

Nizamuddin Urban Renewal Initiative

Building on the success of Humayun's Tomb Garden Restoration, in 2007 an agreement with the Archaeological Survey of India, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi and the Central Public Works Department enabled the Aga Khan Development Network to return to the historic Nizamuddin area to undertake an Urban Renewal Initiative. The initiative has since led to the conservation of over 30 monuments; work towards creating a 100-acre city park by sensitively landscaping the Sunder Nursery - Batashewala Complex; and significant improvements to the quality of life for the residents of Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti - a repository of seven centuries of living culture.



The project aims to serve as a model for civil society engagement in urban development. It also seeks to demonstrate that culture is a significant tool for development and makes the case for a return to a traditional craft-based approach to the conservation of India's monumental buildings.

Humayun's Tomb Complex Heritage Conservation

- Reveal, Conserve and Restore the aesthetic and historical value of the monuments
- Revive and Preserve traditional building craft traditions through training opportunities

Sunder Nursery Environment Development

- Create a significant public space with vibrant ecological-heritage zones and cultural assets
- Establish Delhi's first arboretum
- Develop Nature trails to promote environmental education

Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti Improving Quality of Life

- Improve the quality of life for local communities through improved urban environment and access to education, health, and economic opportunities
- Cultural Revival through documentation & dissemination local music, heritage and craft traditions

Website www.nizamuddinrenewal.org



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

Conserving monuments to a future as valuable as their past



CONTEXT

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BAOLI AT HAZRAT NIZAMUDDIN BASTI

Built during the lifetime of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya in the years 1321-22, this is the only surviving step-well in Delhi which still holds water considered sacred by millions of annual pilgrims. Thousands of pilgrims visit the holy shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. The Baoli forms an intrinsic part of the Dargah complex and is significant as it is the only standing structure that was built in the presence of the saint himself.

BAOLI WALL COLLAPSE

In July 2008, portions of the eastern wall collapsed, threatening safety of 18 families occupying the southern terrace and 5000 or so pilgrims who used the corridor each day to visit the Dargah. Henceforth, intervention began not only to restore the historic structure but also to improve quality of life of resident communities and pilgrims.

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Year: 1802

Source: Step well (Baoli) in Delhi, Aquatint by and after Thomas and William Daniell, London, 43 cms x 60cms.

