



BATASHEWALA - MUGHAL GARDEN TOMB COMPLEX

CONSERVATION REPORT
2011-2015

AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

Conservation Works Co-Funded By:



U.S. AMBASSADORS FUND FOR CULTURAL PRESERVATION



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA



AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

 **Nizamuddin Urban Renewal Initiative**
a *People Public - Private Partnership*
Archaeological Survey Of India - South Delhi Municipal Corporation - Central Public Works Department
Aga Khan Foundation - Aga Khan Trust For Culture

Introduction

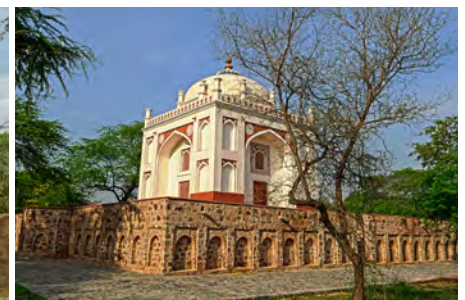
Standing to the north of the Humayun's Tomb World Heritage Site, the 11 acre "Batashewala Complex" includes two Mughal era tomb-garden enclosures within which stand three tombs, of national importance, and protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). They are a significant part of the 16th century Mughal necropolis adjacent to the Dargah of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, the 14th century Sufi saint who has been revered for seven centuries.



Mirza Muzaffar Hussain's Tomb
After Conservation



Chota Batashewala
After Conservation



Mughal Tomb
After Conservation

Restored linkages with other 16th century garden-tombs standing in the adjacent Sundar Nursery and the Humayun's Tomb Complex will also allow visitors an enhanced understanding of this Mughal necropolis. The conservation effort, since 2011, has aimed at recovering the architectural integrity of the monuments. This has been achieved with the use of traditional materials and building techniques in order to replace 20th century alterations that were carried out with modern materials, such as cement.



Mirza Muzaffar Hussain's Tomb
Before conservation in 2010



Chota Batashewala
Before conservation in 2010



Mughal Tomb
Before conservation in 2010

Prior to Conservation

In the 1950s, the ownership of this complex was given to the Bharat Scouts & Guides to serve as a camping ground. This led, in 1989, to the construction of 150 structures. Enclosure walls were demolished, disfiguring the landscape and the historic character. The levelling of land required to build the buildings also led to collapse of the Chota Batashewala – a protected monument – when its foundations were exposed. Following twelve years of effort by the ASI and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC), the ownership was restored to the ASI in 2010, allowing systematic conservation and landscape restoration to be undertaken by the AKTC.



In 1989, over 150 'temporary buildings' were erected within the enclosed gardens. Following over 10 years of effort by AKTC which included litigation, these were demolished in 2010 and land reclaimed by the Archaeological Survey of India.

Batashewala Complex in 2010



The 1989 buildings erected by Bharat Scouts and Guides were built across the 11 acre mughal garden-tomb complex in close proximity to the monuments. Demolition of enclosure walls was also carried out to build these inappropriate structures.



Before Conservation in 2010

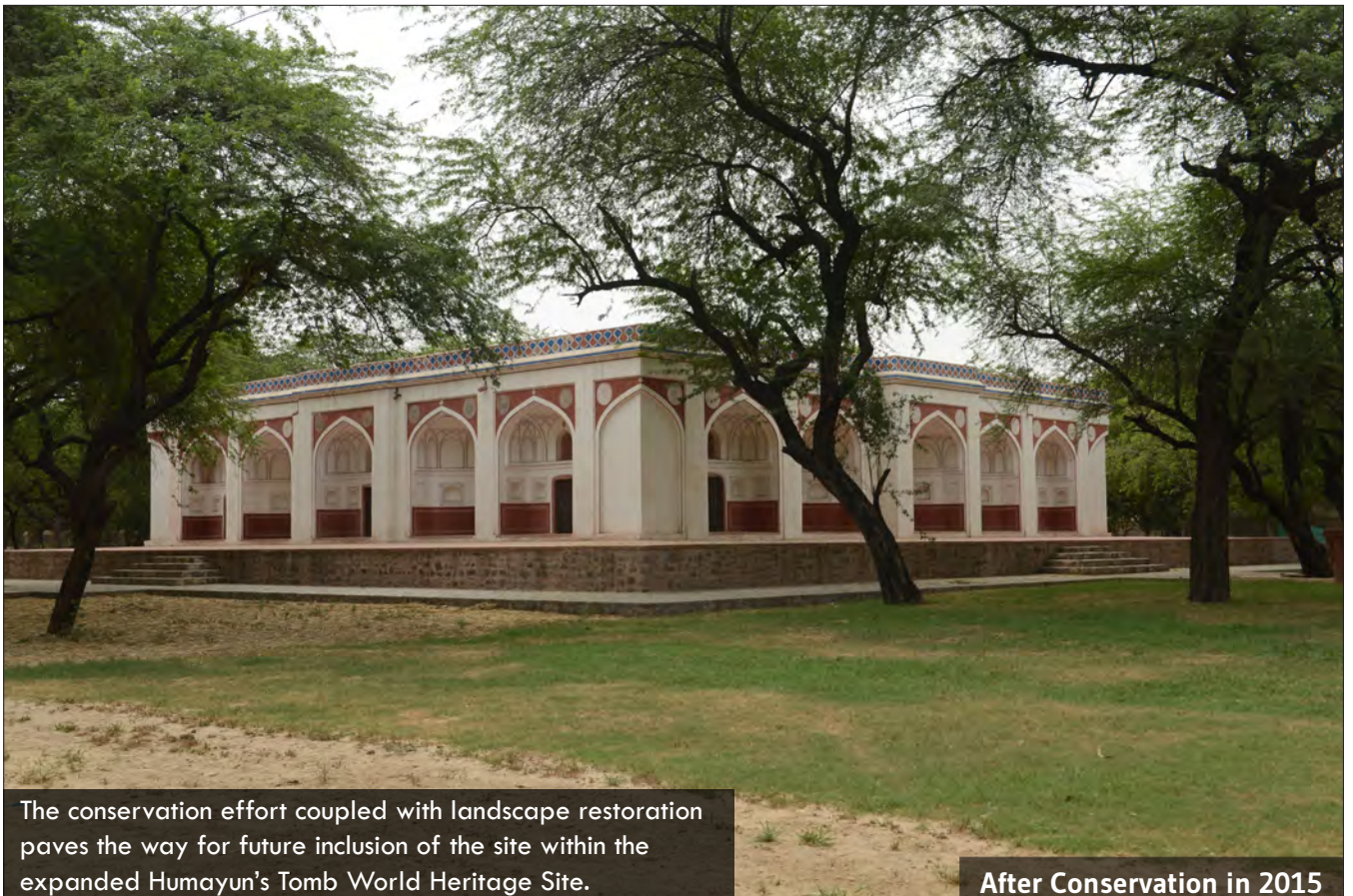


Conservation of monuments was coupled with landscape restoration within the enclosed garden setting.

