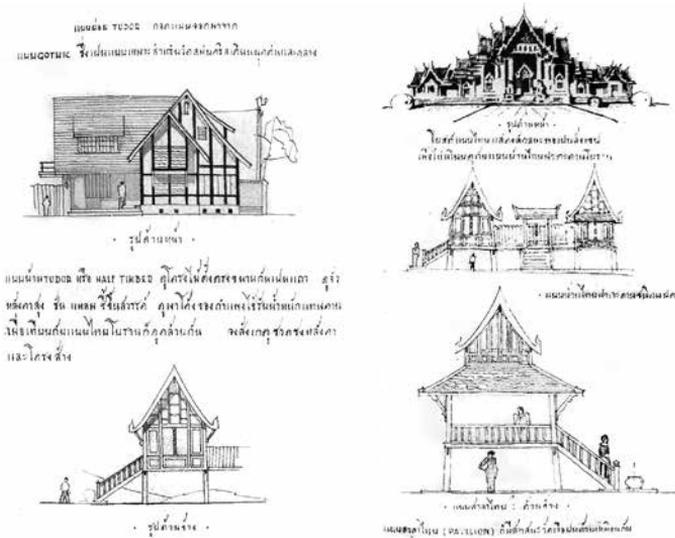


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Adapting older forms of architecture, he clarified, did not mean mere copying, but the introduction of improvements to suit contemporary materials and construction methods. This argument seems to be highlighted well by the design of the house at 42 Soi Tonson. This house, by Prince Vodhyakara's definition, is therefore not merely a copy of a Tudor house, but an adaptation of the architecture of the past to suit contemporary conditions. By pointing out shared qualities between the Tudor and the Thai house of the past in his 1942 lecture, he constructed a transcultural lineage between them that served to support his experimentation in adapting the Tudor into a suitable house form for the contemporary Thai context.



**Figure 2.2:** Prince Vodhyakara's sketches depicting the forms of Thai domestic architecture and how they derived from Thai religious architecture, also the similarity between a Tudor house and a Thai house regarding their forms and structures, and the rationale behind them.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> M. C. Vodhyakara Varavarn's Archive, *Ban* (House): A Note Submitted to Department of Advertisement as a Proceeding of M. C. Vodhyakara Varavarn's Lecture Broadcast in the State Radio on 1 December 1942 (1942), p. 3.

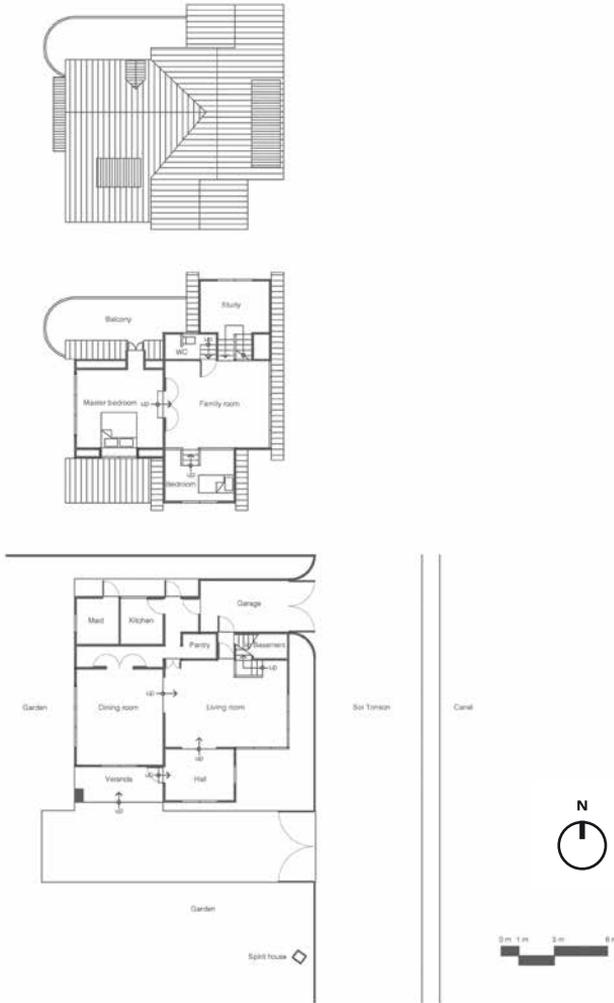


Figure 2.6: Reconstructed plans of 42 Soi Tonson in its original design from a survey and an interview with M. R. Chanvudhi Varavarn<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Drawing by Chomchon Fusinpaiboon