02

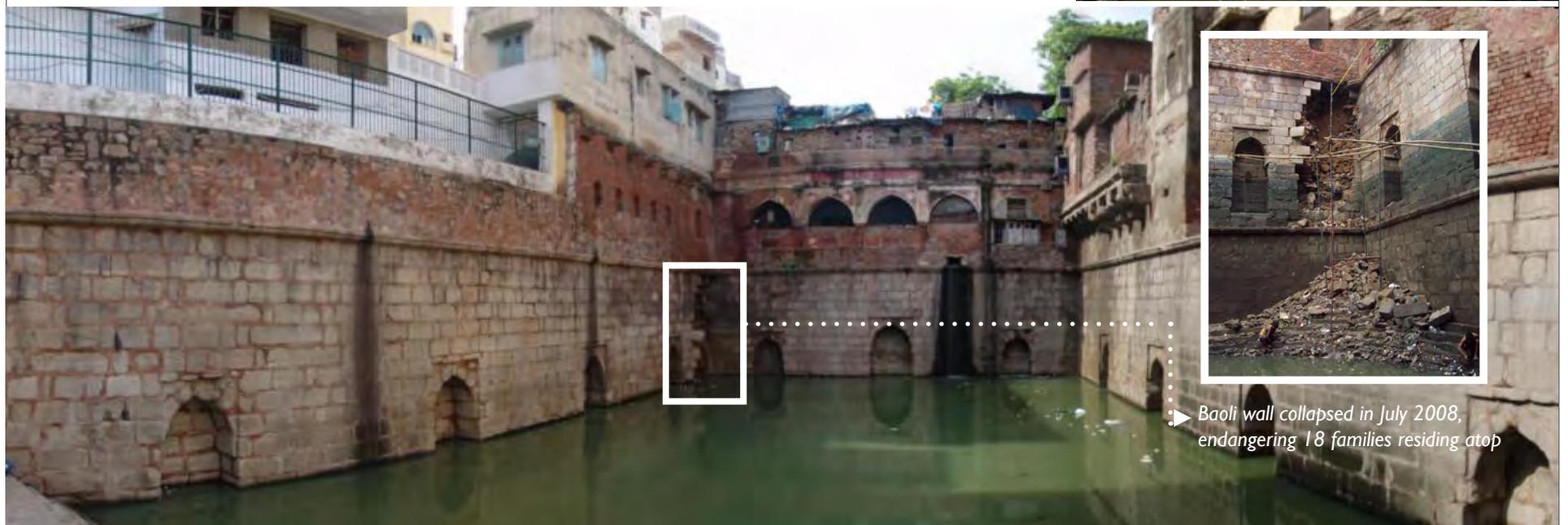
Year: 1903 -1920

Source: Baoli in Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, Archaeological Survey of India Archives

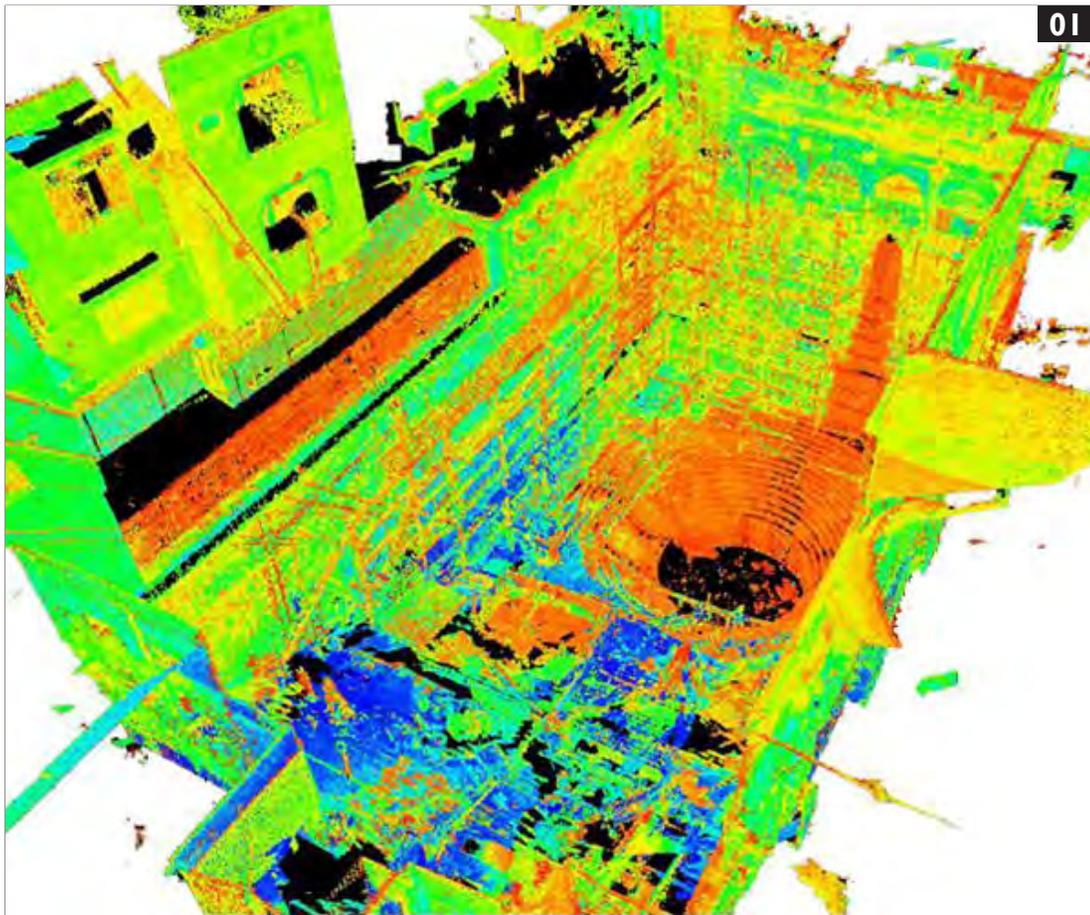
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Year: 2008

Source: Baoli in Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, Aga Khan Trust for culture archives



Baoli wall collapsed in July 2008, endangering 18 families residing atop



CONSERVATION

Conservation works included detailed documentation, condition assessment, de-silting the Baoli, removing chemical epoxy, rebuilding the collapsed wall and restoring architectural character of the step-well.

