



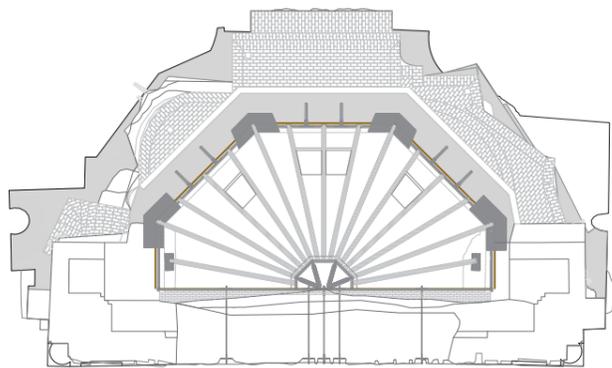
KHWAJA PARSA PARK: SUBHAN QOLI MADRASSA GATE



■ SUBHAN QOLI MADRASSA GATE

The Subhan Qoli madrasa gate is believed to date from the mid 17th century when one of the son's of Balkh's Uzbek rulers commissioned its construction. Built using revenues from the silk route trade, descriptions of the building from the wafiya noted that "it comprises lofty arches and vaulted niches, a majestic portal, a central courtyard and two large domed rooms, one of which is intended as a lecture hall...The madrasa also has 150 hojras (living chambers) on two floors." Built opposite the Khwaja Parsa Shrine, the madrasa is believed to have been intended to mirror and surpass the architectural significance of the Shrine. Following extensive periods of destruction in the 19th century and the construction of a circular road adjacent to the building in the 1950's, requiring the demolition of a large part of the architectural remains; the gate was in need of urgent consolidation works on the colour glazed tiled decoration and brick-masonry structure.

Conceived as a building to rival Khwaja Parsa's Shine in its architectural significance, the restoration works on the gate focused on reintegrating the structure into the public park. Retaining only a fraction of the vibrant colour glazed tiles that once decorated the elevations of the madrasa, conservation works commenced with the repair and consolidation of fragile sections of the remaining tiles. With the tiles stabilized and areas of damage to the main elevations consolidated, teams of masons began the structural intervention required to strengthen the brick-masonry walls of the gate. Additional works entailed providing protection against weathering, which resulted in the construction of a light-weight wooden roof clad in galvanized metal above the main Iwan of the gate. Detached from the park and isolated as a stand-alone structure for more than six decades, paving and leveling works at the base of the gate enabled the transformation of the structure as a main entrance gate into the park – restoring its intended purpose and allowing future visitors to appreciate its fine architecture.



Plan

