

Walk One: The French Quarter



Rue Dumas

The French quarter developed along the beach and around the present Bharathi Park, which is surrounded by stately government buildings. Residential villas extend on either side interspersed by institutional structures. In general the buildings fall into two main categories: residential,



Rue Law de Lauriston

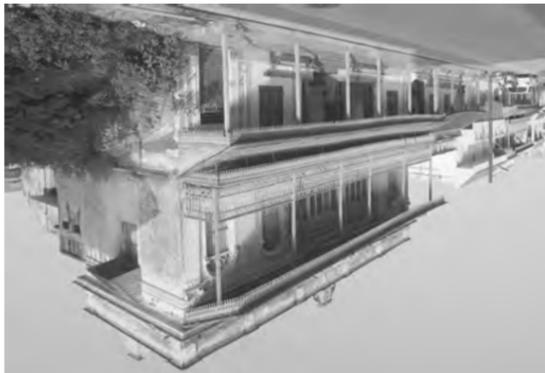
which form the majority, and are simple and varied, and public, which are set amidst large plots with fenced enclosures. French building models were adapted to suit local climatic conditions. The street façades are usually characterised by continuous wall-

to-wall construction with high garden walls and elaborate gateways. The façades are divided into smaller panels by the use of vertical pilasters and horizontal cornices, and feature flat or segmental arched windows with bands and louvered wooden shutters. Wooden balconies over iron brackets and continuous parapets with simple ornamental features are common.

Most French houses were built on similar ground plans with few variations and with full or partial street frontage. The main façades have colonnaded porticoes to provide better protection from sun and rain, and also act as a transition space to the garden court. A major change from the original French model is the use of flat terraced roofs instead of the pitched roofs of the Parisian villas.

The walled gardens form private interior courts on to which the rest of the building spaces open. The interiors of the houses are usually more ornate than the exterior. High ceilings, tall arched doors and windows mark the rooms, and in the case of two storied buildings, vaulted staircases wind up. Often the inclined window shades were made of light materials like wood or metal.

Rue Cazy



the 'milieu' or 'ensemble'. This quality of the streetscapes is today threatened by the widespread destruction of traditional houses, especially in the Tamil part. If this heritage is to be protected then it is important to preserve all these houses. Pondicherry has two distinct parts: the French and the Tamil. The French quarter has structures in the European classical style, whereas the buildings in the Tamil quarter are in the vernacular style of Tamil Nadu. The two styles have influenced each other with the result that many buildings in both parts of the town are a harmonious blend of European and Tamil architectural patterns.

Walk two: The Tamil Quarter

Originally the native Tamil town developed around the nucleus of a group of temples in the northern section, and the streets were laid along the east-west axis, onto which the back-to-back row houses opened.

These streetscapes with continuous wall-to-wall construction are very different in character from the French streetscapes. Their exterior façades mainly feature a *thalvaram* (street veranda with a lean-to roof over wooden posts) - a social extension of the house providing shelter for the pedestrians - and a *thinnai* (semi-public veranda space) with masonry benches for visitors and pilgrims.

These "talking-streets", so called because of their intimate scale and interactive nature, are typical of vernacular Tamil architecture, and the entire street stretch is homogeneous because of connecting elements like lean-to-roofs, cornices (horizontals), and pilasters and engaged columns (verticals) with ornamental parapets, which define the skyline. All houses are similar, but no two houses are exactly the same.

The *thinnai* marks the sensitive transition space after which the

house is entered through a finely carved wooden door. Once inside, the *mutram* (colonnaded courtyard) becomes the central family space around which the various other spaces are functionally arranged. Some



Rue Cazy

houses have several courtyards. Within the intimate fabric of the Tamil town an interesting morphology of built-form is observed, ranging from the simple country tiled single storied houses of the old Hindu quarters, to the two-storied houses with considerable colonial influence of the later Hindu and Christian quarters, to the more elaborately ornamented and colourful houses of the Muslim quarters.

On the whole, a synthesis of two varying styles is evident in many buildings. Especially in the case of some two-storied Tamil buildings, the ground floor is usually Tamil type with *thinnai*, *thalvaram*, *pillared courtyard* and carved wooden doors, while the first floor displays French influence through fluted pilasters, columns with capitals, arched windows, plaster decorations and end-ornament elements.



