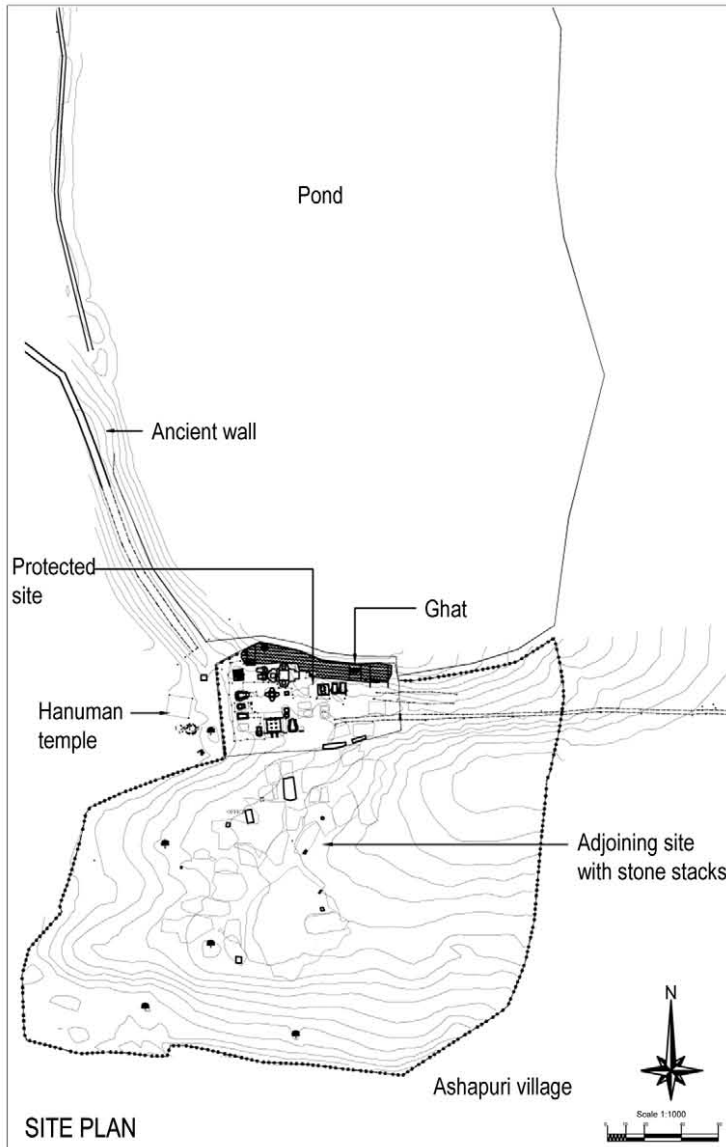


## Introduction

The archaeological remains of some twenty-six medieval temples at Ashapuri (Dist. Raisen, MP, India), under the protection of the Directorate of Archaeology, Archives and Museums, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh, testify to a flourishing urban centre during the Pratihara periods, and an important cult centre with continuous activity in temple construction from at least the 9th to 12th centuries. This little-known site holds crucial clues to-and indeed seems to play a key role in-a radical; stylistic shift of style that took place in central India in the 11th century, accompanying the appearance of a new temple form or 'mode', the Bhumija. Ashapuri is 6kms from the famous, unfinished, 11th century Shiva temple of Bhojpur, and the full historical and architectural significance of both sites can only be understood if they are considered together.



Hundreds of architectural and sculptural fragments have been laid out and numbered, while many still lie as debris. There are numerous ruined temples in central India, but there is probably no site where the remains of so many architectural members still remain. Ashapuri therefore represents a rare challenge as to how to protect, and how to give due value and meaning, to the vestiges of an important centre of medieval Indian temple art. The fragmented nature of the site has posed a challenge for making decisions about techniques and tools for documentation. The fragmentary state of most of the temples provides a unique opportunity for interpretation of medieval temple architecture.

## Protected site



## Condition of site in rains



## Approaches to site during rainy season



## Laid stones



Site owned by: Directorate of Archaeology, Madhya Pradesh

COLLABORATIVE PARTNER

CONSULTANTS

CLIENT



## Scope of Work

Undertake primary and secondary research of the historic site; undertake a total station survey of the entire temple site and surrounding villages/areas identifying known or likely sites of archaeological significance; undertake mapping and documentation of site for salvage archaeology; prepare inventories; undertake detailed documentation of Temples 5, 12 and 17; undertake site investigations and prepare feasibility reports.

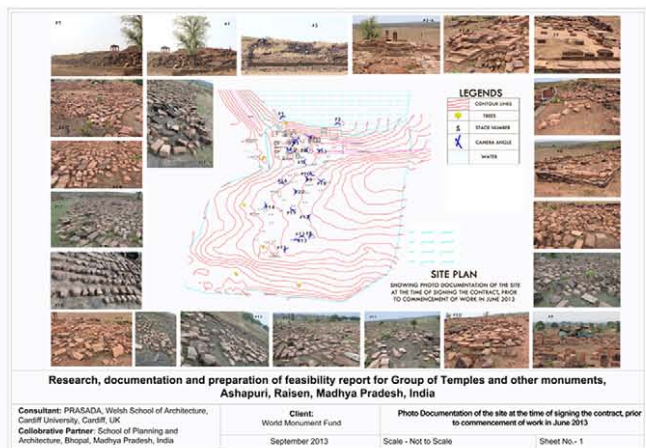
The outputs and deliverables include survey, documentation and feasibility studies, comprising reports and drawings of surveys, inventories, documentation, analysis etc.

