The central part of the cylindrical
shaft is moulded in the form of a ‘bell’. The ‘bell’ portion contains vertical bands of creeper scrolls, band of beaded string festoons, tassels etc. The finish of the shaft is smooth and polished. The upper end of the shaft is designed like a ‘vase’ shaped moulding, typical of the Chola order of pillars. This part contains thinly carved *patrālaṅkāra*. Above this is the *kumbha* moulding, round and polished with neatly carved *dalapadmas* on both sides. Above this are the *maṇḍi* and *phalaka*. The corbels above are of the *muṣṭibandha* type, commonly seen in the pillars of the Hoysala heartland. The lower part of the corbel is beveled with a central band. The lower end of the corbel has a voluted design, to look like a *muṣṭibandha*. The total form of the pillar gives the impression that it is a blend of Nolamba and Hoysala order of pillars. The decoration above the base up to the bottom of the vase is Hoysala in its treatment. The ‘vase’, its floral reliefs, the *kumbha*, *maṇḍi* and the *phalaka* are Nolamba in their execution. As the region was under the influence of Nolamba, Chola and Hoysala rule, the art forms of all the three schools are found blended in the carving of the pillars.

This *mahāmaṇṭapa* has the entrance doorway to its right wall i.e. to the south. On the wall opposite to the *garbhagrha* on the main axis of the temple a *jālaka* is fixed. The doorframe also exhibits the influence of Nolamba workmanship, but is not as elegant as their counterparts of Nolamba heartland. Beyond the *jālaka* to the main axis, the image of Nandi is placed. Behind Nandi an ornate *balipīṭha* is kept.

To the northwest of the main shrine, the Devi shrine is constructed. This shrine also faces east. It is a 13th century structure consecrated by the Puravadhirajas, who were the feudatories of Ballala III. It has only a *garbhagrha* and an *ardha-maṇṭapa*. The *vimāna* is square and has no *aṅgavibhaktis*. This shrine possesses a *pādabandha adhiśṭhāna*. There are six *bhittipādas* of *bramhakāṇṭha* type on the outer wall. There are three empty *kōṣṭas* on all the three sides.
Many small shrines of recent origin have been added to this temple. These additions are not entirely complimenting the original structure. There are many new sculptures installed along with the older ones. The sculptures of aṣṭadikpālakas, Bhairava and Surya are of earlier date. Five out of the aṣṭadikpālaka sculptures are extant. There are three sculptures of Bhairava of which one is a seated image. Three sets of mātrka sculptures, which are also incomplete, are found. These belong to Nolamba, Hoysala and the Vijayanagara periods. There are mālikas on three sides in which sculptures of Virabhadra and Nayanars are housed.

This temple has two gateways of which one has a newly constructed gōpura. The main mahādvarā is built on a pratibhadra upāpītha and padmakēsara adhiśṭhāna. The outer wall of this mahādvarā has ornate bhittipādas, kōṣtas and kumbhapañjaras. The mahādvarā of the inner prākāra also resembles the mahādvarā of the main entrance. This mahādvarā has a subhadra upāpītha. Rest of the details are as described above.

**EKÄMRANĀTHA TEMPLE OF TADAVUR:**

Tadavur is a village situated about 20 kms from Attur, the taluk headquarters, to which this village belongs. The distance from Salem is about 75 kms. The village is situated on the banks of the river Swetanadi. The temple also is built on the bank of this river.

Ekāmranātha (Fig 54, pl 275) is a Chola temple, which has retained its original form to a very great extent and not undergone any changes. There is no foundation inscription for this temple. This is a temple datable to 11\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. on stylistic grounds. This temple is facing east. The original structure is of ēkatala vimana class of Chola style with some additions made in later date by about 13\textsuperscript{th} century.

