



# Qutb Shahi Heritage Park





1

#### Landscape in close vicinity of Tombs

- 1 Proposed garden around Tombs.
- 2 Garden space enclosed by heritage buildings to be improved, through restriction of steps and appropriate adjustment of levels.
- 3 Proposed orchard groves of small fruit trees.

#### General landscape

- A Entrance square.
- B Major new path as the main entry to the complex.
- C Proposed location of Interpretation Centre and Visitor amenities.
- C1 Proposed Open Air Theatre and space for functions with Tomb of Begum Hayat Baksh.

- D Existing water body to be modified with a floating garden proposed as an interlude on the main path.
- E Proposed landscape link across site.
- E1 Existing earth form re-graded to allow direct connection and access to the earliest group of

- Tombs in the south west part of the complex.
- E2 Proposed garden to negotiate the change in alignment of major path.
- P Parking for buses and cars.



2

Ratish Nanda

### Conserving a Sixteenth-Century Necropolis

In the sixteenth century, while the Mughals were building grand fortifications, mausoleums and mosques in north India, the Qutb Shahi dynasty also built majestic structures in their capital, the present-day Hyderabad. Builders and patrons of learning, the Qutb Shahi dynasty strengthened Golconda, one of India's most formidable citadels. The funerary architecture of the Qutb Shahi tomb complex evolved through their rule with most of the mausoleums built by the rulers and their family during their own lifetimes. Similarly, they encouraged the development of Indo-Persian and Indo-Islamic literature and culture in their kingdom.

Unlike the early Mughals, whose majestic tombs are spread across Kabul, Delhi, Agra, Lahore and Aurangabad, the Qutb Shahis lie buried in grand mausoleums at the foot of Golconda Fort. At the Qutb Shahi Heritage Park, conservation and landscape restoration is being implemented by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) in partnership with the Department of Archaeology and Museums of the Government of Telangana and the Quli Qutb Shah Urban Development Authority of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation. As with Humayun's Tomb conservation, the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust is providing valuable funding to conserve ten of the principal monuments.

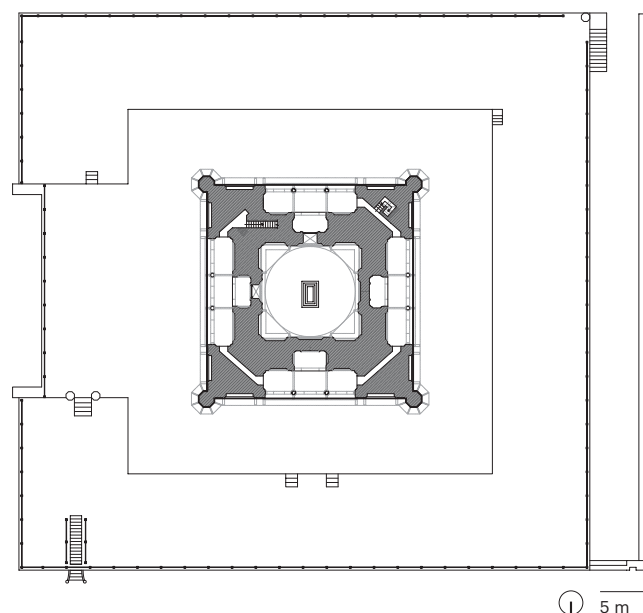
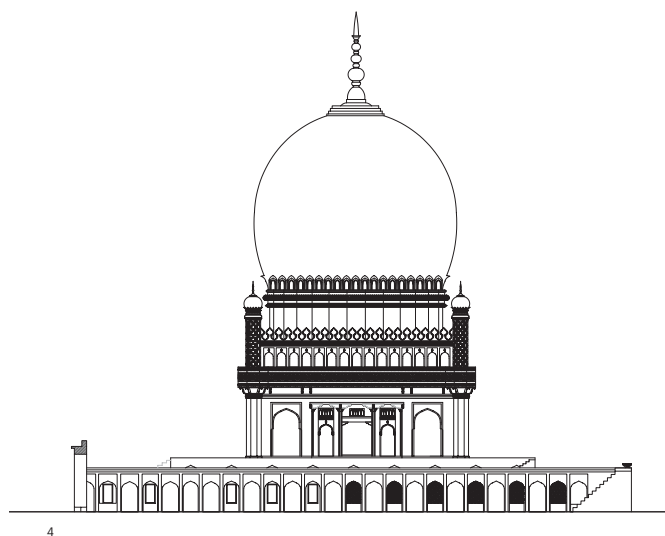
This necropolis of the Qutb Shahi dynasty, which ruled the region for 169 years in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, includes forty mausoleums, twenty-three mosques, five *baolis* (step-wells), a hammam (mortuary bath), pavilions and garden structures set within a significant heritage zone. No other ensemble of structures in the adjoining Deccani kingdoms of Ahmednagar, Berar, Bidar, Bijapur or Gulbarga includes as many monuments of striking grandeur and complexity, reflecting a unique synthesis of architectural styles.

