

# FORT AREA HERITAGE ZONE



**ART & HERITAGE COMMISSION & DEPARTMENT OF  
TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING  
GOVERNMENT OF KERALA**

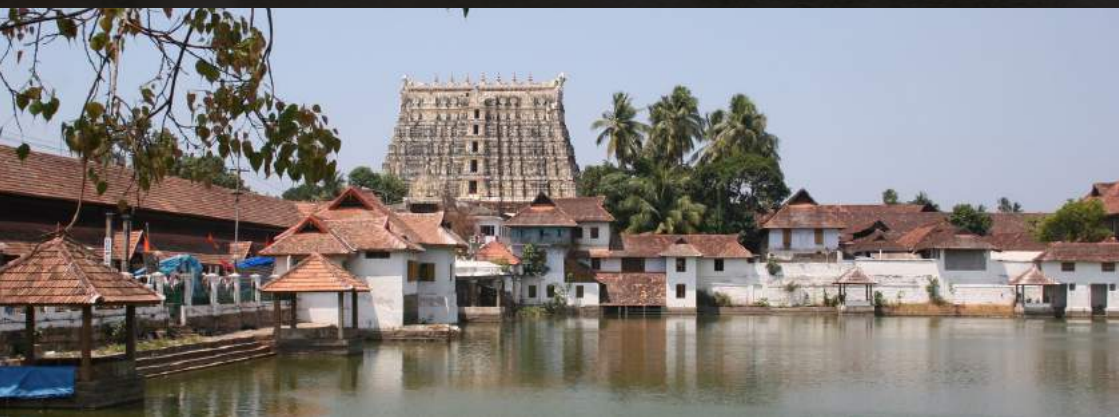
In collaboration with  
Department of Architecture,  
College of Engineering Trivandrum, Thiruvananthapuram



## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of Kerala has a layered history. The city finds mention in early literary compositions from the Sangam age (3rd to 10th century A.D.) as a temple town with the famed Sree Padmanabha Swamy temple as its core. However, the foundation for the modern Thiruvananthapuram dates back to the late eighteenth century, when the old capital of the ruling Travancore kingdom was shifted from Padmanabhapuram (now part of Kanyakumari District, Tamilnadu) to the precincts of the Sree Padmanabha Swamy temple.

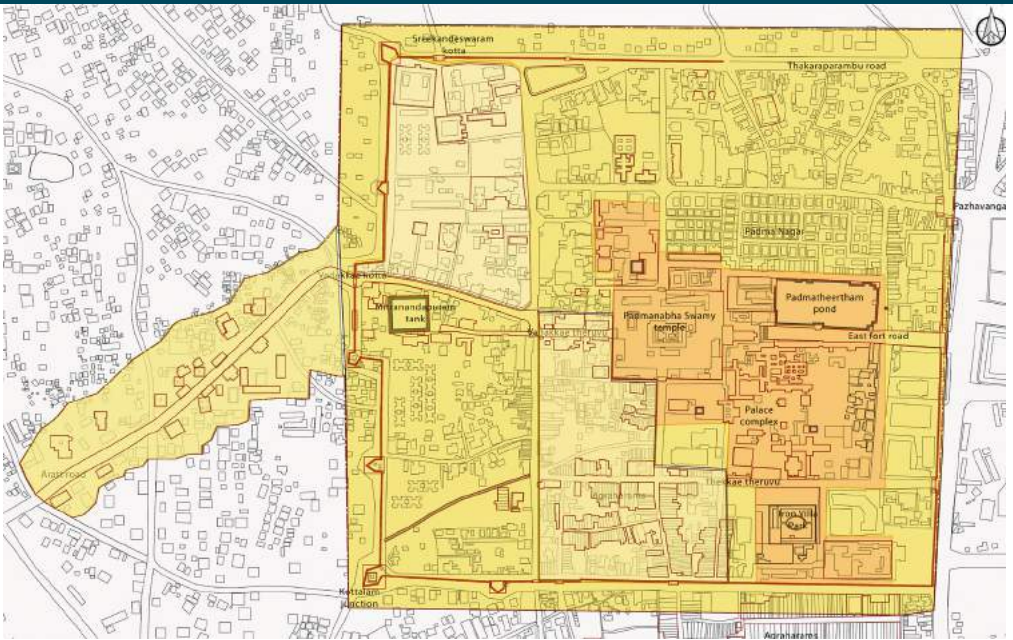
In historical times, the settlement pattern in the capital city was based on strict caste hierarchy. The nuances of the caste system and the position of each community in the traditional social hierarchy reflected in the residential typologies allocated to each group. In the late eighteenth century, a fort was constructed around the settlement, giving a clear boundary to the settlement. The privileged communities such as the Kshatriyas (rulers), the Brahmins (Vedic scholars and priests), and the aristocratic landed gentry were the ones who lived in the precincts of the temple. The various housing typologies have evolved over a while from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, and its design and position within the settlement was a reflection of the social norms and traditions of its inhabitants. Amongst the residential types in the vicinity of the Sree Padmanabha Swamy temple, the Aghraharams, the abodes of the Tamil Brahmin community, claimed a larger share. The wonderful edifices of the Travancore palaces and the elegant façade of the Ammaveedus lend a unique architectural charm to the Fort and its environs. The Kuthira Mālīka, Krishna Vilasam, Anantha Vilasam, Ranga Vilasam, Saraswathy Vilasam, Sundara Vilasam, Sreepādam and Bhajanappura kottaram . are some of the major palaces in the Fort area. The major water bodies include Padmatheertham and the Mitranandapuram temple tanks. Navarathri Mandapam, Theerthapada Mandapam, C.V.N. Kalari, and Margi uphold the cultural ethos of Thiruvananthapuram.