In the elevation, the temple has adhiśṭhāna, bhitti, prastara, grīva, śikhara and stūpi. The adhiśṭhāna is of kapōtabandha variety. The upāna is merged in
Fig 54. Ekamranatha temple - Tadavur

Not to Scale
the ground. The *jagati* is partially exposed. The *kumuda* is *tripaṭṭa kumuda*. The *kapōta* has the decoration of *nāsis* and *patra*. A *vyālamāla* with the reliefs of *bhūtas* in the terminals is carved above the *kapōta*. The plinth possesses two *galas*, one below the *kapōta* and the other above it. This feature helps us to date it to 11\(^{th}\) century A.D. The same type of *adhiṣṭhāna* is built even for the later addition. The *bhitti* has *bhittipādas* of the *saumyakānta* type. *Dēvakōṣṭas* are provided on the outer walls of the *garbhagriha* and *antharāla*. The *dēvakōṣṭas* house, as usual, the sculptures of Ganesha, *Dakṣināmūrti*, Brahma and Durga as per prescriptions. An interesting feature to be noted in this temple is the enshrining of *Umaśāntvanamūrti* in the *dēvakōṣṭa* on the rear wall of the *garbhagriha*. It is a very rare feature to find a sculpture of this kind in a *dēvakōṣṭa*. The *dēvakōṣṭa* of the rear wall usually possesses a sculpture of Mahāviṣṇu or Liṅgodbhava. This is an exquisite sculpture of Chola workmanship of a high order. The same has been described in the chapter on sculptures.

The *valabhi* has a *bhūtamāla*, in which the *bhūtas* are depicted as *bhāravāhakas*, dancing, playing on instruments etc. the *kapōta* is of the regular quadrant shape, with *nāsis* at regular intervals. The lower edge of the *kapōta* is horizontally indented. Above this the *vājana* is decorated with a *vyālamāla*. The *grīva* is octagonal and has *grīvadēvatas*, which are stucco sculptures. The *śikhara* above is of *vaijayanta* class.

This temple, on plan, has a *garbhagrha*, *antharāla*, *ardhamantapa* and a *gūḍhamantapa* of a later date. It has a square *vimana* possessing *bhādras* on three sides. The *dēvakōṣṭas* are found in these *bhādras*. The outer walls of the *antharāla* are decorated with *kumbhapāṇjaras*. These are some of the earliest *kumbhapāṇjaras* of this region.

The Amman shrine is built to the left of the main shrine in the front facing south. This also possesses the *ṣadvargas*. The plinth of this shrine is merged in
the surrounding ground. The bhitti has simple bhittipādas. The kapōta is also very simple with nāsis at regular intervals. The śikhara is of the vaijantya type.

This temple has subsidiary shrines for parivāradēvatas like Bhairava, Jyēṣṭha-dēvi, Candrasekharāmūrti, Sūrya and Candikēśvara, thus making it a temple with twelve parivārālayas. The nandimāntapa is built in front of the main shrine to its main axis. There is a dilapidated pavilion of the Vijayanagara times. The temple possesses a prākāra, the wall of which is now ruined.

This temple is no doubt a very good example for Chola temples of 11th century. It is noteworthy not only for the architectural aspect but also for the sculptures it possesses. It is a treasure house of early sculptures in the Chola idiom, comparable to those found at the Brihadishwara temple at Tanjavur.

SHUKAVANESHWARA TEMPLE AT SALEM

Shukavaneshwara temple (Fig 55) at Salem is another interesting temple in this region. This is one of the most ancient temples of the region. This is situated in the heart of the Salem city. This was built on the banks of the river Tirumanimuttar, which has dried up now.

The structures of the temple have been built in different periods and a chronological development of temple architecture can be noticed. The earliest parts of this temple are the sanctum and the vestibule of the main shrine is datable to 10th century. The gudhamanṭapa is added during the 13th century. The mahāmanṭapa and few parivārālayas were added during the Vijayanagara days and the pavilion built on the left side of the second prākāra belongs to late Vijayanagara period. The prākara, mahādvāra and the gōpuras are of recent times.

The vimānā of this temple can be dated to late 10th century A.D. Inscriptions of Raja Raja I and Rajendra Chola I are found on the door jambs of the garbhagrha. This is an east-facing shrine. In elevation, the vimāna has all the
Fig 55. Shukhavaneshwara temple at Salem

Not to Scale
saḍvargas. But here also, the original šikhara is lost and a modern šikhara is built. It is unfortunate that a lot of modern additions have been done to this shrine as such as last its archaic nature and elegance. The contour of the vimana has bhadras on all sides with dēvakōṣtas. These dēvakōṣtas have sculptures of Ganesha (southern wall of the antarāla), Dakṣināmūrthi (southern wall of the garbhagrha), Lingodbhava (back wall of the garbhagrha), Brahma (northern wall of the garbhagrha) and Durga (northern wall of the antarāla). Two types of adhiṣṭānas are used for this vimāna. The wall proper has kapōtabandha adhiṣṭāna and the bhadras have śrībandha adhiṣṭāna. An interesting feature to be noted here is that both these adhiṣṭānas are the earliest specimen of their kind in the region they show signs of immaturity in their execution.

