

2014



## Khilji Mosque/ Jamaat Khana Masjid

The Khilji mosque is the earliest mosque in Delhi that continues to be used for worship. Built by Khizr Khan, son of Sultan Alauddin Khilji (Khilji Dynasty) in 1315-1325 AD, the mosque is the largest structure in the Dargah enclosure. Each of the three bays has a domed roof with the central one being the largest, as is the practice. Marble finials adorn the top the domes. The central bay and the entrance

archway are embellished with bands of exquisite geometric motifs and Quranic inscriptions. Following the request from Mutawali Khilji Masjid “Janab SMI Nizami” AKTC signed an agreement to undertake conservation works over a three year period at the mosque. Subsequent to the conservation of Fatehpuri Masjid at Chandni Chowk being undertaken by the Archaeological Survey of India, this would be the first ever conservation effort at mosque in worship in Delhi and possibly in India.

### Action Taken:

- Architectural documentation and condition mapping of all the damaged stones, motifs and architectural elements was carried out over a three month period prior to the signing of the agreement with the Dargah committee.
- Following the erection of scaffolding, close inspection was carried out by a multi-disciplinary team of experts comprising of master stone carvers, conservation architect and engineers.
- The religious leadership was informed in detailed discussions of the intention of the conservation effort and the duration of time this was likely to take. This was important as 20th century paint layers and other inappropriate alterations were required to be removed. Also, in a phased manner, while the conservation works are underway, each of the three bays of the mosque will not be available for offering of prayers.
- Scrapping of multiple layers of lead paint from the internal surface of the central bay which includes geometric motifs and Quranic inscriptions commenced soon after signing of the agreement. This is a laborious work that requires great amount of precision and was carried out by craftsmen under strict supervision. .
- Conservation of red sandstone geometric motif band below the red sandstone dome is on-going.
- Missing and damaged floral pattern red sand stone arch stones have been replaced with new stones as per original details.
- The decayed and damaged ornamental parapet stones or *kangura* stone were documented and are being made by the master craftsman. On an average, it takes 25 man-days of work to complete one 400mm X 600mm *kangura* stone.
- Conservation of decayed *kangura* stones on the central dome drum is also underway.

*Conservation on this Khilji-era mosque is the first scientific conservation of an unprotected, living mosque in India and was preceded by several stakeholder meetings.*