## FORT AREA AND ENVIRONS

Owing to the rich architectural and cultural values associated with the historic fort area, the Art and Heritage Commission has identified it as a Heritage Zone and notified it as 'Fort area and Environs' in the sanctioned General Town Planning Scheme for Trivandrum. The Heritage Zone which comprises of the whole of the fort area (around 55.37 ha of land) and the historical Arattu road till Enchakkal junction has the largest concentration of both tangible and intangible heritage components. The State Archaeological Department has identified 28 historical monuments as protected in the Zone, while the Art and Heritage Commission has added a further 21 historical components to the list.



MAP SHOWING THE FORT HERITAGE ZONE



KRISHNAVILASAM PALACE, FORT



LEVEE HALL, FORT

## AGRAHARAMS

The southern side of the historic fort comprises of several streets, locally known as 'theruvu', which is synonymous with the major agraharam clusters. Some of the noted streets are the Thekkae Theruvu, Tippu Theruvu (Ayya Vadhyar Theruvu), Thamman Theruvu, Deekshithar Theruvu, and Kallampalli Theruvu. The Mekkae Theruvu, the Thekkaenada and Padinjaraenada of Sree Padmanabha Swamy temple and the precincts of the ancient Mitranandapuram temple are the other areas where the other agraharam clusters can be spotted. The agraharams built around the temple were either arranged on three sides of the temple otherwise the most commonly seen pattern is the concentric circles around the temple like in Srirangam, a popular temple town of South India.



## PRESENT CONDITION OF THE EXISTING HERITAGE BUILDINGS

The agraharam housing stock: The traditional agraharam housing stock linked with the fort area has a special significance in defining the architectural character of the historic settlement of Thiruvananthapuram.

The most distinguished scholars and the important courtiers amongst the members of the Tamil Brahmin community occupied prime plots, located next to the temple and the palace complex, whereas the less privileged members occupied the outer fringes. The agraharams in the vicinity of Sree Padmanabha Swamy temple has undergone transformation in the recent decades. The once dense residential zone has lost its quaint heritage charm due to modern interventions that are usually unsympathetic to its heritage character. Many of the buildings located alongside the main roads around Sree Padmanabha Swamy temple are the ones that have undergone severe transformation.





## Present scenario:

- Lack of awareness of the historic importance of the structures and the unique construction techniques has resulted in the use of incompatible modern building materials.
- The modern interventions follow an architectural trend that is alien to the heritage charm of the place.
- The extensive changes in the land use pattern transform residential streets into commercial alleys.



