

Built in the style developed in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century in Delhi for royal tombs of the Sayyid and Lodi dynasties, Isa Khan's Tomb pre-dates the building of Emperor Humayun's tomb by two decades. The structure is considered significant for the high level of ornamentation – glazed tiles, plasterwork, stone elements such as finials and lattice screens – much of which had sadly been lost, either removed for the antique market in the 20<sup>th</sup> century or left to deteriorate.



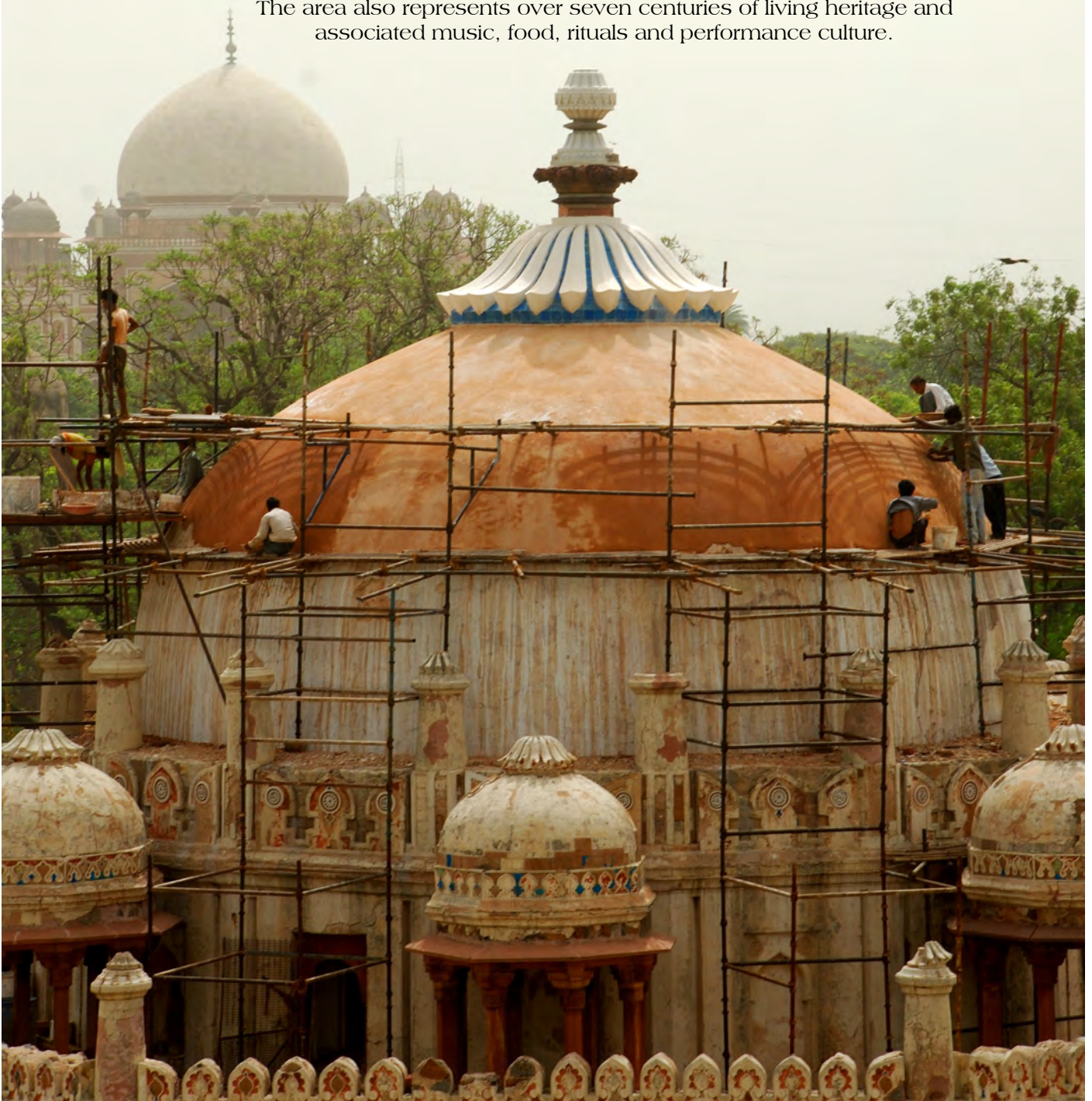
Illustration by Himanish Das



# WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Emperor Humayun's garden-tomb was built by Indian and Persian craftsmen on a scale far grander than any tombs. The monumental scale achieved here was to become the defining feature of Mughal architecture.

Adjoining Humayun's Tomb are several Mughal-era garden-tombs - Nila Gumbad, Isa Khan's enclosure, Bu Halima's tomb, Batashewala Complex, among others. In the larger Nizamuddin area, there are over 100 monuments, dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards, making it one of the densest ensembles of medieval Islamic buildings in the world. The area also represents over seven centuries of living heritage and associated music, food, rituals and performance culture.



