

# VISHWANATH DHAM

Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple was built in 1780. Over time, the main Temple and many others surrounding it were hemmed in by dense and ad hoc development. Access to the Temple was severely constrained, and the lack of infrastructure resulted in the neighbourhood being unkempt and unhygienic. In 1916 when Gandhiji visited Varanasi, he had the following to say:

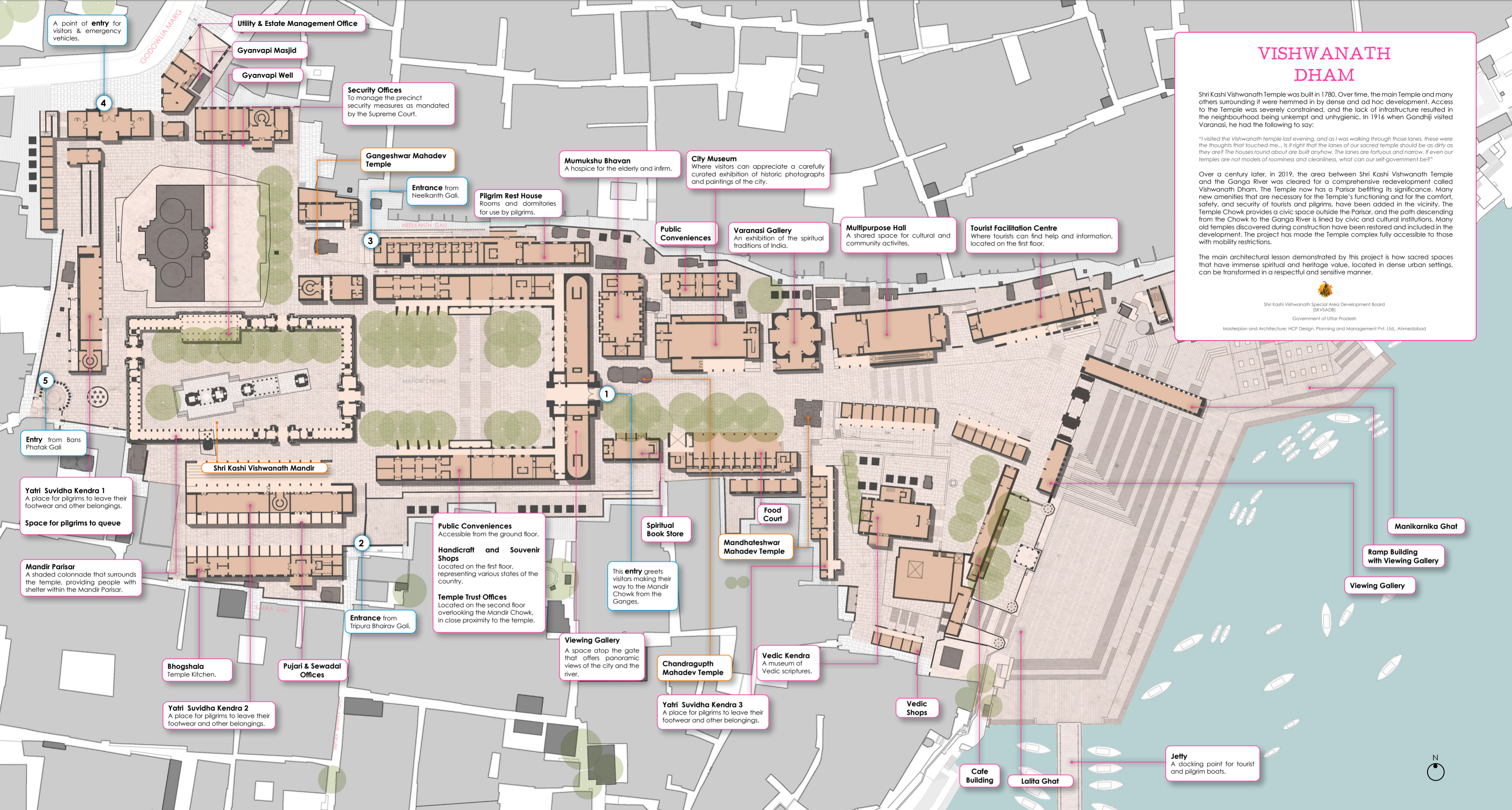
*"I visited the Vishwanath temple last evening, and as I was walking through those lanes, these were the thoughts that touched me... Is it right that the lanes of our sacred temple should be as dirty as they are? The houses round about are built anyhow. The lanes are tortuous and narrow. If even our temples are not models of roominess and cleanliness, what can our self-government be?"*