3D LASER SCANNING:

a detailed laser scan was carried out as was a ground penetrating radar survey – both of these were used for the first time in India for conservation.



REMOVING CHEMICAL EPOXY

A 3-5 cm thick epoxy layer that was applied to the Baoli in 2002 by the Delhi Jal Board was carefully removed. This treatment used for concrete tanks was inappropriate as it accelerated decay of the historic structure.



Removing 2-3cm thick epoxy layers from the Baoli walls



DE-SILTING

A mammoth effort to de-silt the step-well to its original depth of 80 feet below the ground level meant removing 700 years of accumulated dust. The manual lifting of sludge required over 8000 man-days of work.

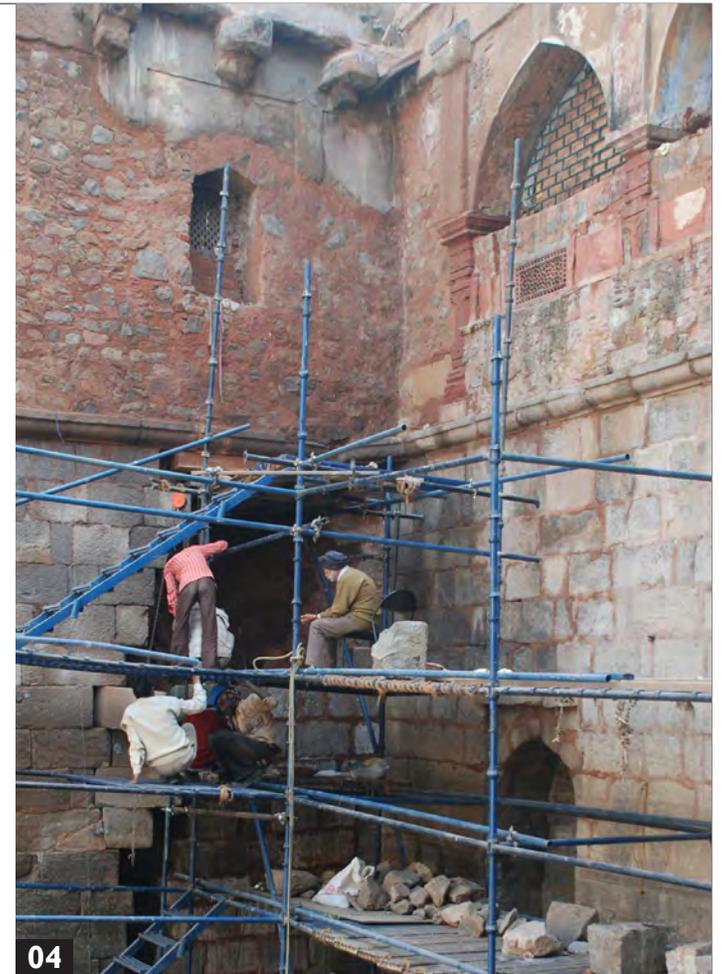
01 3D laser scan image

02 Removing epoxy layers from the Baoli walls

03 Manual de-silting of the Baoli to its original depth of 80 feet below ground level

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE COLLAPSED WALL

The collapsed portion was rebuilt using traditional building materials and techniques. Original Ashlar facing stones which had fallen in the Baoli and were buried in the sludge were lifted manually, collected and reused. Works were carried out from sunrise to sunset for over four months.



RESTORING ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER OF THE 14TH CENTURY STEPWELL

Archway along the passage was rebuilt with red sandstone jalis. Design of the jali took its reference from Tuglaq architecture and the existing jali parapets.

Following the restoration of the archway, the passage was re-opened in September 2009 for pilgrims and visitors to the Dargah.

- 04** Structural supervision during Baoli wall reconstruction
- 05** Masonry stones which had fallen in the Baoli and buried in the sludge, were manually collected, washed and dressed again before reuse
- 06** Stone masons reconstruct the top layer of the Baoli wall
- 07** Installing sandstone jali
- 08** Repair works in the corridor

COMMUNITY DIALOGUE AND RELOCATION

Following the collapse of the Baoli's eastern wall, there was concern for the well being of the 84 people who resided atop the southern terrace. To safeguard the monument, ASI served legal notices of eviction on all 18 families.

