The notion of culture as an asset is as old as human civilization itself. It is an intangible resource that transcends national borders. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) recognizes the importance of cultural preservation. The Trust aims to promote the sustainable development of cultural heritage worldwide. The AKTC works in the preservation, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of historically significant buildings and sites, with the goal of enhancing the quality of life for those living within their environs. The AKTC charity provides funding, technical expertise, and training to support cultural preservation projects worldwide.

AKTC programmes:
- Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme (AKHCP)
- Aga Khan Award for Architecture (AKAA)
- Architect, www.architectural Digest
- Aga Khan Programme for Islamic Architecture (AKPA)
- Aga Khan Museums Initiative in Central Asia (AKMAC)
- Museum Projects (Astoner)

The AKTC's goal is to ensure that our rich cultural heritage is preserved for future generations. By working in collaboration with local communities and governments, the AKTC helps to safeguard our cultural heritage, fostering a sense of pride and belonging among the people it serves.
"... the architects of the Taj Mahal derived their inspiration, from two buildings at Delhi which predetermined it in certain aspects of its conformation. These are the mausoleum of Humayun and the Tomb of Abdur Rahim Khan I Khanan, ....the later one is proof that the type of architecture they represent had not been forgotten during this interval...

Moreover, in view of the fact that Rahim’s Tomb was erected only a few years before the Taj is also an indication that the style they typify was being revived and again coming into favour. On the traditions therefore of Humayun’s Tomb on the one hand, and with the experience gained from that of the Khan I Khanan’s Tomb on the other, Shah Jahan’s architects evolved the masterpiece of the builder’s art.”

INDIAN ARCHITECTURE, ISLAMIC PERIOD, PERCY BROWN, 1968

About InterGlobe Foundation
With a vision to promote India’s heritage and culture, InterGlobe Foundation sees a great opportunity in undertaking efforts in promoting India’s tangible and intangible heritage and culture. We believe that heritage conservation not only seeds a sense of identity in the communities but also fulfills our responsibility of passing on our rich heritage into the hands of generations to come. With this objective in mind, InterGlobe Foundation joined hands with Aga Khan Trust for Culture for conservation of Rahim’s Tomb and revival of his literary works through publications, exhibitions and films. The conservation initiative at Rahim’s Tomb is an endeavor to revive the art and artistry of a person of such magnified stature and to ensure a new lease of life for the grand mausoleum that inspired the Taj Mahal. We are hopeful that our collaborative efforts would garner great interest amongst the visitors and create more awareness of our past.

For more information on the project, visit: www.nizamuddinrenewal.org
For regular updates Like us on: https://www.facebook.com/NizamuddinRenewal
Inquiry: info@nizamuddinrenewal.org

In Partnership With

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE
INTERGLOBE FOUNDATION
Understanding the Tomb of Abdur Rahim Khan I Khanan

Built as a tomb for Rahim’s wife, the mausoleum is also known as a precursor to the famed Taj Mahal. The monumental mausoleum was built by Rahim for his wife making this the first ever Mughal tomb built for a lady. Rahim was himself buried here in 1627 AD.

Major repair works using Delhi Quartzite stone masonry were undertaken to stabilize portions of the tomb in 1923 AD. Further conservation works were undertaken by the ASI including excavation of the platform and restoring some missing sandstone to the tomb. Rahim’s Tomb, depicted in the Asrar-us-Sanadid (1847) by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan with the garden enclosure walls, an impressive gateway and much of the stone intact. The gateway, enclosure walls have since been lost as has much of the stonework.

The Delhi Quartzite plinth was re-set and garden levels raised by 18”. The lower plinth paving was also replaced with red sandstone at a much lower level exposing the foundations.

The repairs in the ancillary chambers and main hall was carried out in cement-surkhi plaster disfiguring the original details and patterns.

The Delhi Quartzite plinth similar in design to Humayun’s Tomb was replaced inappropriately with sandstone paving at a lower level; thus compromising the structural stability of the foundation.

Commencement of conservation works on the tomb of Abdur Rahim Khan I Khanan by Aga Khan Trust for Culture in partnership with Archaeological Survey of India and InterGlobe Foundation in 2014 AD.

