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 recognised 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.

Delhi Area Programme
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 eighteen-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 Basti (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 sewage 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 Basti, 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 Pirzadars, or keepers of the shrine, the Basti 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 silt. 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 Chausath 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 landscape-scaled 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 synergic, community-centric and collaborative approach to develop and strengthen essential urban services through interventions in core areas of education, health, sanitation and upgrading open spaces.

**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 stairs 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 improvements; plans for both are now being implemented.
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 relate as part of the conservation works on the Basti.

Cultural revival initiative

Exceptional by virtue of not just its vintage, the 700-year-old ‘living culture’ of the heritage will be interconnected by nature trails and heritage walks that link not just the three sites but also their heritage and ecological assets.

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 ancient bird habitat. In addition, the park will emphasise its horticultural past with provision 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 pedestrian road now complete, the park will be pedestrian-friendly. 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 heritage and ecological assets.

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 PROJECT AREA

The Nizamuddin Basti, an area comprising the three presently segregated areas of Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, Sunder Nursery and the World Heritage Site of Humayun’s Tomb, has the 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 hosted one of the densest ensembles of medieval Islamic buildings in India, several of which stand within the present-day boundary of Nizamuddin Basti. Sunder Nursery, also dotted with Mughal-era monuments, was established in 1864, and Sunder Nursery (north of Humayun’s Tomb) in 1903 to provide and experiment with plants for the British city of New Delhi.

Challenges

PROGRAMME RISKS

The programme has distinct conservation, environment 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 out of five modern buildings stand next to medieval monuments. The Basti is separated from the larger area of Humayun’s Tomb and Sunder Nursery by a major road. Sunder Nursery has been largely under-utilised, 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 meet water needs of Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, other 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 Dariyana (now called the Old Fort). The 12-hectare enclosed Garden immediately surrounding Humayun’s Tomb was earlier realised by AICTC 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 26-hectare Sunder Nursery and the five-hectare Balshekhri complex, both of which will be landscaped and made accessible to the public as a result of the ongoing project. Despite living on the edge of a garden city, few Nizamuddin Basti residents have access to the ten hectares of neighbourhood parks on the western edge of the Basti. These parks, presently测量ed, 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) 2020 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 Urban Heritage Site, is envoiced in the MPD 2021. Sunder Nursery has now been designated in the MPD as a District Park. The entire project area is zoned under the ‘Protected Areas’ category in the Master Plan, alongside the heritage site planned in the new Master Plan for Delhi (MPD). The two projects have been co-ordinated to protect the heritage site and the important heritage and ecological assets.

PLANNING ISSUES

A prime objective of the programme is to integrate the three presently segregated zones; Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, Humayun’s Tomb and Sunder Nursery. Physical surveys of the entire project area and zones abutting the project have been completed. All the Tomb and Nursery will be preserved and nests acclimated in the project area. In the last decades many others have been lost as a result of expanding urbanization, urban planning and neglect. Three of the remaining six considered of national importance and protected by the Archaeological Survey of India. Other buildings of high historical and architectural significance were catered to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi as building of local importance, many of the remaining neglected and inappropriate repairs. Such that provide a poor living environment, several are torn and occupied as residences. Conservation work on almost 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

The project conservation programme is focused on the area that revenue generated at Sunder Nursery is returned back into operations and maintenance of the park through the formation of a trust or a Special Purpose Vehicle and, furthermore, as support to the education, heritage and conservation 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


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

DELHI, INDIA

The tomb of the second Mughal emperor, Humayun, one of the twenty-seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India, was the first of the monumental mausoleums to be built in the country. The chahar-bagh, or four-part paradise garden, is the earliest existing example of the Mughal garden tomb. The Tomb and Garden are considered one of the precursors of the Taj Mahal.

The restoration of the Garden was the first privately funded restoration of a World Heritage Site in India and was completed in March 2003 through the joint efforts of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) and the Archaeological Survey of India under the aegis of the National Culture Fund. The objective of the project was to revitalize the gardens, pathways, fountains and water channels of the chahar-bagh surrounding Humayun's Tomb according to the original plans of the builders.