The AKDN team initiated dialogue with the residents and then on behalf of the residents with concerned government agencies. This culminated in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi providing alternate plots to 12 families in 2010. Further dialogue, negotiation, support in preparing required paperwork and acquiring required documentation ensured that by late 2012 all 18 families had been allotted plots on which AKDN built residential units.



01

Housing designs were prepared and shared with families prior to the relocation. Families were involved in the design process and the supervision of the construction.

The designs were developed bearing in mind needs of the families and innovative methods for economizing space and ensuring disaster resilience.

It was ensured that the families moving to Savda Ghewra were allotted adjoining plots, to maintain community bonds and support. For a year following the relocation, additional support such as transport allowance, vocational training, access to healthcare and education was provided.



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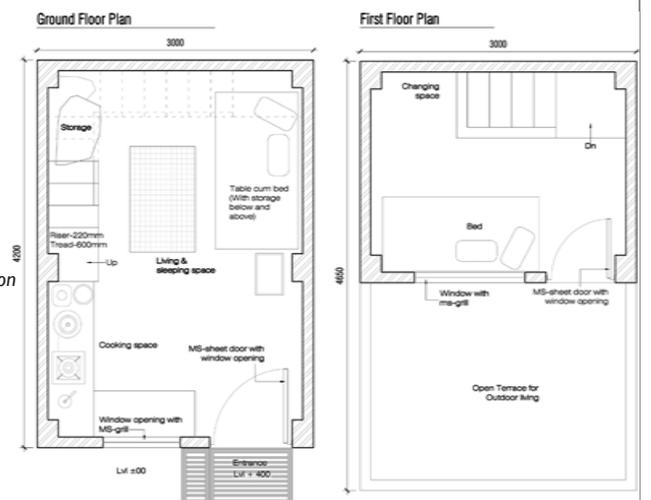
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01 Prayers at the onset of conservation works

02 Regular meetings held with families during different stages of construction and modifications made to design as per needs of specific families

03 AKTC assisted the families in getting the allotment letters and transportation from the basti to the relocation site at Savda Ghewra

