

CLASS- First Year B. Arch

SUBJECT- National Architectural Study Tour to Pondicherry
A one-week national architectural study tour to Pondicherry was organized by the School of Architecture, D. Y. Patil College of Engineering and Technology, Kasaba Bawada, Kolhapur from 12th February 2026 to 18th February 2026

DAY 1 - Arrival on Chennai Central Railway Station around 12:30 noon, transfer to hotel.
Visit to Dakshin Chitra Museum at 3:30pm and Evening visit to Kovalam Blue Flag Beach for leisure.



Dakshina Chitra, located near Chennai, is a famous living-history museum dedicated to preserving and promoting the diverse arts, architecture, and lifestyles of South India. It is best known for its collection of 18 authentic, relocated, and reconstructed heritage homes representing Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh/Telangana.



Authentic Architecture: The Dakshin Chitra museum reconstructs historical homes to showcase traditional building styles, featuring unique structures like Kerala's timber houses and Tamil Nadu's traditional homes. These were original houses slated for demolition that were purchased, dismantled, and meticulously reconstructed on-site by traditional artisans (Stapathis) to ensure historical accuracy.

Design Influence: The museum's master plan was developed by the renowned architect Laurie Baker, known for his sustainable and cost-effective architectural philosophy. The public buildings and ongoing conservation efforts have been led by architect Benny Kuriakose

DAY 2 - Visit to Five Rathas at Mamallapuram



Pancha Rathas is an example of monolithic Indian rock-cut architecture. The complex was initially thought to have been carved during the reign of King Narasimhavarman I (630–668 CE). It has been declared as the World Heritage site by UNESCO in 1984. Each of the five monuments in the Pancha Rathas complex resembles a chariot (*ratha*), and each is carved over a single, long stone or monolith, of granite which slopes in north–south direction with a slight incline. The structures are named after the Pandavas and their wife Draupadi



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DAY 2 -Visit to Shore Temple at Mamallapuram



The Shore Temple is a complex of temples and shrines that overlooks the shore of the Bay of Bengal. The Shore Temple in Mahabalipuram is a 1,300-year-old, 8th-century UNESCO World Heritage site, renowned as one of South India's oldest structural stone temples, built with granite blocks by the Pallava dynasty. Unlike earlier rock-cut cave temples, this is among the earliest structural temples built with stacked, cut stones, marking a major architectural development. It features a pyramidal kutina-type tower and thousands of sculptures dedicated to Shiva, representing the pinnacle of Pallava art. Positioned right on the shore, the temple was designed to be viewed from the sea, often historically linked to the legend of the seven "pagodas" (temples). The temple has survived centuries of sea erosion, salt winds, cyclones, and the 2004 tsunami.

DAY 3 – Workshop in Auroville on Rammed earth construction and brick making



A lecture was arranged for the students explaining them the concept of rammed earth construction and CEB. It was conducted by the Ar. Mansi at the Auroville complex. The students enthusiastically participated in the rammed earth construction workshop. They constructed the wall with the guidance of the experts. Also they made Compressed earth block, from scratch with mixing of raw materials in proper proportions and the compacting them into blocks.



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DAY 3 – Workshop in Auroville on Rammed earth construction and brick making and visit to Matri Mandir



The students studied the layout of the Auroville town, understood the sustainable concepts on which the town functions, and the lifestyle of the residents.

DAY 4 – Heritage Walk in the French Colony of Pondicherry and journey to Tiruchirapalli- Chettinad Heritage Houses

The French Quarter of Pondicherry, often called White Town, is a masterclass in colonial urban planning and architectural fusion. Established by the French in the 17th century, the district is famous for its Neoclassical aesthetics blended with Tamil vernacular adaptations, creating a unique "Franco-Tamil" style.

The buildings here are characterized by their pastel-colored facades—mostly mustard yellow, peach, and white—accented by bougainvillea and tree-lined, cobblestone streets named after French figures like Rue Romain Rolland.

The notable buildings studied :

- 1.Raj Nivas
- 2.Notre Dame des Anges church
- 3.French Consulate
- 4.Basilica of the Sacred Heart
- 5.French war memorial



NoteDamedesAnges

Greco-Roman/Neoclassical. Notable for its stunning pink facade and two symmetrical towers, this church was modeled after the Basilica at Lourdes. It features a unique limestone-and-egg-white plaster finish that gives it a marble-like glow



Distinct Architectural Features of The French Town in Pondicherry

- Color Palette: The iconic yellow and white walls aren't just for aesthetics; they historically represented the status of the "White Town" and helped reflect sunlight to keep interiors cooler.
- The "Franco-Tamil" Hybrid: Many residential buildings feature a Tamil-style ground floor (the thinnai or raised veranda for social interaction) and a French-style first floor with arched windows and wrought-iron balconies.
- Symmetrical Grid Layout: Unlike the organic, winding streets of traditional Indian towns, the French Quarter is laid out in a rigid, geometric grid—a hallmark of French urban design.
- Climate Adaptation: To handle the humidity, architects utilized high ceilings, thick masonry walls, and louvred shutters (Persiennes) which allowed air to flow through while blocking direct sunlight.