After Conservation in 2015



Before Conservation in 2010



The conservation effort coupled with landscape restoration paves the way for future inclusion of the site within the expanded Humayun's Tomb World Heritage Site.

After Conservation in 2015



Before Conservation in 2010



Mirza Muzaffar Husain's tomb required major interventions including restoration of the largely collapsed western facade.

After Conservation in 2015



Before Conservation in 2010



Besides the building of the 1989 structures the garden enclosure was being used by scrap dealers to store material.

After Conservation in 2015

Impact

With the completion of conservation works at this significant ensemble of sites, a proposal for inclusion of the Batashewala Complex in the expanded Humayun's Tomb World Heritage Sites will be submitted in 2015.

- Conservation works will ensure long term preservation of three monuments of national importance. The garden setting of these monuments has also been recovered.
- Recovery of architectural integrity as a result of conservation of attached structures such as the enclosure walls.
- Conservation works have now paved the way to eventual expansion of the World Heritage Site boundaries to include the Batashewala complex.
- Conservation works carried out here using traditional tools and building techniques have generated 100,000 man-days of work for traditional craftsmen.
- The conservation effort provided on-site training opportunities for conservation professionals, students and craftsmen.
- With linkages to Sundar Nursery, the conservation effort will help towards restoring linkages with contemporary 16th century garden-tombs.
- An 11 acre space, rooted in history, yet up till now inaccessible to the public, will be returned to the people of Delhi.
- Establishing a model conservation process and philosophy for India thus ensuring a revival of craft skills and creating employment opportunities for master-craftsmen.
- Reviving lost craft techniques such as making glazed Mughal tiles and in turn establishing an internationally acceptable conservation policy.
- Setting standards for archival research and documentation which would be available to a global audience.



NOTE
The co-ordinates are indicated in Degrees, Minutes and Seconds system on the map

LEGEND

- Boundary of the World Heritage Property
- Buffer Zone of the World Heritage Property
- ASI Protected Monuments of National Importance

AREA

- Area of the world heritage - 21.60 HA property
- Area of the buffer zone of - 34.86 HA the world heritage property



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA



AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

HUMAYUN'S TOMB - SUNDER NURSERY - NIZAMUDDIN BASTI URBAN RENEWAL INITIATIVE DELHI, INDIA

SITE PLAN SHOWING THE BOUNDARIES OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY AND BUFFER ZONE

Scale

Date 05-11-2014 by: AKTC

Dwg No.: WHS/HT/01

Mirza Muzaffar Hussain's Tomb

Popularly known as the Bara Batashewala Mahal and built in AD 1603, Mirza Muzaffar Hussain's square tomb stands on a raised platform with five half-domed arched entrance bays on each side. Parts of the striking plaster ornamentation have survived on some of the internal wall surfaces, providing the evidence required to restore missing portions. Ornamental plaster medallions and the intricate *muqarna* patterns on the half-domed arched entrance bays symbolise the highest craft traditions of the period. The central grave chamber, several feet below the ground, is surrounded by eight rooms, making this an interesting example of the "*hasht-bihist*" plan – which represents the eight spaces of paradise as described in the Holy Quran.

The collapsed eastern facade was restored while the southern facade – inappropriately reconstructed only a decade ago – required dismantling and reconstruction as per the original design. Similarly, the roof, which had deteriorated, was required to be re-laid with lime concrete to create an adequate slope.

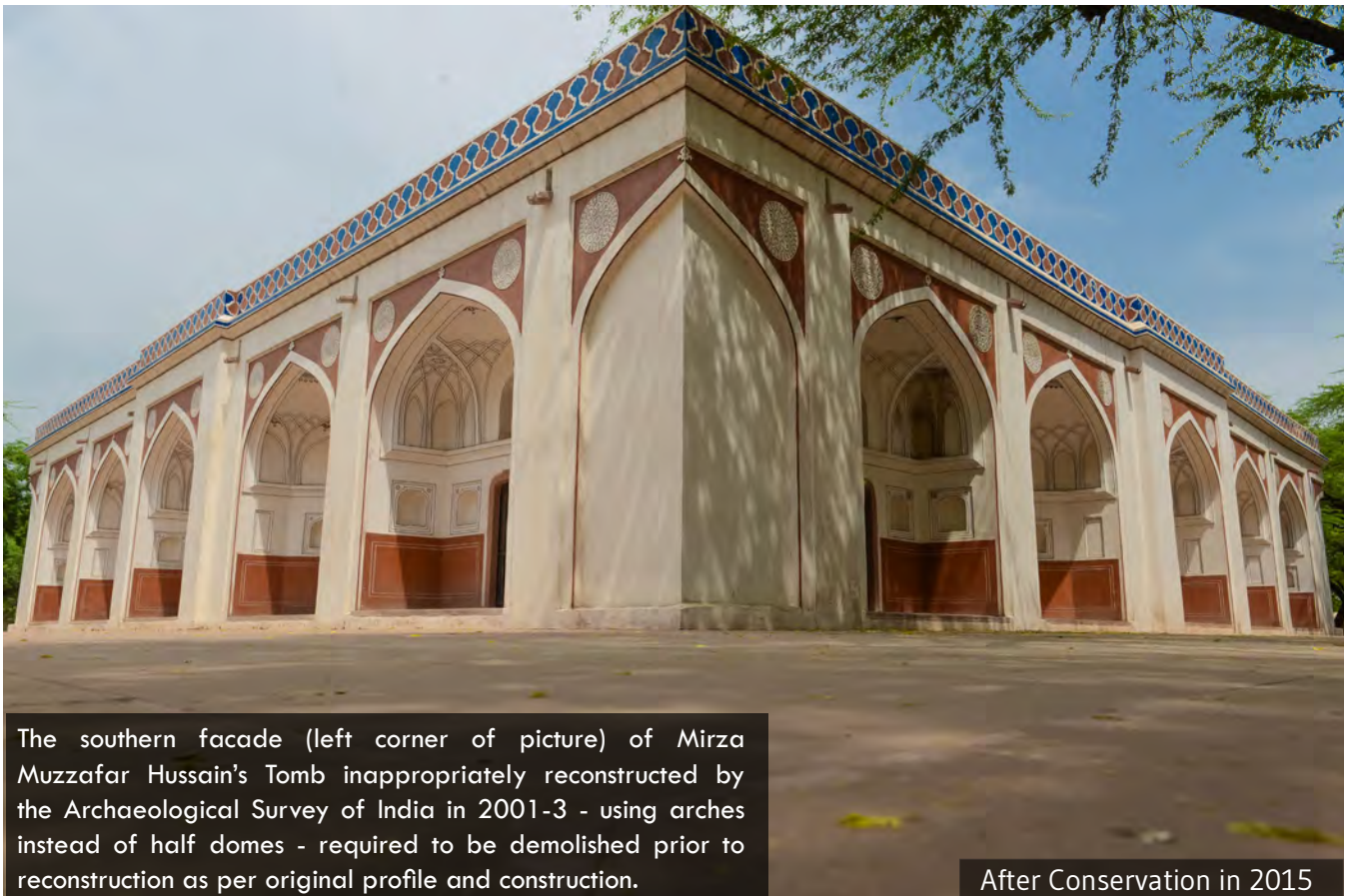
Long stretches of the garden enclosure walls, visible in archival photographs, were demolished in 1989. The foundations of missing portions were excavated in order to guide the reconstruction of these sections. The building techniques, tools and materials employed by the original builders were also used. The bends in the wall indicate other garden enclosure walls – such as those of the adjacent domed Mughal tomb – which clearly pre-date this enclosure.