MAETHAN MANI



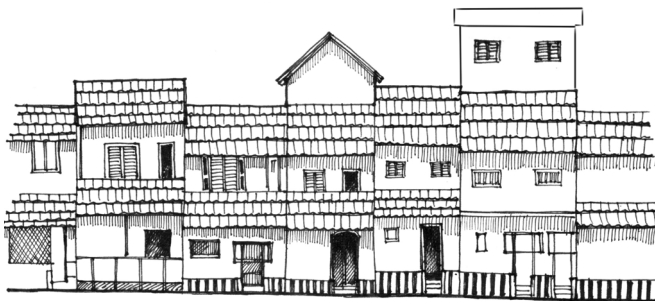
FOUZDAR MADHOM, SOUTH STREET



THEKKAIE THERUVU, THE SOUTH STREET, FORT

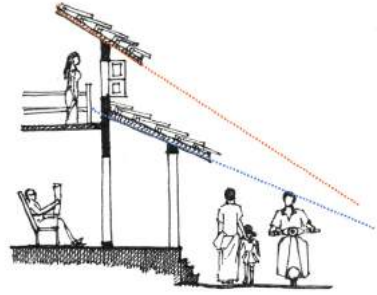
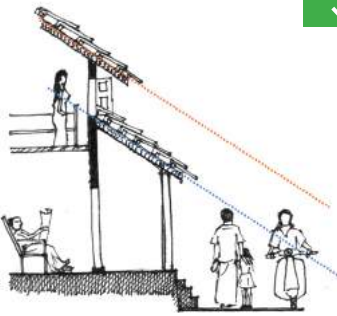
## GENERAL GUIDELINES PROPOSED BY THE HERITAGE COMMISSION

- The total number of storeys including the existing, if any, shall not exceed two from the street level.
- The overall height of the construction including the existing up to the topmost point of the proposed construction shall not exceed 9 metres.
- The slope of roof in facades (pitch) shall be at an angle within the range of



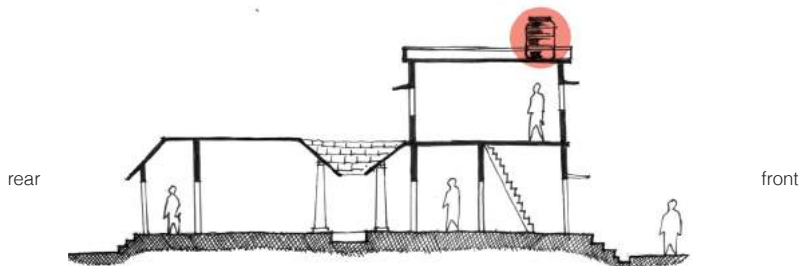
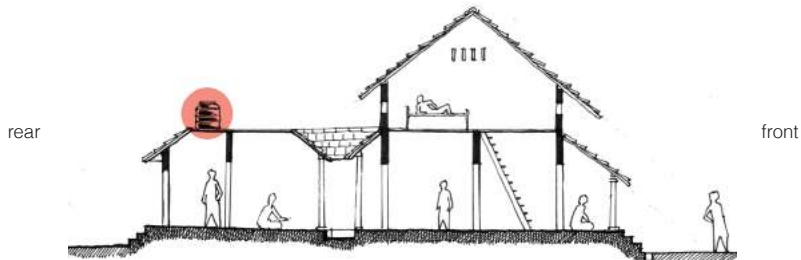
35-45 degrees from the horizontal.

- The roof in façade shall be finished with Mangalore pattern (M.P.) terracotta tiles of natural colour.
- The sunshades in facades, if any, shall have the same slope and finish as