These monuments blend Persian, Pathan and Hindu architectural styles and are built with local granite. Surfaces of the



3

- [1] Proposed Landscape Master Plan for Qutb Shahi Heritage Park in Hyderabad, India.
- [2] View of the Qutb Shahi tombs from Golconda Fort in 1902–03.
- [3] Nestled at the foot of the majestic Golconda Fort, the Qutb Shahi Heritage Park is spread over almost 53 hectares and is the necropolis of the Qutb Shahi dynasty, which ruled the region for 169 years in the 16th and 17th centuries.



historic buildings are ornamented with intricate stucco plasterwork and recent interventions have revealed that many of the monuments were also profusely ornamented with glazed-tile work. The Qutb Shahi tomb structures are derivations of the geometrical designs of the earlier Bahmani tombs of Bidar, though the stucco ornamentation employed here is significantly more intricate and on a far greater scale. During the Qutb Shahi period, these tombs were held in great veneration.

The 'Memorandum of Understanding' (MoU) signed to commence the project on 9 January 2013 was preceded by two years of documentation, condition assessment, topographical surveys and other landscape studies by the AKTC team. The Conservation Plan prepared on the basis of these studies included over two thousand architectural drawings, as well as the Landscape Master Plan prepared by Mohammad Shaheer (Shaheer Associates) on the basis of studies of vegetation, natural drainage, visitor circulation and view corridors, all forming part of the MoU. However, litigation by vested interests against public partners meant that conservation works could commence only in November 2013, subsequent to the sudden partial collapse of four structures in heavy storms.

Exhaustive archival research has now accumulated over five hundred photographs from the nineteenth century onwards.

Archaeological excavations are being carried out with the support of the US Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation to enhance the understanding of the site and to guide the landscape restoration. The conservation works will be preceded by further documentation, including state-of-the-art technology such as high-definition surveys using 3D laser-scanning technology.

As with the Humayun's Tomb project, conservation works will be rooted in the Indian context, where building craft traditions have been passed from father to son for centuries. The project will also be respectful of established international norms with an emphasis on retaining original material and material authenticity, and will be based on evidence, archival or *in situ*. Above all, conservation works will be implemented by master craftsmen using traditional tools, building materials and craft skills. The project is expected to require at least 300,000 man-days of direct employment over a ten-year period.

The mausoleums with bulbous domes are the principal attraction at the site, but the scale of the tombs varies enormously: from structures under four metres in height and twenty square metres in plan to others forty metres in height and almost 2000 square metres in plan. Similarly, there are several minor mosques and at least two very large ones.

[4] The elevation and ground plan of Mohammad Quli Qutb Shah's Tomb.

[5] Opposite page: the Landscape Master Plan developed from a close appraisal of the existing situation, including site slopes and levels, vegetation, access, existing monuments, and their visual setting and relationship to the landscape.