After Conservation in 2015



Before Conservation in 2010



The southern facade (left corner of picture) of Mirza Muzaffar Hussain's Tomb inappropriately reconstructed by the Archaeological Survey of India in 2001-3 - using arches instead of half domes - required to be demolished prior to reconstruction as per original profile and construction.

After Conservation in 2015



Before Conservation in 2010



The western and southern facades of the structure required significant interventions to remove past inappropriate repairs and to ensure long term preservation of fast collapsing portions of the structure

After Conservation in 2015



Before Conservation in 2010



Mirza Muzaffar Hussain's Tomb is symmetrical along its central axis and thus any half facade is repeated 8 times. Conservation of the collapsed western facade was largely carried out on the basis of the standing eastern arcade.

After Conservation in 2015



Before Conservation in 2010



The principal souther facade where early 21st century reconstruction was required to be demolished prior to reconstruction as per original details. The concrete road abutting the monument on this side was also replaced with traditional sandstone paving.

After Conservation in 2015



Before Conservation in 2010



After Conservation in 2015



Before Conservation in 2011



Geometric patterns in incised plaster-work were restored where missing or damaged by master craftsmen using traditional tools, materials and techniques that would have been used by the Mughal era builders.

During Conservation in 2012



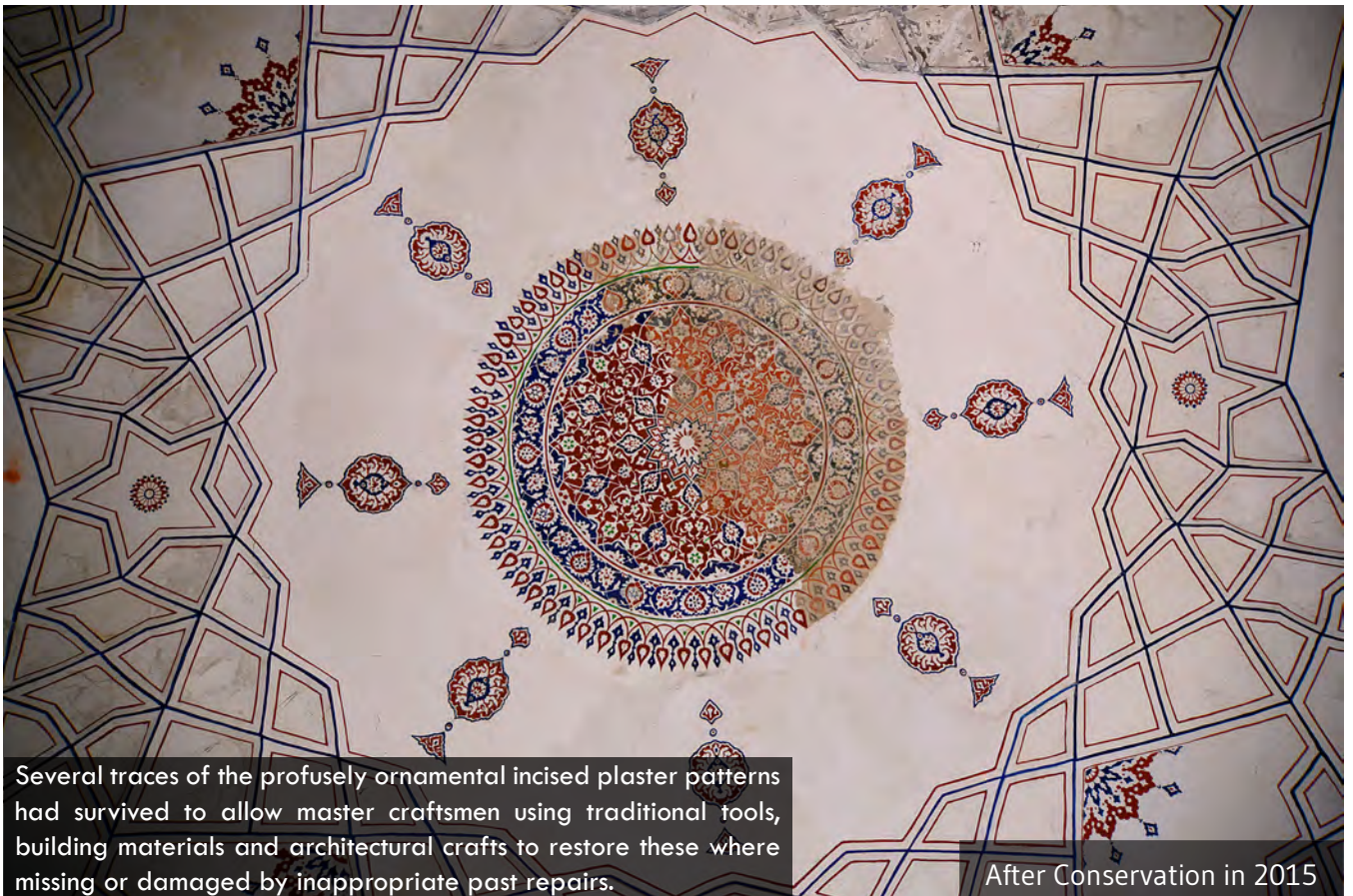
Before Conservation in 2010



After Conservation in 2015



Before Conservation in 2010



Several traces of the profusely ornamental incised plaster patterns had survived to allow master craftsmen using traditional tools, building materials and architectural crafts to restore these where missing or damaged by inappropriate past repairs.