The Garden is laid out in a classical chahar-bagh pattern. It is divided into quarters by raised causeways. The quadrants are divided, in turn, into eight plots, each with walkways. At the intersection of these walkways are octagonal or rectangular pools. Site works encompassed a variety of disciplines, including archaeological excavation, the application of conservation science and hydraulic engineering. Following the restoration of the Garden, visitor numbers increased tenfold. Building on the success of this project, in 2007 AKTC signed a ‘Public-Private Partnership Agreement’ to undertake the restoration of Humayun’s Tomb complex.

Emperor Humayun was the son of Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire. His tomb was built over nearly a decade beginning in about 1565. Influenced by Persian architecture, the Tomb stands on a 120-square-metre platform and reaches a height of forty-seven metres. Built of rubble masonry, the structure is the earliest example of the use of red sandstone and white marble in such great quantities.

Humayun’s Tomb complex and its surrounding areas cover almost twenty-four hectares of land and include several significant monuments, such as Isa Khan’s Tomb enclosure, Afsarwala Tomb and Mosque, the Arab Serai, Bu Haima’s Tomb and several monumental gateways.

Exhaustive archival research, documentation using state-of-the-art laser scanning technology, condition assessment and structural analysis preceded the restoration of the Garden. Site works encompassed a variety of disciplines, including archaeological excavation, the application of conservation science and hydraulic engineering. Following the restoration of the Garden, visitor numbers increased tenfold. Building on the success of this project, in 2007 AKTC signed a ‘Public-Private Partnership Agreement’ to undertake the restoration of Humayun’s Tomb complex.

Humayun’s Tomb complex is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The mausoleum and its peripheral buildings were found to be in urgent need of conservation in order to retard deterioration and enhance the cultural significance of the building. The conservation process emphasized original crafts and skills and sought to revitalize techniques and traditional art forms. The project includes the integrated development of the surrounding open spaces, provision for visitor facilities and an interpretation centre.
The preparation of conservation proposals. Conservation works commenced in April 2008 and included restoration of the mausoleum, the monumental gateways, pavilions and tomb structures. The project also includes the integrated development of the surrounding open spaces and provision of visitor facilities and an interpretation centre.

The project vision is to link up the Tomb complex with the site where the Nila Gumbad, a seventeenth-century tomb, also restored by AKTC, is located, just outside the eastern enclosure wall and Sunder Nursery, which the Trust is converting into a park. Together, this ensemble will create a vast area of monuments, green space, facilities and services.

Once completed, the restoration of Humayun's Tomb complex will return a significant amount of enhanced green space to the city and the surrounding community, with its constituent parts returned to their historically authentic format. The project is expected to increase interest in and visits to the Tomb, the Garden and the associated visitor facilities, which together form a large complex next to a major urban highway in Delhi. It will serve the local residents of Nizamuddin district as a community green area on one level, and the population of Greater Delhi as well as tourists on another level. Humayun’s Tomb and Garden has rekindled interest in the rich history of Mughal rule and presents Delhi’s heritage in a dignified and cohesive setting worthy of this capital city.
PROJECT RISKS

Challenges

PROJECT RISKS
All conservation works at the World Heritage Site are undertaken as part of an established process that ensures cultural significance is retained and visitor experience is enhanced. Almost a million tourists and school children visit Humayun’s Tomb annually and such all works are carried out in a manner that causes minimum disturbance to visitors.

SITE CONDITIONS
Because of the large number of visitors, vehicular and machine movement is not possible within the complex. Manual movement of materials is the only other option; it often requires a group of 20 craftsmen a whole day to lift a single piece of stone to the roof. On a larger scale, the inappropriate earlier application of concrete, removed from the roof of Humayun’s Tomb and the earth expected to be removed from the Isa Khan–Bu Halima complex poses significant logistical challenges.

BUILDING CONDITIONS
Most monuments within the complex are in urgent need of conservation works ranging from removal of 20th-century cement and concrete to stitching of cracks and restoring missing plaster, stones and ceramic tiles.