## Documentation

### Base site plan: Total Station Survey



### Site plan before the contract

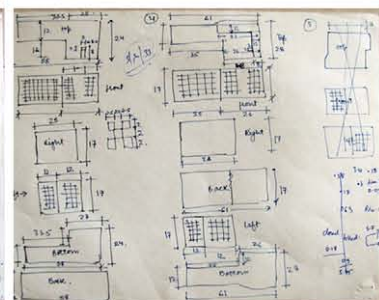
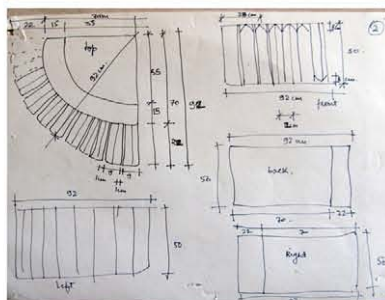
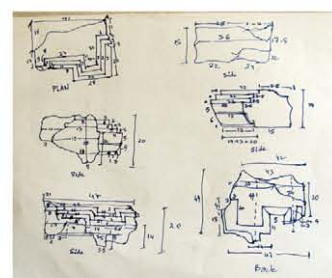
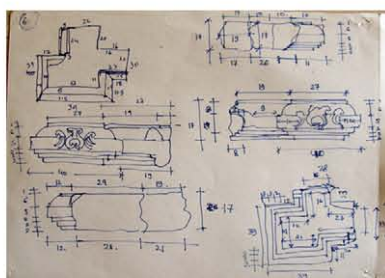


## Photo documentation with critical dimensioning

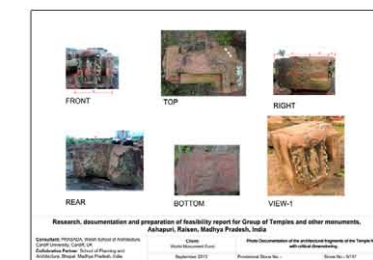
A technique of photo documentation with critical dimensioning has been specially developed for documentation of fragments lying on the site.

## Process

### I. Measurements of the fragments as taken on site



## II. Data sheets



Site owned by: Directorate of Archaeology, Madhya Pradesh

COLLABORATIVE PARTNER

## CONSULTANTS

## CLIENT





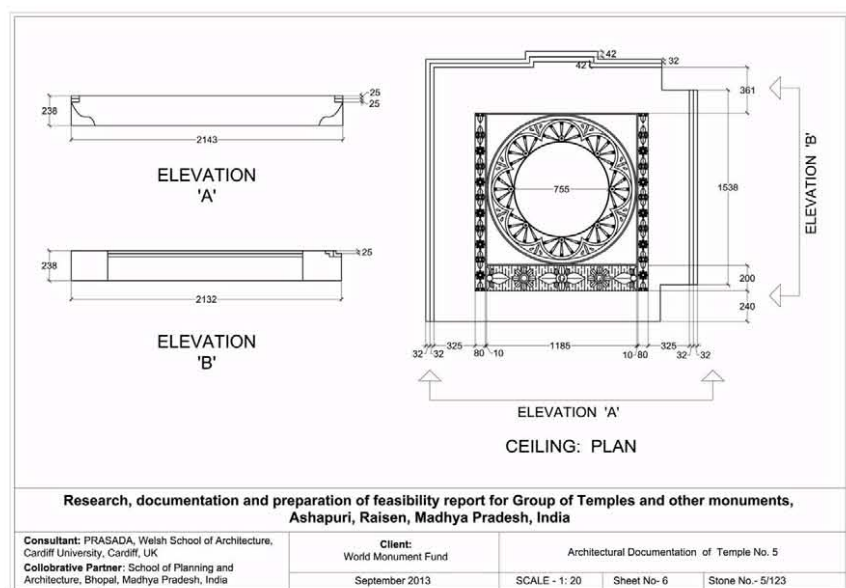
## Database

A unique number is given to each fragment on site. The Database consists of the location of stones where found, now located, the proposed location of the stones as per theoretical reconstruction, condition, value and risk of the fragment.