After Conservation in 2015



Before Conservation in 2012

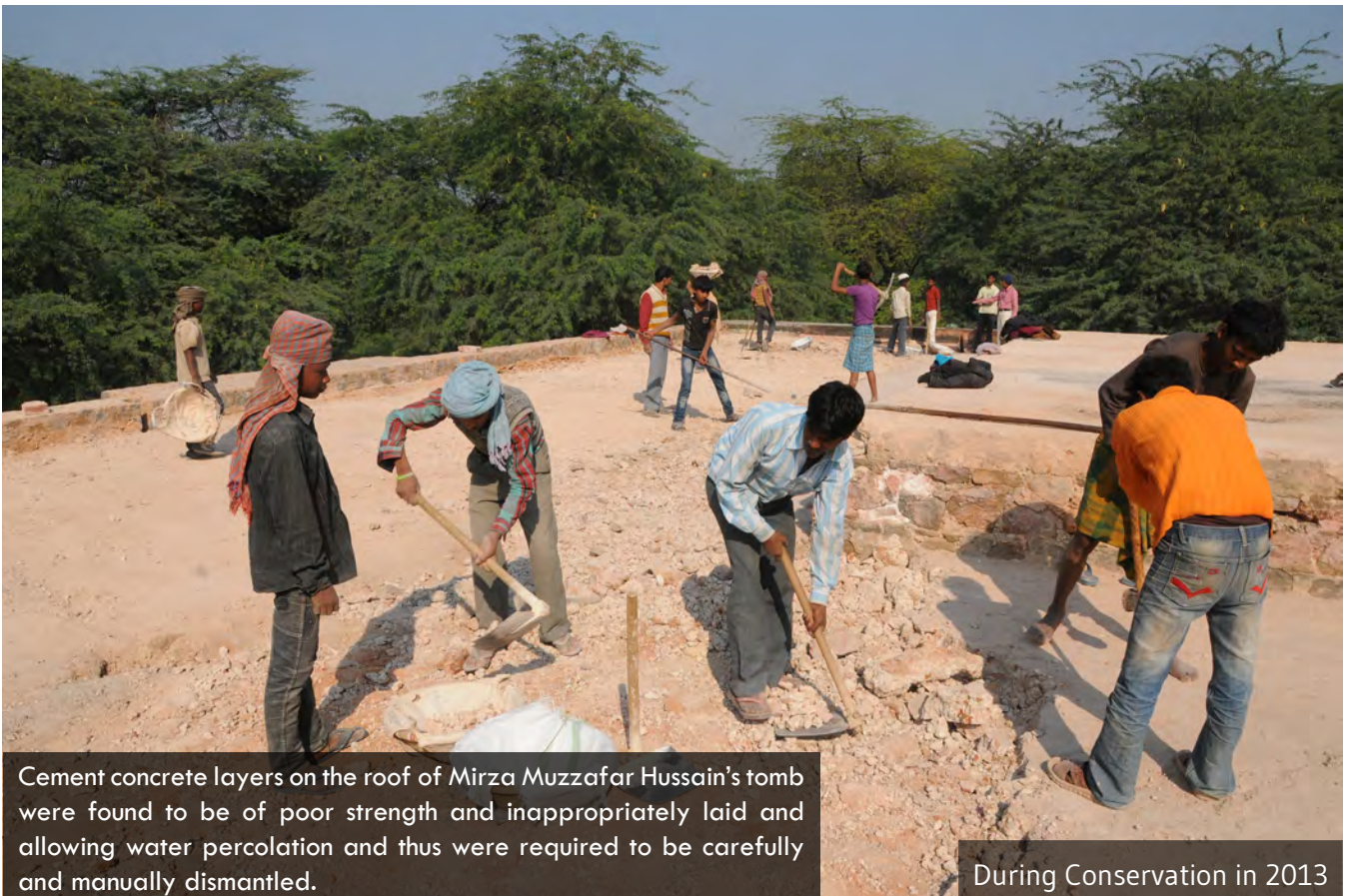


Before & After Conservation. One of the four chambers that are found on the north, south, east, west of the sunken grave chamber. Note that blocked openings were reopened and geometric incised plaster motifs where missing were restored. Cement plaster from past repairs was consistently removed.

After Conservation in 2014



Before Conservation in 2011



Cement concrete layers on the roof of Mirza Muzzafar Hussain's tomb were found to be of poor strength and inappropriately laid and allowing water percolation and thus were required to be carefully and manually dismantled.

