

Visual 63 : Plan, Malagitti Shivalaya at Badami .

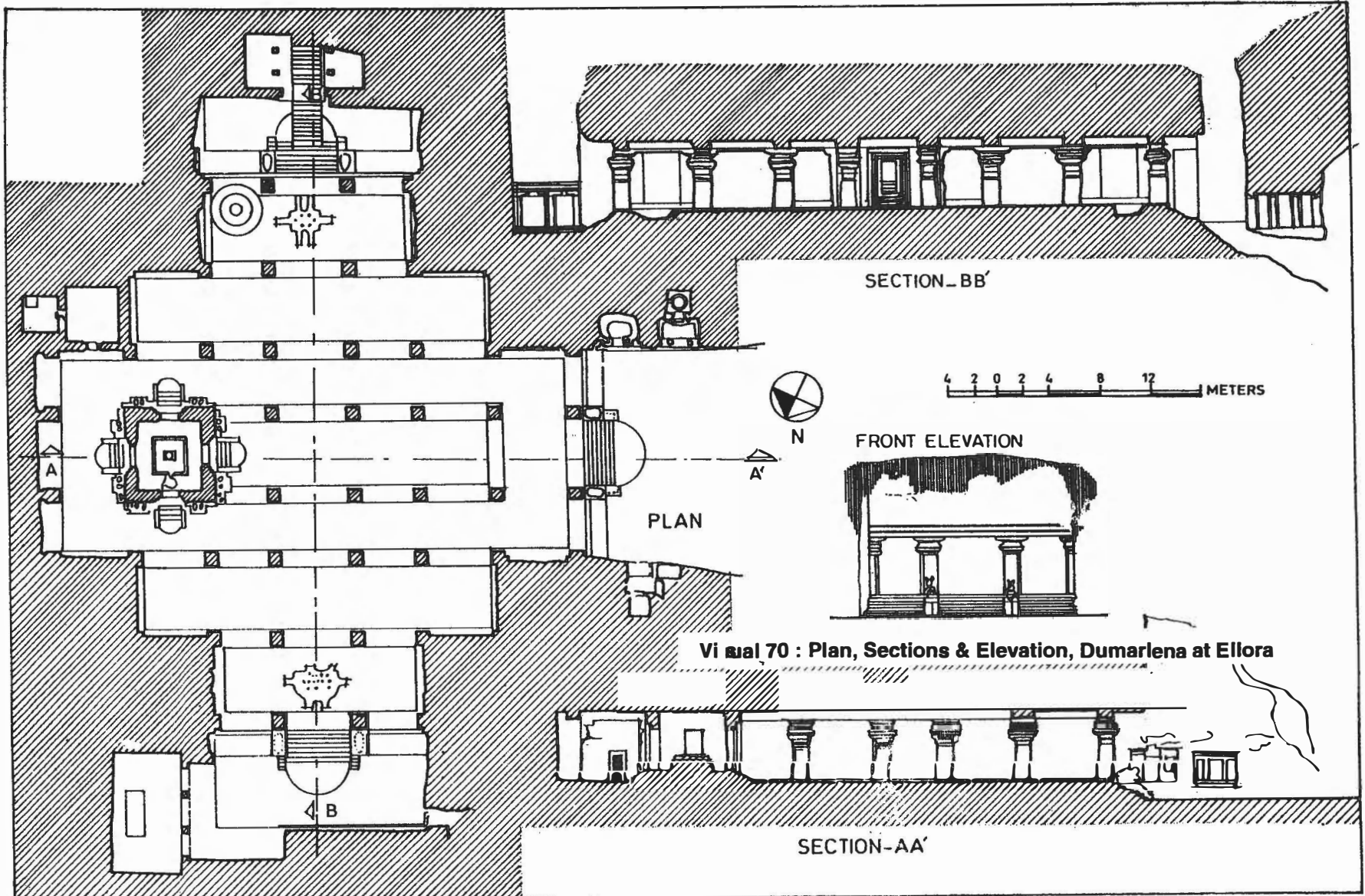
The temple is 90 ft long and has a relatively low height in comparison to its length (Visual-66). Its Shikhara in the Northern or the Nagra style appears small and truncated, whereas, Antarala takes bigger dimensions and serves the purpose of a spill over area. The exterior walls have repetitive canopied niches employed as shrine motifs. This is too monotonous and does not fit into the overall architectural scheme of this temple. This can be termed as an architectural experiment involving combination of northern and southern features in one structure.

The Queen of Vikramaditya-second built the Virupaksha temple, which has better design and construction (Visual-67). The temple is believed to have been done by artisans and craftsmen brought from Kanchipuram, who had the lingering impressions of design and details of the Kailashnath temple executed some decades ago during the rein of Pallavas. Virupaksha temple has great beauty in its exterior appearance. The comprehensive architectural scheme not only focuses on the main shrine but also gives due importance to a Nandi pavilion, which is planned detached in its front. The whole complex is surrounded by a walled enclosure entered into by a well designed gateway.

The main structure measures 120 ft from the front porch to the rear wall of the shrine. The overall grouping of the various structures, when seen from outside, present a very harmonious and cohesive view. The massiveness of the stone work has been subdued by richly carved sculptures, which adorn the main shrine. The main shrine has been distinctively placed away from the Mandapa with a Pradakshina Path all round. The pillared Mandapa has thick stones walls with window fenestration. The square-base Shikhara rises with diminishing tiers of considerable height forms a pyramidal profile in elevation. The external walls have ornamental niches formed by pilasters with sculptures and windows alternatively. This wall of the complex, following the plan of the group itself, has Kuta and Sala heads on its coping, which is suggestive of it being a derivative of the Shore temple at Mahabalipuram.

