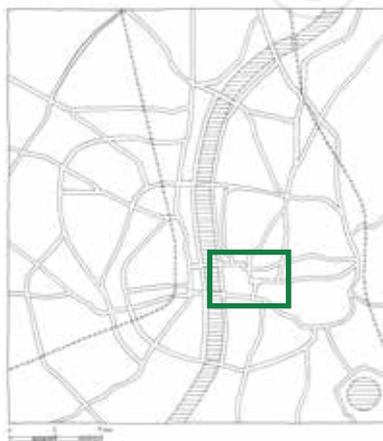


Bhadra

Nearest BRTS: Lokmanya Tilak Bag

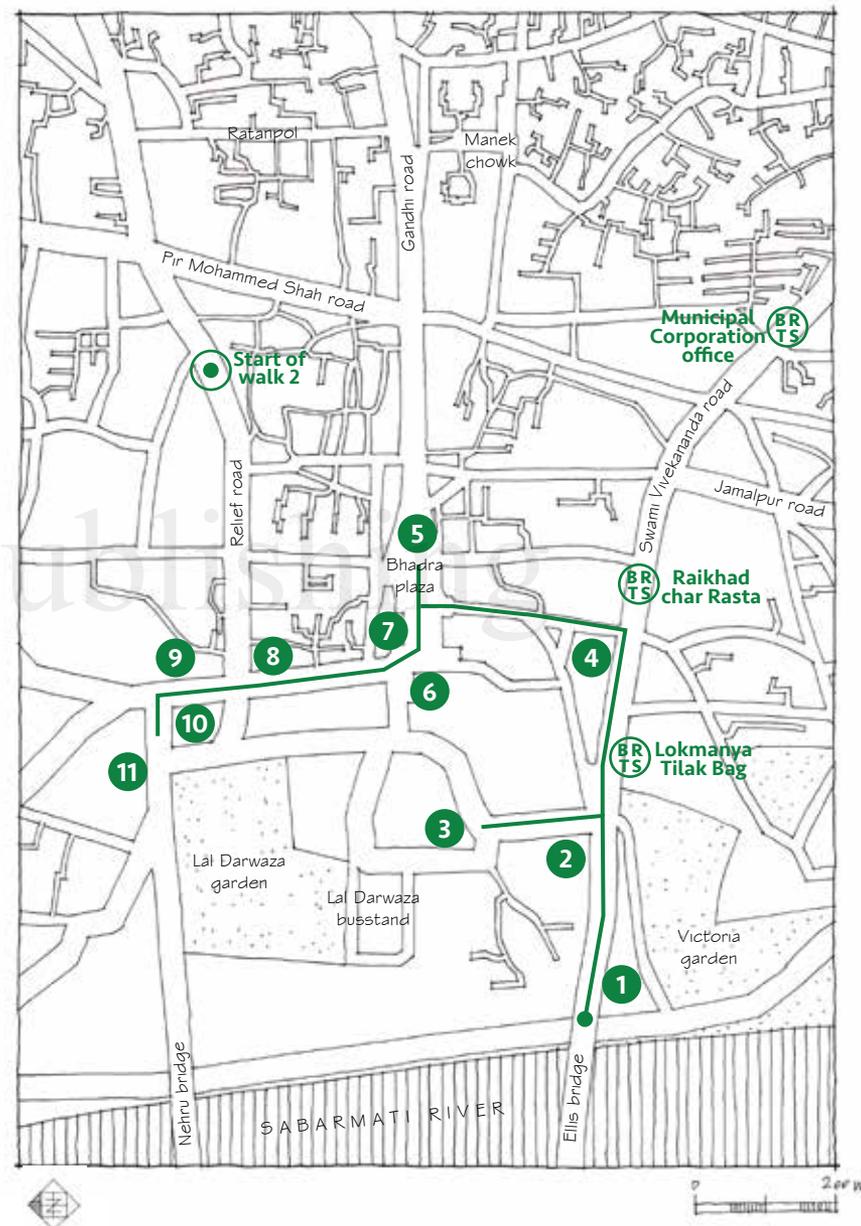
Walking time: 1 hour

The Bhadra Fort was the location of the fortified residence of the rulers of Ahmedabad for hundreds of years. It was here that Ahmed Shah first founded the city in 1411 AD and built his palace and private mosque that rank among the oldest surviving buildings of the city. Although now heavily encroached upon, most of the palace consisted of lush gardens that were fed by water from the Sabarmati River. In recent times, the walls of the fort, except on the riverfront side, have come down and space has opened up for modern buildings. Prominent people and institutes were able to settle in close proximity to the symbolic heart of the city. The area also has many street vendors, fuelled by the crowds of people coming in and out of the Lal Darwaza bus stand, which is the terminal station for most municipal bus services.



