

Vedic Cultural Centre “Improving Accessibility Project”



*A community survives and thrives when it is built
on a solid foundation which supports activities
to enhance its religious, cultural, and social heritage.*

**ARYA SAMAJ
MARKHAM**

(Affiliated to Vedic Aryan Cultural Society of Ontario)

**TORONTO
ARYA SAMAJ**



4345 – 14TH AVENUE, MARKHAM, ONTARIO, CANADA L3R 0J2 • TEL: 905-475-5778
www.vedicculturalcentre.com

August 15, 2025

*Our sincere thanks to Krishan Bhatia ji of Energy Network Systems
for his generous donation of the luminaries for this project
and for sponsoring our booklet publication*



Congratulations on the Successful Modernization of the Facility!

Dear Yash Kapur and Management Team,

Congratulations on the successful modernization of the facility! This transformation is a testament to your forward-thinking leadership and commitment to creating a more efficient, innovative, and future-ready environment.

Your efforts have not only enhanced the functionality of the space but have also positioned the organization to meet future demands with confidence. It's inspiring to see such a strong investment in progress and long-term vision.

Well done to everyone involved in making this milestone a reality. Wishing you continued success as you lead the way into a new era of growth and excellence.

Best regards,

Krishan Bhatia,

President, Energy Network Services Inc.



Vedic Cultural Centre's "Improving Accessibility Project" by Rabi Nauth

Introduction

The Vedic Cultural Centre (VCC) located at 4345-14th Avenue has been a cultural icon in Markham for almost thirty years. The building has served the community with distinction by providing a venue for worship, festivals, and for hosting community events.

In July 2024, the VCC Board approved and launched the **VCC Improving Accessibility Project**. This was the largest renovation project since the building was declared open in 1996. The objective of this project was to ensure the facility complies with the new building codes and accessibility laws, to address concerns raised by the Arya Samaj Markham (ASM) and Toronto Arya Samaj (TAS) memberships, and to improve the aesthetics of the overall building and premises.

Scope

The primary scope included the following:

- Installation of a new custom elevator with three stops
- Decommission of old elevator with two stops
- Construction of a new vestibule (waiting area at parking level)
- Construction of a new canopy over the grand stairs
- Grand stairs upgrades (tile repairs, the addition of two stucco columns and stainless-steel rails)
- Building exterior upgrades (installation of three new signs for building exterior and an awning on east entrance, repaint the rails)
- Driveway enhancements (installation of three additional parking spots for accessibility and wheel trans pickup, repave the front of the grand stairs, repair cracks and repaint parking lines and curbs).

In addition, supplementary upgrades and maintenance included the following:

- Premises upgrades (repair of the fountain, tree pruning, landscaping)
- Kitchen facilities upgrades (cupboards, dishwasher)
- Upper hall (stage curtain system, improve lighting in the yajnashaala)
- Building interior upgrades (six washrooms, door locks, paint restoration)
- Repair of the Heating Ventilation & Air Conditioning System.

Timeline

The project timeline was July 2024 to August 2025

Cost

The cost of the primary scope was approx. **\$600,000**

Project Governance and Resources

The VCC Board initiated a Project Governance Team led by Rabi Nauth and including Dennis Henry, and Sunil Chandna to provide overall project governance and oversight. Devender Arora was engaged in an advisory capacity to the project team. No fees were paid to this governance team. The services of all four team members were done on a pro bono basis.

The VCC Board sponsors were Yash Kapur and Amar Umadas. This overall team consisted of four engineers with extensive experience managing over 300 projects in the telecommunications and construction sectors.

Delta Engineering was engaged to provide professional services, onsite coordination, and certification of the work done by the contractors. The project was tendered and awarded to the following companies:

- AVCAN Construction Inc. to provide services as the General Contractor
- Express Elevator & Lifts Inc. to provide the custom elevator

This was a major construction project which included the use of over thirty different trades and vendors and required keen attention to the sequencing of the work to avoid scheduling conflicts and to ensure that all planned VCC events were conducted without disruption due to construction activities. The contractors, vendors and trades included AVCAN Construction, Express Elevator, Delta Engineering, Joe Battiglia Architect, Morpac Paving, M-L Fire & Burglary Alarms, Cyan Sign Group Inc., Norstar Windows & Doors, Energy Network Services, Venud Ramjit Reno, Tree Pruning Service, Rouge Electric, stucco, paint, electrical, site demolition/preparation, foundation, structural steel, roofing, drywall, plumbing, masonry, moulding, tiling, painting, rail installer, container rental, and hydraulic oil disposal.

The project required permit approvals from the City of Markham and the Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA).

Approach & Methodology

The project team held weekly meetings from the project launch in July 2024 to the substantial project closure in August 2025. These status meetings were done using a hybrid of onsite and online format to monitor the progress of the work, review and mitigate critical issues as they arose, review the work completed by the contractors and certified by Delta Engineering, and advise on the payment of the invoices.