During Conservation in 2013



During Conservation in 2013

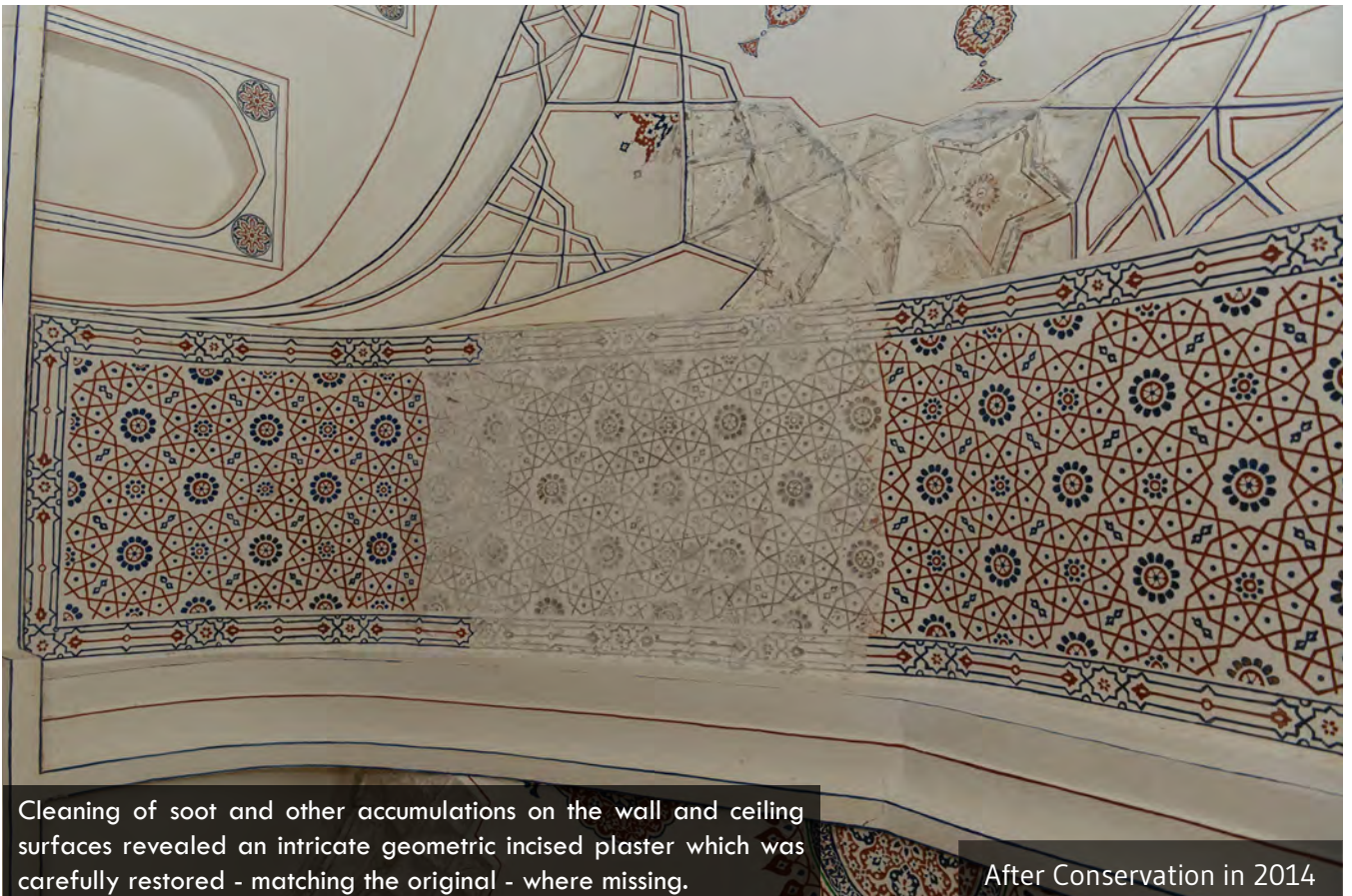


A traditional layer of lime concrete with brick aggregate and traditional additives and adequate slope was laid on the roof of Mirza Muzzafar Hussain's tomb in 2013.

During Conservation in 2013



Before Conservation in 2011



Cleaning of soot and other accumulations on the wall and ceiling surfaces revealed an intricate geometric incised plaster which was carefully restored - matching the original - where missing.

After Conservation in 2014



Before Conservation in 2011



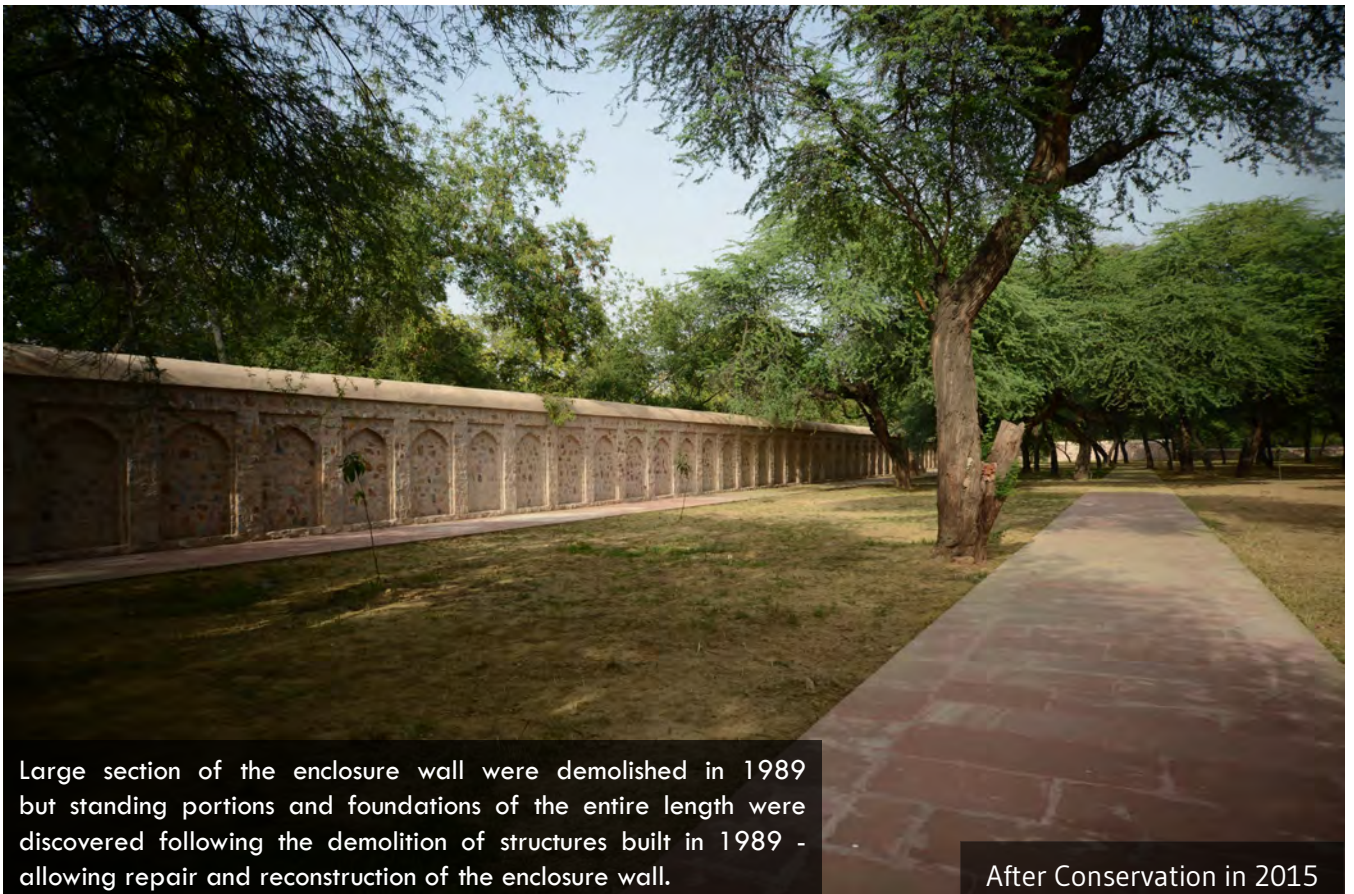
Wall surface of the central chamber where the geometric pattern, typical of Islamic buildings was restored on the basis of in-situ evidence from the structure itself.