*Figure 5.1:* A modern locomotive and the Thai-style Chiang Mai Station (1947)<sup>2</sup>

Chiang Mai is the largest city in northern Thailand. It was a successive kingdom of the Lanna Kingdom, which became a tributary state of Siam in 1774 after two centuries of Burmese rule. Chiang Mai became a Siamese province called Monthon Phayap or Monthon Lao Chiang after the Siamese administrative reforms of 1899 undertaken in resistance to Western imperialism. The royal court in Bangkok and the Siamese public perceived Lanna people as being of Laotian ethnicity for decades until the nationalist government of the 1940s encouraged people of all regions to acknowledge each other as Thai for the sake of national unity and spread their message through propaganda campaigns that aimed to eliminate heterogeneity in Thai society.<sup>3</sup> In this reimagining, people

<sup>2</sup> Bunsoem Sattraphai's Collection, Chiang Mai University

<sup>3</sup> See *'Ratchakitchanubaeksa (The Royal Thai Government Gazette)*', vol 52 (1939), pp. 82.

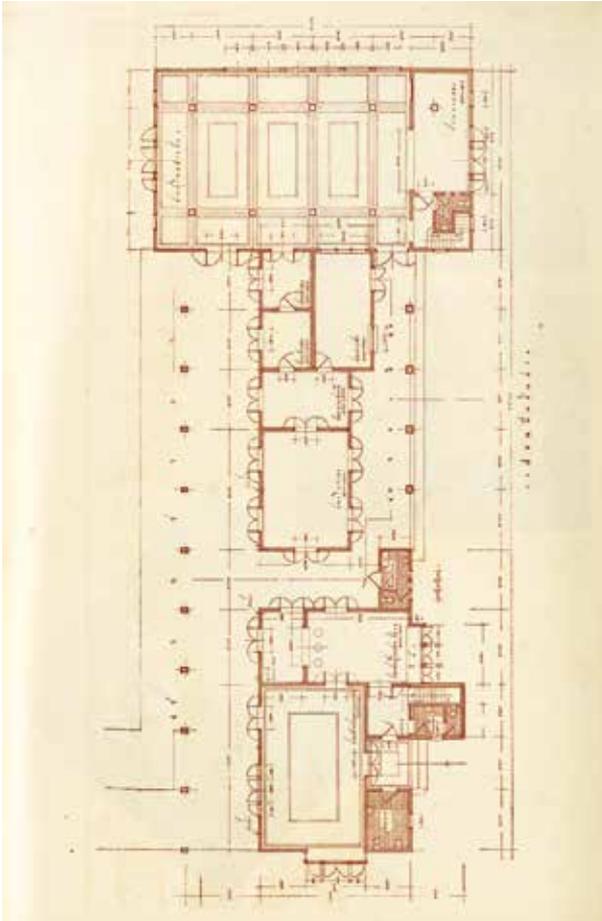
station] have shown enough public appreciation, ignorance & national prejudice!' Assessing these various comments, we come to see that the design outcome of the station is revealing of the political, cultural, and economic factors shaping it. The design of Chiang Mai station reflects the post-war contradiction of pushing towards a western template of modernisation while struggling to maintain a visible national identity. The restrictive economic circumstances and the nationalist agenda of the post-war context served as pressure points in this struggle.



Figure 5.3: A sketch and description of Chiang Mai Station by Prince Vodhyakara after his retirement<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> M. C. Vodhyakara Varavarn's Archives, Part of My Research Work Adopted by the Royal State Railways

room. The offices could not have been placed on the other end of the platform because of the symbolic concern that no one should be higher than the King. The *prasat* roof form was installed on the top of the clock tower above the King's room, as it was a suitable decoration for the King.



**Figure 5.8:** Ground floor plan of Chiang Mai Station<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> 'Sathani Chiang Mai (Chiang Mai Station)'.