Humayun's Tomb - Sunder Nursery - Nizamuddin Basti  
URBAN RENEWAL INITIATIVE

# ISA KHAN'S TOMB - GARDEN

*Isa Khan's Tomb is of an architectural style that was used for royal tombs through the 15<sup>th</sup> century rule of the Sayyid and Lodi dynasty. Marked by deep arcaded verandahs, the significance of the structure lies in the profuse ornamentation and its original setting remaining intact.*



*The striking Mosque within the garden-tomb has a sandstone façade and a lofty central dome. The three bay wide structure has a large plinth with a contemporary well.*



*The gateway would have had a lofty entrance arch and the interior side has three vaulted bays. Past repairs have obliterated all original details on the façade.*



*The octagonal internal retaining wall allowed the outer garden to serve as a typical Persian sunken garden, irrigated with flooding.*

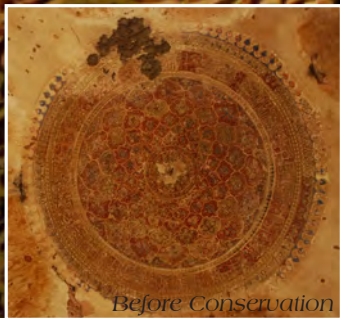


*Isa Khan's Tomb - Garden in 2010*



# ORNAMENTAL CEILING

The highly ornamental ceiling of Isa Khan's Tomb had suffered severe decay due to neglect and water ingress. Also with the dome white-washed and cement plastered, it was too dark for the ceiling to be visible. Careful restoration of the ornamentation has been carried out by master craftsmen and the cement plaster replaced with lime plaster thereby significantly enhancing the historic character of the tomb chamber.



*Architectural drawing prepared using the 3-D Laser Scanning data*



# DOCUMENTATION

Preparatory groundwork for conservation combined archival research, condition assesment, documentation and structural assessment with state-of-the-art technologies.