**Next Steps:**

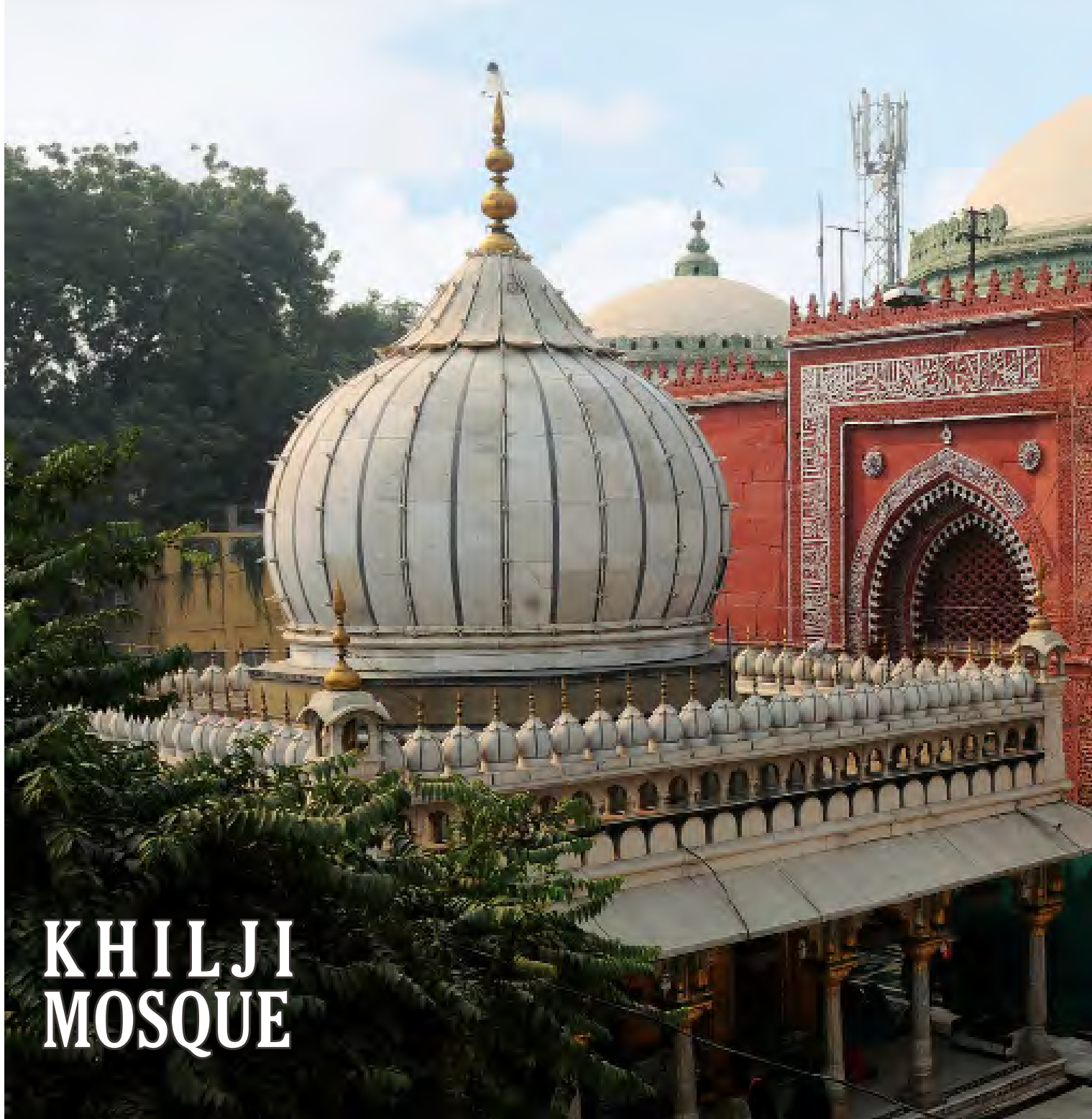
- Scrapping of multiple layers of lead paint from the geometric motifs and Quranic inscriptions.
- Conservation of damaged and decayed red sand stone motifs and missing Quranic inscriptions.
- Removal of unplanned 20th century modern interventions and organizing existing cables in the building in an aesthetic manner.
- Removal of terrazzo flooring from the north and south bays.
- Lime plastering of side bays which include conservation of central motif on the domes.
- Conservation of damaged facade stones and arches.
- Fixing of missing and decayed red sandstone *kanguras*.



Conservation works at the 14<sup>th</sup> century Khilji mosque required scrapping of several dozen paint and cement layers prior to repair or replacement of the damaged sandstone elements.