The marble and sandstone cladding on the dome, facade, flooring of the terrace and the tomb, the parapets, lattice screens have largely been stripped of the building over the years including significant loss of fabric in the 20th century. Conservation works commenced with the financial support of InterGlobe Foundation in late 2014 following approval of the Conservation Plan by the Director General, ASI as well as approvals of the ASI Core Committee meeting held on site.

Built as a tomb by Rahim for his wife, the mausoleum is also a precursor to the Taj Mahal for its architectural style, with some innovations developed ever since the building of Humayun’s Tomb.
Humayun’s Tomb and the other contemporary 16th-century garden tombs within the property form a unique ensemble of Mughal era garden-tombs. The monumental scale, architectural treatment and garden setting are outstanding in Islamic garden-tombs. Humayun’s Tomb is the first important example in India, and above all else, the symbol of the powerful Mughal dynasty that unified most of the sub continent.

With the 2015 recognition that “Humayun’s Tomb and the other contemporary 16th-century garden tombs within the property form a unique ensemble of Mughal-era garden-tombs,” AKTC in 2016 proposed, through the ASI, to UNESCO, for 16th-century garden tombs standing in Sunder Nursery, such as Lakkarwala Burj, Sundar Burj, Mirza Muzafer Hussain’s Tomb, Sundarwala Mahal, ‘Unknown Mughal Tomb’, Chota Batashewala Tomb and Nila Gumbad’s garden setting, to be included in a further extension of the World Heritage Site boundaries and Rahim Khan-i-Khanani’s tomb be included within the Buffer Zone.
India still has a long established building craft traditions which can play an important role in the conservation of Monuments. Employment of crafts persons should be (for)... restoration and reproduction of geometric designs as well as restoration and reproduction of designs of historic interiors.

– ASI National Policy for Conservation, 2014

Stone Craftsmanship

Master stone carvers used traditional tools and building crafts to carefully match the work of their forefathers. At Rahim’s Tomb, each of the 68 arches on the ground level have a different carved motif on each side. Where one was missing, these motifs were restored as per the original design.

Restoring Decorative Motifs

Careful cleaning

Layers of soot and lime-wash had obliterated the 17th century patterns in most parts of the structure but especially in the main tomb chamber. In order to ensure no damage occurs to the underlying plaster patterns, craftsmen took over a year to clean the domed ceiling with soft and moist toothbrushes – with spectacular results.

Cleaning the Main Hall

Supervision

A team of engineers experienced in conservation works and conservation architects monitor, supervise and guide the craftsmen on daily basis to ensure quality and appropriateness of the conservation works. The 1923 ASI Conservation Manual explicitly forbids any conservation work if experienced supervisors are not available.

Stitching the Cracks:

Unequal settlement in the crypt had led to serious structural cracks all the way to the top of the dome. Master craftsmen using traditional building techniques repaired the cracks over a year long period. This required significant underpinning of the foundations and lime grout in the masonry.

Using Lime Mortar

Lime mortar, prepared from limestone, returns to its natural chemical composition and thus is long lasting with only the minimum, maintenance and effort. However, preparation of lime mortar requires several weeks and stringent conditions. Additives such as fruit-pulp, lentil, jaggery ensure that patina to lime mortar returns within a few years of its application.

Incised Plasterwork

The central chamber and five ground level arches on each façade, are ornamented with intricate incised plaster patterns. Original patterns were carefully consolidated and preserved prior to removing 20th century cement layers and restoring missing portions in lime mortar.
Rahim’s Tomb
Conservation Process

Before any practical work starts, a project must be prepared on the basis of said research and must be submitted to a group of experts for joint examination and approval.

The conservation works at Rahim’s Tomb have been guided by national and international charters but especially with the 2014 National Policy for the Conservation of Monuments and the Manual on Conservation by John Marshall – both of the Archaeological Survey of India. Writing the Conservation Manual for the ASI in 1923, John Marshall stressed that ‘repairs be attempted only in cases where its advisability is undoubted, and where special funds can be provided for the purpose’. In 2014, InterGlobe Foundation generously offered to fund the conservation of the mausoleum as well as an associated cultural programme. All conservation works are being undertaken at Rahim’s tomb utilizing ‘available traditional craftsmanship in the country and the use of traditional building materials and skills as an integral part of the conservation process’. All repairs have focussed on imparting ‘stability and to prevent loss of original material’. The conservation effort has primarily aimed to ‘prolong the life’ of the mausoleum while preventing any further ‘damage and deterioration’ by ‘minimising the impact of external agents of decay (natural and human induced) on its setting, structure and material’. All efforts to conserve Rahim’s mausoleum will aim to ‘retain its value and significance, its authenticity and integrity, its visual connections to and from the monument, and to sustain a truthful representation of its original historic appearance’. Before the commencement of any conservation works, a rigorous process of archival research and documentation is followed. One of the key aspects of documentation works is an extensive high resolution photography of all elements of the monument. Prior to commencement of works, Laser Scanning is used for accurate 3D representations of the monument. Laser beams are bounced off the standing to create an accurate and complete 3D data set which is used to create solid 3D models and accurate 2D drawings.