The contracts included terms for the payment draws that were aligned with milestones of work completed. The contracts also included a 10% holdback on submitted invoices to allow the governance team to enforce the remediation of



defects identified with the work done by the contractors. Change orders were issued for the additional civil and other works identified during execution of the project. This approach allowed the governance team to monitor the progress of all items as they were completed, certified, invoiced, and paid.

Project execution and challenges

The initial completion date for this project was March 31, 2025. The final commissioning date was August 12, 2025. This was a complex brownfield project which involved modifying existing infrastructure and systems. Some of the reasons for the delay included:

- Delays with City permit application, remediation and approval
- Inclement weather impacting outdoor work during the winter months
- Long lead times for the procurement of the new elevator equipment
- Contractor delays in scheduling the work



- Late-stage design changes to mitigate identified issues
- Unforeseen civil and other works (wall opening, hole in elevator pit, alarm monitoring)
- Scheduling around planned VCC events (regular services, facility rentals for weddings, etc.)

Benefits to the Community

This is the first major renovation project and will provide the following benefits:

- Allow our seniors to be dropped off at the vestibule and enter the upper and lower halls of the building without having to use the ramp or stairs.
- Allow our seniors to wait in a safe environment for Wheel Trans pickup while having clear visibility of the parking lot.
- Allow the building patrons to enjoy grand stairs access all year round.
- Enable vendors, caterers, and musicians, and event planners to have convenient access to the lower and upper halls for the pickup/drop-off of equipment and materials.
- Enable all patrons visiting the VCC to enjoy an aesthetically pleasing environment.

The VCC Board will strive to continually upgrade the facilities to best serve the ASM and TAS members and the wider community.



Vedic Cultural Centre's Improving Accessibility Project Team



Rabi Nauth



Sunil Chandna



Dennis Henry



Devender Arora



Yash Kapur



Amar Umadas



Arya Samaj Markham (ASM)

Enjoyable Memories at the Vedic Cultural Centre



Toronto Arya Samaj (TAS)

Enjoyable Memories at the Vedic Cultural Centre



Arya Samaj Markham (ASM)

Enjoyable Memories at the Vedic Cultural Centre

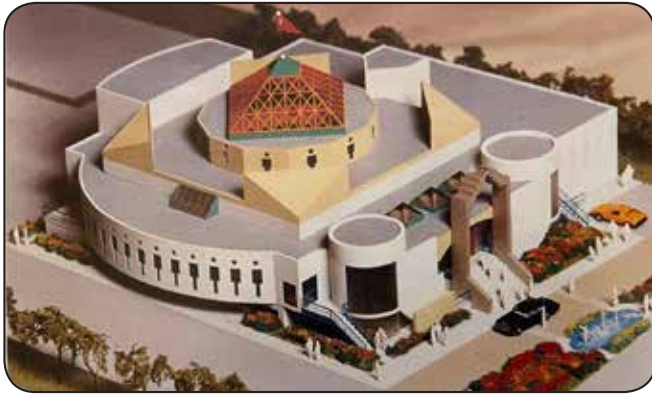


Toronto Arya Samaj (TAS)
Enjoyable Memories at the Vedic Cultural Centre





Vedic Cultural Centre - A historical perspective



Arya Samaj Markham and Toronto Arya Samaj are housed in the Vedic Cultural Centre, located at 4345-14th. Avenue Markham (at the Southwest corner of Kennedy Road and 14th. Avenue).

It is an **Edifice** commemorating the core Principles enunciated by the ancient Sages and *Rishis* of India, emerging from deep meditative states.

The vision of a monument incorporating core Vedic Principles took form under the genius of the Design Consultant, Anupam Banerji, assisted by his Architects Suresh Parab, and Dharam Malik and Engineering Consultants Om Arora, Krishan Sachdev and Yatindra Sinha.

The following is a recap of the Organising Principles of the Centre's architecture:

1. A 12-foot high glazed glass crown at the apex of the Edifice – a symbol of *Agni* - a geometric rendering of Light and Fire. The Sacred Fire ceremony is at the centre of all worshipful ceremonies from childbirth to marriages to end-of-life commemorations and major life events in between. During full moon nights, it lights up the inner sanctum with a soft glow. The unique design of the large skylight also resonates with a favourite *Mantra* from Upanishad. “Lead us from death to immortality, from darkness to light” and truth to falsehood.





2. The *Agni* symbol emerges from a 12-sided circular base representing 12 of the 108 known *Upanishads* which are the summaries of the most ancient scriptures known to man - The *Vedas* - which form the four corners of the large square with triangular openings at the corner to let laser-like beam of light to enter the inner sanctum.

3. The 12 *Upanishads* also adorn the giant Circle on the East representing the Cosmos enclosing the temporal activities within.

