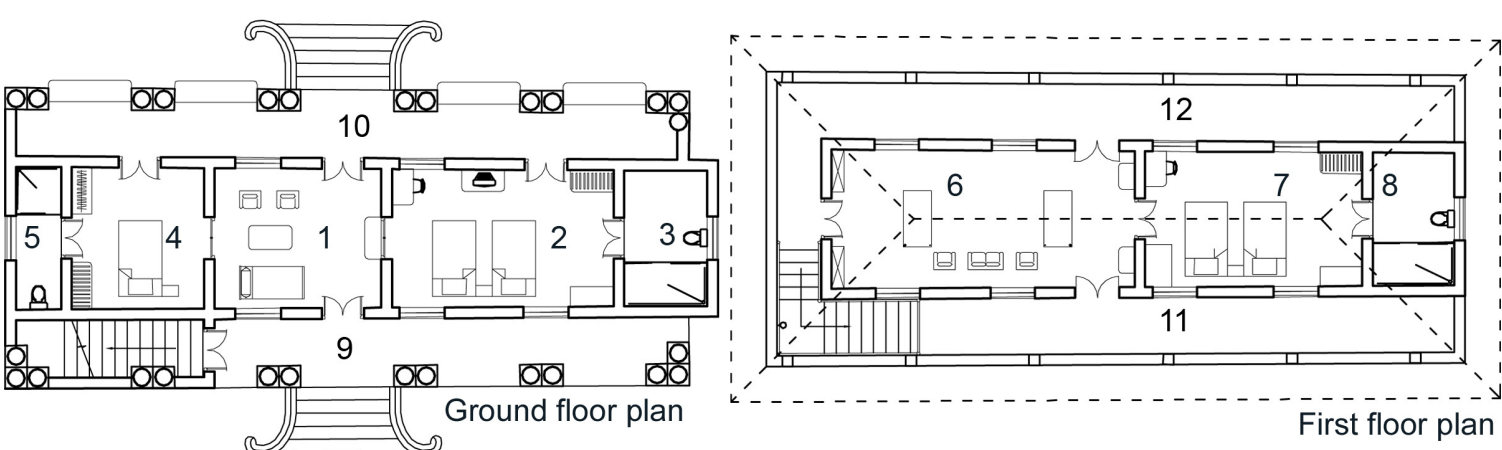


Restoration of Chittoor Palace

Ernakulam Kochi, India	
Architects	Inspirations Kochi, India
Clients	Sureh Namboothiri Kochi, India
Commission	2005
Design	2005
Construction	2006
Occupancy	2007
Site	2,019 m ²
Ground floor	273 m ²
Total floor	434 m ²
Costs	94,280 USD