Key

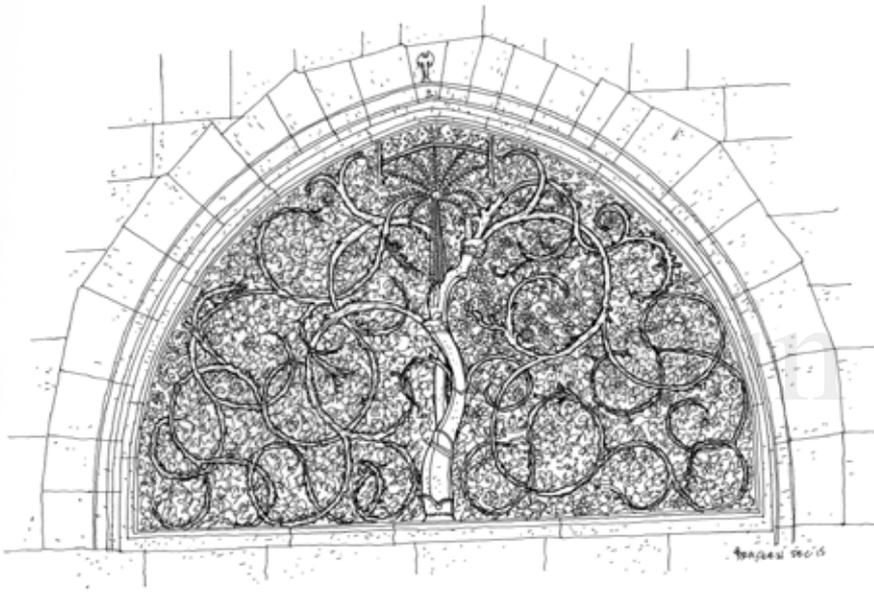
- 1 Manek Burj
- 2 Ahmed Shahi Masjid
- 3 Congress Bhavan
- 4 Irish Presbyterian Mission High School
- 5 Bhadra Plaza
- 6 Bhadra Fort
- 7 Himabhai Institute
- 8 Electricity House
- 9 Mangaldas House
- 10 Sidi Saiyid Masjid
- 11 Central Bank of India



building is not only worthwhile for its architecture, but also for its food. There are two excellent restaurants – one downstairs and one on the rooftop – that serve traditional Gujarati thalis and other Indian dishes.

10 Sidi Saiyad Masjid

Opening times: daily, dawn to dusk (closed during prayers)
Admission: free



The third important building overlooking this junction is a small mosque constructed at the end of the Gujarati Sultanate in 1575 and originally part of the Bhadra fortifications. The main feature of the mosque – and an absolute must see – is the stunning jaalis that make up the eastern façade containing the mihrab, especially the one containing a finely carved vine-and-palm motif that has gained nationwide fame. The motif has become the unofficial logo of Ahmedabad and has also served as the inspiration for the Indian Institute of Management logo. Being one of last mosques constructed in Ahmedabad it represents the final evolution of Sultanate architecture in the city. The front façade is completely opened up by moving the minarets to the corners of

the building and using only arches to hold up the domed roof. Before the A.S.I. (Archeological Survey of India) restored the building, it was in pretty bad shape, perhaps partly because the British had used it as administrative offices during their long occupation. Sidi Saiyed was a slave of Ahmed Shah. Although there were many slaves in the service of the shah, it is a little-known fact that Sidi Saiyid was of African descent. The Siddi community came to India in the sixteenth century from the East Africa coast. Coastal Africa had large Muslim communities and trade between the various Muslim sultanates in Africa, Arabia and India was intensifying. Several Siddis rose to powerful positions within the Gujarati court. Nowadays, there is only a small group of around a 100 Siddis left in Ahmedabad. They still, however, continue some of their native cultural traditions, like the Dharmaal dance.

11 Central Bank of India

Finally, on the north side of the busy junction is the imposing multi-storey mass that houses the head office of the Central Bank of India, which was constructed in 1966. This reinforced-concrete building is divided into a broad podium containing banking facilities, and a six-level tower with offices. The external façade continues for another two floors on top of the offices, creating a roof garden. The building was designed by architect Doshi, who also designed the nearby Premabhai Hall at Bhadra Plaza, and the massive brises-soleils on the office floors are very like they ones he also uses on the CEPT building (which can be seen in the University Walk). These were of course also used by Doshi's famous teacher, Le Corbusier. The building originally had a finish of exposed concrete, but the façade has been whitewashed in later years. Doshi had a much grander vision for the building, and the public plaza above the first two banking floors, these were supposed to be part of a wider network of elevated public spaces and pedestrian bridges which was never completed.

Link to the Around Jama Masjid walk:

Continue walking along Relief road towards the intersection with Pir Mohammed Shah Road.

stairs takes you to the second floor which functioned as the main living room. The mosaics on the floor are imported from Italy and there is stained glass all along the top of the windows of the front façade. If you peek out of the window you can see the Divitia Haveli, which stands directly opposite. It is possible to imagine how people use to talk from building to building across the narrow alley. The house was intended to function as a restaurant but due to local municipal parking restrictions the restaurant was not allowed to open. A heritage walk is organized daily at 10 pm and lasts an hour in which you are shown around the local area by a local guide who explains some of the fascinating aspects of traditional pol life in Ahmedabad.