04 Handing over of the houses at Savda Ghewra to families





SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

June 2008

Wall collapse of Baoli; ASI identifies and serves notices to 19 families

August 2008

AKTC intervenes and starts a dialogue

December 2008 – May 2009

LG of Delhi grants permission

June 2009 – December 2009

MCD conducted a Biometric Survey

January 2010 – July 2010

AKTC initiates a Design Exercise in Partnership with USAP and CURE

August 2010 – November 2010

AKTC initiates a Relocation Programme for the affected families

December 2010

Families move into new homes

2012

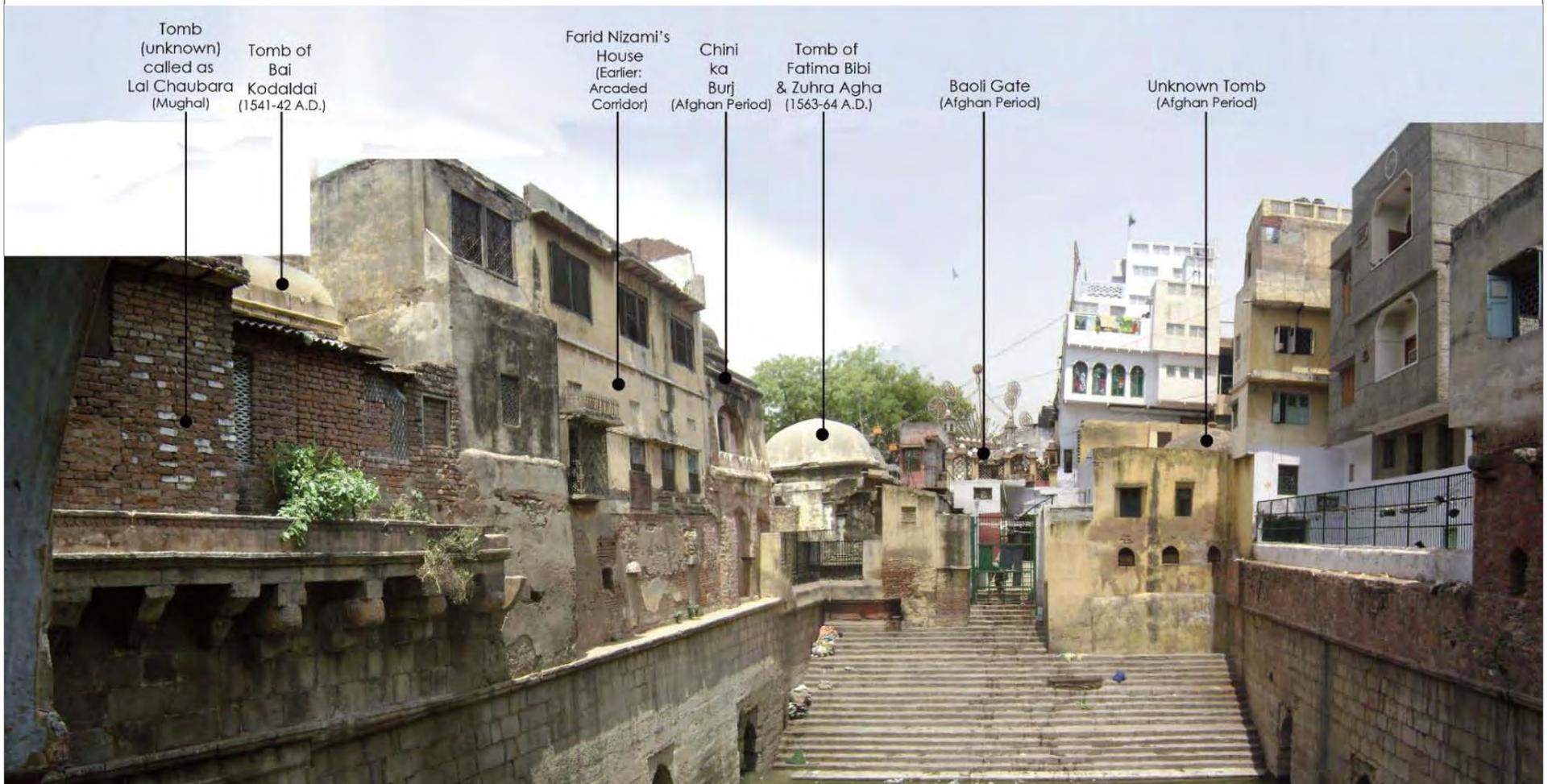
Last two families relocated and houses built



THE BAOLI PRECINCT

The baoli is surrounded by a number of smaller structures that form an integral part of the baoli precinct. Some of these were occupied or were under the private ownership of residents. Following the successful relocation, residents living in the area surrounding the Baoli, allowed conservation works to be carried out on these structures.