The sculptures include depiction of scenes from Ramayana, Shiva and Nagas (snakes). An effort has been made to bring about a marriage of structure and sculpture, though through a disciplined geometry. Virupaksha temple is an exemplary architectural scheme where the conception and construction seem to have gone hand in hand.

The Sangameswara temple built some time earlier, during 725 AD, in the near vicinity, has a similar scheme but with an open Mandapa. The main Vimana of this temple is of three stories. The lower most storey is surrounded by two walls, the inner and outer. The second story is an upward projection of the inner wall, while the outer wall encloses the covered circum ambulatory



The sculptured relief of Nataraja and Sadashiva at Elephanta are better executed than the Bhairava relief at Ellora. The sculpture of Ellora seem to be less accomplished in technique though more florid in style.

The Elephanta cave, like Ajanta and Ellora, has been carved out in the Deccan trap basalt. Removal of the zeolite from the vesicles by the natural processes has given pitted appearance to many of the carvings. Weathering along the flow junction and joint planes in the rock, scaling due to the presence of Chlorophaeite and responsible for damaging parts of the temple walls or columns as well as for the mutilation of the carvings.

The third example of this category is the temple of Jogeshwari in Salsette (Visual-73), which dates back to 800 AD. It is largest of all the others discussed as it measures 250 ft in length cut directly across the trap formations in the outskirts of Mumbai and whose strike is generally north-south. The excavation itself is axially arranged due east-west with two entrances, one at either end, although the main entrance was undoubtedly on the east from the point of view of the longitudinal array of the constituent units of the temple. At the eastern end almost from the very top of the flat roof rock, long flight of steps about 10 ft wide has been sunk down to a depth of nearly 24 ft where the first entrance corridor is separated from the main unit by providing a transverse open court between it in the main unit and providing another door frame at the inner end giving access to what could be called the Mukh Mandapa of the unit. The entrance corridor in that case would represent an Agra Mandapa. It comprises of an almost square cut door frame and wall sections along side and above it in addition to a ceiling. This cave temple is one of the largest excavations of its kind.

The temple of Kailasha at Ellora is most extensive, sumptuous and beautiful (Visual-74 & 75). This temple was hewn out of a rocky hillock by Krishna-first (757-783 AD). It has certain similarities to the Lokeshwara temple at Pattadakal. It is hewn out of a great rectangular quarry. It measures 27 ft long, 154 ft wide and 107 ft deep at the back with lateral projections through out the entire height of the structure. In its general plan it bears a certain resemblance to the Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal, though it is more than twice its size.

There are four main parts of the temple, namely, the main shrine, the entrance gateway to the west, a Nandi shrine in between and cloisters around the courtyard. No significant departure from the conventional clustering of Vimana and the Mandapa is noticeable here, yet the total assembly with a distinct order and rich artistry has been able to evolve a harmonious architectural entity. The whole structure has a considerably high plinth which measures 25 ft in height conspicuous by its heavy plinth moldings

ARCHITECTURE UNDER PALLAVAS

The Pallavas in the far south, were probably the officers and administrators posted there by the Saatyavan kings who upon the decline of Saatyavan kingdom proclaimed themselves as kings, established their dynasty and ~~extended~~ their control southward towards the region around Kaanchipuram near Chennai. King Mahendravarman, who was contemporary to Harsha and Pulakeshin-second, was a Jain, but later adopted Shaivism. At about the same time when the Chalukyas executed shrines for Vishnu in the soft sandstone cliffs of Badami, his political rival in the Tamilnadu, Mahendravarman-first of the Pallava dynasty into the granite hill at Mandagapattu his first cave temple dedicated to the Brahmanical trinity i.e. Brahma, Vishnu & Shiva. As such this would be the first temple in stone in the whole of the southern India. This tradition was followed by the executions at Pallavaram, Vallam, Mamandur, Mahendravadi and Siyamangalam, Dalavanur and Tiruchchinapalli (Visual-76). Several huge temples were constructed in the far south by Pallava kings.

MONOLITHIC SHRINES

King Mahendravarman and Narsimhvarman Mamalla, in the 7th century AD, constructed a rock cut temple near Kaanchi at Mammalapuram (Mahabalipuram). These rock cut temples are called Rathas (chariot). A cluster comprising of seven similar Ratha temples (Visual-77) is well known as 'Seven Pagodas'. These ~~seven~~ Rathas are termed as 'Dharmaraj Rath', 'Bhima Ratha' etc.. These temples are rock cut constructions and monolithic. The huge statues inside the temples are also monolithic in symmetry with the character of temple structure. The scenes sculpting the 'Descent of the Ganges' at Mahabalipuram, is carved out in relief, on the face of a rock, measuring 98 ft in length and 43 ft in width.

West facing Arjuna and Draupadi Rathas have a common terrace supported on elephants. These Pagodas are dedicated to lord Shiva and Durga respectively. The statues of deities are in relief and shown mounted on their vehicles Bull and Lion, which are carved out of adjacent rocks. Single storeyed Pagoda called Draupadi has a roof form resembling curvilinear thatch construction shown supported on posts and beams. The Arjuna is a two storeyed structure square in plan with upper story supporting an octagonal base dome. Valiyankuttai and Pidari Pagodas resemble the Arjuna Pagoda but their detailing of the superstructure above the columns vary. The dome above springs from the square plan.