Significant Issues and Impact
DATA COLLECTION/SURVEYS
Conservation works at Humayun’s Tomb commenced following the peer review and approval of the ‘Conservation Plan’ in May 2008. The ‘Conservation Plan’ included detailed measured drawings of all structures utilizing high-definition 3D Laser scanning equipment, research of archival photographs, drafting of a state-of-the-art conservation Plan’ in May 2008. The ‘Conservation Plan’ included detailed measured drawings of all structures utilizing high-definition 3D Laser scanning equipment, research of archival photographs, drafting of a state-of-the-art conservation proposal on the basis of national and international conservation charters.

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Historic buildings/monuments conserved
Conservation works are ongoing on Humayun’s Tomb and its attached gateways, pavilions and enclosure walls. Work has now commenced on Isa Khan’s Tomb enclosure and Bu Halima’s Gateway.

DOCUMENTATION

Conservation works commence on the east pavilion and west gate; conservation works on the dome and lower plinth completed.

Conservation works commence on north-east pavilion; conservation works on the west access and enclosure walls in preparation and use of state-of-the-art high-definition survey of historic buildings using 3-D laser scanning technology.

All the conservation works on Humayun’s Tomb completed.

Background

BRIEF HISTORY OF PROJECT SITE
Since it is considered auspicious to be buried near a saint’s grave, following the burial of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya the area was used centuries of tomb building. The greatest is Humayun’s Tomb. This complex now includes several other prominent buildings such as Isa Khan’s Tomb, enclosure, Bu Halima’s Tomb, Nila Gumbad and tombs in the Batashewala complex, all dating from the 16th–early 17th century. The Arab Serai, originally part of the complex, today functions as an Industrial Training Institute. The Yamuna River, on the banks of which Humayun’s Tomb was built, drifted eastwards in the 19th century leaving the site landlocked. Humayun’s Tomb became a World Heritage Site in 1993.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING/CAPACITY BUILDING
The project is being used as a platform for training of conservation professionals and craftsmen. Regular training workshops on the use of 3D laser scanner have been attended by over 150 officers of the Archaeological Survey of India from countrywide locations. To mitigate risks a craftsmen training programme has been included in the programme and monthly reviews of work are held by a panel of experts with annual independent peer reviews.

CONTRACTING METHODS
All conservation works are implemented directly by master craftsmen employed by the project.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES INTRODUCED
Use of 3D high-definition laser scanning technology to document all monuments prior to conservation works, and a training workshop to introduce this technology was also held in India.

Partners

PUBLIC PARTNERS
Archaeological Survey of India.

Donors
Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, World Monuments Fund.

Authoritative Framework

Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2007.

Phasing 1997–2012

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING between AKTC and Archaeological Survey of India: signed to undertake the Garden restoration.

Inauguration of Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, World Monuments Fund.

Ceremony marking the completion of the Garden restoration.

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Sunder Nursery

DELHI, INDIA

Sunder Nursery was established by the British to experiment with the trees proposed to be grown in the new capital in Delhi. It is a large, enclosed nursery on the north side of Humayun’s Tomb, owned and operated by the Central Public Works Department. Located in south central Delhi and spread over twenty-eight hectares, the development of Sunder Nursery into a sustainable park is part of a larger socio-economic development programme that includes the urban regeneration of Nizamuddin Basti and restoration of Humayun’s Tomb complex (a World Heritage Site).

The Sunder Nursery abuts Humayun’s Tomb complex, with which its shares a common entrance zone, and stands on the historic Grand Trunk Road. Within the Nursery stand nine Mughal-period tombs, of which three are protected by the Archaeological Survey of India. The work of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) will aim to enhance nursery functions; create a significant arboretum; restore the monuments; create new attractions; and provide visitor facilities. At the same time, plans are in place to link up the Nursery site with Humayun’s Tomb complex, creating a vast green space, a “cultural heritage park”, in the heart of the capital city.