Hidden Details

Along Goubert Avenue (the Promenade), the **French War Memorial** is a minimalist, white structure that serves as a stark, modern counterpoint to the ornate 18th-century villas nearby, specifically designed to offer views of the Bay of Bengal.



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DAY 4 – Visit to Tiruchirapalli- Chettinad Heritage Houses



The **Chettinad settlement** is a unique example of planned vernacular urbanism developed by the Nattukottai Chettiars, a prosperous banking and merchant community in Tamil Nadu. Following a massive flood in their coastal ancestral homes during the Chola period, the community moved inland to a semi-arid region (now spanning 73 villages), which profoundly influenced their settlement patterns.

1. Urban Layout and Town Planning

The settlements are characterized by a highly sophisticated gridiron plan that is climate-responsive and socially organized.

- **Axis Orientation:** Streets are laid out on a North-South axis, which ensures that the primary movement paths remain shaded by the tall mansions during the hottest parts of the day.
- **Linear Plots:** Houses are built on long, narrow East-West plots. This orientation allows the series of internal courtyards to align with the sun's path, facilitating a constant flow of air (stack effect) and natural light without the heat of the direct morning or evening sun.
- **Hydraulic Systems:** Every settlement includes a communal water management system consisting of a network of ponds (ooranis) and channels designed to harvest and store the sparse monsoon rainfall common in the arid region.

2. The Mansion studied: S.AS.RM residence and heritage houses. The "Chettinad Mansion" is the defining unit of the settlement, designed to accommodate large joint families and serve as a statement of global trade wealth. A key architectural feature is the straight-line visibility: looking in from the front threshold, one can often see all the way through to the back exit across multiple courtyards.

- **Front Thinnai (Veranda):** A raised platform with carved stone or wooden pillars used for business meetings and receiving guests without inviting them into the private areas of the house.
- **Valavu (Central Courtyard):** The heart of the home, typically used for marriages and religious ceremonies. It is surrounded by heavy pillars made of Burmese Teak or Italian Marble.
- **Rendu Kattu (Second Courtyard):** A more private space designated for the women of the household, used for daily activities like drying grains or socializing.
- **Bhojana Sala:** Large dining halls capable of seating hundreds of people during community feasts.

3. Materiality and Global Influence: The settlements are a "visual archive" of the Chettiars' trade routes across Southeast Asia and Europe:

- **Athangudi Tiles:** These are iconic, handmade cement tiles with floral and geometric patterns, manufactured locally in the village of Athangudi.
- **Global Materials:** The mansions frequently feature Belgian glass, Italian marble, Japanese ceramic tiles, and Burmese teak, reflecting the community's cosmopolitan reach.
- **Egg-White Plastering:** The walls are finished with a unique lime plaster mixed with egg whites, sea shells, and jaggery, resulting in a smooth, polished surface that keeps the interiors cool for decades.

4. Preservation Status : In 2014, the Chettinad village clusters were added to the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List. While many mansions fell into disrepair as families migrated to urban centers, several villages like Kanadukathan, Pallathur, and Kottaiyur remain well-preserved, with many ancestral homes now repurposed as heritage boutique hotels or museums.



