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FEATURED CASE STUDIES



HUMAYUN'S TOMB COMPLEX



SUNDER NURSERY



HAZRAT NIZAMUDDIN BASTI

Programme Scope/Objectives

This is a conservation, socio-economic and environmental programme with key project components including the conservation of over 30 Mughal-era monuments and the creation of a city park with Delhi's first arboretum. Performance spaces, documentation and training in music traditions, assistance in the revival of craft skills, the strengthening of the municipal education and health infrastructure were also undertaken. The programme involved setting up vocational training programmes, building public toilets, assorted urban improvements, and conservation training for professionals and craftsmen.

Preceding pages:

A panoramic view from the north-east overlooks Humayun's Tomb complex. Sunder Nursery is on the right.

Delhi Area Programme

Located in the heart of New Delhi, in the setting of Humayun's Tomb World Heritage Site and dotted with over a hundred monuments, the project area may be the densest ensemble of medieval Islamic buildings in India. More importantly, the densely populated Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti is the repository of seven hundred years 'living culture' recognized for its pluralistic traditions.

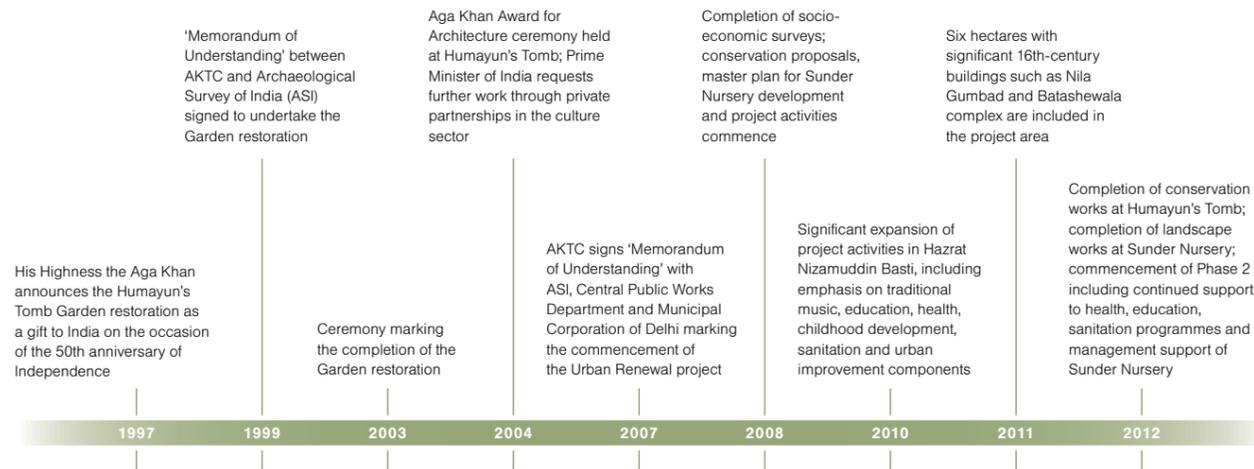
On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of India's independence, as a gift of His Highness the Aga Khan, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) implemented the Humayun's Tomb Garden restoration. The successfully completed project led to a significant increase in visitor numbers and eventually culminated in a new public-private partnership project for a comprehensive urban renewal initiative in the area. With distinct conservation, socio-economic and environmental development objectives, this project aims to unify the three presently segregated areas of Humayun's Tomb, Nizamuddin Basti and Sunder Nursery into an urban conservation zone of considerable breadth and cultural significance while improving the quality of life for resident populations.

Heritage Conservation: Humayun's Tomb Complex

Conservation works aimed at enhancing the historic character and ensuring long-term preservation are now being undertaken on the mausoleum and associated gateways, pavilions and enclosure walls. Similarly the project, through landscaping and conservation, will focus on enhancing the setting of the World Heritage Site and possibly lead to the expansion of the site's boundaries.

Exhaustive archival research, site surveys, documentation using three-dimensional, state-of-the-art laser scanning technology, condition assessment and structural analysis preceded the preparation of detailed conservation proposals in keeping with established Indian and international conservation standards and guidelines. Conservation works then commenced in April 2008, following discussion and peer review. Significant completed works include the careful removal of over one million kilos of twentieth-century concrete from the roof and repairs to the dome, with its marble cladding repointed and cleaned and gold-plated finial repaired. The original Delhi quartzite paving of the lower plinth has now been restored, requiring the removal of concrete and manually lifting and resetting 12,000 square metres of stone blocks, most weighing over a thousand kilos.

Phasing 1997 → 2012



During 2008 and early 2009 over a million kilos of concrete were removed from the roof terrace of Humayun's Tomb.

The project has also served as a platform for training programmes for conservation professionals and craftsmen. Over a hundred officers from across India have attended training modules focused on the preparation and use of lime mortar and high-definition survey techniques.