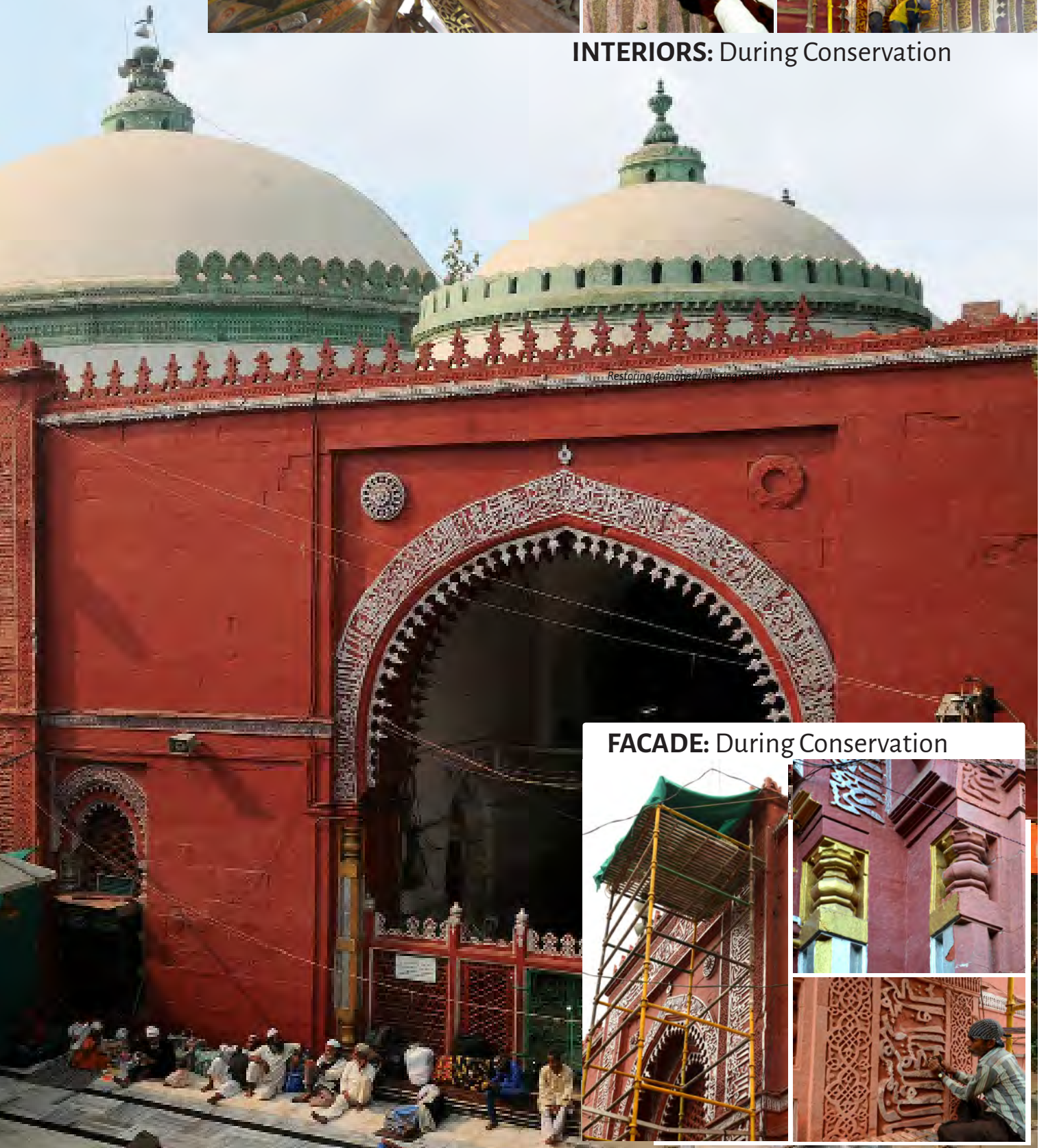
## Archival Research



# KHILJI MOSQUE



**INTERIORS: During Conservation**



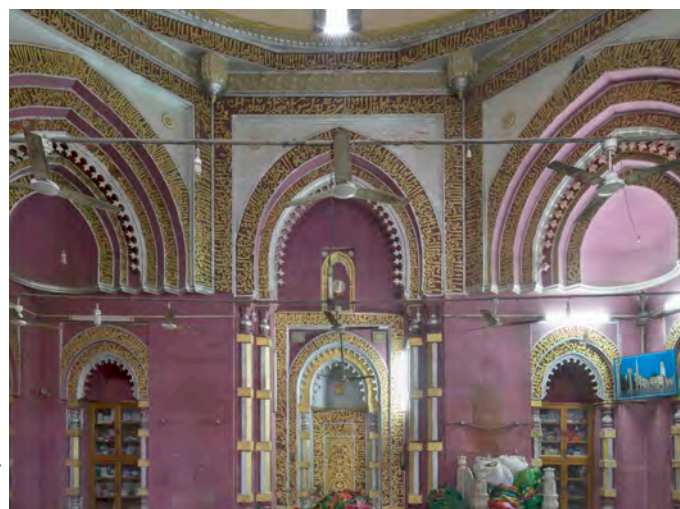
**FACADE: During Conservation**



2015

## Jamaat Khana Mosque

The principal mosque of the Dargah Hazrat Nizamuddin, this 14<sup>th</sup> century structure is the earliest mosque in Delhi that continues to be in use. In 2014, the Dargah Committee led by Janaab Najmi Nizami approached AKTC with a request to undertake an urgently required conservation programme on the structure. Conservation works have to be intermittently halted for festivals such as Eid, during the Urs and for the month of Ramzan.



