

Tourists' road

STREET SMART - KASTURBA ROAD

Kasturba Road lies along the periphery of Cubbon Park on one side. Even though there are a few buildings along the road, a long stretch still retains its verdant greenery. It begins near the junction where M G Road, Queen's Road and Lavalle Road meet.

The junction is surrounded by Queen Victoria, Mahatma Gandhi Park, St Mark's Cathedral and Rathnam Complex.

Life begins as early as five o'clock in the morning on Kasturba Road when walkers and joggers either go towards or from Cubbon park. Till Independence and a little later, Kasturba Road was known as Sidney Road. It was an Anglo-Indian councillor of the City Municipality, Newbold, who moved the resolution to re-name South Parade as Mahatma Gandhi Road and Sidney Road after Kasturba.

In the Forties and Fifties, permission was granted for the construction of bungalows on Kasturba Road opposite the Museum (MacLver Town). In recent years, these bungalows have been pulled down and new buildings have come up.

The Cubbon Park Police Station is perhaps the only one of few extant heritage buildings among police stations. Way back in 1906, the present Cubbon Park Police Station was a room to guard Queen Victoria's statue. It became a police station of the Mysore State police in 1910. This tile-roofed structure with teakwood beams was renovated in 2001 without altering the original beauty.

Tourist spots

The Government museum was established in 1886. This beautiful structure with splendid Corinthian columns, houses a splendid collection relating to archaeology, geology, art, numismatics and old jewellery. Antiquities from Mohenjodaro take visitors back to India of 5000 years ago when it was the cradle of a great civilisation. The Visvesvaraya Technological Museum, the Visvesvaraya Trade Centre, Venkatappa Art Gallery and the aquarium are the three buildings allowed to be built alongside the Government Museum after Independence. With so many public places, it is but natural that tourists throng here.

The Venkatappa Art Gallery displays works of famous Mysore artist, K Venkatappa and books and materials used by him. Works of contemporary artists are also displayed from time to time. The Visvesvaraya Industrial and Technological Museum portrays the application of science and technology in industry and human welfare. Situated at the entrance of Cubbon Park, the aquarium is housed in an octagonal-shaped building and is the second largest aquarium with a variety of exotic and ornamental fish.