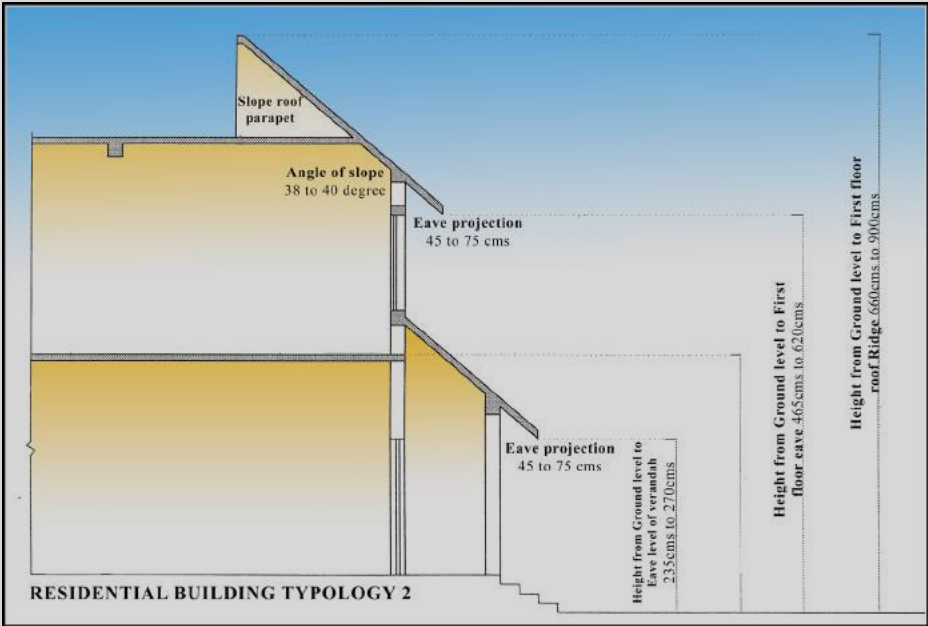
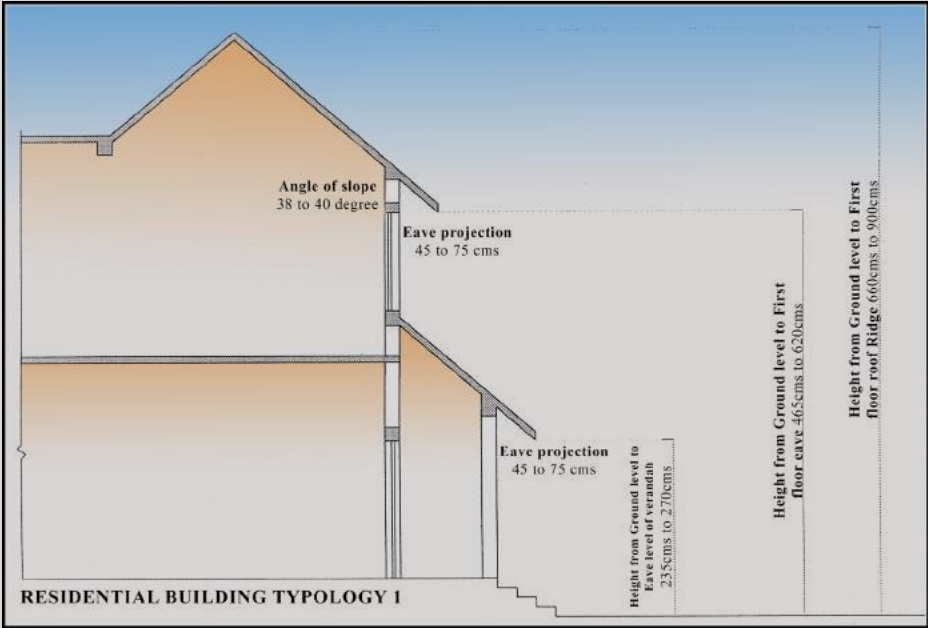


that of the main roof.