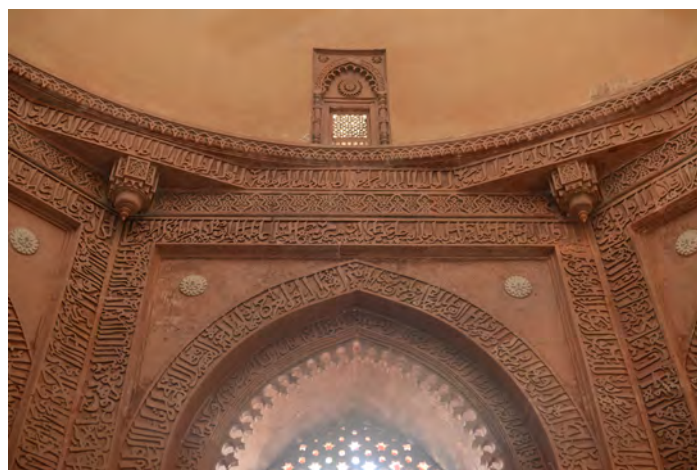
### **ACTION TAKEN:**

- Architectural documentation and condition assessment of the Jamaat Khana mosque was carried out in 2014 prior to commencing conservation works.
- It was agreed that the first phase of works would be on the principal central domed chamber while the two side chambers would be taken up successively.
- At the onset the key task was the scrapping of multiple layers of lead paint from the internal surface including over geometric motifs and Quranic inscriptions.
- Removal of paint revealed damaged sandstone blocks. Several decayed pilasters, damaged red sandstone blocks in arches with Quranic inscription required to be replaced as these had deteriorated beyond repair.
- Scrapping of multiple layers of cement plaster and paint from the domed ceiling was a painstaking work that required 1500 man-days of work.
- Following the scrapping of paint from the red sandstone dome, team of 15 skilled stone carvers repaired the partially decayed or damaged red sandstone decorative pieces to carefully match the original pieces and ensuring original joinery details were followed.
- Conservation of damaged and decayed red sandstone facade is on-going.

### **NEXT STAGE:**

Conservation of the central chamber will be completed by the second quarter of 2016 following which conservation works will be undertaken on the north wing and facade and finally on the south wing and facade. Roof repairs will be carried out in 2017.

*(Below) Jamaat Khana Mosque interiors - before and after conservation*





Restoring damaged/missing elements



Restoring Mosque Interiors



Cleaning up of Interior Chamber



Removal of multiple layers of lead paint



Meetings with Dargah Committee



Removal of multiple layers of lead paint



Revealing 14th century grandeur



3D Laser Scanning of the monument



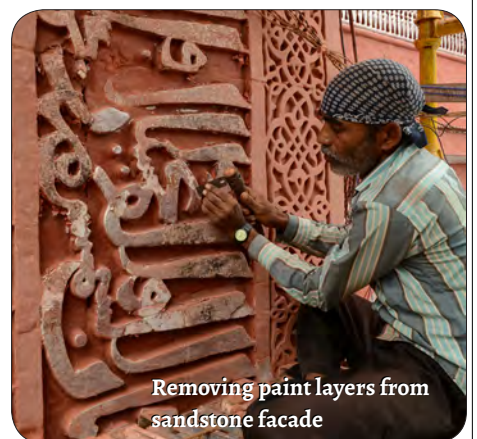
Restoring Quranic Inscriptions



Restoring damaged/missing elements



Restoring damaged/missing elements



Removing paint layers from sandstone facade