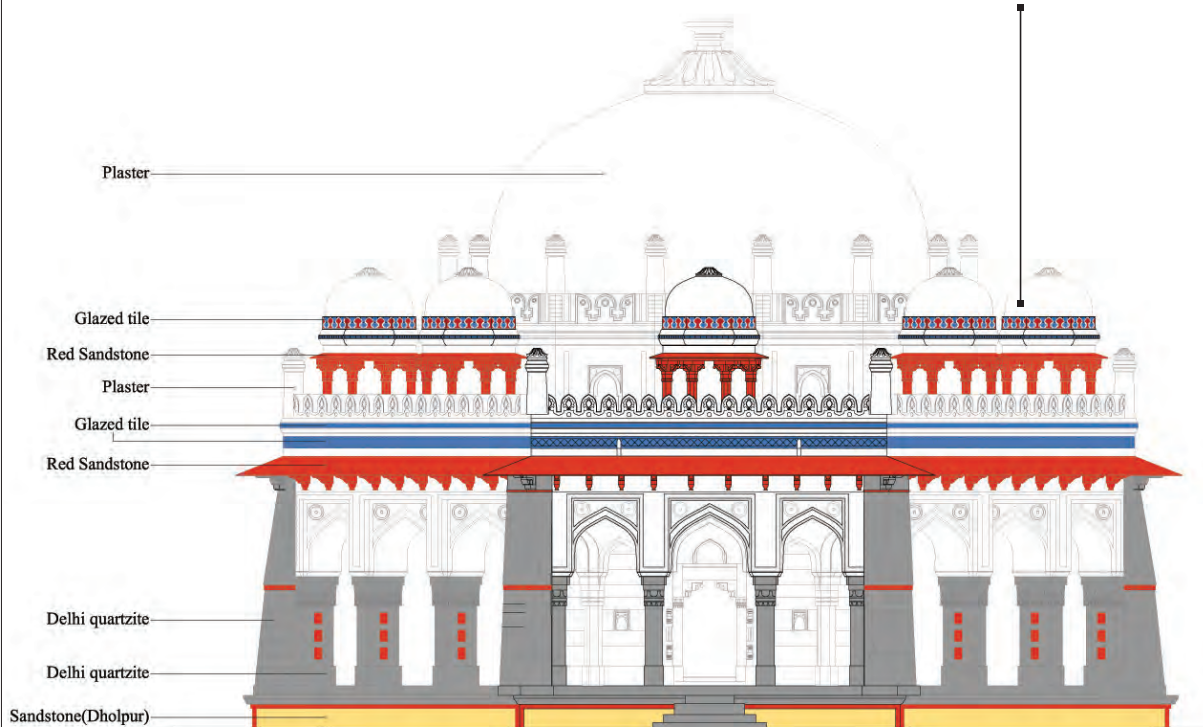
Ground Penetrating Radar Survey



3-D High Definition Survey using laser scanning technology

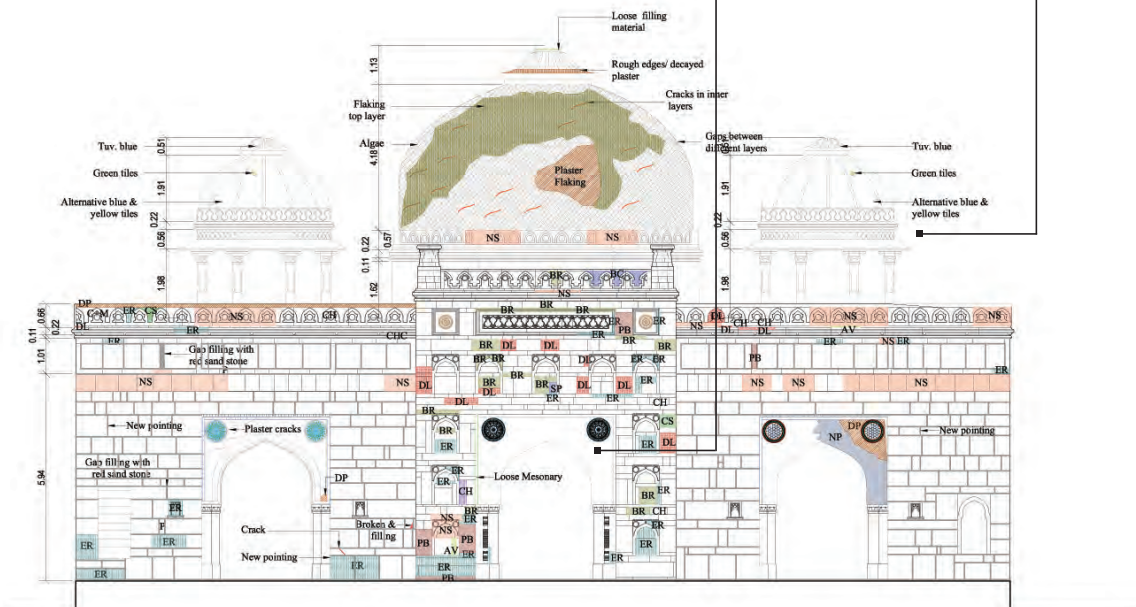
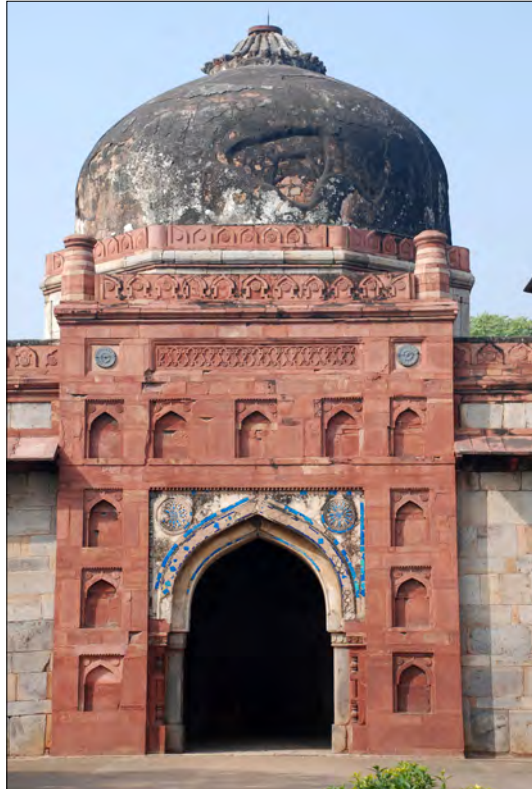


An exhaustive documentation of tile patterns on the canopies was carried out



# CONDITION ASSESSMENT

Prior to the commencement of conservation works, over 500 drawings including condition assessment were prepared, documenting each detail, including ornamental plasterwork and ceramic tilework in detail.



