GOZARGAH SHRINE COMPLEX

The grave of the 12th century Sufi poet and scholar, Abdullah Ansari, in Gozargah is one of the most important religious sites in the region. Situated in the courtyard of an important shrine complex dating from 1425 AD, Ansari’s grave remains an important focus for prayer and contemplation to this day. In order to protect the distinctive decoration in the complex, repairs have been carried out to all roofs, while access by visitors to the courtyard has been enhanced by brick paving, the installation of discreet external lighting and the replacement of modern fittings where necessary. Work continues on documentation and interpretation of the decoration and dedications on the many historic graves that lie in the courtyard of the shrine. Parallel restoration work on the adjoining Namakdan Pavilion (left) and Zarnegar Takihana is now complete.

AKTC’s urban conservation and development work receives support from the governments of Germany, Norway, US, UK and Uzbekistan, as well from as the Prince Claus Fund (Netherlands) and the Open Society Institute.

AGA KHAN MUSIC INITIATIVE IN CENTRAL ASIA

The Aga Khan Music Initiative in Central Asia (AKMICA) was created by His Highness the Aga Khan in 2000 to support the efforts of Central Asian musicians and communities to sustain, further develop and transmit musical traditions that are a vital part of their cultural heritage. The Music Initiative’s strategy is to contribute to the revitalisation and continuing evolution of music in Central Asia by identifying and supporting outstanding musical talent, cultivating new approaches to musical performance and pedagogy, documenting and disseminating the work of leading exponents of Central Asian music, and stimulating interest in the region’s music worldwide.

In Afghanistan, the Music Initiative engaged six masters to offer instruction on the premises of AKTC in Kabul. In 2006, another group of ustâds began teaching students in historic premises in the centre of the Old City of Herat. The ustâds provide instruction to groups of around 20 students in two-hour sessions three times a week. All students are selected on the basis of merit, and have to pass regular tests to retain their place in the course. While initial enrolment in the Training Programme was all-male, efforts continue to identify female students in the various courses, in which some 170 students now receive instruction. The Government of India has provided instruments for these classes.

For more information about the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, please visit www.akdn.org or contact the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, PO Box 2049, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland. Tel. +41 22 909 7200; Fax. +41 22 909 7292; Email: aktc@akdn.org
INTRODUCTION

In 2002, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) signed an agreement with the Interim Administration of Afghanistan to restore and rehabilitate a number of significant historic buildings and public open spaces in the city of Kabul. Since then, a range of conservation and urban regeneration efforts, living condition improvements, community development programmes and planning initiatives have been implemented in war-damaged neighbourhoods of the Old City of Kabul. A similar initiative commenced in the Old City of Herat in 2005. The Trust is also involved in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage in Afghanistan through the Aga Khan Music Initiative in Central Asia.

BAGHE BABUR, KABUL

In early 2003, conservation began of the sixteenth-century Baghe Babur in Kabul, where the first Mughal Emperor Babur is buried. Now managed by an independent Trust, the restored 11-hectare garden not only re-establishes the historic character of the site with its water channels, planted terraces and pavilions, but also provides the population of Kabul with a space for recreation and cultural events. The bulk of physical works were completed by 2007, since when the various facilities – including a swimming-pool, garden Pavilion, caravanserai and Queen’s Palace complex – have been in public use. In addition to the conservation work in Baghe Babur, investments have been made in upgrading basic infrastructure for residents of the surrounding neighbourhood, while the joint formulation of a District Action Plan continues.

In 2008, Baghe Babur has seen a steady increase in number of visitors, with some 60,000 per month in mid-summer. Since the introduction of a new system of management under the Baghe Babur Trust, with participation from Kabul Municipality, the Ministry of Information and Culture and AKTC, there has also been an appreciable increase in revenue. In order to ensure that the restored landscape and monuments can be maintained to appropriate standards, the Trust aims over time to achieve financial sustainability by generating revenue from entrance fees and appropriate public events in the various facilities.