Vysial Street

Heritage Walks

The old town has a unique charm, which captivates the hearts of visitors. To experience the spirit of Pondicherry, it is essential to walk through the old town and closely observe the nature of its architectural traditions. With a view of offering a sensitive revelation of the city to tourists and the citizens themselves, INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage) has planned this Heritage Walk of Pondicherry. There are very few monumental buildings in Pondicherry, its architectural character is a result of hundreds of French and Tamil houses that create

History of Pondicherry

Pre-colonial History

Pallava Dynasty	325 - 900
Chola Dynasty	900 - 1279
Pandya Dynasty	1279 - 1370
Vijayanagar Empire (under nayakship of Gingee)	1370 - 1614
Sultanate of Bijapur	1614 - 1638

Colonial History of Pondicherry

Portuguese set up a factory	1523
Dutch buy textiles	1618
Danes set up a factory	1624
First French settlement	1674-1693
Dutch rule	1693-1700
French rule	1700-1761
British rule	1761-1765
French rule	1765-1778
British rule	1778-1783
French rule	1783-1793
British rule	1793-1815
French rule	1815-1954



Rue de la Marine

It is the cross-influence of building patterns in the Tamil and French quarters that gives the old town its distinct architectural vocabulary.

At present, the guided walks are offered by prior appointment.

You can also discover the town on your own with the help of this Heritage Trail map.

For guided tours, please contact:

Tourist Information Centre
(Pondicherry Tourism Development Corporation)
40 Goubert Avenue, Pondicherry - 605 001
Tel : 2339497 / 2334575

INTACH Heritage Center*
(Indian National Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage)
62 Rue Aurobindo, Pondicherry - 605 001
Tel : 2225991 / 2227324
*Visit Architectural Heritage Exhibition

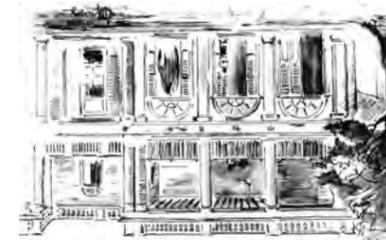
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Pondicherry Heritage Trail