The bhitti of the vimāna has saumyakānta bhittipādas at the terminals of the bhadras and the viṣṇukānta bhittipādas on the wall proper. But some of these bhittipādas are covered by the modern additions. The prastara is covered by modern roof of a pavilion built around the shrine. The kapōta is of the regular quadrant shape with nāsis at regular intervals. But this seems to be renovated during the late Chola period, when the gūḍhamaṇṭapa was added. The upper portion of the prastara is not visible. As said earlier, the šikhara is a completely modern structure. Khandaharmyas with small towers are built for the dēvakōṣtas in the recent years and painted. This does not synchronize with the original structure and as a result the archaic appearance of the temple is lost.

The gūḍhamaṇṭapa is an addition made to the main structure in the late Chola period i.e. 13th century. This gūḍhamaṇṭapa, in elevation, possesses a pāḍabandha adhiṣṭāna, a non-ornate bhitti with only bhittipādas and an ordinary kapōta. This is square on plan and has four citrakhaṇḍa pillars. The ceiling of the central bay has padmaśila. This gūḍhamaṇṭapa has two entrances, one to the main axis of the temple, i.e., to the east and the other to the south. The southern entrance has a mukhamanṭapa with a flight of three steps in the central bay, which divides the mukhamanṭapa into two parts. The mahāmaṇṭapa is built
between the gūḍhamantapa and the nandimantapa on the main axis of the temple. This is an addition made during the Vijayanagara days, while the nandimantapa is late Chola.

The Amman shrine is situated to the left of the main shrine, in its front, facing south. It is interesting to note that inscriptions of Raja Raja I and Rajaendra Chola are found on the steps of the sōpāna of this shrine. Probably stones of earlier days were used in the construction of this shrine. This shrine, in elevation, has a pādabandha adhiṭṭāna, a simple bhitti with bhittipādas and empty kōṣtas and a prastara of the later period, topped by a modern tower. On plan, this has a garbhagiha and ardhamantapa. This is a late Chola structure. The dhwajastambha is installed right in front of the Amman shrine on the axis of the main shrine.

There are many parivārālayas in this temple complex. But they are all of different periods. The shrine of candikēśwara is built in front of the pranāla of the main shrine. The sculpture of jyēṣṭhādevī, carved in high relief is placed in the northwestern corner of the temple. The sculpture of jeshtadevi has traits of 10\textsuperscript{th} century sculpture. The sculptures of bhikṣāṭanāmūrti and sasta enshrined in the niches on the inner wall of the first prākāra, exhibit features of Chola sculptural art, while the saptamātrakas and nāyanmārs have features of Vijayanagara sculptures.

A pavilion, built to left side of the second prākāra, locally referred to as the kalyāṇamaṇṭapa, is a structure built during the post Vijayanagara period. A local chief of the Getti mudali clan claims to have constructed this manṭapa.

Apart from these, this temple has a treasure of Chola bronzes of Nataraja, Sōmāskanda, Candikēśwara, Patañjali, Vyāghrapāda and all the sixty-three nāyanmārs. Except for the Nataraja and Sōmāskanda bronze, rest of the bronzes are of later dates, and can be dated period between 14\textsuperscript{th} and 16\textsuperscript{th} century.
KAILĀSANĀTHA TEMPLE AT TARAMANGALAM

Taramangalam is a village situated about 15 kms from Omalur, the taluk headquarters, to which this village belongs. It is about 25 kms from Salem. This has been an important centre from the times of the Hoysalas. This was a part of Puvaninadu. The Getti mudalis of the post-Vijayanagara had their seat of power in this place. This village is famous for the temple of Kailasanatha. (Fig 56) There is another temple that of Ilamishwara, which is very simple in its execution.