CONSERVATION OF TIMUR SHAH MAUSOLEUM, KABUL

Located in a busy commercial area in central Kabul, conservation of the sixteenth-century Timur Shah Mausoleum commenced in 2003. In addition to safeguarding an important historic landmark, the project has enabled the training of Afghan professionals and craftsmen, as well as the reclamation of a sizable garden around the monument, which had over recent years been encroached upon by informal traders. Since its conservation, the mausoleum has been transformed through re-planting, installation of irrigation, paving and provision of public facilities. The Park now provides a shady respite on a daily basis for thousands of visitors. Among the socio-economic initiatives supported in the Old City are home-based training and literacy courses for women, and the operation of a restored community bath-house, whose revenue is used to meet the costs of neighbourhood upgrading. A second bath-house is currently under restoration.

AKTC staff continue to work closely with members of the Kabul Old City Commission to oversee development in the historic fabric, as well as providing technical support to planners from Kabul Municipality and the Ministry of Urban Development. In 2008, work began on the formulation of a planning framework for the Old City and on proposals for a national policy for urban heritage preservation, with support from the World Bank.

URBAN REGENERATION PROJECTS IN KABUL

The Asheqan wa Arefan neighbourhood, which takes its name from an important shrine at its centre, represents one of the last surviving clusters of historic fabric in the Old City, which suffered massive damage in the early 1990s. Since early 2003, 11 homes and 15 historic public buildings have been conserved, and the living conditions of more than 60 households improved through access to small-scale grants and building advice in this and adjacent areas. A range of upgrading measures have been undertaken, including paving of alleyways and selected streets, along with the construction of drains and improvement of water supplies. This rehabilitation has benefited nearly 20,000 residents and generated some 80,000 work-days of employment, while the conservation works has provided the opportunity for training of more than 60 apprentices under the instruction of 15 master-craftsmen and 65 skilled labourers. Efforts have been made to protect and upgrade public open space through the old city. In the case of Zarnegar Park, to the north of the old city, a degraded space has been transformed through re-planting, installation of irrigation, paving and provision of public facilities. The Park now provides a shady respite on a daily basis for thousands of visitors. Among the socio-economic initiatives supported in the Old City are home-based training and literacy courses for women, and the operation of a restored community bath-house, whose revenue is used to meet the costs of neighbourhood upgrading. A second bath-house is currently under restoration.

AKTC staff continue to work closely with members of the Kabul Old City Commission to oversee development in the historic fabric, as well as providing technical support to planners from Kabul Municipality and the Ministry of Urban Development. In 2008, work began on the formulation of a planning framework for the Old City and on proposals for a national policy for urban heritage preservation, with support from the World Bank.

HERAT OLD CITY REHABILITATION INITIATIVE

In 2005, AKTC initiated a process of mapping of all property in the old city of Herat, which has taken place in parallel with the conservation of five important historic houses and 17 public buildings, along with provision of small-scale grants to more than 70 households. This work alone has generated more than 60,000 work-days of employment. Based on surveys of living conditions, investments have been made in repairs or reconstruction of 2,500 metres of drain and laying of more than 4,000 metres of stone paving in pedestrian alleyways. Along with the removal of solid and liquid waste, these measures have benefitted more than half the residents of the Old City. With technical support from AKTC, an Old City Commission now oversees urban development and upgrading within the confines of the historic quarter, as well as formulating neighbourhood plans and raising public awareness of the need for safeguarding in the Old City and beyond.
INTRODUCTION

In 2002, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) signed an agreement with the Interim Administration of Afghanistan to restore and rehabilitate a number of significant historic buildings and public open spaces in the city of Kabul. Since then, a range of conservation and urban regeneration efforts, living condition improvements, community development programmes and planning initiatives have been implemented in war-damaged neighbourhoods of the Old City of Kabul. A similar initiative commenced in the Old City of Herat in 2005. The Trust is also involved in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage in Afghanistan through the Aga Khan Music Initiative in Central Asia.

BAGHE BABUR, KABUL

In early 2003, conservation began of the sixteenth-century Baghe Babur in Kabul, where the first Mughal Emperor Babur is buried. Now managed by an independent Trust, the restored 11-hectare garden not only re-establishes the historic character of the site with its water channels, planted terraces and pavilions, but also provides the population of Kabul with a space for recreational and cultural events. The bulk of physical works were completed by 2007, since when the various facilities – including a swimming-pool, garden Pavilion, caravanserai and Queen’s Palace complex – have been in public use. In addition to the conservation work in Baghe Babur, investments have been made in upgrading basic infrastructure for residents of the surrounding neighbourhood, while the joint formulation of a District Action Plan continues.