1. Identify the Place
The need for extensive conservation and landscape works in Abdur Rahim Khan I Khanan’s Tomb was felt necessary to ensure long-term preservation, enhance visitor understanding and experience of the Tomb and cultural heritage of Rahim. Detailed structural analysis was carried out of the building at the crypt, plinth, foundation, chambers and dome. Investigations ‘tell-tales’ installed at various locations on the building to assess any movements.

2. Documentation & Research
Through 2014, exhaustive recording, architectural documentation, condition assessment, structural assessments, surveys and research exercise was carried out by the multi-disciplinary project team as a precursor to the Conservation Plan that forms the foundation for the project.

3. Statement of Significance
Prior to outlining the conservation philosophy, it was considered essential to define the significance as it is understood by the project team. This is to be read in conjunction with the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value as per the nomination dossier.

4. Conservation Philosophy
The conservation works, provided by high standards of recording to be undertaken are focused on restoring the ‘spirit and feeling’ of the space with an emphasis on craftsmanship, interpretation and supervision. A stone by stone analysis of each facade was carried out to identify the various decorative elements on each facade and to better understand the patterns of building in its entirety, as it would have been. The analysis informed the conservation philosophy for the restoration of the facade and stone blocks are being restored where considered necessary and where evidence of stone patterns leaves no doubt of original cladding details.

5. Peer Review
Evaluation of the importance of the elements involved and the decision as to what may be destroyed cannot realistically be drawn on change of the work. Additionally, being a listed place to the UNESCO, it is considered essential that the conservation works are on a regular basis reviewed by independent experts in addition to ASI Core Committee and AKTC officials.

6. Conservation Plan
Implementation of works commenced only after the approval of the conservation plan by the ASI Core Committee. Following the completion of the project, Conservation Plan (desk, photographs and drawings) will be available on the project website and thus accessible worldwide.

7. Implementation
Conservation works commenced only on the basis of adequate financial resources being available for the successful implementation of this project. The project has access to technical staff, national and international experts. In order to ensure quality of craftsmen, no conservation works are being tendered – all works being carried out by master-craftsmen employed by the project. Similarly, traditional materials – sandstone & lime – are procured and prepared with quality assurance.

8. Supervision
Conservation works are being carried out in keeping with the conservation plan and are guided by engineers with over three decades of conservation experience and by experienced conservation architects. A conservation architect and a Jr. engineer are present at all times during conservation works and are assisted by field supervisors.

9. Completion Report & Publication
Six monthly progress reports will be prepared and issued for reporting. On completion of the project a publication on the project will be published. In addition the annual report will document works carried out each year.
### Conservation Challenges at Rahim’s Tomb

#### Decayed Ancillary Chambers

- **Terrace Repairs**
  - The sandstone on the upper plinth was possibly stripped in the 19th century and replaced with cement concrete. Based on the evidence of stone thickness and existing patterns the plinth will be restored with red sandstone. The sandstone plinth floor was covered with cement concrete thereby significantly disfiguring the historic character and missing elements. In the centre of the southern facade the sandstone steps leads to the grave chamber. Unlike Humayun’s Tomb the domed chamber is supported on columns and has a circumambulatory passage all around it. Major structural cracks were seen in the roof of the chamber and heavy settlement of the flooring of the passage – both of which required emergency repairs to be undertaken on a short-term basis and damaging original lime plaster. The four corners were restored using Delhi quartzite blocks have been stripped from here, and the structure presents a ruinous appearance. With the protective stone cladding removed from large parts of the structure, the building is today in a poor state of preservation. Major repairs to portions of the building have been carried out in the 20th century that have ensured preservation. These repairs are being retained as examples of good repairs.