This temple is a very good example for the hybridization of the Chola idiom and the Hoysala idiom. (Pl 262) The main shrine of this temple was constructed during the rule of Hoysala king Ramanatha deva, prior to 1268 A.D\(^9\). Even this temple is built in three phases. The main shrine was probably consecrated in the mid 13\(^{th}\) century. Surrounding this shrine, a \(pṛākāra\) was built in the 16\(^{th}\) century. The construction of the second \(pṛākara\) is a few decades later than that of the first \(pṛākāra\). Though this temple is of Chola Dravida style, the ornamentation and decoration of the architectural members extensively reflect the influence of the Hoysala school of art.

In elevation, this temple has all the \(śaṇḍvargas\) and here again the \(śikhara\) is a modern structure. The \(adhiṣṭhāna\) is of \(pādabandha\) variety, which is highly ornate. The mouldings of the \(adhiṣṭhāna\) are carved with various decorations. The \(jagati\) has the relievos of \(bhāravāhakas\), miniature shrines, rampant \(vyālas\) and \(cakravākas\). The \(paṭṭika\) has the decoration of \(ratnapaṭṭi\) and the \(prati\) is decorated with a \(puṣpapaṭṭi\). The \(bhitti\) has reliefs of Ganesha, Skanda, Nārada, Tumburu, Bhikṣāṭanamūrti, etc. carved on the lower part, immediately above the \(prati\) of the \(adhiṣṭhāna\).

The \(prastara\) possesses a \(valabhi\) decorated with lotus petals. The \(kapōta\) above this is highly ornate. The shape of the \(kapōta\) is the usual quadrant shape, but the decorations done on it resembles those done on the double flexure \(kapōta\).
Fig 56. Kailasnatha temple at Taramangalam

Not to Scale
The surface of the kapōta has the sculptures of pigeons, monkeys and the monitors carved on them. The lower edge of this has a series of pointed knobs. The nāsis are also highly ornate. The gāḍha of the nāsis are decorated with tiny figures of Nytyagaṇapati, Balakṛṣṇa, gandharvamukhas, ṛṣimukhas, rākṣasamukhas, etc. The floriated arches of these nāsis are intricately designed. The kirtimukhas appear to be bigger than the usual ones and are attached to the vājana. The vājana has the vyālamāla and bharavāhakas are relieved along with the vyālas. This marks a transition between the kapōtas of the 12th century and the kapōtas of the 14th century. Though the faunal figures are carved on the kapōta, the surface is plain. This plain surface gets the decoration of elongated lotus petals in the succeeding period. But the knobs at the lower edge, which are seen more in the Vijayanagara period, make their appearance here itself.

An interesting feature to be noted here is the construction of khanḍaharmyas buttressing the wall of the sanctum and vestibule. These khanḍaharmyas are constructed for the dēvakōṭas, housing the sculptures of Ganesha, Dakṣināmūrti, Liṅgodbhava, Brahma and Durga. These khanḍaharmyas possess an adhiṣṭhāna, bhitti and a Prastara, thus making these a trivarga shrine. The adhiṣṭhāna of these khanḍaharmyas are the continuation of the adhiṣṭhāna of the main shrine, whereas the bhitti is shorter than that of the main shrine. The prastara of the khanḍaharmyas correspond to the uttara of the prastara of the main shrine. Though the kapōta resembles the one, on the main shrine, the faunal figures are not carved on these. The vājana has horizontal indentations on it. The construction of the khanḍaharmyas buttressing the main shrine is a Hoysala trait and is not to be seen in the Chola style of architecture, while the housing of the above cited divinities in the kōṭas in this particular scheme is a Chola feature not found in the Hoysala temples.

On plan, this temple has a garbhagriha, antharala and gūḍhamanṭapa. Here again, the ardhamanṭapa, which is a Chola feature, is absent. The gūḍhamanṭapa has four pillars of the citrakhanda variety. The gūḍhamanṭapa
also has two entrances one on the main axis (i.e. west) and the other to the south. The southern entrance, as was the practice of the day, possesses an ornate dwārabandha and a sōpāna with hastihasta of the makara type.