In 2008, Baghe Babur has seen a steady increase in number of visitors, with some 60,000 per month in mid-summer. Since the introduction of a new system of management under the Baghe Babur Trust, participation from Kabul Municipality, the Ministry of Information and Culture and AKTC, there has also been an appreciable increase in revenue. In order to ensure that the restored landscape and monuments can be maintained to appropriate standards, the Trust aims over time to achieve financial sustainability by generating revenue from entrance fees and appropriate public events in the various facilities.

CONSERVATION OF TIMUR SHAH MAUSOLEUM, KABUL

Located in a busy commercial area in central Kabul, conservation of the late-eighteenth century Timur Shah Mausoleum commenced in 2003. In addition to safeguarding an important historic landmark, the project has enabled the training of Afghan professionals and craftsmen, as well as the reclamation of a sizable garden around the monument, which had over recent years been encroached upon by informal traders. Since its conservation, the mausoleum has been transformed through re-planting, installation of irrigation, paving and selection of water channels lead out to the garden Pavilion. Since opening, Baghe Babur has become a popular destination for the citizens of Kabul.

HERAT OLD CITY REHABILITATION INITIATIVE

In 2005, AKTC initiated a process of mapping of all property in the old city of Herat, which has taken place in parallel with the conservation of five important historic houses and 17 public buildings, along with provision of small-scale grants to more than 70 households. This work alone has generated more than 60,000 work-days of employment. Based on surveys of living conditions, investments have been made in repairs or reconstruction of 2,500 metres of drainage and laying of more than 4,000 metres of stone paving in pedestrian alleys. Along with the removal of solid and liquid waste, these measures have benefitted more than half the residents of the Old City. With technical support from AKTC, an Old City Commission now oversees urban development and upgrading within the confines of the historic quarter, as well as formulating neighbourhood plans and raising public awareness of the need for safeguarding in the Old City and beyond.

URBAN REGENERATION PROJECTS IN KABUL

The Asheqan wa Arefan neighbourhood, which takes its name from an important shrine at its centre, represents one of the last surviving clusters of historic fabric in the Old City, which suffered massive damage in the early 1990s. Since early 2003, 11 homes and 15 historic public buildings have been conserved, and the living conditions of more than 60 households improved through access to small-scale grants and building advice in this and adjacent areas. A range of upgrading measures have been undertaken, including paving of alleys and selected streets, along with the construction of drains and improvement of water supplies. This rehabilitation has benefited nearly 20,000 residents and generated some 80,000 work-days of employment, while the conservation works has provided the opportunity for training of more than 60 apprentices under the instruction of 15 master-craftsmen and 65 skilled labourers. Efforts have been made to protect and upgrade public open space through the old city. In the case of Zarnegar Park, to the north of the old city, a degraded space has been transformed through re-planting, installation of irrigation, paving and provision of public facilities. The Park now provides a shady respite on a daily basis for thousands of visitors. Among the socio-economic initiatives supported in the Old City are home-based training and literacy courses for women, and the operation of a restored community bath-house, whose revenue is used to meet the costs of neighbourhood upgrading. A second bath-house is currently under restoration.

AKTC staff continue to work closely with members of the Kabul Old City Commission to oversee development in the historic fabric, as well as providing technical support to planners from Kabul Municipality and the Ministry of Urban Development. In 2008, work began on the formulation of a planning framework for the Old City and on proposals for a national policy for urban heritage preservation, with support from the World Bank.

