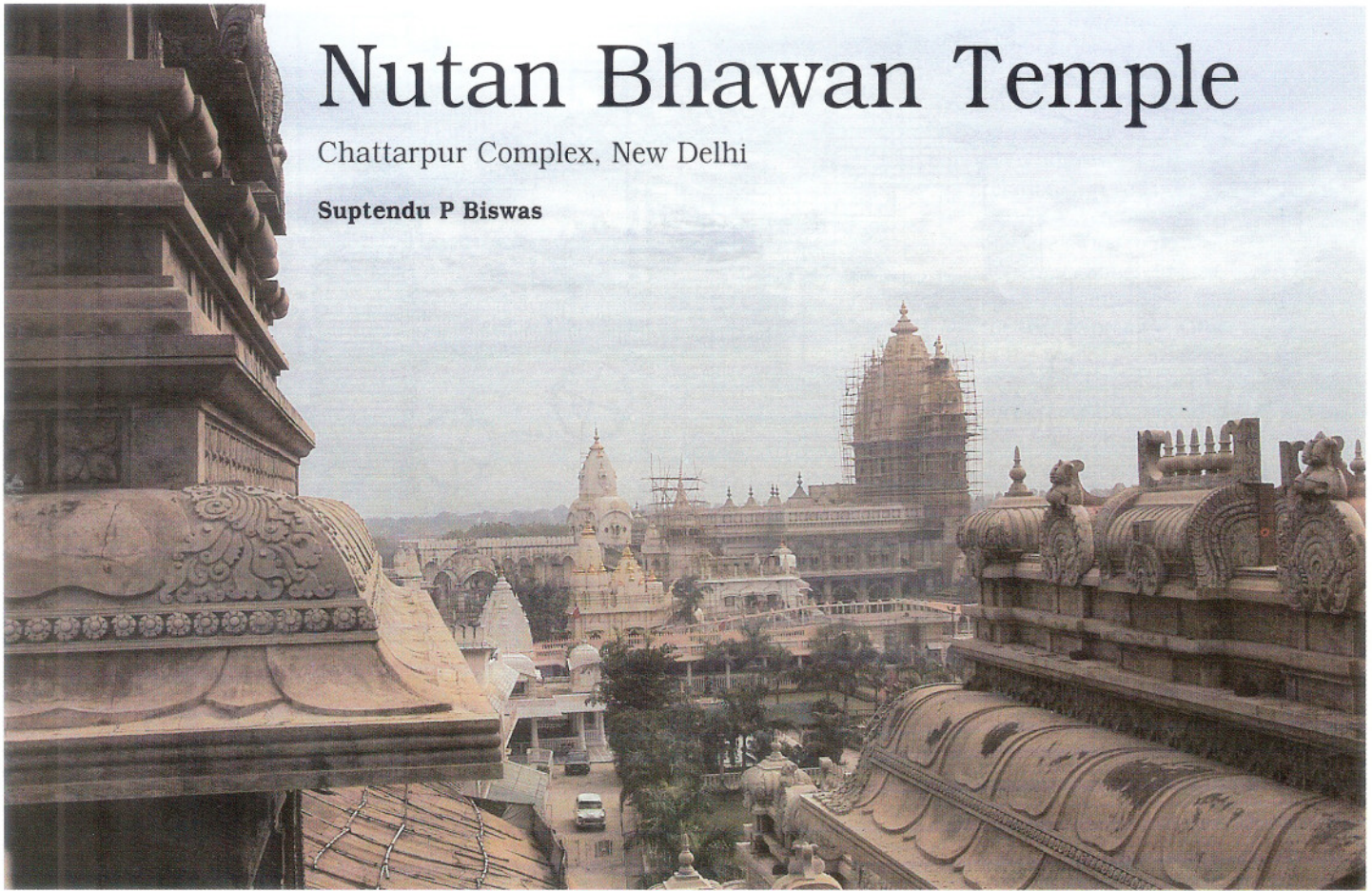


Nutan Bhawan Temple

Chattarpur Complex, New Delhi

Suptendu P Biswas

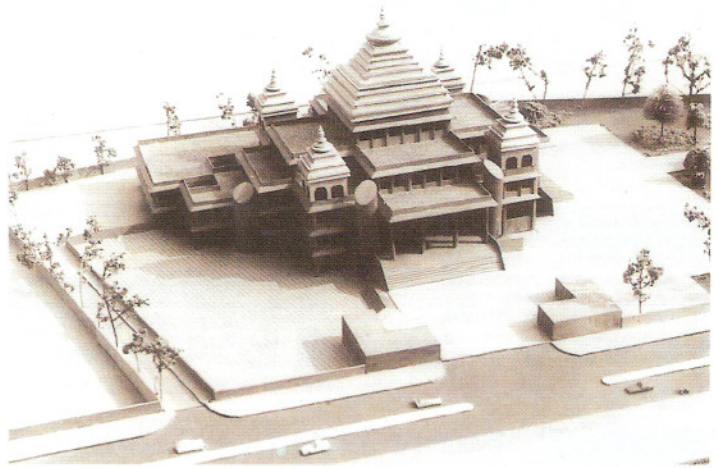


Above The Chattarpur Temple Complex



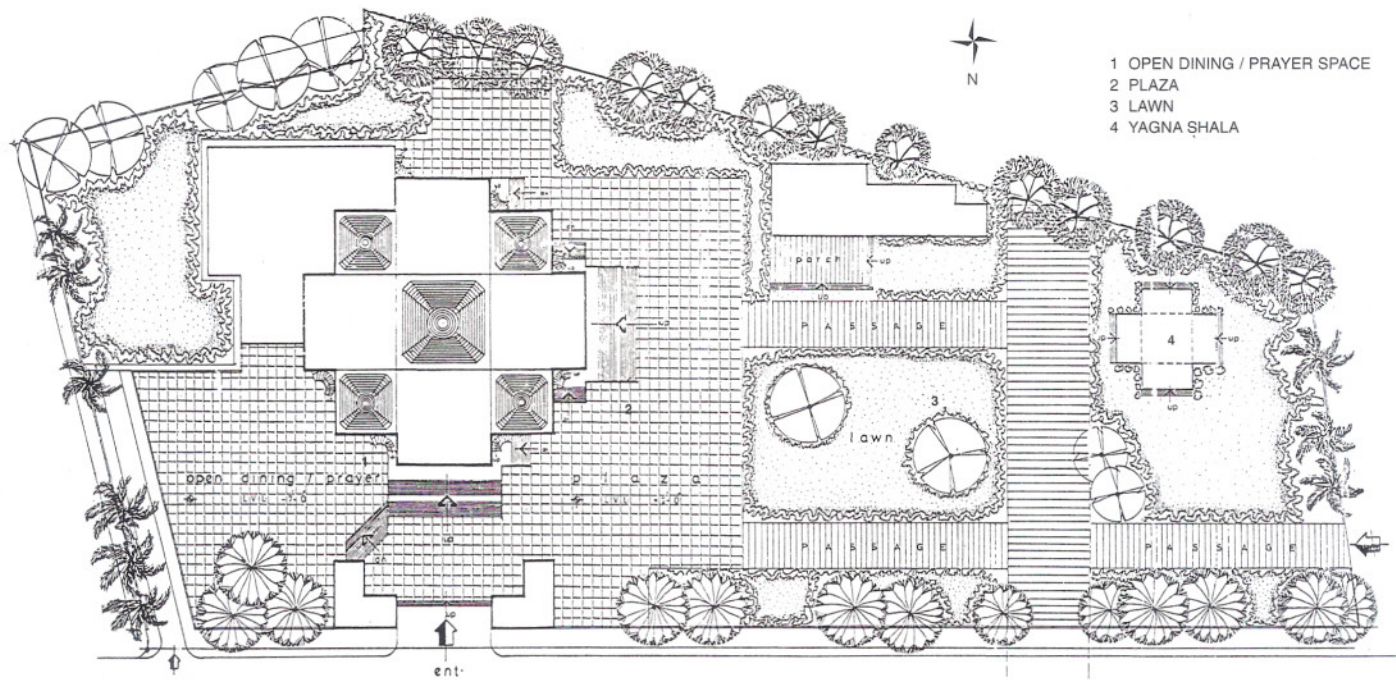
In 1974, Sant Nagpal, an ascetic, acquired land from the *Panchayat*, and established the Katyani temple. Within less than 25 years, a huge temple complex came up, sprawling over almost 60 acres of land. Today, Adya Katyani Shakti Peeth Temple Complex at Chattarpur is one of the major religious complexes in Delhi. On approaching the temple from the Mehrauli-Gurgaon road towards Chattarpur village, the monumental structures of the temple complex are visible. With a dominating skyline, Nutan Bhawan, in the Shakti Peeth temple premises, contributes a significant image to this setting of 'historicity'.