#### Contours, Elevations

The Qutb Shahi Heritage Park slopes in a diagonal direction from north-west to south-east.



#### Slope analysis

Slopes vary from 1 in 2 (dark brown) to 1 in 100 (light beige). An analysis of these slopes reveals that a considerable portion of the site has only a gentle slope.



#### Existing vegetation

Existing vegetation consists of native forest-type vegetation, scattered groups, individual trees among monuments and dense ornamental planting in Deccan Park. Each tree is presently being documented.



#### Existing drainage

The natural flow of rainwater runoff follows the slope from north-west to south-east. Landscape works will include earth grading to ensure that rainwater is collected in the step wells.



#### Access and movement

A path system based on the history of the place would play a vital role in enhancing and enriching the visitors' experience of this large, deep and complex historical site.



#### Landscape concept

The Landscape Master Plan envisages ecological zones on the north and south of the core monument area and a zone for facilities and parking along the periphery.



6

Variations in scale apart, it was determined that all the tomb and mosque structures, as well as all the step-wells, were in a poor state of preservation and the step-wells mostly in ruinous decay. The monuments suffer from similar patterns of material decay, as well as structural defects caused by dampness and water seepage, neglect and nineteenth/twentieth-century repairs using inappropriate modern materials such as cement. Often these repairs did not respect the original builders' design intention and thus altered the architectural character of the structures. Much of the plasterwork on the wall and dome surfaces has deteriorated, with all the structures covered with an inappropriate application of modern finish, disfiguring the historic character of these monuments.

Conservation works needing to be carried out on structures located within the Qutb Shahi Heritage Park range from preservation of original material fabric to reconstruction of collapsed building portions, such as the step-wells. The intention of the conservation works is to ensure that the significance of the site is preserved and that the architectural integrity is maintained. On occasion, this will require the removal of modern materials inserted into the built fabric and the restoration of elements such as stone edging on plinths, seen in archival images but removed at some time in the twentieth century.

The proposed Landscape Master Plan, based on site surveys and available archival material, is aimed at an enhanced setting for the monuments and improved internal visitor circulation.

On the northern and southern edges of the site, significant areas will be dedicated to ecological zones for local flora coupled with the revival of water structures, leading to a significantly improved environment within a densely populated city. Ecological trails will allow visiting school children to have an improved understanding of heritage and ecology issues. Together with archaeological investigations, a detailed vegetation survey is now being undertaken, to record species, height, spread, girth and condition of each tree in order to inform the Landscape Plan.

The proposed Landscape Plan would appropriately utilize the space of the presently segregated "Deccan Park" as a generously proportioned entrance zone, hence establishing an effective presence on the public road and avoiding the present anomaly of the indirect approach that does not encourage an even spread of visitor activity across the complex. Judicious modification and reorganization of entrances and paths will increase accessibility to the older parts of the complex and allow visitors to easily traverse the whole site and understand its sequential development rather than restrict their experience to only a part of the area. A path system based on the history of the site could play a vital role in enriching the visitors' experience of this large, deep and complex historical site.

Though conservation works in November 2013 commenced with emergency repairs, future conservation and landscape works will be carried out in a phased manner to ensure that only

[6] Lifting and re-setting masonry blocks of the Badi Baoli, which had collapsed during 2012–13.

[7] Plan of the 16th-century Badi Baoli.

portions of the site are inaccessible to the visiting public at any given time. Two international peer reviews have been held in 2014 to review the Conservation Plan and the Landscape Master Plan.