This temple possesses two prākāras built in about 16th century. The first prākāra has a mālika built around the main shrine. The bhadraka pillars of the mālika have life size sculptures, carved almost in the round, attached to their shafts. Sculptures of divinities, saints, sages, mythological episodes etc., are found carved attached to them. The sculptures of the sixty-three nāyanmars are installed in the mālika. The interspaces of the bhadraka pillars have dēvakōṣṭas, with the sculptures of parivāradēvatas enshrined in them. The mālika in the front gets extended to form a mahāmanṭapa as seen in the Chola temples. The shrines of the Dēvi and Subrahmanya are built, in the extended portion, facing the main shrine. The śayyamanṭapa is constructed to the right side of the main shrine facing south. The ceiling of this mahāmanṭapa in front of the main shrine has three panels decorated with the carvings of fully blossomed inverted lotus, with three rows of petals. These petals have the figures of parrots connecting them. The panels at its four corners contain stone chains. The chains indicate that this mahāmanṭapa also served the purpose of the kalyānamanṭapa and a dōlōtsavamanṭapa. The uttara of this structure has series of reliefs of narrative panels depicting incidents from mythology.

This prākāra has two main entrances, one on the main axis (west) and the other to the south of the structure. The southern entrance has an ordinary porch with four citrakhanḍa pillars arranged in a row. The central nave is to the ground level and has a pathway leading in to the first prākāra. The dwārapālakas are relieved on the two pillars, in the centre of the mukhamantapā. The plinth of this porch has the reliefs of mithuna sculptures.

The front entrance has a mukhamanṭapa of the oblong type. This possesses an ornate śrībandha adhiśṭhāna, over which six pillars of the
aśvakaṇṭa variety are arranged in a row. The kapōta is of the double flexure type with faunal sculptures on it. The second prākāra, which is very spacious, has an ornate nandimaṇḍapa and a dhvajastambha made of wood and covered with metal shields. There are two more shrines dedicated to Shiva in this prākāra, which resembles the main shrine in its execution to a large extent. A notable feature of this temple is that the decorations done on the adhiṣṭhānas of the different adjuncts are very much similar to each other, though not contemporary. It is clear that the artists of the later period have followed earlier artists.

This temple has a huge mahādwarā, over which a lofty gōpura (modern) is constructed. This mahādwarā, in elevation, possesses an urdhvajaṅga and an adahjaṅga. The lower jaṅga has a subhadra upapeetha. Both the jaṅgas have padmakēsara adhiṣṭhāna, with dhārāvruttakumuda. The prastaras have ornate kapōta and nāsis. Another interesting feature is the hastihasta provided for the mahādwarā on the inner side of the prākāra. This hastihasta has the decoration of elephant carved in the round, horse, wheel indicating the chariot and a fighting warrior. This symbolizes the caturaṅgabala of the ancient Indian army. Which according to tradition is to be present at the time of certain rituals, ceremonies conducted in the temple.

Thus, in all aspects, this temple is a very magnificent temple. it also helps to trace the development of temple architecture, especially during the transition periods.

ARDHANĀRĪŚVARA TEMPLE AT TIRUCHENGODU

Tiruchengodu, is a town situated in the modern Namakkal district. It is a taluk head quarter. This is situated about 40 kms from Salem. This place is famous for the temple of Ardhanārīśvara, situated on a hillock, facing west, in the heart of the town. This is a rare temple, where the sanctum enshrines an image of hermaphrodite form of Shiva, (fig 48) as against the usual practice of installing
the Linga. Though this temple has lost its original form to a very great extent, it is interesting to note certain aspects of architectural developments.

The main shrine probably possessed only a garbhagrha and ardhamantapa on plan, which is now included into a gūḍhamantapa of a later date. The main shrine has inscriptions of Raja Raja I and his son Rajendra Chola. By this it may be inferred that this shrine existed during the last decade of the 10th century. The inclusion of the gūḍhamantapa must have been done during the 13th or 14th century, i.e., three centuries after the construction of the original shrine. The pillars are painted and modern walls are built in the interspaces of these pillars. Therefore, a detailed study of its stylistics is difficult.

The gūḍhamantapa has an entrance from its sidewall i.e. from the south. The wall built opposite the garbhagrha, on the main axis, has a jālaka. Only the rear wall of the garbhagrha can be identified as that of the original structure. There is a shrine built adjoining this main shrine, but facing east. Both these shrines have a common wall in-between. The right wall of the main shrine and the left wall of the later shrine are attached to each other. This shrine is dedicated to Subrahmanya.