A flat, extensive and underused green space lies in Nizamuddin, a designated heritage zone comprising Lutyen’s Garden City, its extensions and a number of significant heritage areas, such as India Gate, Humayun’s Tomb complex, Lodhi Gardens and the Old Fort. The Nursery is bordered by Humayun’s Tomb to the south, the National Zoological Park to the north, the Shahar Scouts and Guides Centre to the east and the prominent Delhi Public School to the west. The area’s position between Humayun’s Tomb complex and Nizamuddin Basti provides the opportunity to create a larger Area Development Project connecting Humayun’s Tomb and its outer precinct.

The design of the new Park is organized along a central axial spine around which gardens and landscapes are arranged. From formal garden to informal settings for families to enjoy picnics, the Park will offer a variety of recreational and cultural venues. Water features, ponds and lakes are part of the master plan, which includes nursery beds, a flower showcase, arboretum, rose garden and orchards.

More than just a green space in the heart of the city, Sunder Nursery literally stands in the midst of history. The monuments located here are being carefully conserved using traditional materials and building crafts. Lakkarwala Burj with its landscaped garden is shown above.

Opposite page: Conservation work on the ceiling of Sunder Burj.

Project Scope/Objectives

The conversion of Sunder Nursery into a public park consisting visitor facilities and restored Mughal-era monuments is part of a development programme that seeks to create a larger Area Development Project connecting with Humayun’s Tomb and its outer precinct.
As part of the Nursery development project all of the historic structures located in the Nursery will undergo conservation to enhance their significance and restore their architectural integrity. Landscaping the setting of the monuments is an important element of the conservation works and the master plan for the Nursery. Over 140 tree species presently exist at Sunder Nursery, some of which are unique to the Delhi region. It is proposed to add a similar number of species mostly comprising vegetation that has been lost to the Delhi region. A 3.6-hectare nursery has been established along the northern edge of Sunder Nursery; glasshouses, mist chambers, tissue culture labs, and a training centre are also proposed to be built. As part of the project a micro-habitat zone – an arboretum – is being created, simulating a microcosm of Delhi’s landscape, including Kohl (hilly), Khadar (riverine), Bangar (alluvial) and Dabar (marshy) zones.

The proposed Interpretation Centre on ecology and heritage in Sunder Nursery will host education programs. A newly created amphitheatre will host musical and cultural performances and a café and restaurant will provide refreshments and food for visitors. The buildings will be eco-friendly and sustainable, having minimum impact on the site’s environmental character, and vehicular traffic will be limited to the periphery to allow visitors to enjoy the natural and built heritage of the new Park.

Transforming the Nursery into a Park will create employment opportunities for the residents of Nizamuddin Basti. In keeping with AKTC’s wider objectives of improving built environments and raising living standards, it is hoped that the surplus income generated from the park can be used to support the Basti’s urban infrastructure, such as the municipal school, polyclinic, community toilets and public spaces.

**Planning Issues**

The new park design is organized along a central axial spine around which gardens and landscapes are arranged. From formal gardens to informal settings, the park will offer a variety of recreational and cultural venues. Water features, ponds, lakes, nursery beds, a flower showground, belvedere, rose garden and orchards are all incorporated in the design, landscaping settings for the monuments as an important element of the park. A number of original species of vegetation currently lost are being considered for replanting. A traffic study is underway to minimize the impact of the six-meter-wide road that divides Humayun’s Tomb from Sunder Nursery.

**Data Collection/Surveys**

A detailed survey and database of all existing trees was prepared prior to commencement of the master planning process. Over 140 tree species exist at Sunder Nursery, some of which are unique to the Delhi region. A plan for conservation works on several monuments was similarly prepared at the onset of the project.

**Partners**

PUBLIC PARTNERS

National Public Works Department, Archaeological Survey of India.

Donors


Authoritative Framework


**Background**

**Brief History of Project Site**

Sunder Nursery is located inside an important archaeological zone between the 16th-century fort built by Mughal ruler Humayun and his tomb. The Mughal-era Grand Trunk Road passed through the area. The Nursery was established by the British to cultivate trees for the new capital in Delhi.