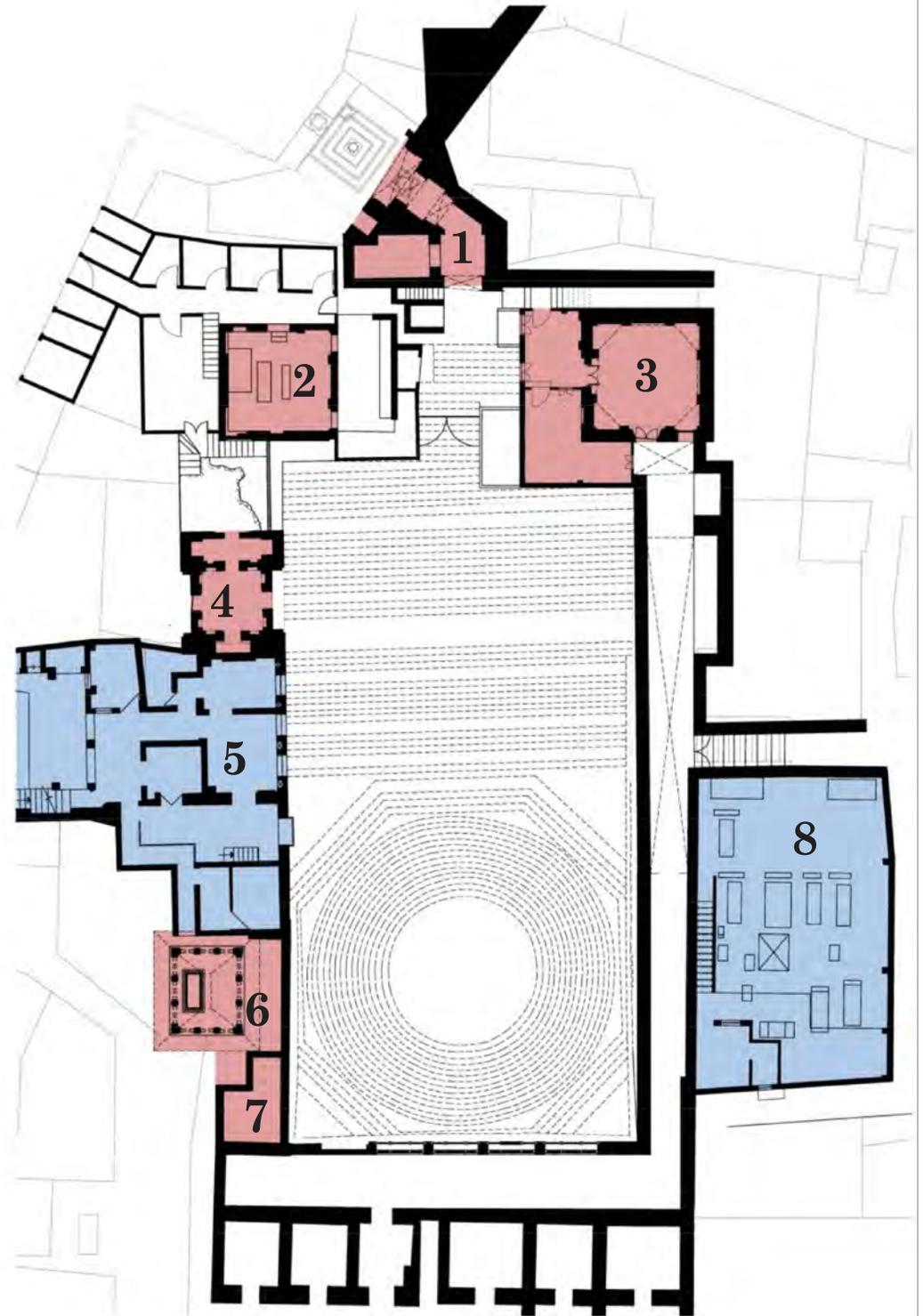
◀ Conservation works on ASI protected Chini ka Burj are now ongoing. Conservation works here required removal of cement layers to reveal glory of the original building



Residence of Fida Nizami was moved back by four feet from the wall of the Baoli and improved structurally. The facade along the Baoli was designed using traditional elements and colors were neutralized.

A similar proposal has been made for the Dargahi Markaz ensuring Structural safety, and façade improvement facing Baoli.

Conservation proposals have been prepared for the Unknown Tomb and Tomb of Bibi Fatima.



- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Baoli Gate | 5. Residence of Farid Nizami |
| 2. Tomb of Bibi Fatima and Zuhra Agha | 6. Bai Kokaldai's Tomb |
| 3. Unknown Tomb | 7. Lal Chaubara |
| 4. Chini Ka Burj | 8. Residence of Fida Nizami |