3 Rameshwar Mandir

Opening times: daily, dawn to dusk
Admission: free

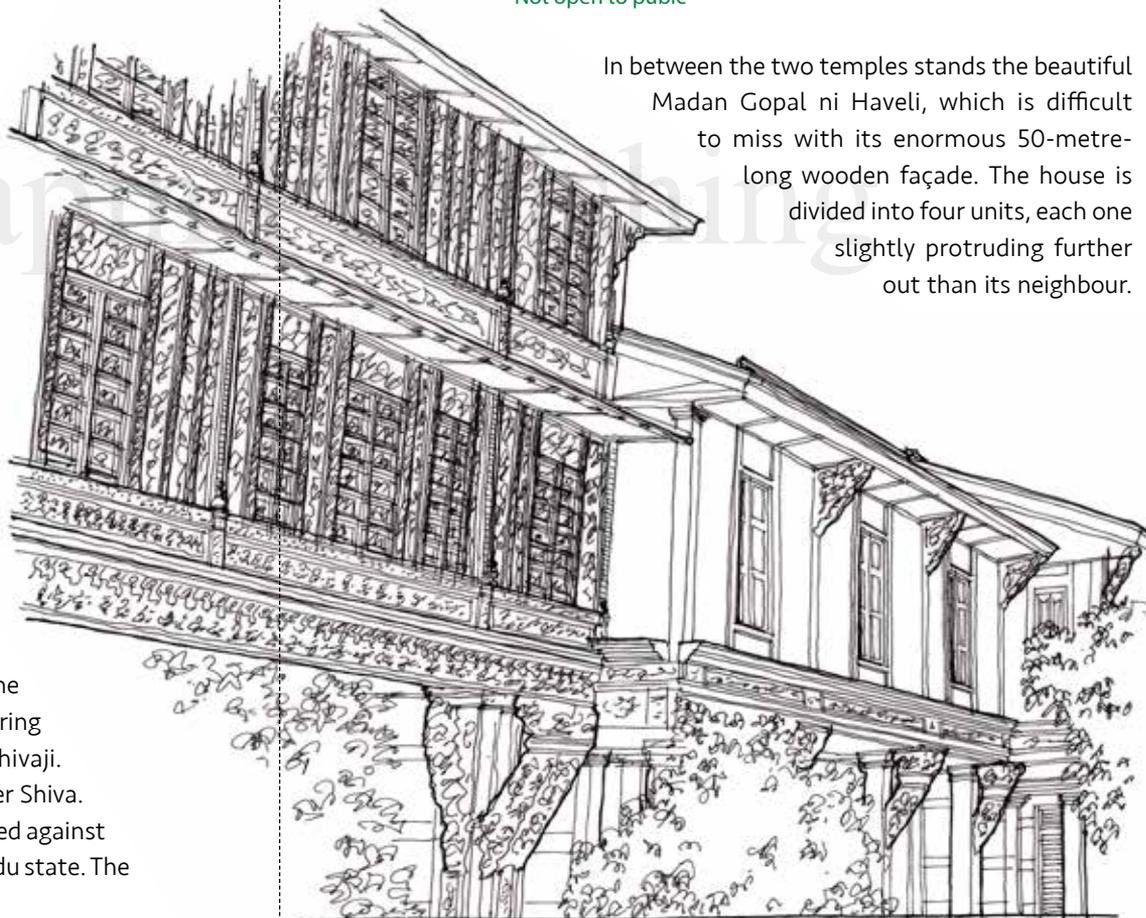
Head back to the main lane and follow its winding course for around 400 metres until you come to a T-junction and turn right. This road has two temples close to one another; they are called Rameshwar Mandir and Kameshwar Mandir respectively. The Marathas ruled Ahmedabad from 1758 to 1817 and during their rule they built various temples in the city. The maximum extent of the Maratha empire encompassed the entire region of central India, from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal. Their rule was marked by constant warfare, first with various sultanates and the Mughal empire, and later with the British. All temples built in Ahmedabad by the Marathas are dedicated to Shiva, including the two here. Shiva is one of the three main deities in the Hindu pantheon and became particularly popular during Maratha rule because of the dynasty's founder Shivaji. Shivaji was born in Pune District and was named after Shiva. During the seventeenth century he successfully rebelled against the Muslim Sultanate of Bijapur and established a Hindu state. The

temples are as a result both a tribute to Shiva and to Shivaji, as well as a projection of Maratha power. Rameshwar and Kameshwar are names for different forms of Shiva. An easy way to identify any Shiva temple is the presence of Nandi, the bull that serves as Shiva's mount. The larger Rameshwar Mandir (on the right-hand side) has a classic two-tiered system of pavilion or vestibule in front and a towering Sikhara behind. The Sikhara contains the Garba Griha, the room that holds the deity. The Kameshwar Mandir (on the left-hand side of the road) is smaller. Unfortunately, both temples are in a bad state of disrepair.

4 Madan Gopal ni Haveli

Not open to public

In between the two temples stands the beautiful Madan Gopal ni Haveli, which is difficult to miss with its enormous 50-metre-long wooden façade. The house is divided into four units, each one slightly protruding further out than its neighbour.



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