The brief, given to the architect H Rai Malik, for the Nutan Bhawan Temple Complex, was to create spaces for religious discourse, educational and medical facilities, along with guestrooms for pilgrims. Nutan Bhawan was conceived more as a temple with these multifunctional requirements attached to it. Functional spaces, organized around the central atrium, are clearly demarcated in vertical layers within the built form, and accessed by separate staircases, kept open to facilitate dispersion of large crowds in a crisis. The entrance to the building is through an elevated base, extended into the prayer hall



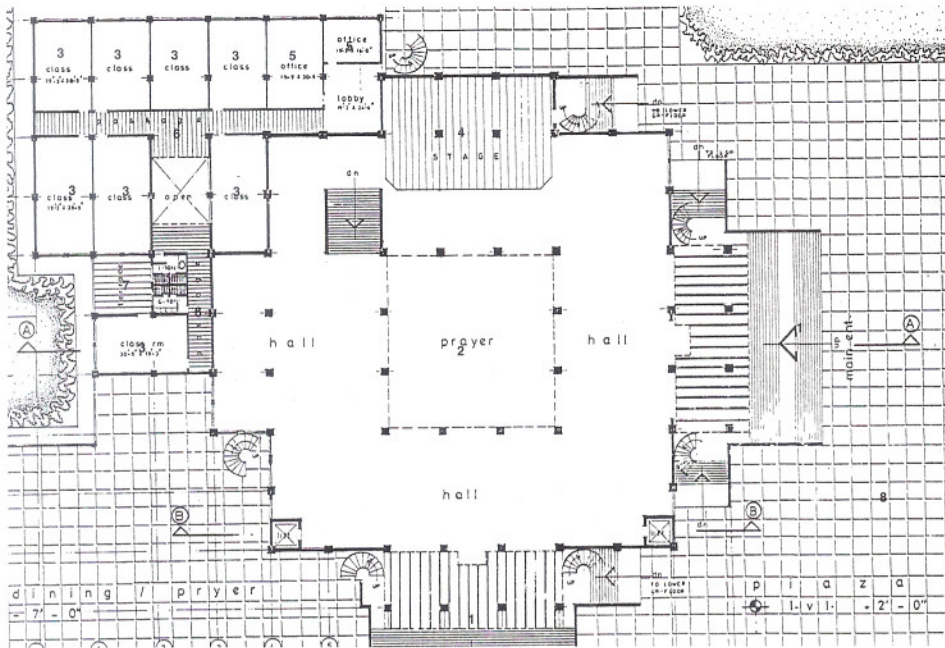
and the sacred place spread out under a large dome on a 18 m x 18 m grid. Public facilities are placed on the first floor, and guestrooms are on the first and second floors. Though lifts are provided here for circulation, no provision is made for handicapped people to climb up to almost 3 m from the ground level to reach major public spaces on the upper ground floor. Surprisingly, this aspect is not considered in any manner in other temples also of the Shakti Peeth.

In his design, the architect was influenced by the temple at Modhera and the Mahesvara Temple at Patan. This is