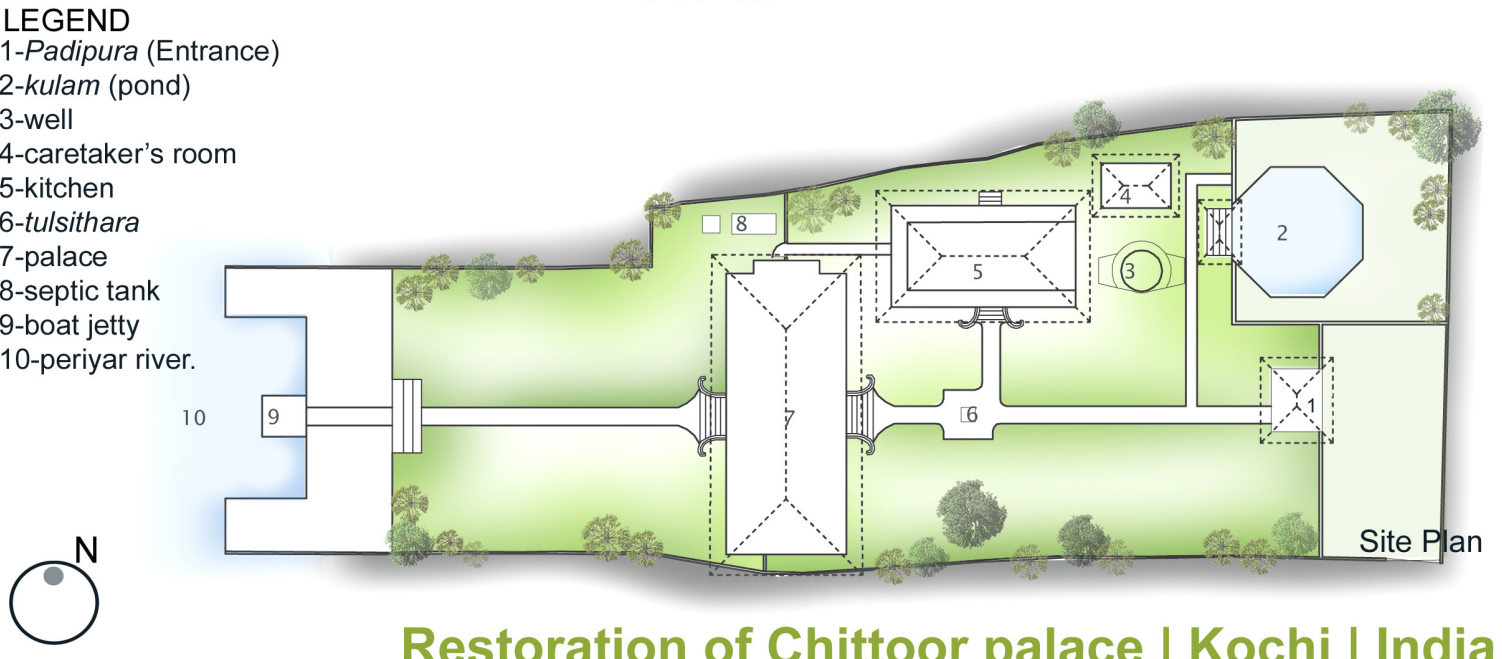
Programme This 400 year old summer palace has been preserved to provide upmarket paying guest accommodation without compromising the original fabric. The palace is approached via an entrance gate or, from the rear, from a river jetty. These structures, along with the pool and bathhouse, and the outbuilding that now houses the kitchen, were also renovated. Timbers were restored and some shutters glazed to improve the internal space. Walls were stripped to reveal the lime plaster, verandahs were retiled and modern bathrooms and air conditioning introduced with no external impact. The full budget was recouped within a year, exemplifying the commercial case for adaptive reuse as much as the importance of preserving traditional building crafts.



LEGEND
1-Lobby 2-Bedroom 3-Bath room 4-Bedroom 5-Bath room 6-Living room 7-Bedroom 8-Bath room
9-Lower front corridor 10-Lower rear corridor 11-Upper front corridor 12-Upper rear corridor

The Chittoor Palace, once the summer home of the maharajah of Cochin is a testimony to a four hundred year history. Unlike other grand palaces, this is small in scale. The double storied semi-colonial, semi- kerala style palace is entered through a padippura (entrance gate). The main building comprises of a living space and 3 rooms flanked by spacious verandahs on both floors. A kitchen and a dining space exist as a separate structure with the caretaker's room. The palace sits amidst two large gardens, one with a traditional kulam (pond) and another overlooking the Periyar River.

After several years of being unoccupied and neglected, the palace was in a dilapidated state before restoration. Most wooden members were damp and termite infested. These were treated and restored. Door and window shutters were treated, restored and selectively replaced with plain glass. A team of highly skilled artisans dismantled the damaged part of the roof, asbestos clad railings (introduced at sometime during its long history) and replaced them with wooden panels. Several layers of paints on the walls were painstakingly peeled off to expose the rich lime plastered surface underneath.