**Challenges**

**Site Conditions**

Sunder Nursery is nearly flat and shares an entrance with Humayun’s Tomb complex. Within the Nursery remain rare Mughal-period tombs, and the archaeological remnants of several other structures. The Nursery is bordered by the National Zoological Park to the north, the Botanical Garden to the east and the Delhi Public School to the west.

**Significant Issues and Impact**

**Data collection/surveys**

A detailed survey and database of all existing trees was prepared prior to commencement of the master planning process. Over 140 tree species exist at Sunder Nursery, some of which are unique to the Delhi region. A plan for conservation works on several monuments was similarly prepared at the onset of the project.

**Master Planning Process**

The landscape Master Plan emphasizes developing the ecology, heritage and nursery functions of Sunder Nursery and received approval of the Delhi Urban Art Commission.

**Planning Issues**

The park is designed to be organized along a central axial spine around which gardens and landscapes are arranged. From formal gardens to informal settings, the park will offer a variety of recreational and cultural venues. Water features, ponds, lakes, nursery beds, a flower showground, belvedere, rose garden and orchards are all incorporated in the design, landscaping settings for the monuments as an important element of the park.

A number of original species of vegetation currently lost are being considered for replanting. A traffic study is underway to minimize the impact of the six-meter-wide road that divides Humayun’s Tomb from Sunder Nursery.

**New Building Facilities**

Amongst the new project activities was a ten-kilometre pipeline to ensure that vehicles can access the public areas. The park is designed to be organized along a central axial spine around which gardens and landscapes are arranged. From formal gardens to informal settings, the park will offer a variety of recreational and cultural venues. Water features, ponds, lakes, nursery beds, a flower showground, belvedere, rose garden and orchards are all incorporated in the design, landscaping settings for the monuments as an important element of the park.

A number of original species of vegetation currently lost are being considered for replanting. A traffic study is underway to minimize the impact of the six-meter-wide road that divides Humayun’s Tomb from Sunder Nursery.
Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti

Located in the heart of New Delhi, adjacent to Humayun’s Tomb complex and Sunder Nursery, Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti is named after the revered saint Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, who lived here in the early fourteenth century. A settlement developed at this location during the saint’s lifetime and it has been continuously inhabited.

Following the successful restoration of Humayun’s Tomb Garden in 2004, the urban renewal project commenced with the signature of a public-private partnership ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ on 11 July 2007. The non-profit partnership includes the Archaeological Survey of India, the Central Public Works Department, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC).

Nizamuddin Basti comprises a resident population of approximately 20,000. A synergistic, community centred and collaborative approach has been adopted to improve the quality of life for residents through a series of multi-input projects that aims to improve the urban environment, conserve monuments, develop public parks, strengthen basic services through interventions in the three core areas of health, education and environmental sanitation and engage community participation through a regular series of cultural activities and performances. In so doing, the project seeks to integrate conservation, socio-economic development and urban and environmental development objectives in consultation with local communities and relevant stakeholders. All programmes commenced following a quality of life assessment study.

In 2009 a physical mapping/survey of the Basti was undertaken to document the area with the intention of planning sensitive urban improvements. The survey has led to the preparation of street improvement plans which will be implemented by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. Small public parks are being planned along the western edge of the Basti in areas that are deteriorating and are no longer safe and clean. These spaces will be landscaped to fulfil the needs expressed by the resident community. These parks will bring much needed community space and nodes of civic life back to the area and improve pedestrian circulation through the Basti, and there will be parks earmarked for women, children, cricket, community functions and weddings.

**Project Scope / Objectives**

The project combines conservation with a major socio-economic development effort that is being implemented through a community-centred, collaborative approach. The objective is to improve environmental conditions and strengthen essential urban services with interventions in the core areas of education, health and sanitation.
A series of initiatives are spurring a cultural revival in the Basti. Here, Chaunsath Khamba (right) is lit up at night during a concert of Qawwali music at the Jashn-e Khusrau festival.

The conservation of monuments and the rehabilitation of open spaces in the Basti aim to restore their intrinsic cultural, historical and spiritual significance. Using state-of-the-art technology, including ground-penetrating radar survey, high-definition 3D laser scanning and geotechnical assessments, conservation started on the fourteenth-century Baoli (step-well).