It is surprising to note that a very ornate mahāmantapa is built in front of the Subrahmanya shrine, while it is the backside of the original shrine. This mahāmantapa, built during the 16th century, is quite broad. The right side corner has an elevated mālika like structure, in front of which a śrībhoga adhiśṭhāna is built in the centre to serve the purpose of a raṅga. The pillars of this mahāmantapa are massive and highly ornate. They possess upastambhas, portrait sculptures, traceries, etc. A interesting feature of the pillars is that life size sculptures are attached to their shafts, but they are not of just divinities. Secular sculptures are carved along with the divinities on a large scale, which is unusual. These sculptures are quite elegant in their form and depiction. This mahāmantapa possesses the vyālakānta pillars on its three sides. This
mahāmanṭapa was extended towards the front of the main shrine, probably during the first quarter of the 17th century. This mahāmanṭapa also resembles the earlier mahāmanṭapa in execution. But a dōlōtsavamanṭapa, nandimanṭapa, dhvajastambha and balipīṭha are all built in this mahāmanṭapa on the main axis of the main shrine. The pillar shafts possess huge sculptures of divinities and the portrait sculptures of the patrons (Nayakas) and their consorts. The pillars at the façade are of the aśvakānta and the corner pillars are of the samyukta type having three pillarets. The uttaras of these mahāmanṭapas have reliefs of mythological episodes like the Kirātārjunīya and others carved on them. The lower portions of these uttaras are also highly decorated with kīrtimukhas and creeper scrolls.

There are three subsidiary shrines in the premises dedicated to Subrahmanya, Vishnu and Ganesha. The Ganesha shrine is highly ornate. It possesses a śrībhōga adhiṣṭhāna, with intricate carving of the decorative motifs like shrine motifs, nāsis, creeper scrolls, ratnapāṭṭi, padmajagati with deeply scalloped petals, figures of pigeons and monitors (which are usually found on the kapōta), kaṭakāvrṭakumuda, kapōta, etc., and each and every part of the adhiṣṭhāna is extensively decorated. The bhitti has all the decorative motifs like bhittipādas, tōraṇas, kumbhaṇaṇjaras and relief sculptures. The prastara is also highly ornate. The valabhi has scalloped lotus petals, with the figures of monkeys carved on them. The terminals of this valabhi i.e. the panels above the corbels of the bhittipādas are carved in the form of bhaṛavāhakas. The kapōta has elongated lotus petals on its surface, with the fore part (bust) of the rampant lion carved in the centre. The lower edge of the kapōta has rows of knobs and droppings. The vējana has the vyālmāla with bhaṛavāhakas in the centre. This prastara can be considered as the best specimen of ornate prastaras, which emerged as a result of the influence of Hoysalas in this region and reached its zenith under the patronage of the Nayaks of Vijayanagar.

The shrine of Subrahmanya is also quite ornate. It possesses a pratibhadra upapīṭha, over which an ornate padmaka adhiṣṭhāna is carved. The gala of the
upapīṭha is decorated with figures of squatting bhāravāhakas. The kumuda of the adhiśṭhāna is of katākāvṛta type. The prāṇāla is also highly ornate. In the forepart, makaras are relieved as decorative motifs. The structures in the premises exhibit the traits of late 16th century like the extending arms of the corbels getting connected, the tip of the lotus bud in the terminal of the prāṇāla getting bent, etc.

On the left corner of the prākāra is a mālika. Thus, the temple has the architectural features of three different periods.

VARADARĀJA TEMPLE AT SENDAMANGALAM

Sendamangalam is a town situated in the Namakkal district, about 20 kms from Salem. The Varadarāja temple is situated in this town. This temple is datable to Vijayanagara period, i.e., 16th century. From the observation of the stylistic features, it can be concluded that the entire structure i.e., from the garbhagrha to the gopura, was constructed at one time.

On elevation, this temple has upapīṭha, adhiśṭhāna, bhitti, prastara and a superstructure of modern times. The entire structure, including the mukhamanṭapa and vāhanamanṭapa, is constructed over a pratibhadra upapīṭha. This upapīṭha has an upāṇa, padmajagati, broad gala with galapādas and a kapōta moulding. The galapādas are relieved with floral designs, creeper scrolls etc. The surface of the kapōta is decorated with elongated lotus petals. The lower portion of the kapōta is horizontally grooved and the tip is decorated with a row of knobs.