The verandah on the ground floor



A framed entrance for those arriving by water



The Kulam (with the kulappura)



Rear view of the palace



The haven of peace



View of palace from the padipura

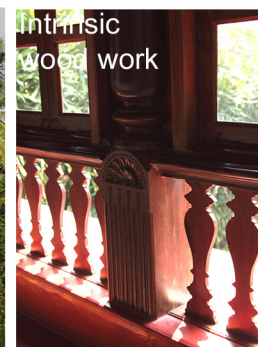
Section through site



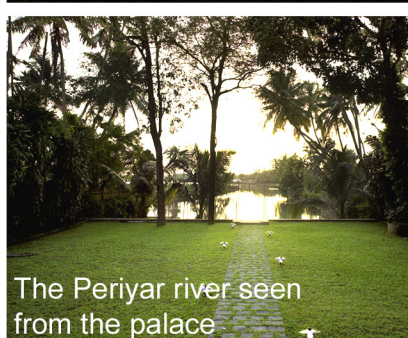
The dinette



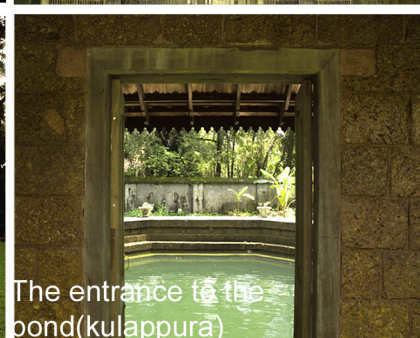
The welcoming entrance by boat



Intrinsic wood work



The Periyar river seen from the palace



The entrance to the pond (kulappura)



The restored windows



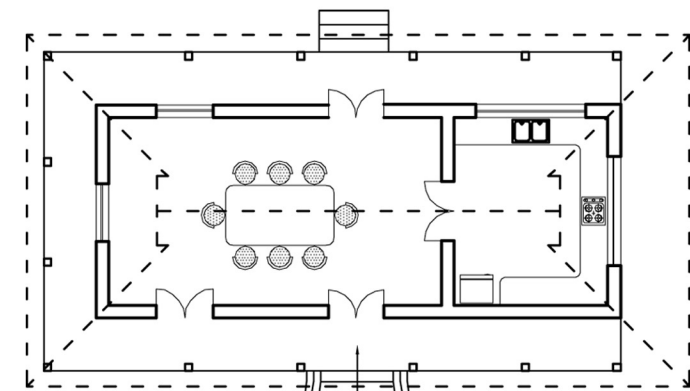
The ascent to majestic heights



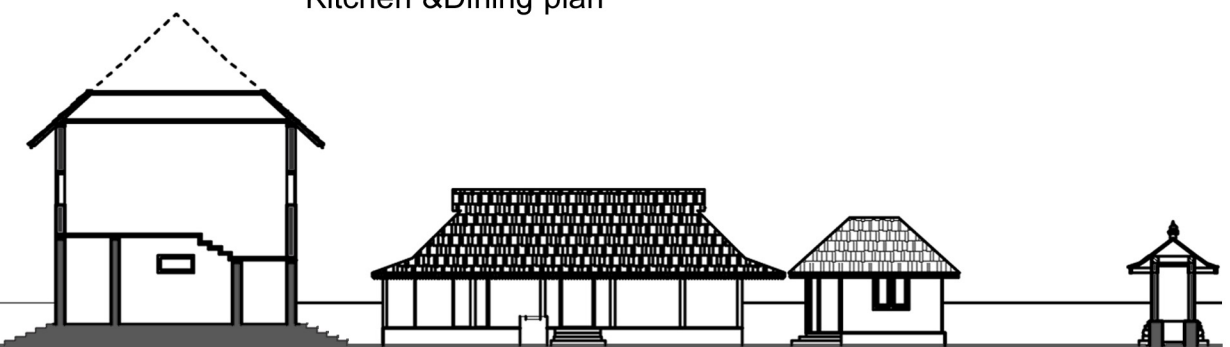
The royal living room

The flooring was done up with athangudi tiles with polished red oxide borders and skirting. The toilets were redone to accommodate functional use and hygiene. The electrical, plumbing and air conditioning systems were introduced without tampering the building. Other interesting features are the entrance gate and the pond built strictly as per vastu guidelines.

The palace in its restored condition is being used as a home stay targeting a very premium clientele of travelers who cherish their privacy while they holiday in comfort. The end result has turned out to be a small haven of peace and tranquility – a statement of recreating the traditional grandeur of the palace with the comforts of a contemporary lifestyle, at a reasonably moderate over all cost of less than \$ 95,000.



Kitchen & Dining plan



The enchanting corridor on the first floor