

A large, leafless tree stands in a field of tall grass. The background is a soft, blue-tinted landscape with more trees in the distance. The overall mood is serene and quiet.

The Splendours of

NARNIAJUL

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The Splendours of...

NARNAUL

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A Publication of Department of Archaeology & Museums, Haryana
2024



Director's Message

It gives me immense pleasure to know that the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Haryana has come out with a highly informative, comprehensive and visually appealing monograph on the centrally and state protected monuments of the city of Narnaul in State of Haryana.

The city of Narnaul, has the potential to rival major heritage cities of the likes of Ahmedabad, Jaipur and Mysore when it comes to built architectural heritage. The Monuments at Narnaul are a perfect blend of Afghan/Pathan Style, Rajput Style and Mughal Style with hints of local indigenous flavours. The Department of Archaeology and Museums, Haryana is also working relentlessly towards the Preservation and Conservation of these monuments so that they can relive their past glories.

This monograph will be a huge tribute to the city and the people of Narnaul and a work of this stature was long overdue.

Great emphasis has been paid to the employment of lucid language so that the work is accessible and digestible to the common public. I am thankful to Dr. Kush Dhebar writer of this book. Besides, in the department, I also acknowledge the help rendered by Dr. Banani Bhattacharyya, Deputy Director, Ar. Jaideep Singh and Tarunima Sen, Akash, Sh. Darbar Singh, Photographers, without their active cooperation it would not have been possible to complete this book. I would further like to thank Reliance foundation & I am Gurgaon for there generous support in the publishing. I hope this book will certainly be welcomed by the researchers, scholars and heritage lovers.

Shri Amit Khatri, IAS
Director

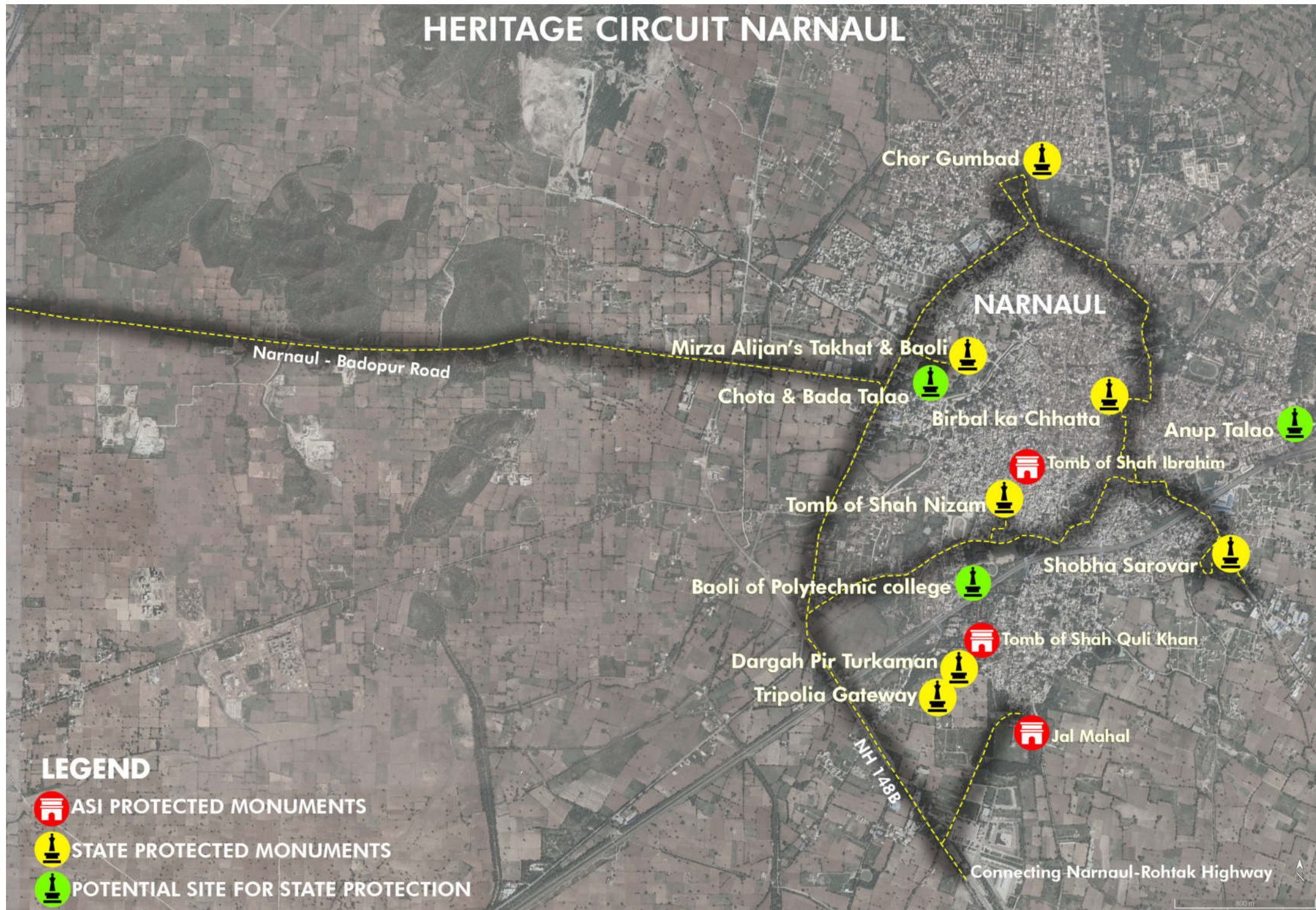
Department of Archaeology and Museums, Haryana

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HERITAGE CIRCUIT NARNAUL







01 Introduction . . .



1. INTRODUCTION

Mahendragarh is one of the 22 districts of the present-day state of Haryana. The city of Mahendragarh, which is situated within the district with the same name, was formerly known as Kanaud after the Kanaudia Brahmins who populated the area. It is said that Malik Mahmud Khan, an officer under the employment of Babur established the city.

