



AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

Historic Cities Programme

NASIR KHUSRAU SHRINE, BADAKHSHAN: HISTORY OF SITE



The Nasir Khusrau Shrine before conservation, AKTC, 2009



Building's loose conglomerate outcrop, the shrine required extensive consolidation works, AKTC, 2011

HISTORY & CHARACTERISTICS

The shrine of Nasir Khusrau was constructed on the final resting place of the 11th century Ismaili scholar Nasir Khusrau, who came to Yumgan in 1060. The shrine is situated on a steep slope on top of a 15-metre high exposed conglomerate stone outcrop, 50 meters above the village of Hazrat-e Sayyed. The site is accessed by a narrow, winding path from the south, leading to a large flat terrace. A stone-lined pool used for ablutions is filled from a stream that runs through the village. To the north, there is a ruined kitchen (*langar-khana*). A small terraced garden for pilgrims, divided by stone retaining walls, has been laid out to the north-east of the shrine. Fine inscriptions, found carved in timber in the grave chamber (*mazar*), indicate that the building was substantially transformed in 1697. Repairs were again made in the late 19th century, when a small mosque was built on an adjacent terrace. The shrine contains four small spaces composed of two enclosed rooms, each approached by separate vestibules. The centrepiece of the shrine is Nasir Khusrau's grave, accessed from the east through a large open vestibule lined with six decorated timber pillars and carved wooden rafters.

While some historic sources indicate that the *mazar* chamber of the shrine may have originally been Nasir Khusrau's dwelling, the room measures approximately 20 square metres with a low ceiling height of just over 2.5 meters. The *mazar* chamber is divided into two zones, a small area covering about one-quarter of the floor space and a raised larger southern zone containing Nasir Khusrau's grave. Lit by small barred windows on each of its three external walls, the chamber is covered with four rows, containing 52 wooden joists painted with verses from the Quran.



Main vestibule before conservation, AKTC, 2011



A precarious pathway around the shrine enabled upkeep, AKTC, 2009



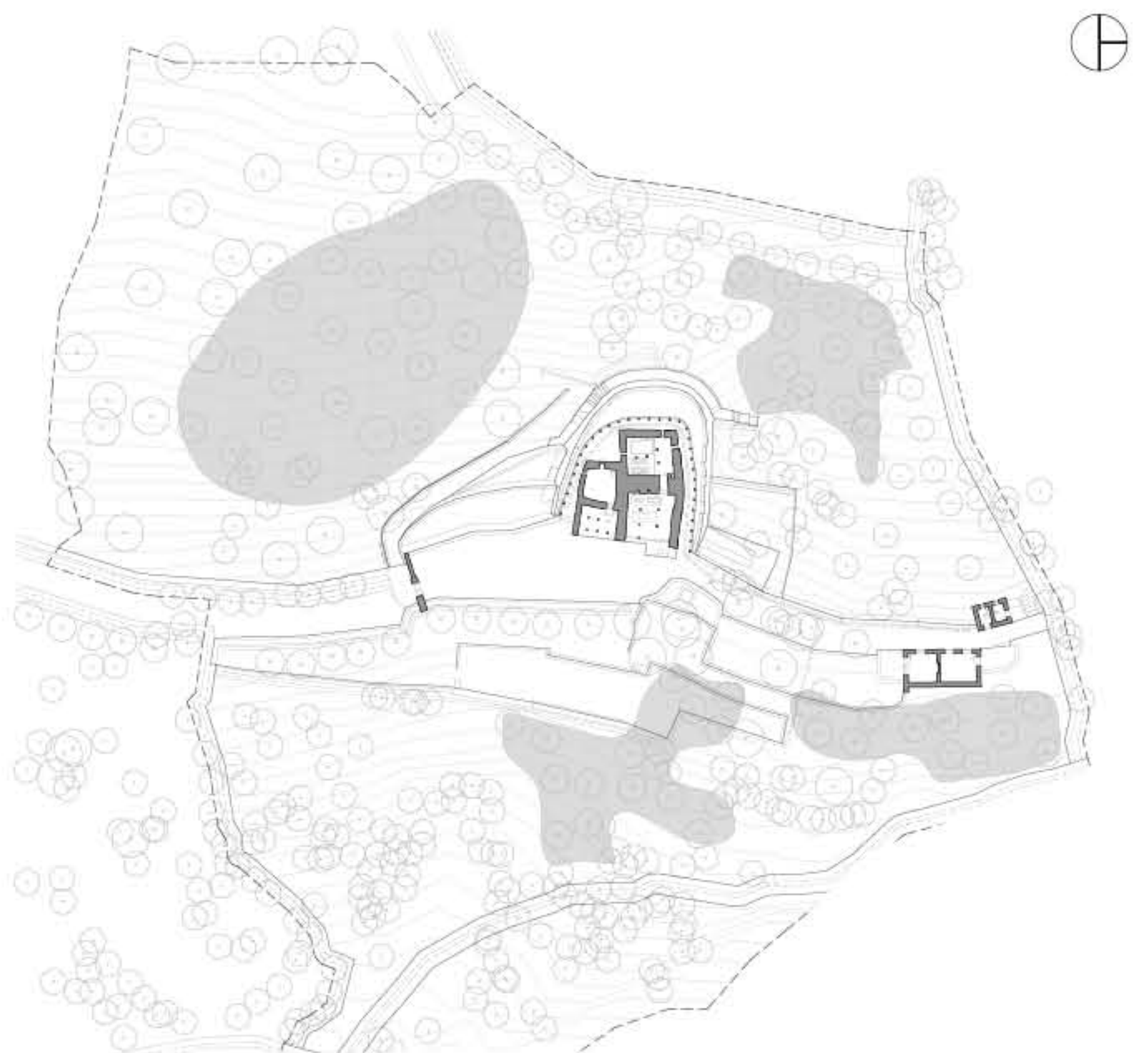
Decorative carved wooden columns in the secondary vestibule, before conservation, AKTC, 2005



The grave chamber constructed with carved timber posts and beams, AKTC, 2009



Plasterwork and wall paintings before grave chamber conservation, AKTC, 2009



Site Plan, AKTC, 2012

0 25m



Detail, carved wooden column base, AKTC, 2011



Detail, carved wooden column, AKTC, 2011



Beams in the grave chamber decorated with religious verses, AKTC, 2011