**LEGEND:**

<p><b>DEFECTS IN PLASTERED SURFACES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> CRACKS IN THE PLASTER</li> <li> DECAYED PLASTER</li> <li> FLAKING OF FINISHING LAYER</li> <li> PLASTER CRACKS</li> <li> MISSING PLASTER</li> <li> NEW PLASTER</li> </ul>	<p><b>DECORATIVE PLASTER AND BANDS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> DECAYED PROFILES</li> <li> MISSING PATTERNS</li> <li> FLAKING OF FINISHING LAYER</li> <li> PLASTER CRACKS</li> <li> MISSING PLASTER</li> </ul>	<p><b>SURFACE DEPOSITS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> ALGAE</li> <li> BLACK CRUST</li> <li> GROWTH</li> <li> LIME WASH</li> <li> DEPOSITS</li> </ul>	<p><b>DEFECTS IN STONE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> FRACTURE</li> <li> HAIR CRACKS</li> <li> SPITTING</li> <li> MAJOR STRUCTURAL CRACKS 2mm WIDE</li> </ul>	<p><b>DETACHMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> BURSTING</li> <li> CURTAIN SCALING</li> <li> DELAMINATION</li> <li> PEBBLING AND BLISTERING</li> </ul>	<p><b>MATERIAL LOSS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> AVERAGIZATION</li> <li> EROSION</li> <li> LOOSE MASONRY</li> <li> MECHANICAL IMPACT</li> <li> MISSING MEMBERS</li> </ul>	<p><b>NEW INTERVENTION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> NEW POINTING</li> <li> NEW STONES</li> <li> NEW INFILLS</li> </ul>	<p><b>DECORATIVE FEATURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> TILE BASE EXISTING</li> </ul>
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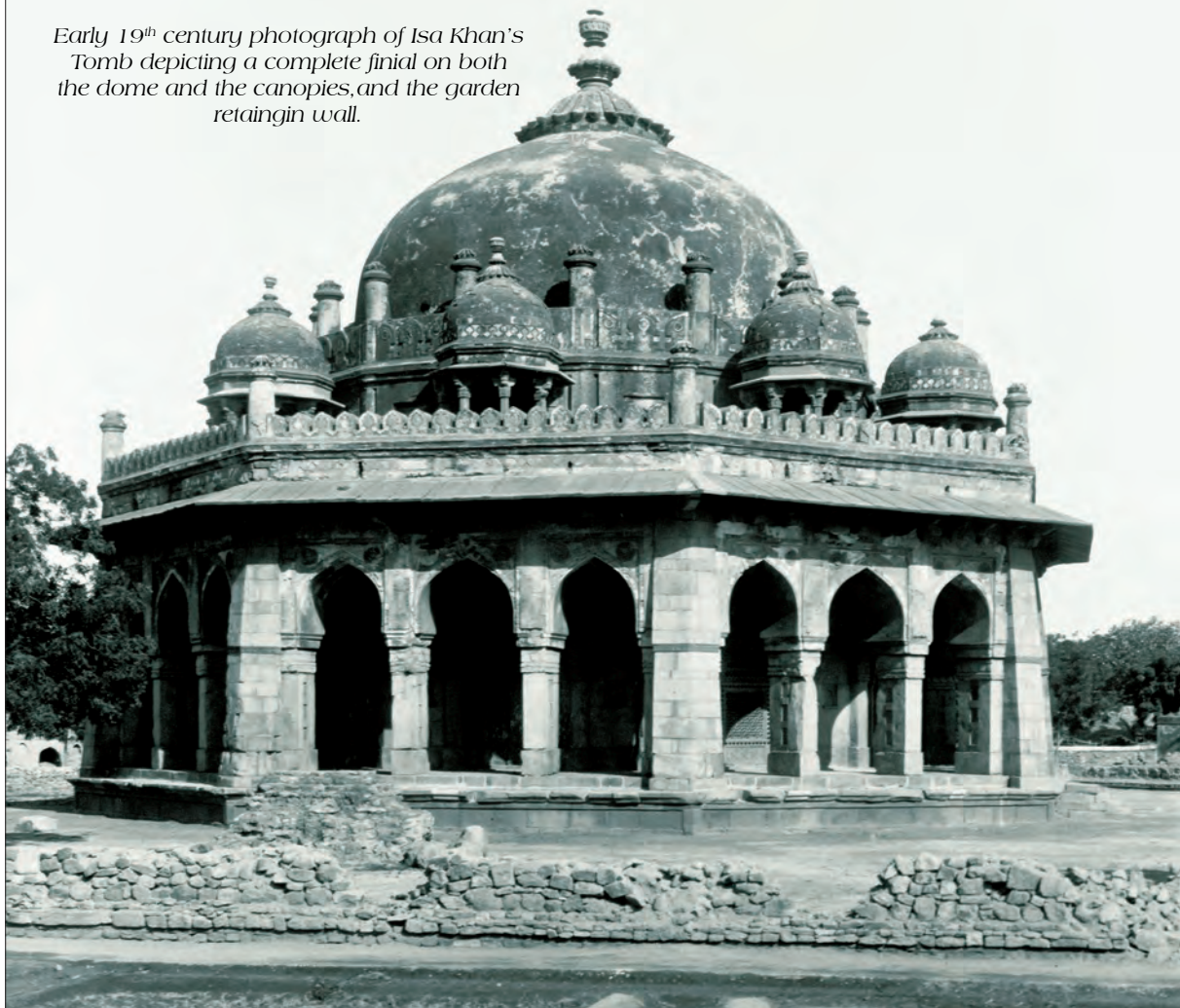
# ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

This tomb and its enclosure was crowded with village huts before it was taken in hand and repaired by the Archaeological Department in 1905... Rs.3,900/- were spent on its acquisition and the subsequent works of conservation.

- Zafar Hasan  
Volume 2, No 179, ASI; description of Isa Khan's Tomb enclosure



Early 19<sup>th</sup> century photograph of Isa Khan's Tomb depicting a complete finial on both the dome and the canopies, and the garden retaining wall.

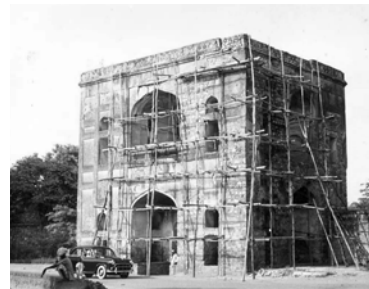


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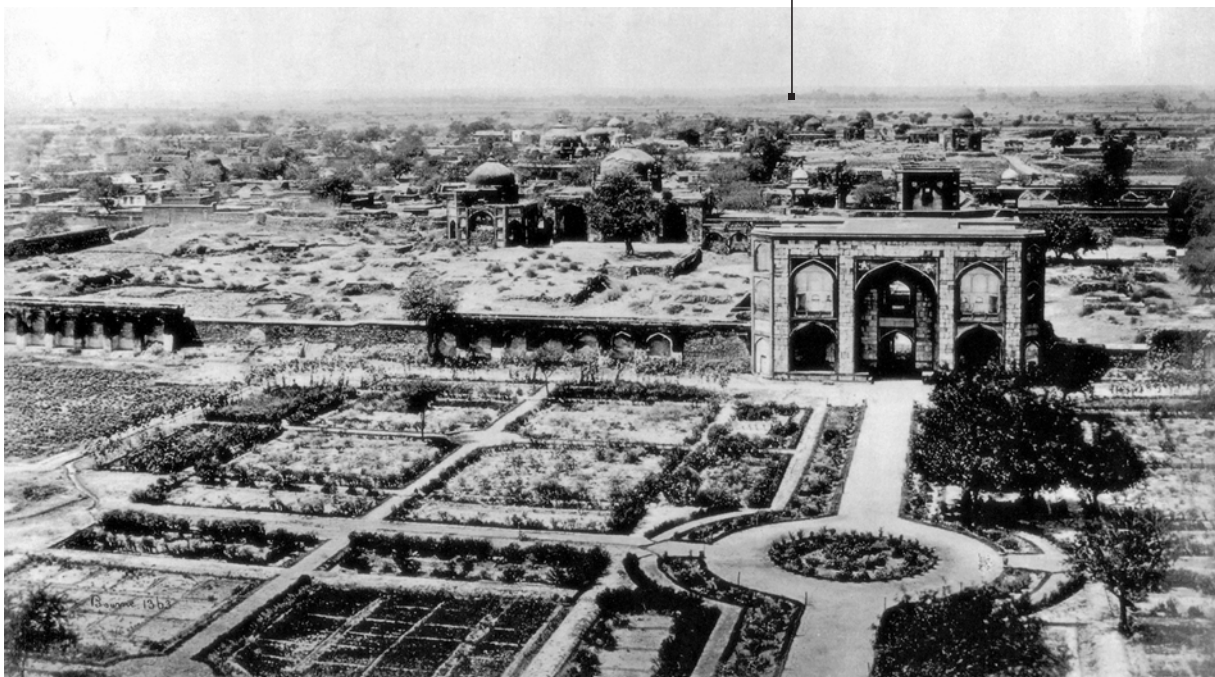
# ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