Rue François Martin

History of Pondicherry

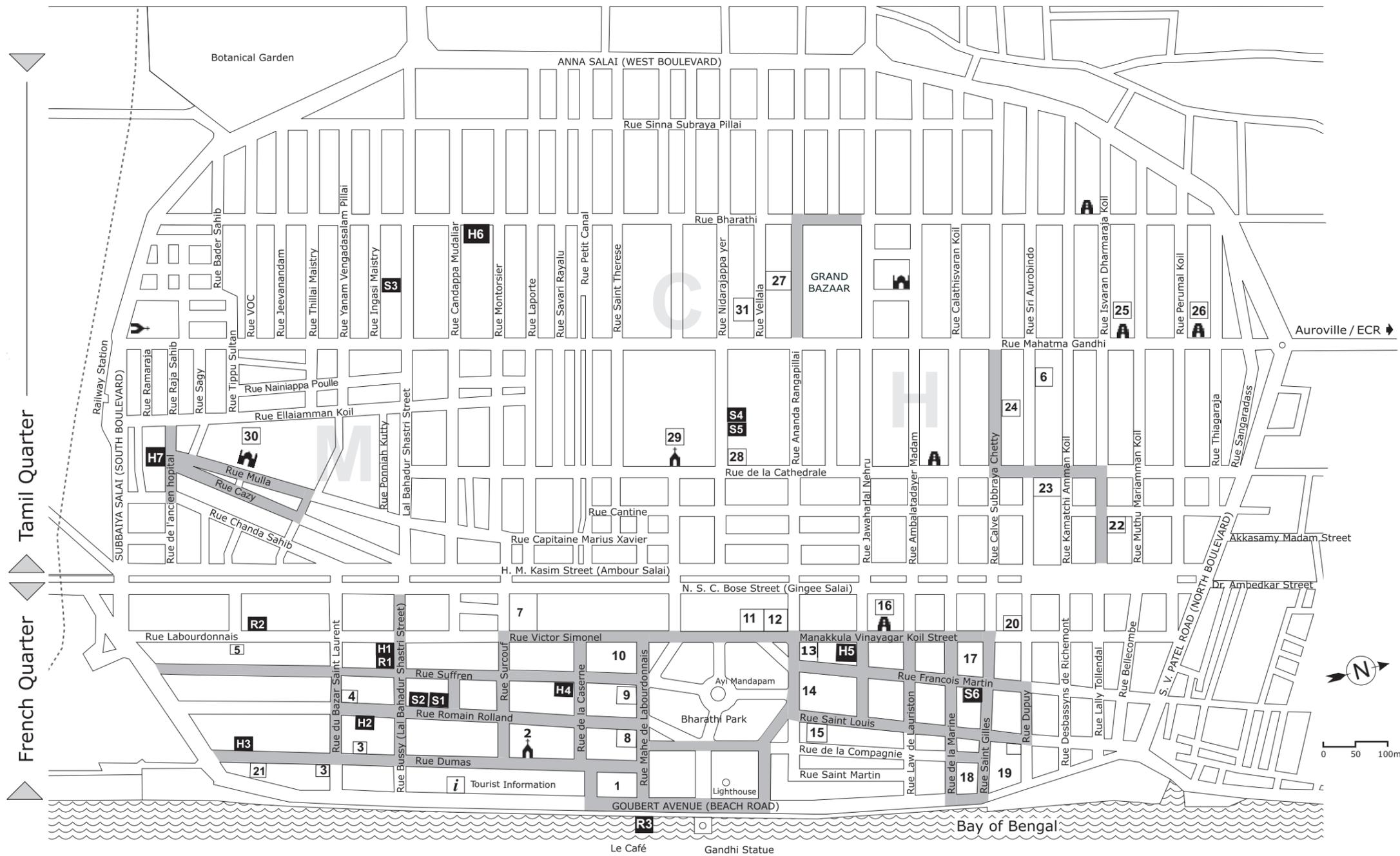


Pondicherry Museum

In 1521 the Portuguese were the first Europeans to return to trade in the flourishing trade attracted the French to establish a settlement in 1674. Under Governors such as François Martin and Duplex, it grew into a prominent fortified town and an important port of call. In 1746 the British lost Fort St. George in Madras to Duplex, and retailed by capturing Pondicherry in 1761 and razing the town to the ground, sparing only a few structures. However the Treaty of Paris returned Pondicherry to the French. The removal of fortifications led to flattened ramparts, which form the boulevards of Pondicherry today. A storm water canal separated the French and Tamil quarters, and streets were laid in the form of a grid. By 1768 much of the old town of Pondicherry, as we know it today, had been laid out and rebuilt on its former foundations.

Pondicherry was part of the Pallava, the Chola and Pandya empires from the 4th to 14th centuries, and thereafter it became a part of the Vijayanagar Empire, followed by Islamic rule.

"Pondicherry" is the French interpretation of the original name "Puducheri" meaning 'new settlement'. Excavations at Arkamedu, about 7 kms to the south of the town, show that the Romans came here to trade in the 1st century AD. The trade included dyed textiles, pottery and semi-precious stones. The findings are now displayed in the Pondicherry Museum.



Walk One: The French Quarter

- 1 Town Hall (Mairie / Hotel de Ville)
- 2 Notre Dame des Anges Church
- 3 Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient
- 4 Cluny Embroidery Centre
- 5 Alliance Française
- 6 INTACH Heritage Center
- 7 Lycée Française
- 8 Art Gallery
- 9 Chamber of Commerce
- 10 UCO Bank
- 11 Assembly
- 12 Cercle de Pondichéry
- 13 Ashram Dinning Hall
- 14 Raj Nivas
- 15 Museum
- 16 Manakkula Vinayagar Temple
- 17 Sri Aurobindo Ashram
- 18 French Consulate
- 19 French Institute
- 20 Golconde
- 21 Maison Colombani

Walk Two: The Tamil Quarter

- 22 Bharathi Museum
- 23 Calve College
- 24 Sushilabai School
- 25 Iswaran Temple
- 26 Perumal Temple
- 27 Ananda Ranga Pillai Mansion
- 28 VOC School
- 29 Immaculate Conception Cathedral
- 30 Kutpa Mosque
- 31 Subbiah Museum

Establishments in Heritage Buildings

- Hotels**
- H1 Villa Helena
 - H2 Hotel de l'Orient
 - H3 Hotel de Pondichéry
 - H4 Le Duplex
 - H5 Hotel du Parc
 - H6 Hotel Ganga
 - H7 Reve Bleu

- Restaurants**
- R1 Rendez vous
 - R2 Satsanga
 - R3 Le Café

- Shops**
- S1 Via Pondichéry
 - S2 Curio
 - S3 Kailash Bookshop
 - S4 Cottonwood
 - S5 Touchwood
 - S6 Fleurs en Flacon

Streetscapes

- H** Hindu Quarter
- C** Christian Quarter
- M** Muslim Quarter
- A** Temple
- ⛪** Church
- 🕌** Mosque



8, Rue de la Marine



Hotel de l'Orient



3, Rue Surcouf