After Conservation in 2015





Before Conservation in 2011



Large section of the enclosure wall were demolished in 1989 but standing portions and foundations of the entire length were discovered following the demolition of structures built in 1989 - allowing repair and reconstruction of the enclosure wall.

After Conservation in 2015



Chota Batashewala

Within the enclosed garden and standing just east of the Mirza's tomb, the remnants of an octagonal tomb once stood. It is said to have been profusely ornamented and known as Chota Batashewala. Described in the 20th century texts as "...standing on a platform some 3 feet high. It consisted of a central octagonal chamber, with a surrounding arcade containing an arched opening on each of the eight sides. The central apartment was provided with four doorways, three of which were closed by stone jalli screens. The domed ceiling of the central chamber, as well as the walls inside, is ornamented by floral and geometrical patterns intermingled with Quranic inscriptions in incised plaster".

Using archival images, the effort here has been to raise standing portions of the structure to complete just one portion of the facade in order to indicate to visitors the original scale and profile. A rubble masonry wall has been built all along the periphery to provide support to standing portions in lieu of the shallow foundations of the structure.



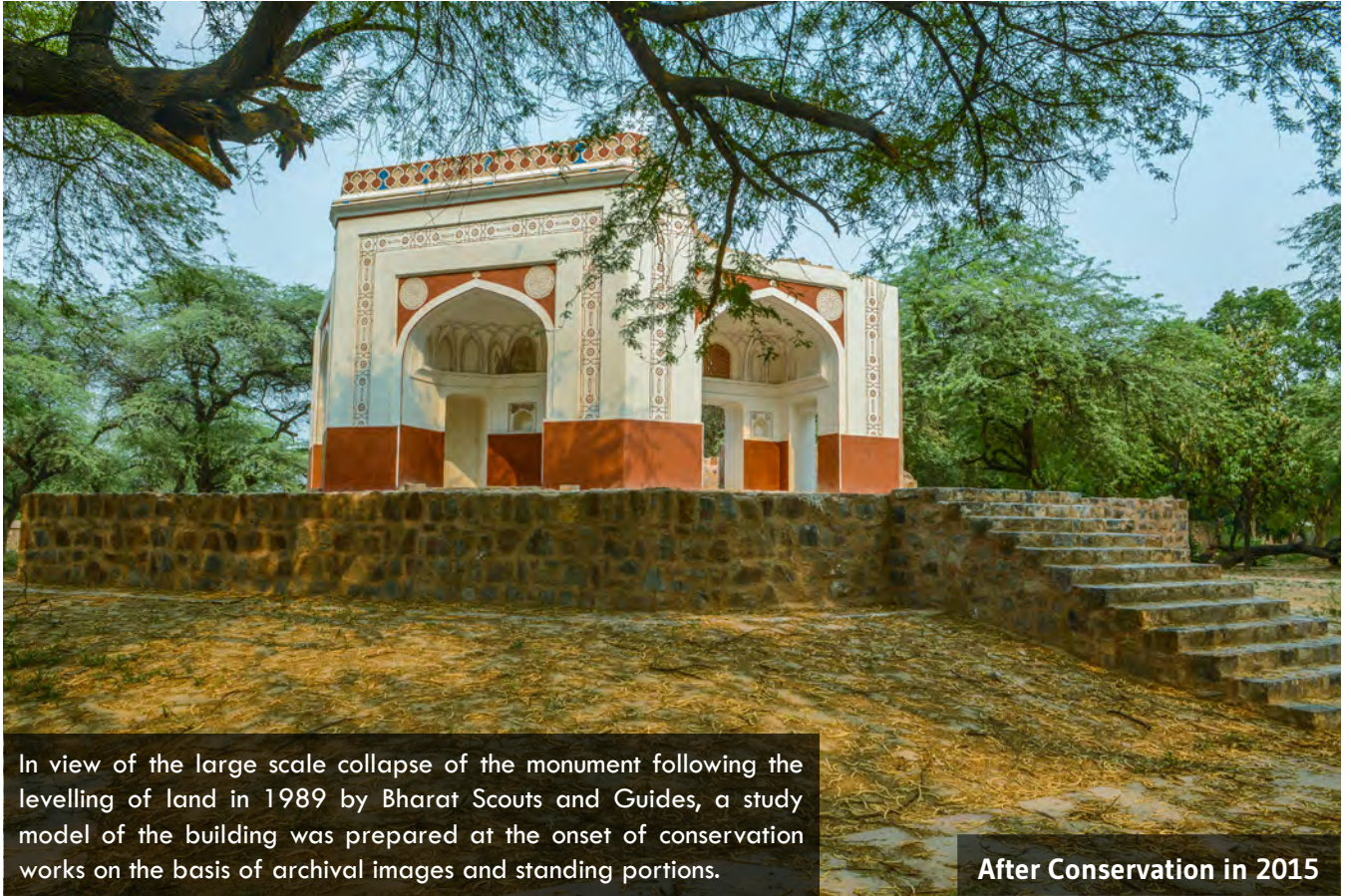
Earliest image of Chota Batashewala showing the monument in the most intact form with the Mughal Tomb in the background

1930 A.D. ▲
1955 A.D. ►





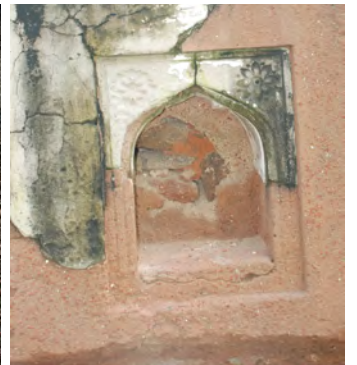
Architectural Model was created to understand the structure in detail



In view of the large scale collapse of the monument following the levelling of land in 1989 by Bharat Scouts and Guides, a study model of the building was prepared at the onset of conservation works on the basis of archival images and standing portions.