The Isa Khan and Bu Halima enclosures stand at the western end of the Humayun's Tomb complex. Significantly in 1914 portions of the Bu Halima enclosure wall were demolished to allow entry to the Humayun's Tomb enclosure from this area. The wall on the west side has latterly been removed to open up the approach to Humayun's tomb on the east from the Subz burj at the junction of the Delhi-Muttra Road with that leading to Safdar Jang.

- Zafar Hasan,  
Volume 2, No 179, ASI; description of Isa  
Khan's Tomb enclosure



The profile of this arched gateway, together with the western enclosure wall before its demolition in 1916 is visible in the photograph taken by Samuel Browne from the roof of Humayun's Tomb looking westwards.

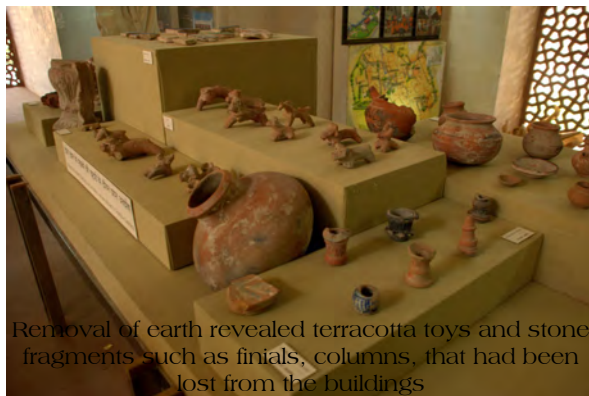




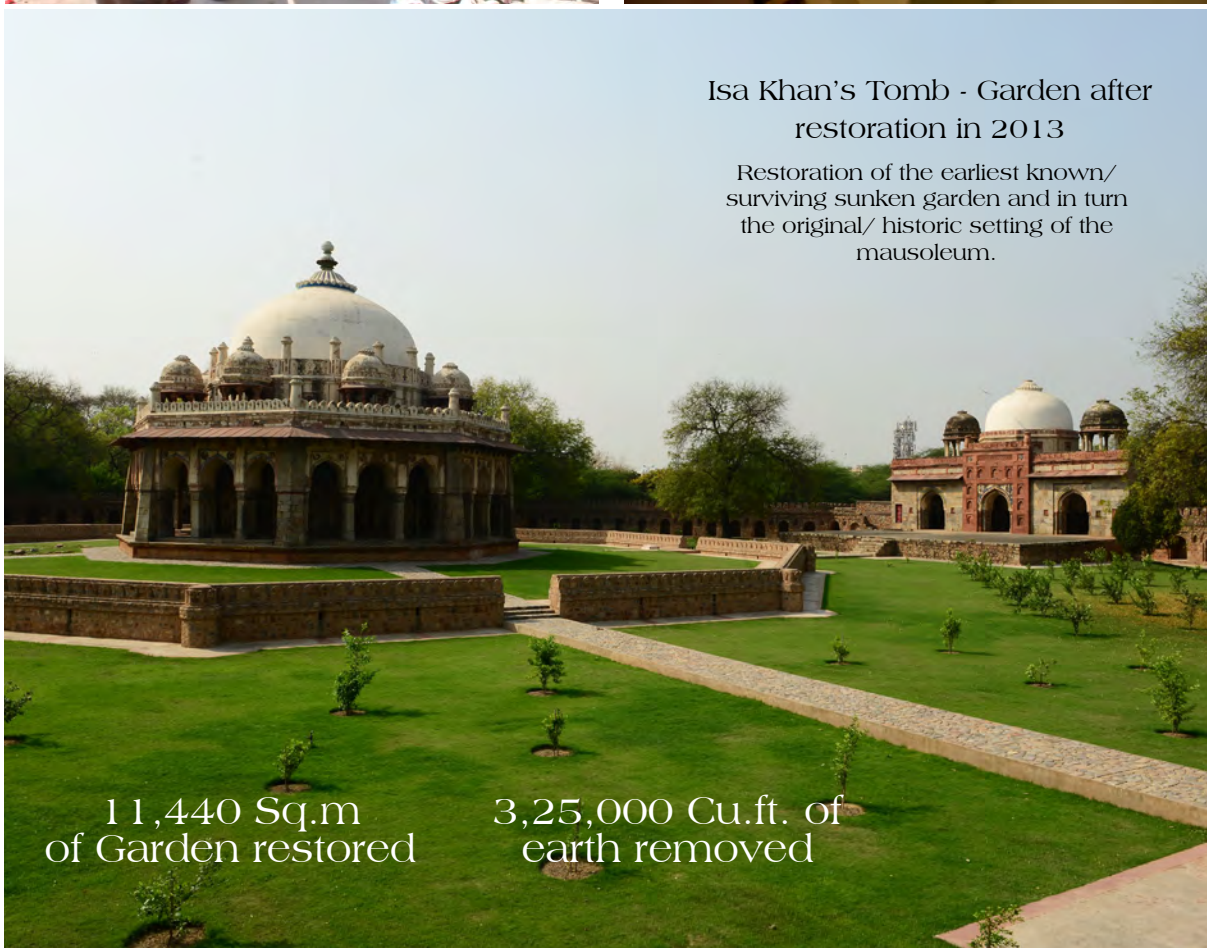
# LANDSCAPE RESTORATION



ASI - AKTC Core Committee inspect the antiquities



Removal of earth revealed terracotta toys and stone fragments such as finials, columns, that had been lost from the buildings



Isa Khan's Tomb - Garden after restoration in 2013

Restoration of the earliest known/surviving sunken garden and in turn the original/historic setting of the mausoleum.

11,440 Sq.m  
of Garden restored

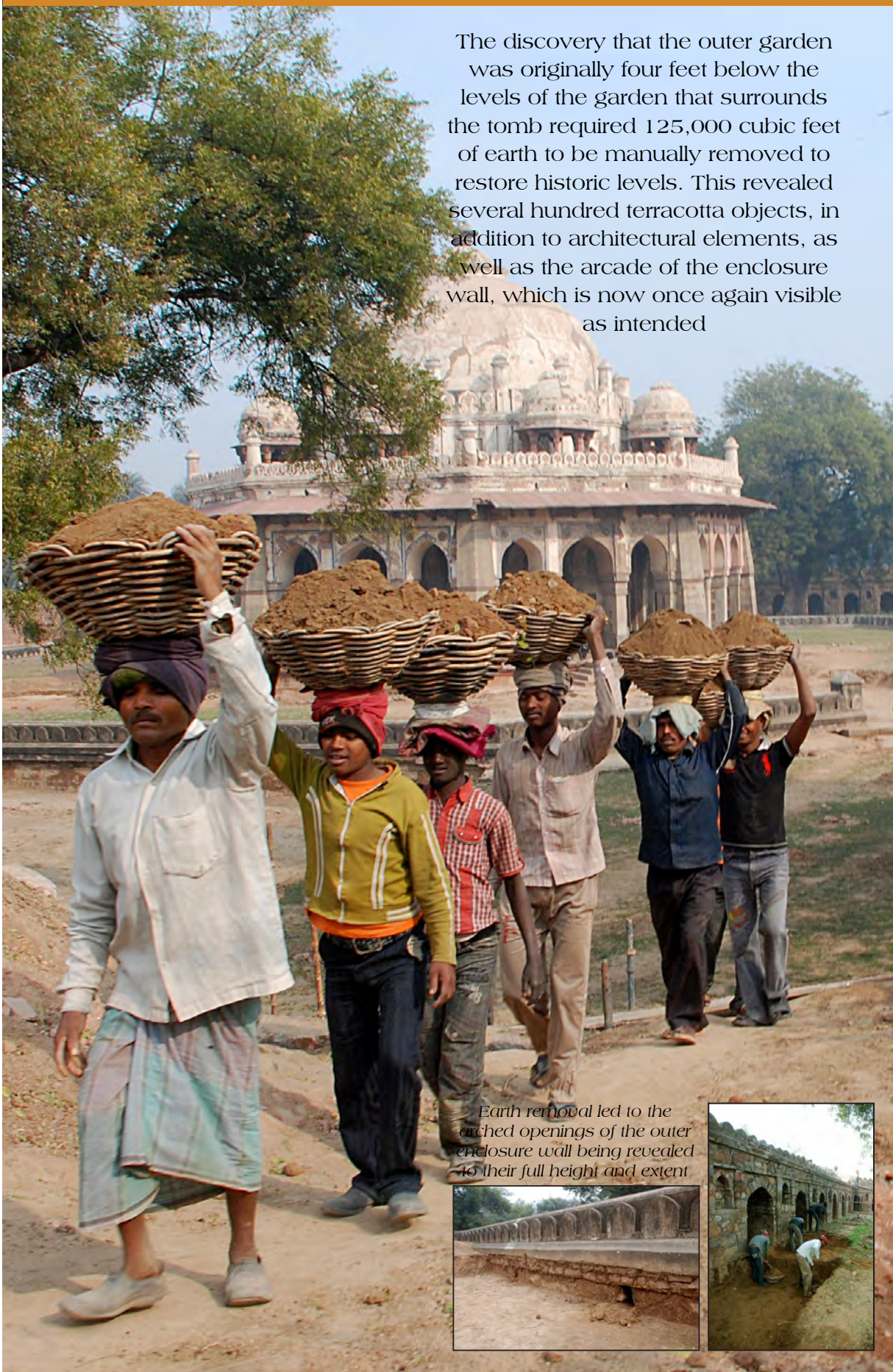
3,25,000 Cu.ft. of  
earth removed



Humayun's Tomb - Sunder Nursery - Nizamuddin Basti  
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# LANDSCAPE RESTORATION