Sunder Nursery Monuments

Located immediately north of Humayun's Tomb, the twenty-seven-hectare Sunder Nursery stands on the historic Grand Trunk Road linking Lahore to Kolkata and hosting significant sixteenth-century monuments that exist there thanks to nearby Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya's *dargah*.

Conservation works are ongoing on the unique sixteenth-century Sunderwala Mahal and have been completed on the eighteenth-century Mughal-era garden pavilion, which was on the verge of collapse and threatened with demolition for a roadway project. Its conservation required painstaking work by master craftsmen using traditional materials, skills and techniques.

Over the next few years conservation works will be carried out on Lakkarwala Burj and Sunderwala Burj – buildings considered to be of national importance. It is also planned to integrate the large Azimganj Serai, to the north of Sunder Nursery.

Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti

The densely populated Basti is named after one of India's most venerated fourteenth-century Sufi saints, Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya. The conservation and rehabilitation of monuments and civic open spaces aim to restore its intrinsic cultural, historical and spiritual significance and enhance visitor experience for pilgrims and tourists.

Conservation works in the Basti commenced following the partial collapse, in July 2008, of the fourteenth-century Baoli (step-well), considered holy and visited annually by millions of pilgrims. This is the only step-well in Delhi still fed by underwater springs, albeit heavily polluted by sewerage and waste. Its collapse in July 2008 endangered the lives of both residents and pilgrims and necessitated urgent remedial measures. Prior to commencing conservation works on the Baoli, studies were carried out using state-of-the-art technology including a ground penetrating radar survey, high-definition 3D laser scans, and geotechnical assessments.

In keeping with the requests of the Pirzada's, or keepers of the shrine, the Baoli was also de-silted to its original levels and centuries of accumulations were manually removed requiring over 8000 man-days of work. The collapsed portions were rebuilt as per the original construction techniques and the entire wall surface was chiselled to remove a thick layer of epoxy. Prior to conservation works, a dwelling unit over the collapsed portion needed to be dismantled and an alternate residence built for the family.

Standing at the eastern edge of the Basti, the unique Mughal tomb known as Chaunsath Khamba, together with the tomb enclosure of Mirza Ghalib – South Asia's most renowned poet – forms the largest open spaces within the Basti. Both enclosures have been landscaped so as to enhance its historic character and restore dignity while creating performance spaces for musical traditions associated with the area for over seven centuries.

Socio-economic initiatives

Aimed at improving the quality of life for the densely populated Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, the project takes a synergistic, community-centric and collaborative approach to develop and strengthen essential urban services through interventions in core areas of education, health, sanitation and upgrading open space.

Education

The existing education infrastructure has already been significantly enhanced and improved. Interventions in key segments of education, such as the training of teachers and support for students, were extended to include a major refurbishment of a municipal primary school building. This was in a dilapidated state and lacked functional toilets or drinking water. Aimed at creating a student friendly, secure school environment beneficial to the growth and development of pupils, 'Building as a Learning Aid' elements were incorporated and provisions made for drinking water, separate toilets for boys and girls, wider staircases and safety features, like additional exits, unbreakable window panes and new electrical systems. The renovated school and education initiatives have resulted in a 150-per cent increase in the enrolment of students in just over a year.

Health

Interventions at the municipal polyclinic have significantly improved the quality of available clinical and preventive health care. A newly established pathology lab is capable of conducting thirty-four types of tests and more than 3500 people have used the facility to carry out over 11,000 tests in just over a year. The initiative has included placing additional doctors for consultations in Gynaecology, ENT and Eye Care.

Vocational Training

In response to community needs, vocational training, career development and employability programmes have been developed and are being implemented. These are aimed at building skills that translate into employment for youth, and livelihood opportunities and financial independence for women.

Urban improvements

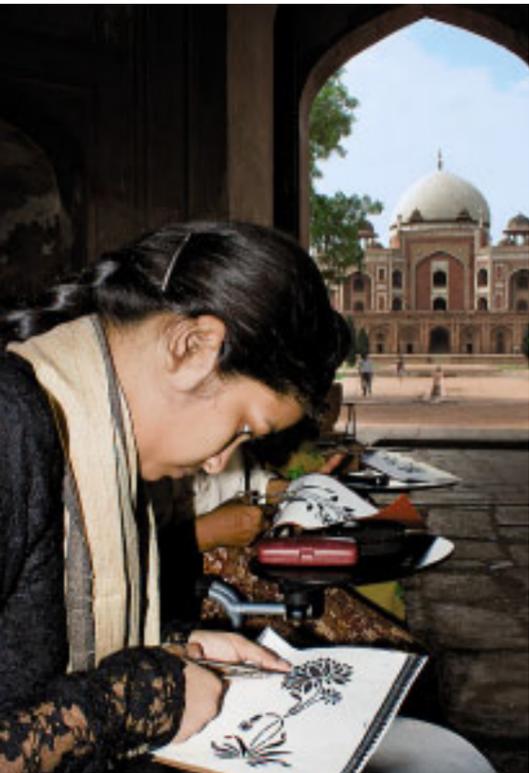
A year after socio-economic development programmes commenced in the Basti and interaction with residents had increased, a physical mapping was undertaken in 2009 with the intention to plan sensitive urban improvements including landscaping of open spaces and street improvement; plans for both are now being implemented.