After Conservation in 2015









During Conservation in 2014



During Conservation in 2014



During Conservation in 2014



During Conservation in 2014



During Conservation in 2014



During Conservation in 2014



During Conservation in 2014



During Conservation in 2014



During Conservation in 2014



During Conservation in 2014



During Conservation in 2014



During Conservation in 2014





During Conservation in 2014



During Conservation in 2014



During Conservation in 2015



After Conservation in 2015





During Conservation in 2015



After Conservation in 2015



During Conservation in 2015



Incised plaster patterns were prepared with templates that were used to mark the pattern on freshly applied layer of plaster.

During Conservation in 2015



During Conservation in 2015



One of the medallions at Chota batashewala mahal, manually incised as would have been carried out by the Mughal builders.

After Conservation in 2015

Mughal Tomb

This lofty domed Mughal-era tomb stands on an elevated stone masonry plinth, giving it a fort-like appearance. The domed, decorative tomb, which is visible from afar, affords spectacular views of, and from, Humayun's Tomb.

The structure had suffered from inappropriate repairs in the 20th century. Careful interventions were required to restore the architectural intentions of the Mughal builders, including rebuilding the lower platform and removal of cement plaster, which was used here extensively.

Re-plastering with lime plaster included restoration of the intricate plasterwork on the parapet, interiors and facade. The sandstone lattice screens openings have been restored using Mirza Muzaffar Hussain's tomb as a model.

Collapsed portions of the comparatively low enclosure wall were rebuilt on the original foundations. Because the north-eastern portion had suffered from damage caused by landslides in the past, these portions were raised six metres. A neem orchard has been planted within the garden enclosure.

Before Conservation in 2010



After Conservation in 2015



The Mughal tomb stands within its own garden enclosure immediately north of Humayun's Tomb. Here the principal challenge was to carefully remove earlier - 21st century - repairs inappropriately carried out using cement.



As with the larger Batashewala enclosure, the garden setting and enclosure wall of the Mughal tomb was required to be restored by AKTC together with conservation works on the monument.

After Conservation in 2015



Before Conservation in 2011



The profusely ornamental ceiling with painted incised plaster was first required to be cleaned off soot and 20th century paint layers prior to restoring missing portions.

During Conservation in 2013



Before Conservation in 2011



The domed ceiling of the Mughal tomb required removal of cement, restoration of sandstone lattice screens in the four openings and a final 1 mm layer of lime plaster prepared with marble dust.

After Conservation in 2014



Before Conservation in 2011



The north face of the tomb chamber. Conservation works required the complete removal of the 'pinkish' 21st century cement plaster, restoration of lime plaster layers as well as the sandstone lattice screen that seems to have been removed in the 20th century for the antique market.

After Conservation in 2015



Before Conservation in 2011



The intention of the original builders has been restored to the Mughal tomb. In keeping with ASI directives, the band of verses from the Holy Quran was not restored where missing.

After Conservation in 2015





Before Conservation in 2011



The sandstone plinth replaced the earlier cement plinth which was found to have been laid over construction rubble in the early 21st century. The sandstone is long lasting, especially in view of the large number of visitors expected to visit here in future years.

After Conservation in 2015



Before Conservation in 2010



Hand carved sandstone screens were restored to three of the ground level openings and to each of the four arches over the doorways, The pinkish 21st century cement layers were replaced with traditional lime plaster.

After Conservation in 2015



Before Conservation in 2010



In addition to the profusely ornamental plaster patterns on the parapet - revealed on cleaning, the water spouts and bind of ceramic tiles was also restored.

After Conservation in 2015



Before Conservation in 2010



On all four facades of the building conservation works commenced with removal of recent cement layers followed by re-plastering with lime plaster mixed with traditional additives such as marble dust for the final 1 mm layer.

After Conservation in 2015



Before Conservation in 2010



After Conservation in 2015



Before Conservation in 2010



After Conservation in 2015





Before Conservation in 2010



After Conservation in 2015



Broken portions of the finial were found collapsed on the roof. Master craftsmen prepared matching finial pieces to restore on the dome.

Craftsmanship

India is fortunate in its building craft traditions, which have been passed down through many generations and over a number of centuries. Craftsmen here still take great pride in replicating the work of their forefathers, using tools and building techniques seen depicted in Mughal miniatures. Craftsmen clocked over 100,000 man-days of work to complete the conservation work here.

The use of traditional materials, especially lime plaster – even when prepared in a traditional manner – will appear “new” at the onset, but over time the patina comprising organic growth will return on account of the jaggery, lentils, egg whites, pulp of the *bael* fruit that has been used as additives in the lime mortar. At the same time, the traditional methods will ensure the long-term preservation of these sites.