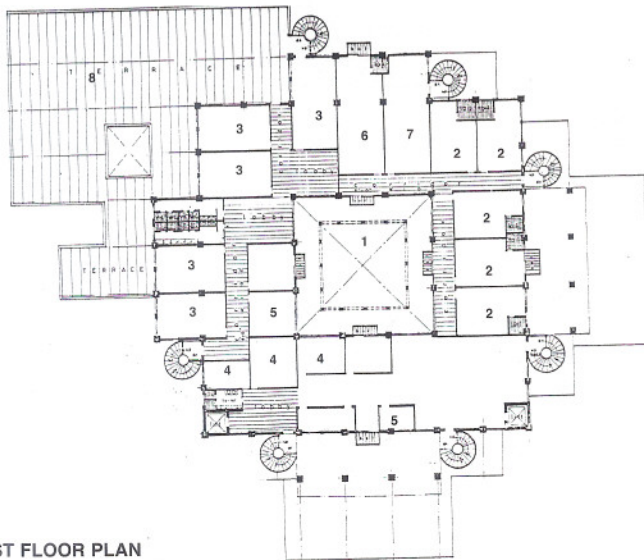
Above Temple sikhara
Right Detail of pillar base





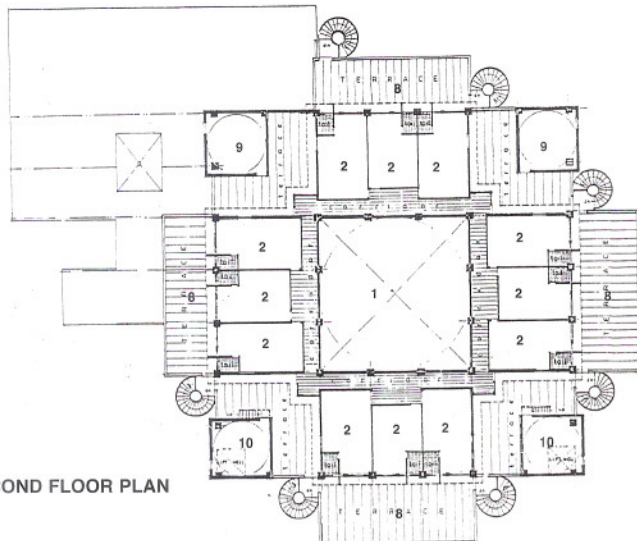
GROUND FLOOR PLAN

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 ENTRANCE | 4 STAGE | 7 TERRACE |
| 2 PRAYER HALL | 5 OFFICE | 8 PLAZA |
| 3 CLASSROOM | 6 PASSAGE | |



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

- | |
|-----------------|
| 1 PRAYER HALL |
| 2 GUEST-ROOM |
| 3 CLASSROOM |
| 4 DRAWING ROOM |
| 5 STORE |
| 6 SUITE |
| 7 KITCHEN |
| 8 TERRACE |
| 9 ROOM |
| 10 MACHINE ROOM |



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

obvious from his symmetrical composition of the basic plan form, based on the symbol of Hindu *swastika*, and the vertical built mass. The contextuality of the Nutan Bhawan has been addressed through its axial relationship with the main temple.

However, this kind of gesture becomes obscure owing to its abstraction, and is not apparent enough in articulating outdoor spatial organization, entries and exists to the temple premise. Other temple complexes of the Shakti Peeth, designed later by various architects, are not responsive to the context even to this extent. As a result, temple buildings are reduced to isolated objects in space, courting in isolation within their respective boundaries.

Ganapathy Sthapathy has handled the facade treatment which the architects feel is in contradiction to their scheme. A great deal of attention has been devoted to the extensive detailing. Though transition from the solidity of stone to the plasticity of concrete requires more innovative interpretations, yet, detailing, using brick, cement concrete and other contemporary materials to imitate intricate stone carvings, are probably to restore craftsmanship to meet demands of changing times.

Within the complex, three basic structures, the temple building, the administrative office and the *Yagya-Shala*, are spaced within well-manicured lawns and decorative foliages. Here, and also in other temple complexes of the Shakti Peeth, the possibility of forming meaningful spaces through cohesive and more definite landscape approach could have been adopted.

The Temple Trust took an administrative stand of not encouraging any sort of formal and informal activities along the immediate stretch outside the temple complex. Consequently, the design decision of providing clean and passive interface between religious spaces and the road, will push further developments towards the periphery of the complex.

In this context, the need for a sensible urban design framework from the municipal authorities, as a prelude to this type of large development, becomes urgent in order to comprehend the whole urban fabric in totality. ☸

Factual information provided by the architects

Architect H Rai Malik and Associates
Consultants R K Aggarwal (structural), Malik Associate Pvt Ltd (plumbing and electrical)