Top, classes are held in new classrooms at the Municipal Corporation of Delhi School.

Middle, people listen to a young Basti resident trained as a heritage volunteer at Chaunsath Khamba.

Bottom, a child is being examined at the Municipal Corporation of Delhi Polyclinic.



At Humayun's Tomb, young women practice the once near-extinct art and craft of *sanji*, or paper cutting, which was introduced to create income-generation opportunities in the district.

The parks along the western edge of the Basti will be landscaped to suit the needs expressed by the resident community in consultative meetings and as such there will be earmarked parks for women, children, cricket and other sports, community functions and weddings.

A key intervention for urban renewal in the Basti, the community toilet complex built in 2009 has improved access to hygienic sanitation for residents and pilgrims, who rely on public utilities. Also, over a hundred household toilets have been connected to the sewerage system and portions of the sewerage system relaid as part of the conservation works on the Baoli.

Cultural revival initiative

Exceptional by virtue of not just its vintage, the 700-year-old 'living culture' of the heritage area is a unique blend of secular and interfaith elements that encompass performing arts, classical music, poetry and traditional crafts in the setting of significant monuments. The project aims to revive and revitalize these components by documenting and recording their rich legacy and by making them viable in a contemporary milieu and to showcase this intangible heritage through music festivals held at the performance spaces created within the Basti. With the Qawwali music of fourteenth-century poet-composer Amir Khusrau Dehvi originating here, it is the focus of documentation, training and outreach components of the project.

The initiative also aims to build awareness and generate interest in the built heritage on the Basti through activities like theatre, painting, craft workshops and guided walking tours – led by trained youths of the area. Basti women tutored in the traditional craft of paper cutting now augment family incomes with sales of their products.

Sunder Nursery: Developing a city park

The twenty-seven-hectare Sunder Nursery, established in 1912, is being developed as an urban park with distinct heritage, ecological and nursery zones. Works to enhance and showcase its ecological and historical heritage under a multidimensional landscape and conservation programme are now ongoing.

The landscape master plan includes a micro-habitat zone/arboretum to showcase Delhi's fast disappearing biodiversity. In a first for Delhi, the arboretum will house three hundred tree species representative of Delhi's native flora, trees and plants favoured by the Mughals and secure an important bird habitat. In addition, the park will emphasize its horticultural past with provisions for mist chambers, a tissue culture lab, glass houses, 3.6 hectares of nursery beds, a training centre, and dedicated spaces for flower shows and exhibitions.

With a two-kilometre-long peripheral road now complete, the park will be pedestrian. The central axis of the park, aligned to Humayun's Tomb entrance plaza, will draw in visitors and lead them through the many magnificent Mughal-period monuments set in lush environs, specialized gardens and ecological zones of the park. Additionally, Sunder Nursery will house educational facilities such as an Interpretation Centre on Ecology and Heritage, an amphitheatre for cultural events and a lakeside restaurant.

The three project zones of Humayun's Tomb, Nizamuddin Basti and Sunder Nursery will be interconnected by nature trails and heritage walks that link not just the three sites but also their history and culture. The resulting landscape will thus offer a unique experience for visitors while enhancing the cultural significance of the greater Nizamuddin area.

Background

BRIEF HISTORY OF PROGRAMME AREA

The Nizamuddin heritage precinct, comprising the three presently segregated areas of Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, Sunder Nursery and the World Heritage Site of Humayun's Tomb, has had continuous building activity since the 12th century. The revered Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya lived here in the early 14th century and following his burial the area witnessed centuries of tomb building, since it is considered auspicious to be buried near a saint's grave. The Mughal-era Grand Trunk Road linking Calcutta to Lahore passed through the site, which boasts one of the densest ensembles of medieval Islamic buildings in India, several of which stand within the densely populated Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti. Sunder Nursery, also dotted with Mughal-era monuments, was established as a plant nursery north of Humayun's Tomb in the 1920s to provide and experiment with plants for the British city of New Delhi.

Challenges

PROGRAMME RISKS

The programme has distinct conservation, environmental and socio-economic development goals. Significant progress has been made to realize diverse project objectives, but existing partnerships with public partners and the local community need to be strengthened and new partnerships with public and private agencies established.