Reviving the craft of Tile-making



Reviving traditional building craft of Lime



Stone Craftsmanship



Introducing traditional techniques in masonry

Reviving Traditional Building Craft of Lime Plaster





During Conservation in 2013



During Conservation in 2014

Reviving the Tile Craft



Introducing traditional materials and techniques in masonry

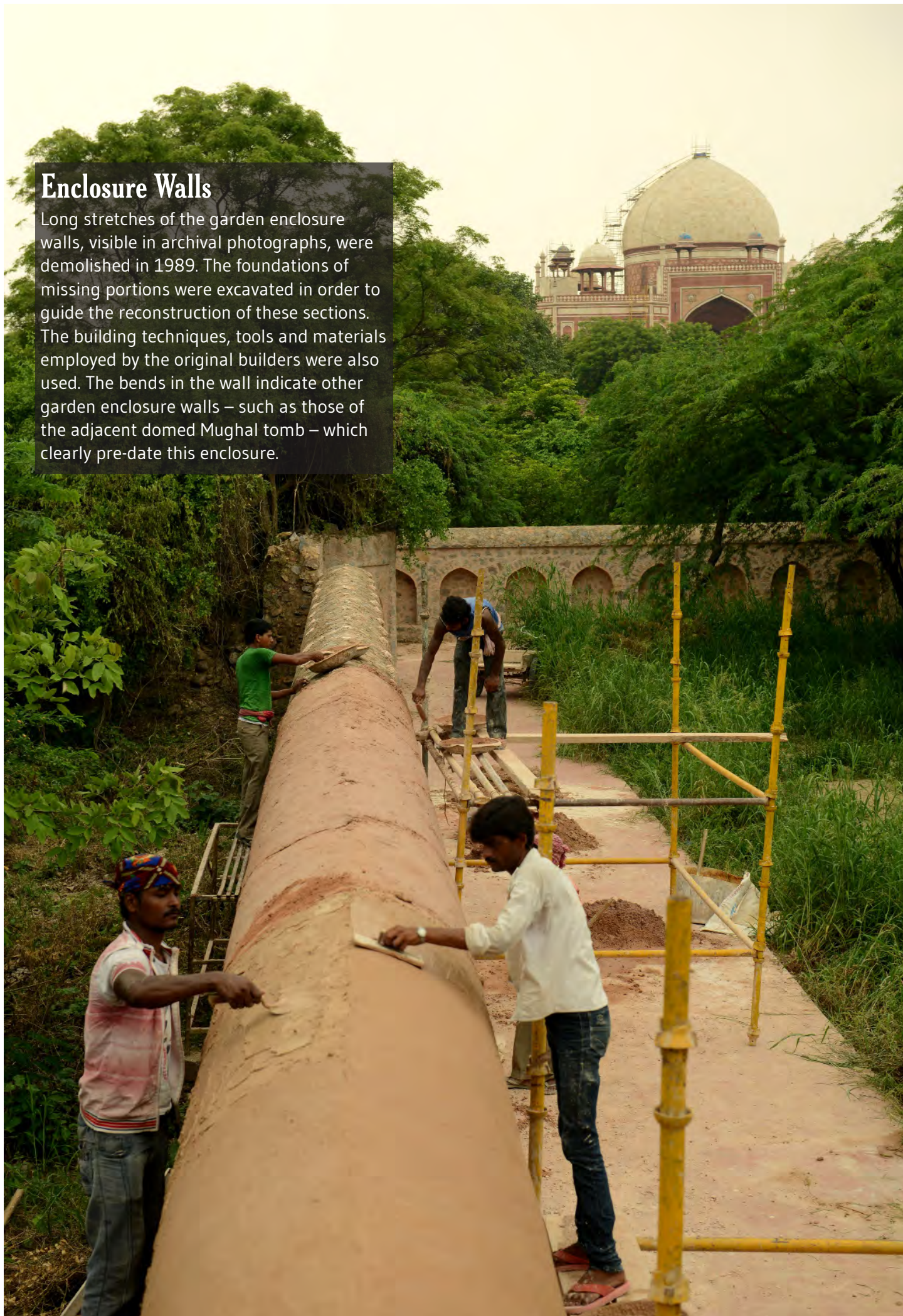


Stone Craftsmen

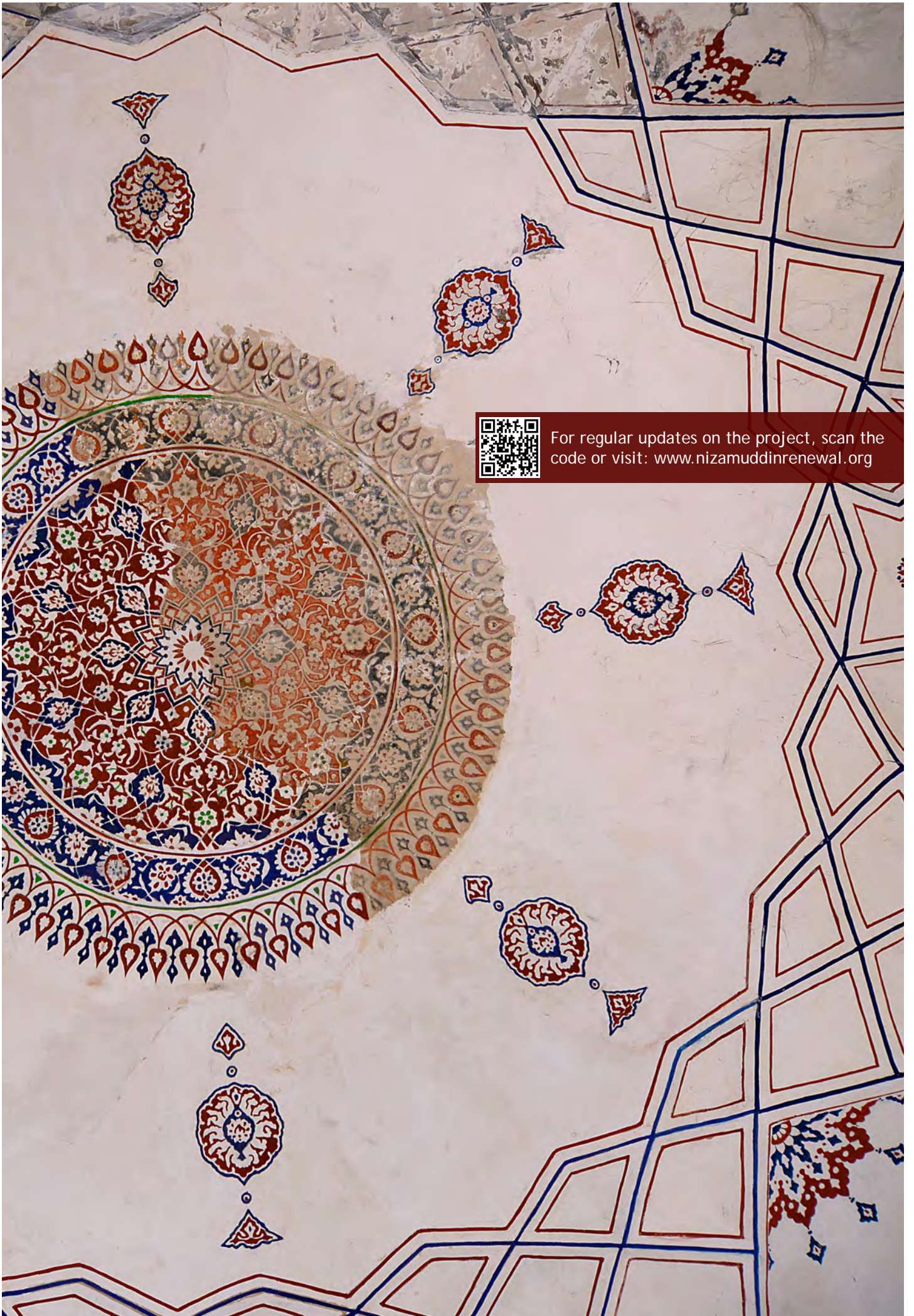


Enclosure Walls

Long stretches of the garden enclosure walls, visible in archival photographs, were demolished in 1989. The foundations of missing portions were excavated in order to guide the reconstruction of these sections. The building techniques, tools and materials employed by the original builders were also used. The bends in the wall indicate other garden enclosure walls – such as those of the adjacent domed Mughal tomb – which clearly pre-date this enclosure.







For regular updates on the project, scan the code or visit: www.nizamuddinrenewal.org