The discovery that the outer garden was originally four feet below the levels of the garden that surrounds the tomb required 125,000 cubic feet of earth to be manually removed to restore historic levels. This revealed several hundred terracotta objects, in addition to architectural elements, as well as the arcade of the enclosure wall, which is now once again visible as intended



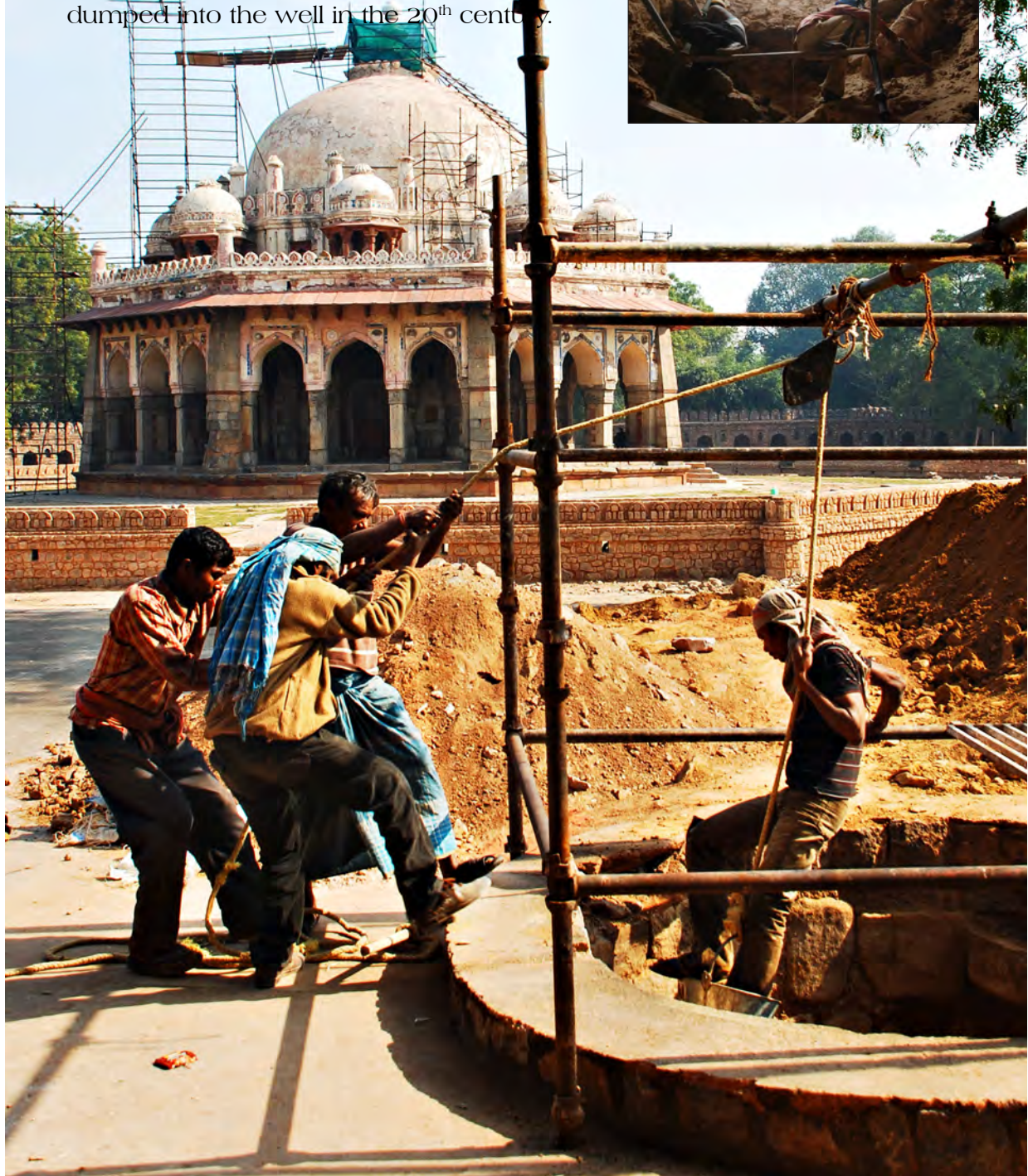
*Earth removal led to the arched openings of the outer enclosure wall being revealed to their full height and extent*



# DE-SILTING OF WELL

At least a dozen wells within the project area have been discovered and desilted to their original depth. These wells were filled-in in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when rubbish had made these useless to draw water.

A combination of traditional techniques of lowering skilled craftsmen into the well with buckets and use of modern technology such as use of pumps have been employed as well as structural repairs which followed after the clearance of rubble and earth which were dumped into the well in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



# CONSERVATION PROCESS

## PROCESS



DOCUMENTATION

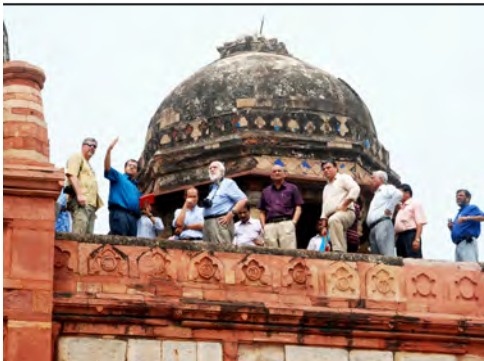
CONDITION  
ASSESSMENT

ARCHIVAL  
RESEARCH

FUNDING

## CONSERVATION PLAN

The Conservation Plan prepared jointly by the ASI – AKTC team was submitted for peer review prior to commencing conservation works.