For over 50 years, vehicle owners in Bangalore are fa-

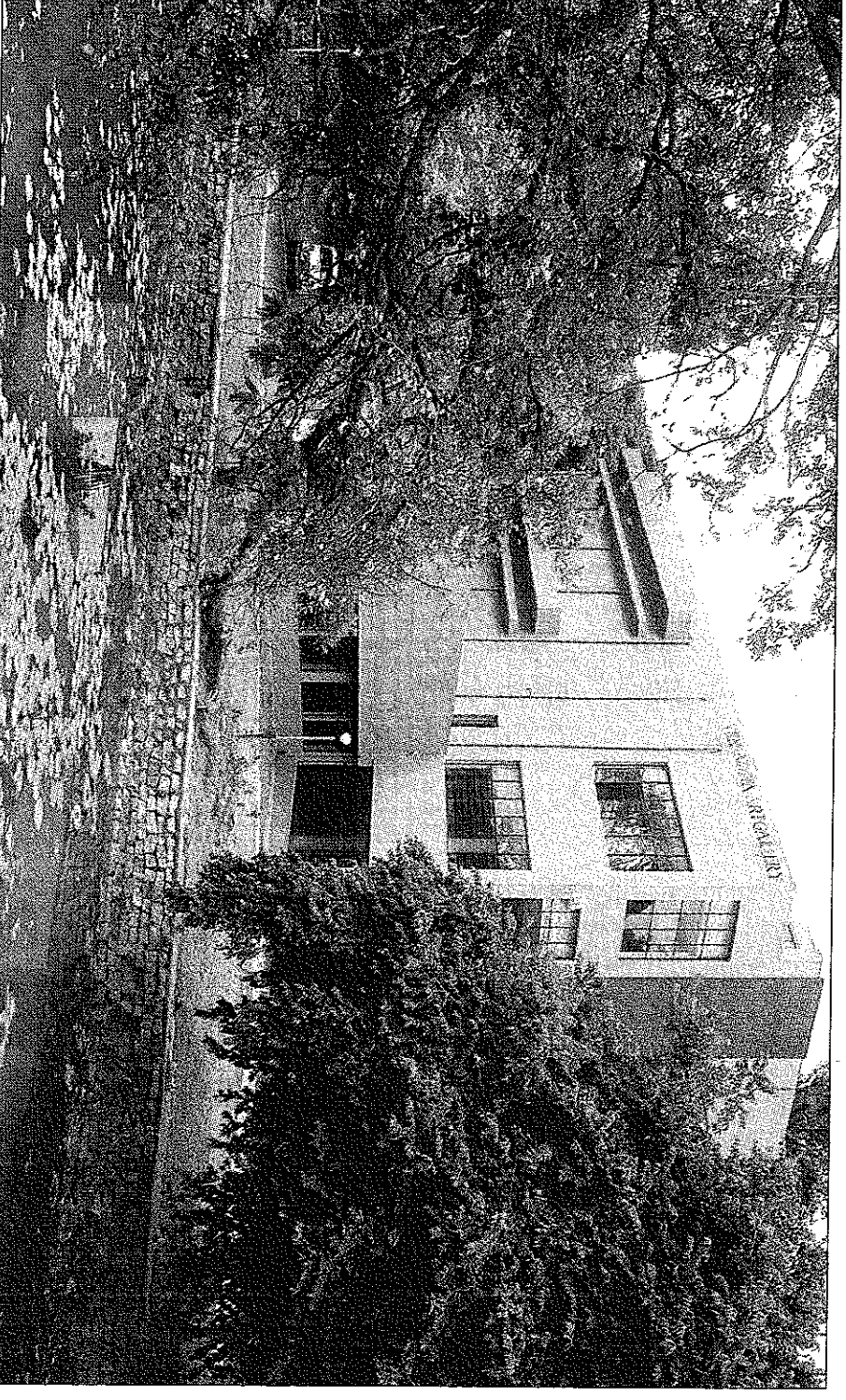
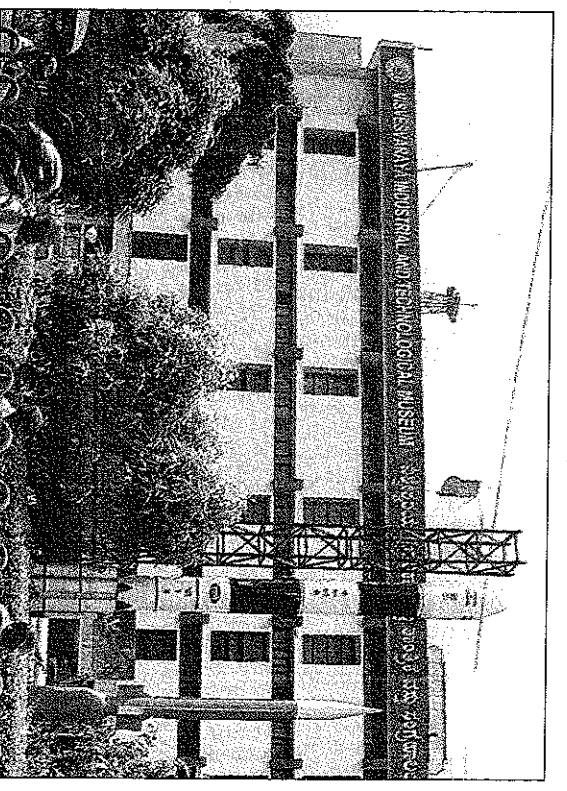
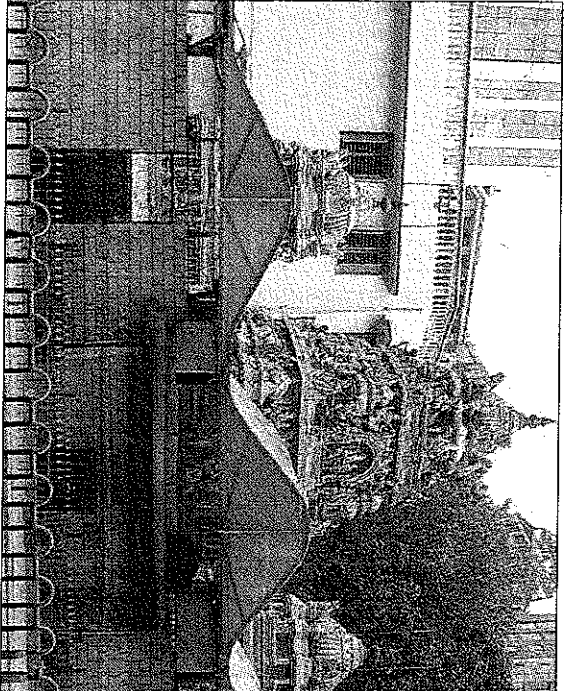
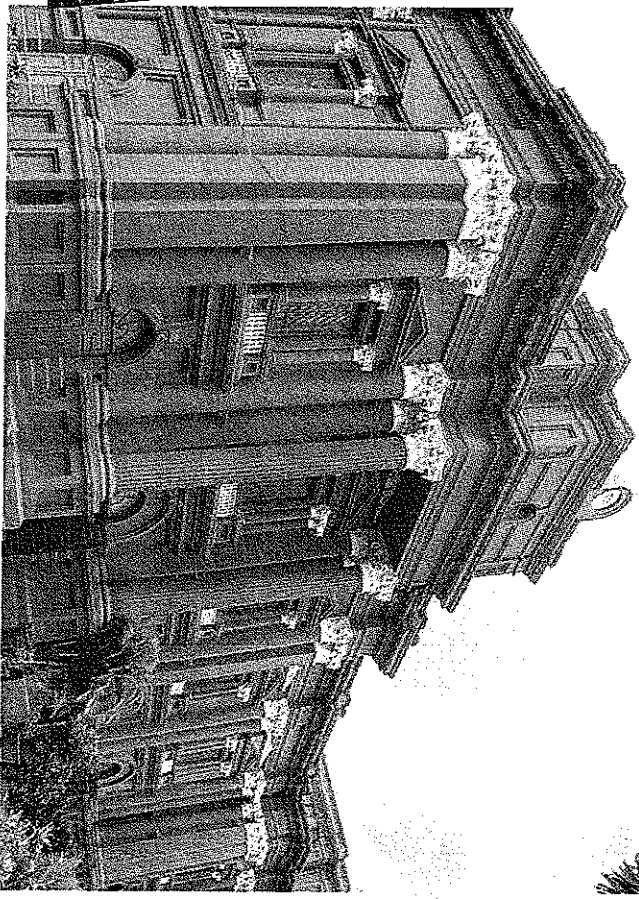
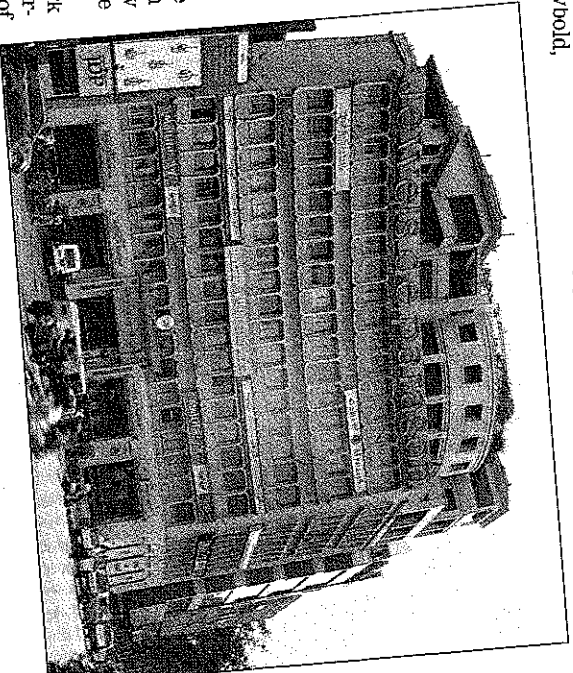
miliar with 'Vehicle Ganapathi Temple (Sri Prasanna Ganapathy Temple) on Kasturba Road. There is a belief that offering pooja to the temple's three-foot idol, under a large boulder, ensures an accident-free run for their vehicles. It is believed that the temple is 600 years old and part of an ancient natural rock formation. Kempegowda is believed to have visited this temple and Wodeyar and his mother are said to have been ardent devotees.

The temple's association with vehicles probably began after the 'TVS Motor dealership opened on Kasturba Road some 50 years ago. People who bought vehicles at the showroom began to offer pooja at this temple. Later, Bajaj and Maruti showrooms also sprang up nearby, adding to the queue of vehicles in front of the temple.

Kenneth Anderson, hunter and author of shikar books is said to have owned a bungalow between the museums and the Cubbon Park Police Station.

The Anderson bungalow, painted in Sienna red, continued to exist till until a few years ago when the first private building came up on the Cubbon Park side. The 11-storeyed building, Prestige Obelisk is rather incongruous in an otherwise aesthetically planned road. It is said that aesthetics on this road has given way to commercialism.

Michael Parrao



Clockwise from top: Cubbon Park police station; The Government Museum; Visvesvaraya Technological Museum; Venkatappa Art Gallery; Vehicle Ganapathy temple; Rathnam's complex.