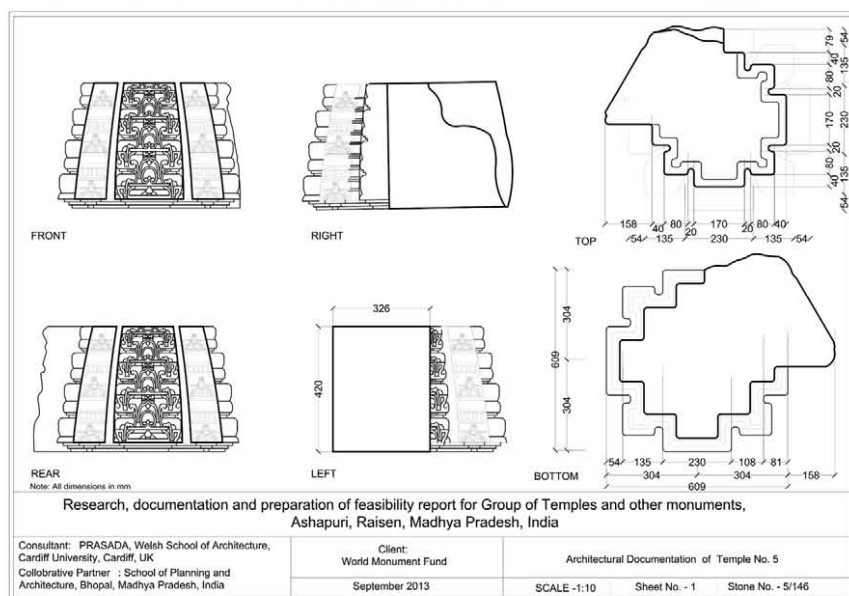
Ashapuri Temples Project, Database: Temple 5															
Volume No.	Fragment No.	Front	Rear	Right	Left	Top	Bottom	View 1	Old No.	Where Found	Where Stored	Original Location	Condition of Fragment	Value	Risk
2	51								Z 51	Stack 5 B	Temple 5 mound	Shikhara	Water Stagnation, Loss of sharp Edges, Microbiological Growth,	High	Loss of Strength, Trapped Water, Storage
2	53								Z 53	Stack 5 B	Temple 5 mound	Shikhara	Loss of sharp Edges, Missing Details, Traces of Lime Plaster	Very high	Loss of Strength, Trapped Water

## Architectural drawings

### Drawings of the stone fragments



### Existing temple base of temple no. 5



Site owned by: Directorate of Archaeology, Madhya Pradesh

COLLABORATIVE PARTNER

CONSULTANTS

CLIENT



## Shikhara



## Varandika (cornice) and crowning of Bhadra



## Jangha (wall)



## Vedibandha (moulded base)



## Pitha (platform)



## Mulaprasada

The exact size of the garbhagriha (cella) and skandha (shoulder platform) are not known, but can be estimated with reasonable accuracy on the basis of comparative examples and textual prescriptions.

## Conclusion

Of the carved exterior above the pitha, probably less than twenty percent of the original pieces remain, yet the design of the mulaprasada of Temple 5 can be deduced with a fair degree of certainty from what survives. There are a few elements of which no examples have come to light, but their form can be extrapolated from what we know.

It would be unwise to decide on the strategy for the site while this study has still to reveal the full picture, but a grasp of the options is already clearer. For temple 5, the parts can certainly be made meaningful in relation to their original whole, and this document perhaps begins to give clues as to how this can be done through drawings, or perhaps models (physical or digital). Full reconstruction of the temple need not be entirely ruled out, though clearly the volume of the new parts would be far greater than that of the original parts, unless substantial quantity of fragments is found in stacks of other temples.

Partial reconstruction, both in situ and/or in carefully chosen positions close to the original temple, is clearly feasible. Before either option for reconstruction can be carried out, an approach to the insertion of new pieces to support and supplement the original will need to be agreed, and a process of trial assembly will need to be followed, alongside the production of detailed design and assembly drawings.

## Shikhara

Surviving pieces from the ascending chain of karnakutas exhibit a sequence of diminishing sizes that points to a five-bhumi (storey) composition. This would give a height of 1.07 times the width (plausible though a little lower than would be expected) and a radius of about three times the width (trigunasutra). The range of fragments from the intermediate facets, is consistent with pratikarnas and pratilatas following the widths of the respective projections of the wall below. Their coursing follows that of the karnas. However, the central lata spine appears to have wider courses, and consequently a larger-scale jala (network) of gavakshas. The griva (neck), amalaka and padmasirsaka from the summit of the shikhara survive substantially intact.

## Varandika (cornice) and crowning of Bhadra

The varandika consists of a pair of kapotali mouldings with a tulasangraha (joist-end moulding) in between, and is penetrated by the remarkable miniature shikharas that completes the projecting shrine forming the centrepiece of the whole composition.

## Jangha (wall)

The wall projections are fronted by niches. The (now empty) deep one in the bhadra and those in the karnas have chhadya canopies. No doubt dikpalas (guardians of the directions) were housed in the karnas (corner projections), while intermediate projections house heavenly maidens. The pratibhadra takes the form of a ghatapallava pillar, like the sole pratiratha of many 9th century temples in this tradition. Along the top of the jangha runs the usual kinkinikajala (band of bells).

## Vedibandha (moulded base)

The design can be deduced from the surviving fragments. It comprises the usual kumbha, kalasha and kapotali mouldings, crowned by a lush manchika. In the pratibhadra kapotali is replaced by a tulapitha. Every projection has a pedimented niche.

## Pitha (platform)

The elaborate pitha has survived reasonably intact. It was carefully dismantled, and the pieces numbered, before the start of this contract. This has allowed an understanding of the nature of temple foundations at the site.