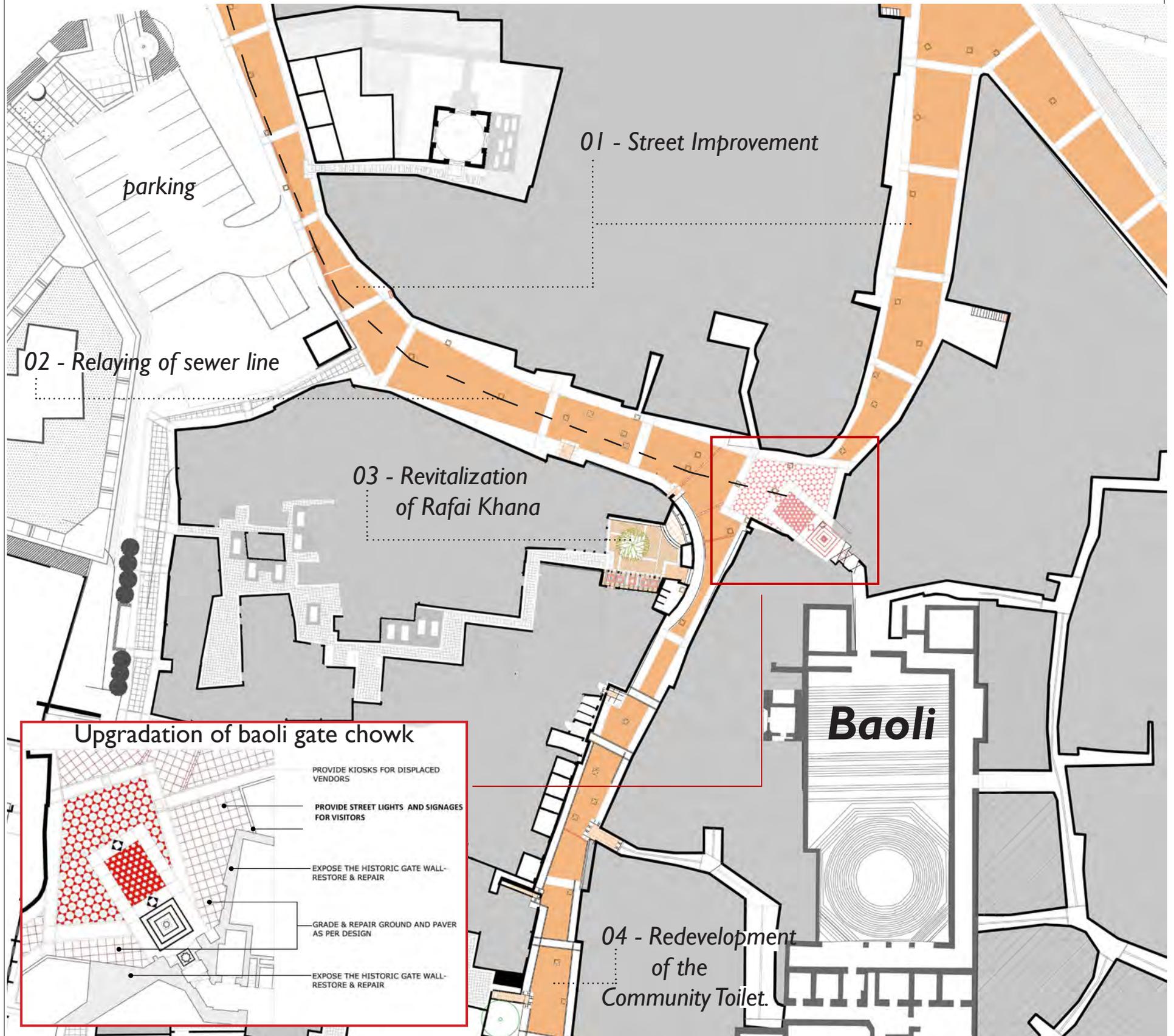
Residence of Fida Nizami

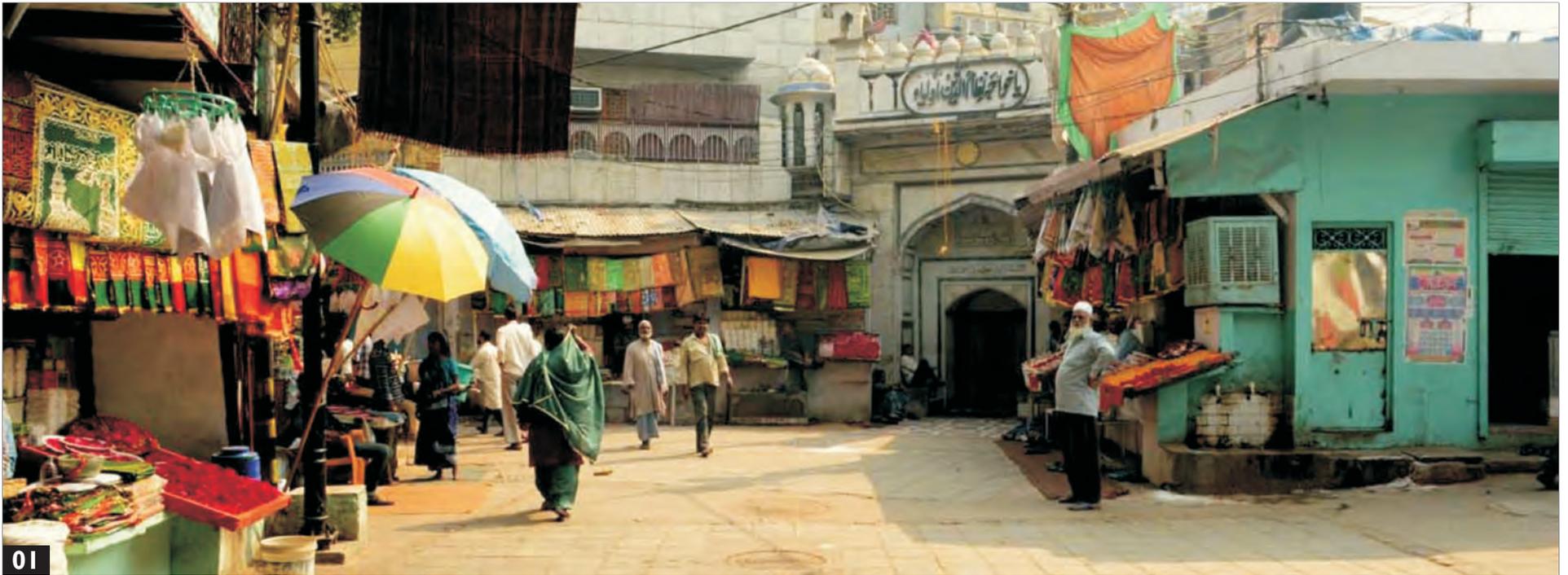


Tomb of Bibi Fatima and Zuhra Agha

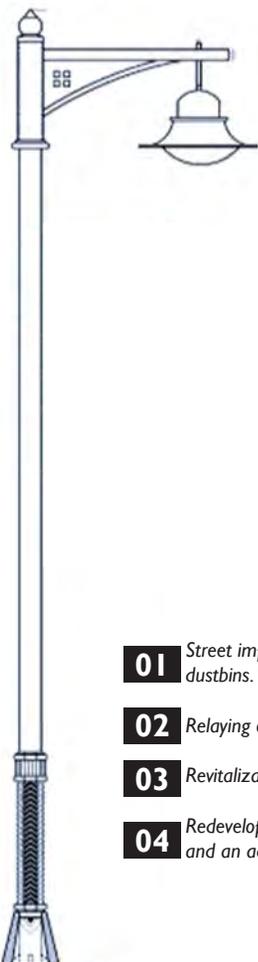
Unknown Tomb

MONUMENT AREA DEVELOPMENT





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Street Lamp

URBAN RENEWAL

Open space development, street improvement, provision of services such as community toilets, street lighting, kiosks for flower vendors have all been part of an urban renewal plan around the Baoli. Provision of parking facilities in the vicinity has also been envisioned.

- 01** Street improvements include road surfacing, street lighting, sewage and water line repair works and placement of dustbins. Precast concrete blocks; 10 cm thick have been used for road surfacing.
- 02** Relaying of sewer line. Over 100m of sewer line was removed and re-laid at a depth of 2.5m from ground level.
- 03** Revitalization of Rafai Khana, a multi-activity community space.
- 04** Redevelopment of the Community Toilet. The complex is being used by residents and pilgrims. Nearly 150 daily users and an additional 25 resident families (125 people) are using it on a daily basis.



02

Upgrading Infrastructure



Before

03

After

Enhancing Community Spaces



Before

04

After

Upgrading Community Facilities

HERITAGE AWARENESS

The Baoli is at the centre of a 700 year living culture which has sadly been gradually forgotten and no longer remains the hallmark of the Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti. Efforts have been made to work with the local community especially youth and children to bring it back to its lost glory.

HERITAGE WALKS

Basti youth trained as heritage volunteers conduct walks for tourists and school children about the baoli and other heritage structures in the area.

THEATRE : QISSA BAOLI KA

AKTC partnered with The Urdu Academy to train kids and youth from the Basti in theatre. 40 kids from Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti performed in front of a 1000 strong crowd. The play focused on the story of the construction of Hazrat Nizamuddin Baoli which was built in the 14th century despite objections from the Tughlaq king

INVOLVING COMMUNITY LEADERS

Religious leaders have joined hands with the Eco Club – a children's environment group of Basti children in spreading awareness about cleanliness and sanitation especially around the Baoli.

STORY TELLING AND BOOK FAIRS

Story telling sessions, book fairs and painting competitions have been conducted in the Basti for children with a special focus on heritage culture and history.