4. The 3 skylights, behind the *Namaste* sign at the entrance, represent the three attributes *Gunas* of Primordial Matter *Prakriti* - all that comes into existence – *TAMAS* (Inertia), *RAJAS* (euphoric activity), and *SATTVA* (Purity)

5. The glass-enclosed cylindrical columns on either end of the building represent the twin Principles of Pure Consciousness – *Paramatma* and *Atman*.

6. The cylindrical column on the left, an embodiment of the Silent Witness, only enables entry and exit into the building.

7. Since the Centre faces North, the large stage for cultural activities also faces North, but the main platform for spiritual practices faces East.

Many Scholars have extolled the symbolism of Vedic Principles in the Centre's Architecture as being one of the finest in North America and perhaps unique even among the new Indian temples, which are often dedicated to a particular lineage.

The Centre is our inheritance and as its custodians, it behoves us to preserve it for future generations. May we be single-minded in protecting this heritage sacrificing our personal perspectives, differences of opinions, likes and dislikes.

Chander Khanna





आर्यसमाज के दस नियम

१. सब सत्यविध्या और जो पदार्थ विध्या से जाने जाते हैं, उन सबका आदिमूल परमेश्वर है।
२. ईश्वर सच्चिदानंदस्वरूप, निराकार, सर्वशक्तिमान, न्यायकारी, दयालु, अजन्मा, अनन्त, निर्विकार, अनादि, अनुपम, सर्वाधार, सर्वेश्वर, सर्वव्यापक, चर्वान्तर्यामी, अजर, अमर, अभय, नित्य, पवित्र और सृष्टिकर्ता है, उसी की उपासना करनी योग्य है।
३. वेद सब सत्यविध्याओं का पुस्तक है। वेद का पढ़ाना – पढ़ाना और सुनना – सुनाना सब आर्यों का परम धर्म है।
४. सत्य के ग्रहण करने और असत्य के छोड़ने में सर्वदा उद्यत् रहना चाहिए।
५. सब काम धर्मानुसार, अर्थात् सत्य और असत्य को विचार करके करने चाहिए।
६. संसार का उपकार करना इस समाज का मुख्य उद्देश्य है, अर्थात् शारीरिक, आत्मिक और सामाजिक उन्नति करना।
७. सबसे प्रीतिपूर्वक, धर्मानुसार यथायोग्य वर्तना चाहिए।
८. अविध्या का नाश विध्या कि दृष्टि करनी चाहिए।
९. प्रत्येक को अपनी ही उन्नति से सन्तुष्ट न रहना चाहिए, किन्तु सब की उन्नति से अपनी उन्नति समझनी चाहिए।
१०. सब मनुष्यों को सामाजिक, सर्वाहितकारी, नियम पालने में परतन्त्र रहना चाहिए आर प्रत्येक हितकारी नियम पालने सब स्वतंत्र रहें।



THE 10 PRINCIPLES OF THE ARYA SAMAJ

Principle One: God is the original source of all that is true knowledge and all that is known by physical sciences.

Principle Two: God is existent, Conscious, All Beautitude, Formless, Almighty, Just, Merciful, Unbegotten, Infinite, Unchangeable, Beginningless, Incomparable, the support of All, the Lord or all, All-pervading, Omniscient and Controller of All from within, Evermature, Imperishable, Fearless, Eternal, Pure and Creator of the universe. God alone must be worshipped.

Principle Three: The Vedas are the books of TRUE knowledge. It is the paramount duty of all Aryas to read them, to teach them to others, to listen to them and to recite them to others.

Principle Four: All persons should always be ready to accept the truth and renounce the untruth.

Principle Five: All acts ought to be performed in conformity with dharma (Righteousness and Duty) i.e. after due consideration of the truth and the untruth.

Principle Six: The primary object of the Arya Samaj is to do good to the whole world i.e. to promote physical, spiritual and social progress of all humans.

Principle Seven: Your dealings with all should be regulated by love and due justice in accordance with the dictates of dharma (righteousness).

Principle Eight: Avidyaa (illusion and ignorance) is to be dispelled, and Vidya (realisation and acquisition of knowledge) should be promoted.

Principle Nine: None should remain satisfied with one's own prosperity only, but should incessantly strive for the social upliftment of all, realise one's own prosperity in the prosperity of others.

Principle 10: All persons ought to dedicate themselves necessarily for the social good and the well being of all, subordinating their personal interest, while the individual is free to enjoy freedom of action for the individual well being.

Project Acknowledgement

One of the primary guidelines for this construction project was to minimize the impact on the patrons using the building for regular services, weddings, and community events.

We sincerely thank the ASM and TAS membership for their patience over the last year for any inconvenience endured.

We extend our gratitude to all the contractors, vendors, trades and the VCC building caretakers who worked diligently to get this project completed.