PEER REVIEW



CRAFTSMANSHIP



SUPERVISION

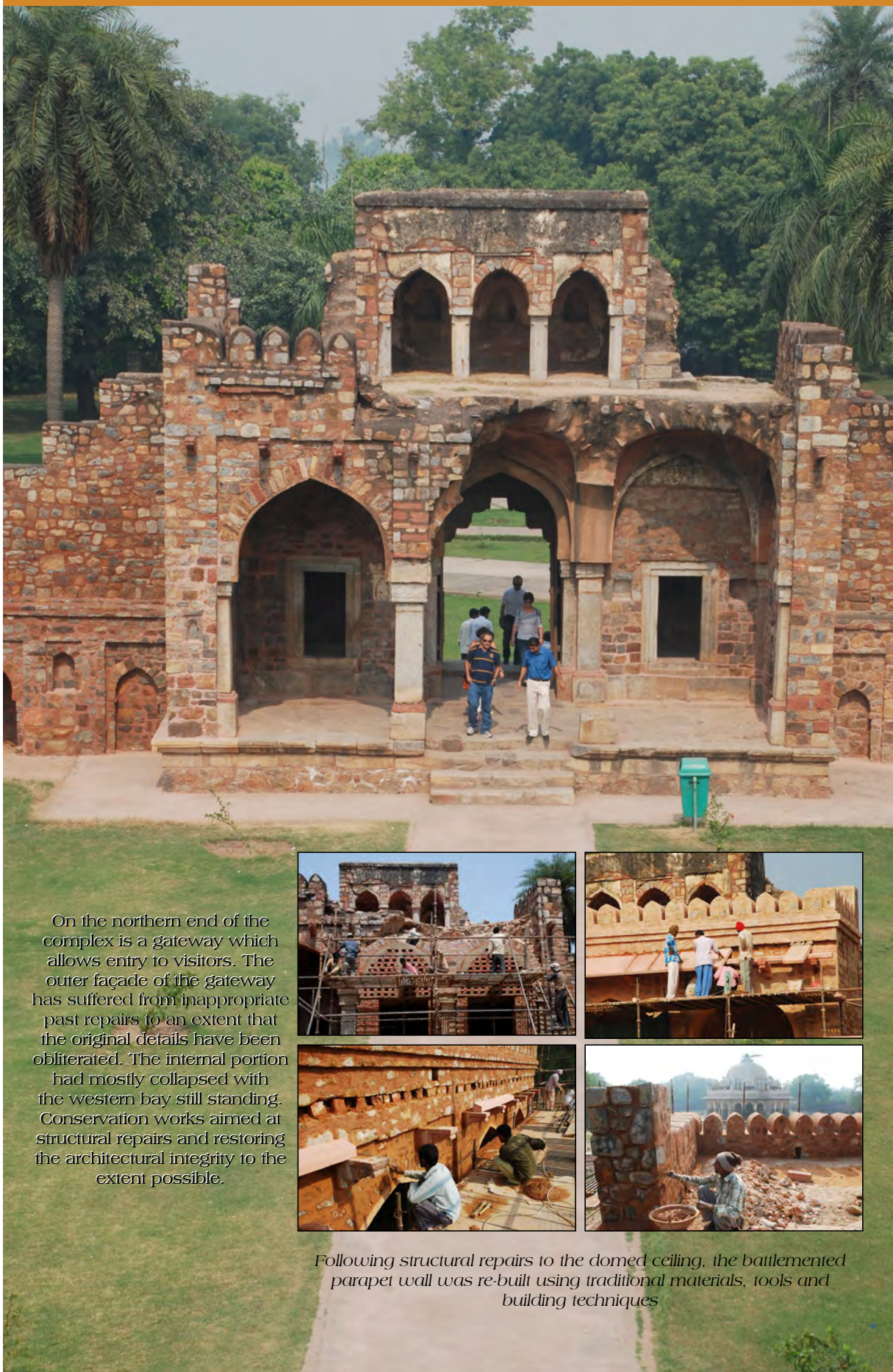


TRAINING



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# ISA KHAN'S TOMB GATEWAY



On the northern end of the complex is a gateway which allows entry to visitors. The outer façade of the gateway has suffered from inappropriate past repairs to an extent that the original details have been obliterated. The internal portion had mostly collapsed with the western bay still standing. Conservation works aimed at structural repairs and restoring the architectural integrity to the extent possible.



*Following structural repairs to the domed ceiling, the battlemented parapet wall was re-built using traditional materials, tools and building techniques*



# ISA KHAN'S TOMB GATEWAY



*During the earth removal the missing column supporting the collapsed central and eastern bays of the internal verandah was discovered as was the decorative DQ stone capital.*

*Following reconstructing the collapsed central and eastern bay in 2011, the conservation works on the gateway in 2012 included restoring the eaves as well as the battlemented parapet.*



# ISA KHAN'S MOSQUE



Within the tomb-garden stands an imposing mosque on a raised plinth. As with the other structures in the complex, the mosque suffered on account of inappropriate repairs as well as loss of architectural elements such as the tile-work on the canopies.



Lime punning being applied to the dome surface



Remnants of tilework on the façade and the canopies



# BU-HALIMA'S GARDEN



Early 20<sup>th</sup> century British-era carriageway disfigured the historic character of Bu Halima's Tomb - Garden and the entrance zone of the World Heritage Site

## VARIOUS STAGES OF LANDSCAPE WORKS



Orchard plantation will be carried out in Bu Halima's Tomb - Garden during monsoon 2013