At the eastern edge of the Basti stand two important tombs: the Chaunsath Khamba, a Mughal tomb, and the tomb of Mirza Ghalib, South Asia’s most renowned poet. Together, they form one of the largest open spaces in the Basti. Landscape works at both tombs have enhanced the historic character, restored dignity to these monuments and provided much-needed community gathering spaces in this dense setting.

Social programmes in conjunction with the AKF have focused on education, training, health and the environment. In the first place the major effort towards primary education improvement has included a refurbishment of the MCD primary school, interventions to improve quality of education through professional development of faculty, improved classroom processes/child centred to teaching-learning process, better school management and strengthened school community approaches interface. Secondly, vocational training programmes for young people include a career development centre (NITT Institute of Technology), the teaching of the English language (British Council) and training of heritage guides to give tours of the Basti and its history, while learning support to students in the age group of fourteen to sixteen years is given in Maths and English (‘English Access Micro-Scholarship Programme’ co-funded by the US Embassy).

In parallel with these procedures health interventions in the Basti include upgrading the MCD Polyclinic to ensure better diagnosis and treatment, reduce referrals and build the capacity of a community health outreach team for preventive health care, as well as the creation of a pathology laboratory. Finally, newly built public toilets – a key intervention for urban renewal in the Basti – have improved access to hygienic sanitation for residents.

As part of the urban renewal project there is a focus on cultural initiatives. A rich cultural vein, particularly in music and poetry, has existed in the Basti for centuries and drives the lifeblood of the community. This is where Amir Khusrau, musician, poet, scholar, Sufi mystic and spiritual disciple of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, started Qawwali music traditions in the thirteenth century. This tradition continues to this day. The ‘living culture’ of the area is a unique and vibrant blend of secular and interfaith elements that encompass the performing arts, classical music, poetry and traditional crafts. Improvement in the life of the residents must also include initiatives that embrace the creativity and talent nurtured in this environment and that are core to its identity. Steps are being taken to revive and revitalize these components highlighted at festivals, performances, discussions and through recordings.

Above, noted poet Mirza Ghalib’s tomb setting was enhanced by landscaping the court and creating an enclosure with stone jali screens to be used for mushairas (poetry readings) and other performances.

Below left, conservation works on the Basti were initiated following the collapse of portions of the 13th-century stepped well; right, a view of the Basti after the work.
Background

BRIEF HISTORY OF PROJECT SITE
     Ghulam-ul-lin Balban, Sultan of Delhi in the 13th cen-
     tury, built the palace of Laj Mahal in what is now Hazrat
     Nizamuddin Basti. In the early 14th century, the sea-
     soned saint, Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, lived and was
     also buried there, initiating seventeen century of loc-
     matory building in the area. During the building of New
     Delhi, the agricultural lands attached to the Basti were
     acquired and the area declared an urban village. The
     area was declared a conservation area in the 2001
     Master Plan of Delhi.

Challenges

PROJECT RISKS
     Low levels of literacy, high number of migrants, rem-
     enant drug usage and peddling have led to high crimes.
     Though there is a presence of several NGOs working
     in Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, there are no active resi-
     dent associations/youth groups or community groups.

DEMOGRAPHICS
     Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti is one of the most densely
     populated areas in Delhi, especially when the floating
     population is taken into account. Approximately 66% of
     the population is in the productive employment age
     group but only 47% participate.

HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY
     Over 50% of families in Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti have
     a single wage earner – largely employed in petty trades
     or as casual workers. A similar number of men in the
     15 to 25 age group are working and only 6% of women
     hold jobs. During community discussions, the skills,
     career counselling and vocational training opportunities
     emerged as key needs.

STATUS OF HEALTH AND EDUCATION
     Lack of access to quality clinical facilities has resulted
     in extremely poor health conditions. During baseline
     research, reported illnesses in the previous two weeks
     was 54% among females and 29% among males. The
     project continues to implement interventions to improve
     health care including both clinic-based and outreach
     activities and plans to address health issues of the
     elderly and the disabled. While literacy rates remain
     high, raising the quality of education, and increasing
     enrolment and completion rates of existing program-
     ming are a project focus.