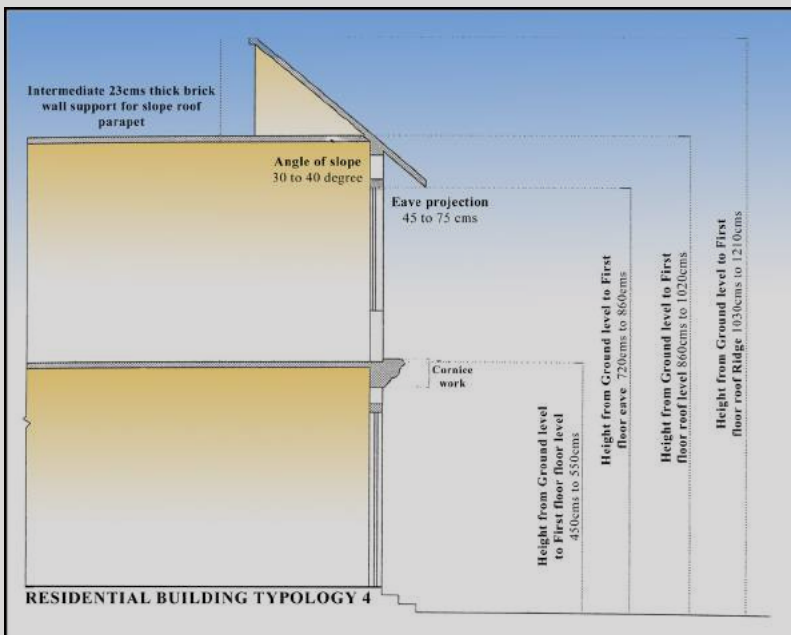
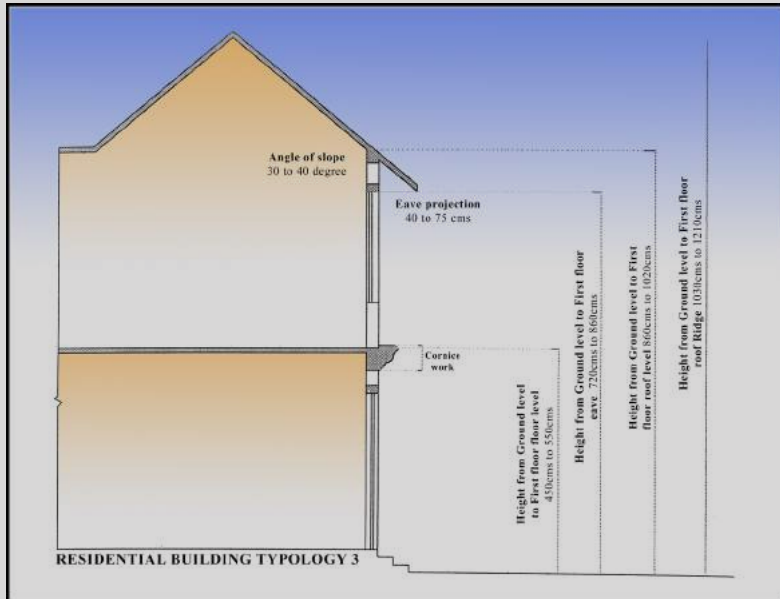
- Open balconies on the front façade, facing the street, shall not be permitted.
- Water tanks if any provided, shall be located, so that they are not visible from the nearby streets or public spaces.
- The exterior wall surfaces shall be finished in white or off-white colour. The



# Recommended Residential Building Typologies







exterior walls shall be given plain finish.

- In the case of flat terraces which are open to sky, means of access to such terrace shall be provided by way of fixed ladder or the like to ensure periodical cleaning to avoid water logging and it shall not be visible from the street



#### EAVE BOARD DETAILS

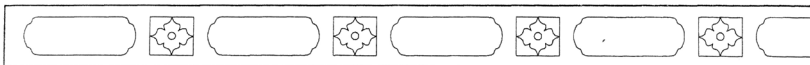


Figure 1 shows three types of door frames, each with an elevation and a section view. The elevation views show the door panel with a grid of rectangular openings. The section views show the frame profile, which is a simple rectangular frame. The dimensions for each type are as follows:

- Type 1:** Elevation height is 210-270, width is 100-150. Section height is 210-270, width is 100-150.
- Type 2:** Elevation height is 210-270, width is 100-150. Section height is 210-270, width is 100-150.
- Type 3:** Elevation height is 240-270, width is 100-150. Section height is 240-270, width is 100-150.