Over a century later, in 2019, the area between Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple and the Ganga River was cleared for a comprehensive redevelopment called Vishwanath Dham. The Temple now has a Parisar befitting its significance. Many new amenities that are necessary for the Temple's functioning and for the comfort, safety, and security of tourists and pilgrims, have been added in the vicinity. The Temple Chowk provides a civic space outside the Parisar, and the path descending from the Chowk to the Ganga River is lined by civic and cultural institutions. Many old temples discovered during construction have been restored and included in the development. The project has made the Temple complex fully accessible to those with mobility restrictions.

The main architectural lesson demonstrated by this project is how sacred spaces that have immense spiritual and heritage value, located in dense urban settings, can be transformed in a respectful and sensitive manner.



Shri Kashi Vishwanath Special Area Development Board (SKVSADB)  
Government of Uttar Pradesh  
Masterplan and Architecture: HCP Design, Planning and Management Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad



A point of entry for visitors & emergency vehicles.

Utility & Estate Management Office

Gyanvapi Masjid

Gyanvapi Well

**Security Offices**  
To manage the precinct security measures as mandated by the Supreme Court.

**Gangeshwar Mahadev Temple**

Entrance from Neelkanth Gali.

**Pilgrim Rest House**  
Rooms and dormitories for use by pilgrims.

**Mumukshu Bhavan**  
A hospice for the elderly and infirm.

**City Museum**  
Where visitors can appreciate a carefully curated exhibition of historic photographs and paintings of the city.

**Public Conveniences**

**Varanasi Gallery**  
An exhibition of the spiritual traditions of India.

**Multipurpose Hall**  
A shared space for cultural and community activities.

**Tourist Facilitation Centre**  
Where tourists can find help and information, located on the first floor.

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Entry from Bans Phatak Gali

**Yatri Suvidha Kendra 1**  
A place for pilgrims to leave their footwear and other belongings.

Space for pilgrims to queue

**Mandir Parisar**  
A shaded colonnade that surrounds the temple, providing people with shelter within the Mandir Parisar.

Shri Kashi Vishwanath Mandir

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**Public Conveniences**  
Accessible from the ground floor.

**Handicraft and Souvenir Shops**  
Located on the first floor, representing various states of the country.

**Temple Trust Offices**  
Located on the second floor overlooking the Mandir Chowk, in close proximity to the temple.

Entrance from Tripura Bhairav Gali.

**Spiritual Book Store**

**Viewing Gallery**

A space atop the gate that offers panoramic views of the city and the river.

**Chandragupth Mahadev Temple**

**Yatri Suvidha Kendra 3**  
A place for pilgrims to leave their footwear and other belongings.

**Vedic Kendra**  
A museum of Vedic scriptures.

**Vedic Shops**

**Bhogshala**  
Temple Kitchen.

**Pujari & Sewadal Offices**

**Yatri Suvidha Kendra 2**  
A place for pilgrims to leave their footwear and other belongings.

**Mandhateshwar Mahadev Temple**

**Food Court**

Manikarnika Ghat

**Ramp Building with Viewing Gallery**

**Viewing Gallery**

**Cafe Building**

Lalita Ghat

**Jetty**  
A docking point for tourist and pilgrim boats.



Shri Kashi Vishwanath Mandir

Mandir Chowk

Pilgrims' Path

Manikarnika Ghat