- **Stone & Plasterwork Restoration**
  - The sandstone is in a double height decoratedplinthat covers over the actual burials chamber. The original plaster patterns which have been stripped in the 20th century disfiguring the historic architectural character. The stone blocks have been stripped. The four deep chamber are plastered with cement-sand and sandstone eaves. Conservation works will restore their original character and missing elements. In the centre of the four deep chamber a large foliated water tank found on the upper plinth suggested an elaborate water lifting mechanism to operate fountains on the terrace level. Further explorations have revealed a fountain in the foliated tank and further studies on the water mechanism are ongoing.

- **Restoring Main Facade**
  - In the centre of the southern facade the stone steps lead to the grave chamber. Unlike Humayun’s Tomb the domed chamber is supported on columns and has a circumambulatory passage all around it. Major structural cracks were seen in the roof of the chamber and heavy settlement of the flooring of the passage – both of which required emergency repairs to be undertaken on a short-term basis and damaging original lime plaster. The four corners were restored using Delhi quartzite blocks which no longer survived though visible in archival images. Built of Delhi quartzite, this platform has been stripped and now repeated with hand pressed red sandstone paving.

- **Terrace Repairs**
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- **Dome**
  - The tomb is covered with a double dome, where the outer dome would have originally been clad with marble serving as a protective layer for the underlying masonry. This was stripped in the 18th century exposing the underlying random rubble masonry. The inner layer of the dome is in brick masonry and has significant deep cracks. Following a full detailed assessment and studies by structural engineer and ASI-AKTC committee on their cause, conservation works were undertaken which included re-plastering. An important test step is addition of matches to the dome in a protective layer and important architectural element.

#### Ornamental Plasterwork of Lower Arcade

- **Original fabric of Lower Plinth**
  - The tomb interiors have cement layers that has not only disfigured the historic character and disfigured the historic architectural character. The cracks in the old and domed surfaces have been inappropriately filled with cement mortar in place. On the four corners of the principal tomb chamber, they are profusely decorated using incised plasterwork. Layers of plaster have been stripped from here, and the structure presents a ruinous appearance. With the protective stone cladding removed from large parts of the structure, the building is today in a poor state of preservation. Major repairs to portions of the building have been carried out in the 20th century that have ensured preservation. These repairs are being retained as examples of good repairs.

- **Original fabric of Lower Plinth**
  - The corner chambers of the arcade and three deep chamber are plastered with decorative instead of plasterwork. Modern cement-sand plaster was applied to the arches in the ground level arcade during 2002-05 disfiguring the historic character and damaging original lime plaster. The four corners were restored using Delhi quartzite stone, one of the hardest stones known, so as get the original details to strengthen the corners and be together the wall base structurally.

- **Conservation of Lower Arcade**
  - The ground level arcade comprises of 17 arches on each of the four sides of the mausoleum. Modern cement-sand plaster was applied to the arcade in the ground level arcade during 2002-05 disfiguring the historic character and damaging original lime plaster. The missing plasterwork on all chambers has been restored and the cement flooring of these chambers has been replaced with sandstone paving. The four arches of the arcade comprises sandstone eaves of each with with spandrels of buff coloured sandstone with a decorative medallion on each stone. Some of These medallions have been missing or inappropriately replaced, which has been corrected with new medallions prepared by master craftsmen.
Installing sandstone lattice screens

2014

Manual cleaning of tomb interiors

Cleaning of the Main Tomb's ceiling

Soft cleaning of ornamental motifs and plasterwork

2016

Restoring the missing ornamental motifs

Tomb of Abdur Rahim Khan I
Khanan: MAINHALL
Rahim's grand mausoleum would have been a garden tomb as with Humayun's Tomb and Taj Mahal. Scientific clearance of earth was carried out in an effort to reveal any foundations of enclosure walls, remains of garden pathways, water features etc. Having found no archaeological evidence of the same, and in view of this a minimal charbagh has been proposed. Though the original landscape setting has been lost, an indication of how grand the northern gardens would have been is provided by the revelation of rooftop tanks. Rahim, who is known to have built elaborate water lifting structures in Burhanpur would have no doubt incorporated such a system here. In the space available a small formal garden is to be created to allow visitor movement and views to the monument. The garden will be planted with a citrus orchard and other plants known to have been favoured by the Mughals.