#### Badi Baoli

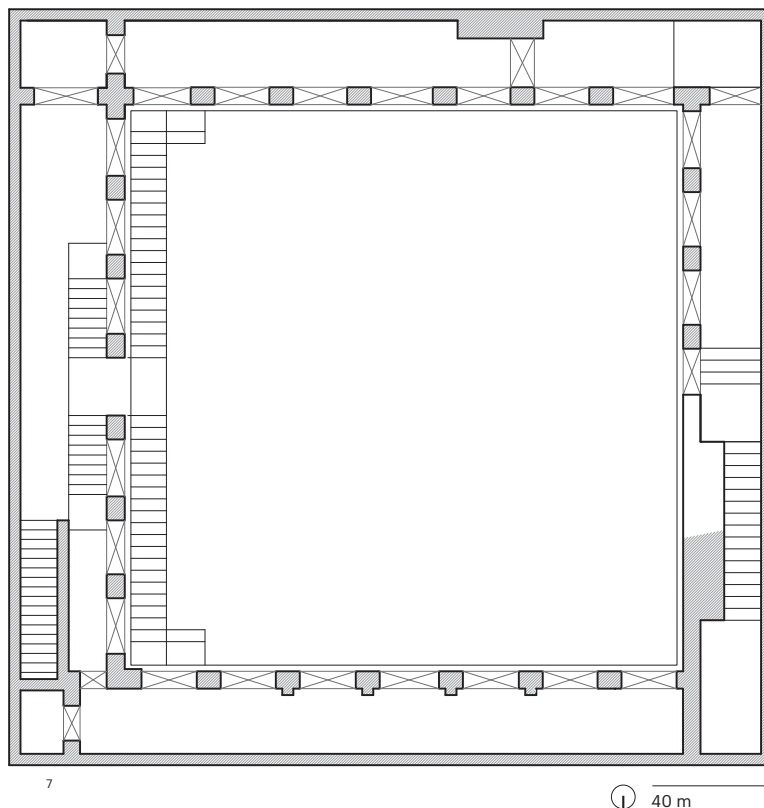
Of all the step-wells found on the site, the Badi Baoli seemed the best preserved when AKTC commenced surveys in 2012. However, through 2013, heavy storms led to the collapse of the west wall, threatening total collapse of the structure.

Archival research revealed that although originally built only as a tank in a depressed portion of the site, the arcade was, in fact, a nineteenth-century addition and prone to significant water pressure as large portions of the site drained into the area.

However, the Badi Baoli was to be restored as found prior to the collapse.

In a dangerous and intense effort, several months were required to remove the collapsed masonry as well as centuries of accumulated material from the base of the well. Once the bedrock was found, a raft foundation was built to stabilize the site. Six hundred cubic metres of stone masonry has since been built over this base with lime mortar.

Rainwater drainage into the well from the western side has been created in a manner that does not allow water to exert pressure on the stone masonry. The arcade and remaining portion will be restored in 2015 once the rebuilt masonry has stabilized.







8

#### Jamshed Quli Qutb Shah's Tomb

The removal of deteriorating cement plaster from the domed surface required no tools since the plaster had lost all strength and could be removed by hand. This was followed by the application of a layer of traditional lime mortar to prevent further water ingress, which was causing significant cracks. The stucco plasterwork is also being restored on both the internal and external wall surfaces, as is the stone edging of the lower plinth, clearly visible in archival images.

To decide on the most appropriate conservation strategy for the stucco plasterwork, one of the most visible architectural elements on all structures, AKTC has created a template. This aims at ensuring that no original stucco is removed while also taking into account a tolerance for variations.

#### Abdullah Qutb Shah's Mosque

At the request of the local community, emergency repair works have also commenced on Abdullah Qutb Shah's Mosque, the roof of which was leaking and from where nearly half a metre of cement concrete weighing over ninety tonnes was manually removed.

The entire interior chamber was found to have been plastered in cement, and the inappropriate flooring is also now being replaced. Agreements with the Mosque committee will allow AKTC to design and implement the sensitive installation of electric fittings in order to ensure that the impact on the historic character of the Mosque is minimized.

[8] Removing cement and re-plastering the walls of Abdullah Qutb Shah's Mosque with lime plaster.

[9] Opposite page: restoring the original plasterwork of Jamshed Quli Qutb Shah's Tomb.



