



CSA Partners includes glass dome at Hindu temple in California desert



Jenna McKnight | 18 July 2025

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Masonry buildings and a rounded “womb-like” meditation room form a Hindu temple complex in southern California, designed by the architecture studio CSA Partners and built over a 15-year period.

The Hindu Temple Antelope Valley Campus is located in Lancaster, which is about 70 miles (113 kilometres) north of Los Angeles. The rural town lies within a desert valley ringed by mountains.

Composed of three main structures, the campus is viewed as “the unifying space of a dozen distinct Hindu immigrant groups”.





CSA Partners designed a Hindu temple complex in California

The project was first conceived about 15 years ago and was completed in multiple phases. CSA Partners, a Chicago-based studio founded by Cyrus Subawalla, oversaw the design, which embodies a merging of historical and contemporary approaches.

"The design of the campus, rooted deeply in history and metaphor, combines historical forms with contemporary building technology to produce distinctively modern interpretations of traditional architecture," the studio said.

The design draws upon India's Temple at Kangra, which is notable for its dedication to the worship of two deities – Vishnu and Shiva. The temple is located in the northern state of Himachal Pradesh, and variations of its design can be seen throughout India, the studio said.





The design combined traditional and modern architectural elements

For these reasons, the Temple at Kangra was seen as "an ideal design precedent for the diverse needs of the varied Hindu communities of the Antelope Valley".

The campus sits on an arid, flat site adjacent to a park. Its first building, MahaVishnu Temple, was completed in 2014.

Elevated on a plinth, the masonry building is clad in terracotta-hued brick that mimics the colour of the earth. The temple's domes are wrapped in precast concrete panels that also are an orangey hue.





The temple's domes were wrapped in precast-concrete panels

The temple has a primary shrine dedicated to Vishnu, with shrines for other deities found along the perimeter.

The next building, Annapoorna Hall, was dedicated in 2021. It serves as a social hall and includes a commercial kitchen.

"Executed in matching materials, the building is defined by freestanding masonry walls – sliding past one another – into which a glass volume has been inserted," said the studio.

"Experientially, this building thereby creates a second wall defining the exterior courtyard space, forming a side entrance to the temple gate."





A glass-clad meditation space was tucked into a mound

The third building, the Shri Amma Meditation Center, was added in 2023.

Viewed as “the final and most overtly metaphorical space on the campus”, the rounded, concrete-and-glass structure is tucked into a mound. A paved path leads to the entrance of the 900-square-foot (84-square-metre) building.

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“This structure builds on womb-like analogies of personal growth and emergence and is intended to speak to the worship of the Goddess Akhilandeswari, the Hindu goddess of fertility,” the team said.

“This building is also the most structurally innovative contribution to the campus, comprised of portal frames and faceted glass, holding together an otherwise curvilinear volume with oriented views of the exterior temple, courtyard and beyond.”





The meditation space was described by the architects as “womb-like”

Throughout the campus, various strategies were incorporated to meet California’s energy performance criteria, such as careful building siting and incorporating elements that reduce solar penetration.

Additional Hindu temples include a large complex in India’s Andhra Pradesh by Sameep Padora & Associates that has stepped buildings made of black limestone, and a small temple in West Bengal by Abin Design Studio that features a glazed corner surrounded by a concrete lattice.

The photography is by Jill Weller and Cyrus Subawalla.

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