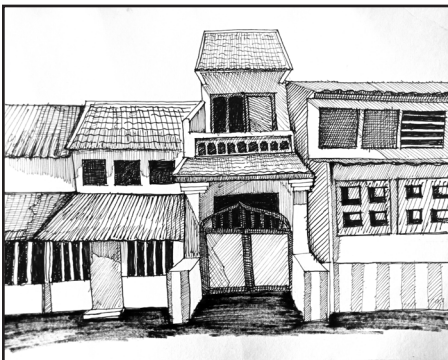




## TRANSFORMING AGRAHARAMS

### COMMON TRENDS – DO'S AND DON'TS

- The verandah could be enclosed using fully openable grill doors/windows, which maintain transparency. The grill, windows and doors can be made of wood, aluminium or steel, but should follow a pattern and colour scheme appropriate for the heritage character of the area. In case of renovation or reconstruction, aim to retain the heritage character of the precinct by using appropriate architectural elements such as wooden or stone pillars in the front façade.
- In the case of any new constructions or alterations within the heritage agraharam precinct of Fort, the existing street line should be maintained.
- Doors, windows and screens used in the front façade of the agraharams should be coloured in wood finish.
- Steel roof sheets and other structures are not permitted in this area.
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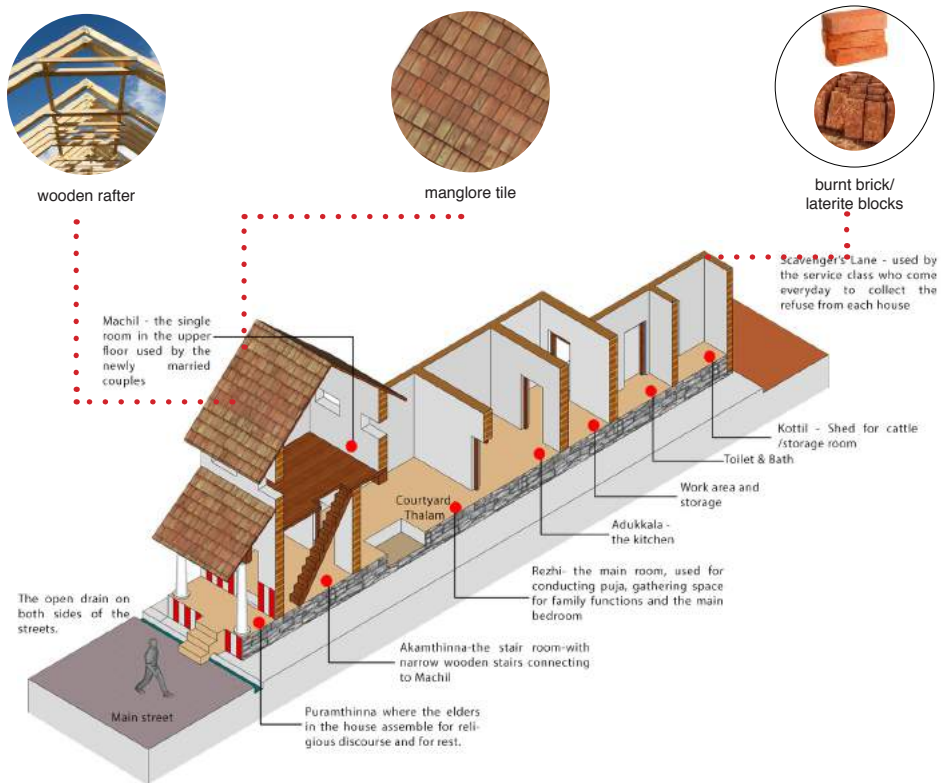
INCOMPATIBLE TRANSFORMATIONS AFFECTING THE HERITAGE CHARACTER OF AGRAHARAM

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUILDING MATERIALS

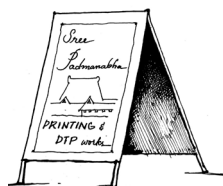
The integrity of the heritage housing stock in the Fort area, consisting mostly of agraharams can be further enhanced through the following measures:

- The building materials used for any new construction or renovation work within the heritage precinct should be compatible with the traditional building materials used in the region.

- Timber framed roof truss with Mangalore tile is to be followed in the heritage precinct. Sloping roof slab in concrete in the front façade shall be laid with terracotta roof tiles on a steel frame.
- Traditional patterns adopted for eave boards should be maintained throughout. Eave boards shall be made of wood or any other material resembling wooden appearance. Concrete eave boards shall not be used.



- The usage of signage shall be compatible to the heritage character of the area. Large sized signage in bright colour patterns is not recommended.



SIGNAGES RECCOMENDED IN THE HERITAGE ZONE

If any construction work violating the above regulations is noticed, complaint can be raised to the following officers.

**Secretary, Corporation of Tiruvananthapuram**

Phone : 0471 2320821

Email: tvpmcorpn@gmail.com

**Chief Town Planner & Member secretary**

Art & Heritage Commission

2nd floor, Swaraj Bhavan, Nanthancode, Tvpm

Phone : 0471 2722754

Email: ctpkeralam@gmail.com

**Chief Town Planner Vigilance**

Vigilance Wing, LSGD

5th floor Swaraj Bhavan,

Nanthancode, Tvpm

Phone : 0471 2723772

Email: ctplsgdvw@gmail.com