URBAN REGENERATION PROJECTS IN KABUL

The Asheqan wa Arefan neighbourhood, which takes its name from an important shrine at its centre, represents one of the last surviving clusters of historic fabric in the Old City, which suffered massive damage in the early 1990s. Since early 2003, 11 homes and 15 historic public buildings have been conserved, and the living conditions of more than 60 households improved through access to small-scale grants and building advice in this and adjacent areas. A range of upgrading measures have been undertaken, including paving of alleys and selected streets, along with the construction of drains and improvement of water supplies. This rehabilitation has benefited nearly 20,000 residents and generated some 80,000 work-days of employment, while the conservation works has provided the opportunity for training of more than 60 apprentices under the instruction of 15 master-craftsmen and 65 skilled labourers. Efforts have been made to protect and upgrade public open space through the old city. In the case of Zarnegar Park, to the north of the old city, a degraded space has been transformed through re-planting, installation of irrigation, paving and provision of public facilities. The Park now provides a shady respite on a daily basis for thousands of visitors. Among the socio-economic initiatives supported in the Old City are home-based training and literacy courses for women, and the operation of a restored community bath-house, whose revenue is used to meet the costs of neighbourhood upgrading. A second bath-house is currently under restoration.

AKTC staff continue to work closely with members of the Kabul Old City Commission to oversee development in the historic fabric, as well as providing technical support to planners from Kabul Municipality and the Ministry of Urban Development. In 2008, work began on the formulation of a planning framework for the Old City and on proposals for a national policy for urban heritage preservation, with support from the World Bank.

HERAT OLD CITY REHABILITATION INITIATIVE

In 2005, AKTC initiated a process of mapping of all property in the old city of Herat, which has taken place in parallel with the conservation of five important historic houses and 17 public buildings, along with provision of small-scale grants to more than 70 households. This work alone has generated more than 60,000 work-days of employment. Based on surveys of living conditions, investments have been made in repairs or reconstruction of 2,500 metres of drainage and laying of more than 4,000 metres of stone paving in pedestrian alleys. Along with the removal of solid and liquid waste, these measures have benefitted more than half the residents of the Old City. With technical support from AKTC, an Old City Commission now oversees urban development and upgrading within the confines of the historic quarter, as well as formulating neighbourhood plans and raising public awareness of the need for safeguarding in the Old City and beyond.
GOZARGAH SHRINE COMPLEX

The grave of the 12th century Sufi poet and scholar Abdullah Ansari, in Gozargah is one of the most important religious sites in the region. Situated in the courtyard of an important shrine complex dating from 1425 AD, Ansari’s grave remains an important focus for prayer and contemplation to this day. In order to protect the distinctive decoration in the complex, repairs have been carried out to all roofs, while access by visitors to the courtyard has been enhanced by brick paving, the installation of discreet external lighting and the replacement of modern fittings where necessary. Work continues on documentation and interpretation of the decoration and dedications on the many historic graves that lie in the courtyard of the shrine. Parallel restoration work on the adjoining Namakdan Pavilion (left) and Zarnegar Takibana is now complete.

AKTC’s urban conservation and development work receives support from the governments of Germany, Norway, IS, IJK and Uzbekistan, as well from as the Prince Claus Fund (Netherlands) and the Open Society Institute.

AGA KHAN MUSIC INITIATIVE IN CENTRAL ASIA

The Aga Khan Music Initiative in Central Asia (AKMICA) was created by His Highness the Aga Khan in 2000 to support the efforts of Central Asian musicians and communities to sustain, further develop and transmit musical traditions that are a vital part of their cultural heritage. The Music Initiative’s strategy is to contribute to the revitalisation and continuing evolution of music in Central Asia by identifying and supporting outstanding musical talent, cultivating new approaches to musical performance and pedagogy, documenting and disseminating the work of leading exponents of Central Asian music, and stimulating interest in the region’s music worldwide.

In Afghanistan, the Music Initiative engaged six masters to offer instruction on the premises of AKTC in Kabul. In 2006, another group of ustâds began teaching students in historic premises in the centre of the Old City of Herat. The ustâds provide instruction to groups of around 20 students in two-hour sessions three times a week. All students are selected on the basis of merit, and have to pass regular tests to retain their place in the course. While initial enrolment in the Training Programme was all-male, efforts continue to identify female students in the various courses, in which some 70 students now receive instruction. The Government of India has provided instruments for these classes.

For more information about the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, please visit www.akdn.org or contact the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, PO Box 2049, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland. Tel. +41 22 909 7200; Fax. +41 22 909 7292; Email: aktc@akdn.org