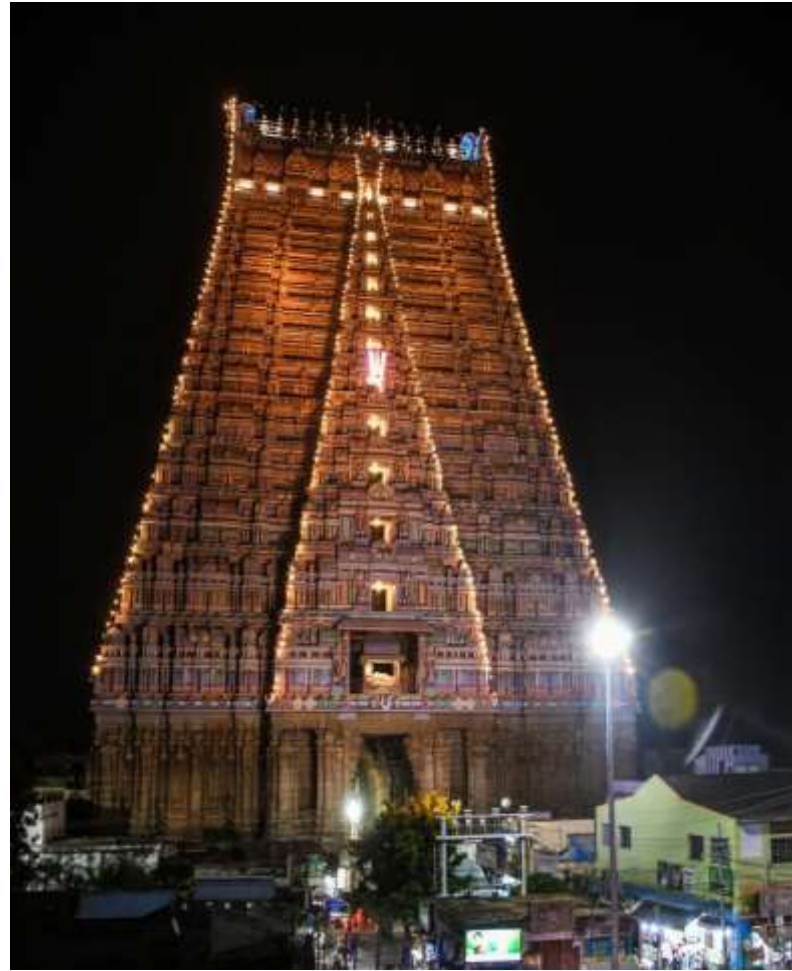
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DAY 5 – Visit to Tiruchirapalli- Athangudi Tile Workshop and evening visit to Srirangam Temple



Athangudi tiles are exquisite, handcrafted cement tiles originating from the village of Athangudi in the Chettinad region of Tamil Nadu, India. They are renowned for their vibrant colors, intricate geometric or floral patterns, and cooling properties, making them a hallmark of traditional Chettiar architectural heritage.

The students had hands on workshop for making Athangudi tiles. They were demonstrated the whole process right from mixing the raw materials in right proportions to setting of tiles and releasing of moulds. The students participated and made tiles in different designs. The workshop was conducted at a reputed tile factory **MALAR TILES (in Sivganga, Tamil Nadu)** supplying tiles pan India. Tiles were made in the size of 10"x10",



The Ranganathaswamy Temple is a Hindu temple dedicated to Ranganathar and his consort Ranganayaki. The temple is located in Srirangam, Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu, India. Often recognized as the world's largest functioning Hindu temple complex. Dedicated to Lord Ranganatha (a reclining form of Vishnu), this 156-acre complex in Tiruchirappalli is a premier Vaishnavite site featuring 21 stunning gopurams. Built in the Dravidian style, featuring seven concentric, thick walled enclosures (prakaras). The main entrance tower, the Rajagopuram, is one of the tallest in Asia. The temple is also known for its extensive history, with contributions to its construction from the Cholas, Pandyas, Hoysalas, and Vijayanagar dynasties.

DAY 6 – Visit to Brihadeeshwara temple and Chidambaram Nataraj Temple



The Brihadeeswara Temple in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu—also known as Peruvudaiyar Kovil or the "Big Temple"—is a supreme achievement of Chola architecture and a UNESCO World Heritage site. Commissioned by Emperor Raja Raja Chola I and completed around 1010 CE, it represents the pinnacle of the "mature" Dravidian architectural style. The key architectural features are: The Towering Vimana: The temple's most iconic feature is its Vimana (the tower over the sanctum), which rises to a height of 216 feet (66 meters). It is one of the tallest temple towers in India.

- **Monolithic Capstone** (Kumbam): The tower is topped by a single block of granite weighing approximately 80 tons.
- **Precision Dry Masonry**: the temple was constructed without mortar, using an advanced interlocking system of stone blocks, which has helped it withstand over a millennium of seismic activity.

- **Shadowless Legend**: It is a popular, though debated, observation that the Vimana is designed such that it casts no shadow on the ground at noon during the equinoxes, showcasing the Chola era's mastery of astronomy and geometry.

The Chidambaram Temple: located in Tamil Nadu, India, is a premier 1,000-year-old Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Shiva as Nataraja, the Lord of Dance. Representing the element of space (Ākāsha), it is renowned for its unique, multi-form worship, including the secretive Chidambara Rahasya, and its association with human anatomy.

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