The adhiśṭhāna provided to the temple is of padmakēsara variety. Though not ornate, the execution of this plinth is delicate and neat. The minute padmadalas carved are very intricate. The kumuda of this adhiśṭhāna is tripaṭṭa. The mouldings appear thinner than the usual adhiśṭhānas and the gala also is narrow.
The bhitti is decorated mainly with architectural motifs and no reliefs of figural theme are noticed. The bhittipādas on the wall of the garbhagriha and antarāla are of brahmakānta type and those on the gūḍhamantapa wall are of the viṣṇukānta type. The tōraṇa framework with śāla canopy is found on the walls around. Niches of these thoranas are deep on the walls of the garbhagriha, antarāla and ardhamantapa. The thoranas on the outer wall of the gūḍhamantapa have no niches in them. The śala canopies carved on these tōraṇas are all alike. The mahānāsi of these sālas contain shrine motifs in their gāḍha. The kumbhapāñjaras carved on the walls are also very elegant in their form and execution. The kumbha has vertical grooves, with a horizontal ratnapaṭṭi in the centre. The tassels on the either sides of the kumbha are delicately carved with floral bands and pleats arranged neatly. The shaft of this motif is of brahmakānta type with a bhadra projection in the centre, decorated with creeper scrolls. Above this shaft a miniature kapōta is carved, over which the pañjara coping is carved.

The prastara is simple in its form. The valabhi has a row of scalloped lotus petals relieved on its surface. The kapōta is the regular quadrant shaped kapōta. The vājana is decorated with the usual vyālamāla.

On plan, this temples possesses a garbhagriha, antharala, ardhamantapa, gūḍhamantapa and a mahāmanṭapa. The garbhagriha, antharala and the ardhamantapa are constructed on a slightly elevated floor than the floor of the gūḍhamantapa. This is a feature noticed during Vijayanagara times. The gūḍhamantapa has lost its form, due to the addition of modern walls built in the interspaces of the pillars forming cellas, with sculptures of alwars enshrined in them. As a result the gūḍhamantapa has lost its elegance and seems crowded.

A spacious mukhamantapa with twenty pillars arranged in four rows is constructed. An interesting feature to be noted here is that the pillars of the periphery facing the courtyard are of citrakhanḍa variety, while the pillars facing
the central bay are of *aśvakānta* and *vyālakānta* types, as opposed to the usual scheme of arrangement. The pillars of *aśvakānta* and *vyālakānta* types are also different in their carving. The *aśva* and the *vyāla* figures are not in the round but they are relieved on the projecting faces and sides of the *bhadra* attached to the main shaft. They are not completely relieved in the round as found in the regular *aśvakānta* and *vyālakānta* pillars. These *aśva* figures possess human mounts on them, while the *vyālas* are depicted as holding their elongated trunks with their forelegs. Out of eight pillars, four are of *aśvakānta* type and four are of *vyālakānta* type.

A *vāhanamantāpā* is built attached to this *mahāmaṇṭapa*. This *vāhanamantāpā* is constructed to resemble a regular shrine in all respects. It possesses the *sādvargas*, including a *pratibhadra upapītha*. The *upapītha* is provided with an additional *jagati* and *gala* to increase the height, to correspond to the height of the *upapītha* of the *mahāmaṇṭapa*. The *adhiṣṭhāna* is of *padmakēśara* type with a *vṛttakumuda*. The *bhitti* has the decorations of *bhittipādas* and the *tōraṇas*. A modern *prāśāda* of the *śrīkara* type is constructed over the *prastara* of this *vāhanamantāpā*. This *vāhanamantāpā* possesses *bhadras*, on three sides, on plan.

The Amman shrine is built to the right of the main shrine, slightly receding from the main shrine. This shrine is built upon a *pratibhadra upapītha* and *padmakēśra adhiṣṭhāna*. This *adhiṣṭhāna* possesses a *vṛttakumuda*. The *bhitti* is decorated with *brahmakānta bhittipādas* and empty *kōṣṭas*. The *prastara* has the regular *kapōta* and a *vājana* without the decoration of the *vyālamāla*. The super structure is a modern construction.

This temple is surrounded by a *prākāra*. The *bhitti* of the *mahādvāra* has closely spaced *bhittipādas* of the *viṣṇukānta* type. A *koṣṭa* with śāla canopy is carved in the centre. The *kapōta* of this structure has closely spaced *nāsīs* with
figures of divinities and devotees carved in its gāḍha. The gōpura built above the mahāḍwāra is of recent times.

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