AVAILABILITY OF DRAINING WATER
     and PROPER SANITATION FACILITIES
     Household water connection is available and 30% of
     households access water from public taps, which
     are in a poor condition. Public toilets are used by 17%-
     of households and 14% share latrines. In addition, the
     large floating population of pilgrims puts further strain
     on the system.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS
     Rapid physical densification and population growth
     put enormous strain on the infrastructure at Hazrat
     Nizamuddin Basti, especially in terms of environmental
     sanitation and waste management. Frequent flooding
     and blockages in sewage lines are common and
     provide public health concerns.

INFRASTRUCTURE
     Water supply and sewage disposal systems are present
     but well below required capacity.

ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE
     Encroachment and misuse of open spaces and parks
     are widespread.

BUILDING CONDITIONS
     In Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti limited living space per
     family, poor ventilation due to densification, inadequate
     sewerage and water connections compounded by
     large numbers of pilgrims have increased the depen-
     dence on public utilities and building facilities.

Significant Issues and Impact

DATA COLLECTION/SURVEYS
     The project activities commenced following detailed
     physical mapping of the project area, documentation
     of the monuments and socio-economic surveys, which
     needed to be managed sensitively by senior pro-
     ject staff to explain objectives. The physical
     surveys in the community were meet with repeated
     resistance from the community. They could only be
     completed in 2009 after establishing confidence building
     programming in health, education, sanitation and voca-
     tional training.

PLANNING ISSUES
     With the renovation of open spaces and landscaping
     of parks coupled with community mobilization, owner-
     ship and their involvement in management of these
     spaces, it is hoped that children, women and residents
     in Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti will be able to safely access
     these spaces. The project has incorporated interventions
     such as connecting households to sewer lines and
     trees and there is plans to improve housing stock in need
     of repair, especially those surrounding significant monu-
     ments and public spaces such as the Basti and the
     nallah respectively.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS/MONUMENTS CONSERVED
     Several monuments dating from the 12th-century on-
     wards are located within Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti. Conserva-
     tion works to date in the Basti have focused on a 13th-century
     step-well or basti that partially collapsed in July 2006
     and on the conservation and landscaping of the tomb of
     the famous poet Mira Ghalib. In 2011, conservation
     works will continue on the basti and also expand to the
     18th-century structures known as Chunarshah Khambe and
     Aligh Khan’s Tomb.

NEW BUILDING FACILITIES
     One block of community toilets has now been built
     and is in operation. Work on an additional, much larger
     toilet block is planned to commence in 2011.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT/PROGRAMME
     The project began to strengthen civil society, based
     on consultative planning and implementation, as well
     as the formation of internal and user groups. Self-help
     groups have been established and commu-
     nity management of public facilities such as toilets has
     commenced. The project continues to implement in-
     terventions to improve health care, including both
     clinic-based and outreach activities, and plans to ad-
     dress health issues of the elderly and the disabled.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING/CAPACITY BUILDING
     With only 21% of youth having completed senior sec-
     ondary education, the vocational training programmes
     being implemented are designed for improving employ-
     ability. Market linkages with textile artisans at Humay-
     un’s Tomb are being established for craft and embroi-
     dered goods by local women. Whilst literacy rates are
     reasonably high, increasing enrolment and completion
     rates and the quality of education are a project focus.

CONTRACTING METHODS
     All conservation works and renovations are imple-
     mented directly by master craftsmen employed by the
     project.

Phasing

2007 - 2011

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING/ Signed between AKTC and the
Government of India

SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY/ Data collected

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING/ Signed between AKTC, the Delhi
Development Authority and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi

REHABILITATION WORK ON CHAUNSATH AMBA, THE LOCAL MUNICIPAL
Corporation of Delhi School completed

Two public open spaces

in the Nizamuddin Basti

fully reinstated