SITE CONDITIONS

Located in the heart of New Delhi, the Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti is one of the city's densest settlements where three- to four-storey modern buildings stand alongside medieval monuments. The Basti is separated from the large open space of Humayun's Tomb and Sunder Nursery by a major road. Sunder Nursery has been a largely under-utilized green space with significant heritage and ecological assets.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The programme aims to build the required infrastructure at Sunder Nursery so it can function as a city park. Visitor facilities including an interpretation centre are required at Humayun's Tomb. In order to allow residents of Nizamuddin Basti better access to health, education, sanitation, open spaces and economic opportunities the existing infrastructure needs to be considerably strengthened.

ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE

Humayun's Tomb stands on the southern edge of a 40-hectare green zone that stretches to Humayun's Citadel named Dinpanah (now called the 'Old Fort'). The 10-hectare enclosed Garden immediately surrounding Humayun's Tomb was earlier restored by AKTC in partnership with the Archaeological Survey of India and the remaining portions of the 27-hectare complex will now be landscaped. North of Humayun's Tomb stands the 28-hectare Sunder Nursery and the five-hectare Bata-shewala complex, both of which will be landscaped and made accessible to the public as a result of the ongoing project there. Despite living on the edge of a garden

city, few Nizamuddin Basti residents have access to the two hectares of neighbourhood parks on the western edge of the Basti. These parks, presently misused, are being landscaped in consultation with community groups, especially women and youth.

Significant Issues and Impact

MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

The Master Plan for Delhi (MPD) 2000 recognized the greater Nizamuddin Area (including Humayun's Tomb and Sunder Nursery) as one of five designated 'Conservation Areas' in Delhi. However, the status of the Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, which should be that of an 'Urbanized Village', is unclear in the MPD 2021. Sunder Nursery has now been designated in the MPD as a 'District Park'. The entire project stands in Zone D of the MPD, alongside the British-era constructed area today known as the Lutyens Bungalow Zone. A preparation of a 'Local Area Plan' for the Nizamuddin Basti is now underway.

PLANNING ISSUES

A prime objective of the programme is to integrate the three presently segregated zones: Nizamuddin Basti, Humayun's Tomb and Sunder Nursery. Physical surveys of the entire project area and zones abutting the project have been completed. At the Tomb and Nursery this will be achieved by forming a single pedestrian entrance zone, emphasized by an interpretation centre. Heritage trails will link the Basti where, following detailed physical mapping and studies, the project will focus on urban improvements. The three project zones of Humayun's Tomb, Nizamuddin Basti and Sunder Nursery will be interconnected by nature trails and heritage walks that link not just the three sites but also their history and culture. The resulting landscape will thus offer a unique experience for visitors while enhancing the cultural significance of the greater Nizamuddin area.

BASELINE STANDARDS

A Quality of Life survey, aimed at establishing benchmarks for key interventions in the Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti was completed. A baseline for establishing benchmarks for early childhood care and development indicators was also carried out. In addition, monitoring and evaluation systems to track programme beneficiaries and changes due to implementation of interventions have been established.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INITIATIVES

Significant efforts in the field of education, health, sanitation, vocational training and urban improvements coupled with cultural revival initiatives are being made to improve the quality of life for local residents and the pilgrimage experience. Major works have now been completed towards upgrading a primary school, establishing a pathology laboratory at the local polyclinic, building new community toilets, establishing vocational training programmes aimed at improving employability and setting up community self-help groups.

CONSERVATION ASPECTS

Over a hundred listed heritage buildings stand within the project area. In the last decades many others have

been lost as a result of expanding urbanization, vandalism and neglect. Twenty-nine of the remaining are considered of national importance and protected by the Archaeological Survey of India. Other buildings of high historical and architectural significance were presented to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi as buildings of local importance, many suffering decades of neglect and inappropriate repairs. Though they provide a poor living environment, several are tombs and occupied as residences. Conservation work on at least 40 heritage buildings is being undertaken as part of the ongoing project. Boundaries of the MPD Conservation Area and the World Heritage Site are also to be defined.

POST-IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

Discussions are ongoing to ensure that revenue generated at Sunder Nursery is returned back into operations and maintenance of the park through the formation of a trust or 'Special Purpose Vehicle' and, furthermore, as support to the education, health and sanitation programmes established under the programme.

Partners

PUBLIC PARTNERS

Archaeological Survey of India, Ministry of Culture, Government of India, Municipal Corporation of Delhi, Central Public Works Department, Ministry of Urban Development, Delhi Development Authority.

Authoritative Framework

'Public-Private Partnership Memorandum of Understanding' signed by the Archaeological Survey of India, Municipal Corporation of Delhi and Central Public Works Department together with AKTC and the Aga Khan Foundation on 11 July 2007.



Conservation efforts on Humayun's Tomb complex involved the work of many skilled craftsmen, including stonemasons.