However, it is speculated, that the current name of the city and the district was coined in 1861, when ruler Maharaja Narendra Singh of Patiala principality had named this fort in Mahendergarh in honor of his son Mohinder Singh. The concerned fort is said to have been constructed by the Maratha Chief, Tantia Tope. Taking the cue from the fort, this town came to be known as Mahendragarh and the name of Narnaul Nizam was changed to Mahendragarh Nizam.

In 1948, the district of Mahendragarh was formed with the part of Narnaul and Mahendragarh tehsil of Patiala principality, and Narnaul was made the district headquarters. It is interesting to note that Mahendergarh district is the only district in the state, whose district headquarters is not in line with the name of the district but located in Narnaul.



Since the formation of Mahendergarh district in 1948, due to the reconstruction and re-organization of the districts and the formation of new districts, the geographical boundaries of Mahendergarh have been subjected to change on a number of occasions. Recently, with the making of the new district of Rewari in 1989, the geographical boundaries of Mahendergarh district have once again changed.

The present volume, is a sneak-peak into the History, Archaeology and Culture of the Mahendragarh District with a special focus on the Art and Architecture of the Monuments situated in the city of Narnaul.

Through this work, the readers will get a glimpse of the rich and highly ornate past of the city of Narnaul and to make this experience more relevant and worthwhile, a lot of visuals, plans and line drawings have been used.

A walk through, these immaculate monuments of Narnaul, will not only educate us about the polity, culture and society of Narnaul of the bygone eras, but it will also show the readers how various cultures and sub-cultures interacted with each other to form a highly complex and interwoven society.

The Art and Architecture of the city, gives us a glimpse of how various indigenous practices acculturated with a number of foreign practices to create whole new aesthetic forms of Art and Architecture.

A careful study of the aesthetic norms and practices of the past, gives us very thoughtful insights on how the contemporary society might have been back then. To add to the aesthetic richness, the technology used to create such monumental edifices also shows how progressive and agile, the society was back then.

The monuments at Narnaul, are part of shared memory of the past for the present-day inhabitants of the city. The religious, social and emotional affinities of the people of Narnaul and North India particularly are still visible to this day.





02 Narnaul . . .



2. NARNAUL

The city of Narnaul has been a witness to a lot of political, social and cultural events and currents. But the city that we see today has stood the test of time. The present chapter aims at giving a brief context and introduction to the city of Narnaul. This introduction will help the readers to gage the importance and richness of the monumental architecture that will be discussed in the succeeding chapters.

If one goes deep into the etymology of the name of the city, i.e., tracing history and evolution of the name Narnaul, one comes across multiple explanations. According to Mahabharata, there was a Nar Rashtra, that the Pandava brother, Sahadev subjugated.

Based on another legend, the name Narnaul was coined from the word Nahar Naul, which could signify the forest or an abode of Lions/Tigers. Another founding myth of the city talks about a fight between a snake and mongoose that was witnessed by the initial settlers at the location, hence Nag-Naul later became Narnaul.

Another legend goes as the city named after the queen of Raja Laun Karan, cousin of Anangpal who founded the city near the Dhosi Hills.



As far as the Vedic affiliations of Narnaul go, there is a considerable hiatus in the literature, but we do have enough other circumstantial evidence regarding the same. There are two river systems that go through or around the present-day city of Narnaul. The Sahibi and the Kasaunti or Krishnavati.

Sahibi has been identified with Rig Vedic Rasa. While the Kasaunti or Krishnavati is suggested to have been named after a Rig Vedic tribe that inhabited the very same valley it passes through.

Dohan, a third seasonal river that passes through the vicinity of Narnaul has been associated with the Vadhusara of Mahabharata, which is said to have been originated from the tears of Divya Pauloma, wife of Sage Bhrigu and mother of Sage Chavan. Even today, it passes through an Ashrama on the Dhosi Hills said to have been established by Sage Chavan.

Over the past couple of decades, the archaeological investigations in the region have intensified and the results have shown that this region was definitely inhabited around the Harappan times and since then, there has been continuous habitation in the region. However, the city of Narnaul has not specifically shown material remnants of all the periods per se.

A few sculptural remains of Vishnu, Mahishasura Mardini, Durga and Ganesh in the vicinity can be approximately dated between 10th and 12th centuries CE based on the stylistic affiliations to the Gurjara-Pratihara, Tomara and Chahamana art styles. While a few sculptural remains of Jain faith like Adinatha and Parsvanatha can be dated to around 13th-14th centuries CE. This, however does not mean that the city of Narnaul was not inhabited before the aforementioned periods, it only points towards the need for deeper investigations and probes into the material culture of the city.

Based on a few folklores, the town was under the control of Jogis. These Jogis, were known as mystical group of men of esoteric nature. Some even attribute magical powers to them. These Jogis were ousted by the Rathors. There is no unanimity among the scholars regarding which group or lineage did these particular Rathors belong to and in which period they ruled Narnaul.

However, the stories go further that Hazrat Turkaman, entered the city with a sword in one hand and jewels in the other. The forces of Hazrat Turkaman and the Rathors clashed multiple times and Hazrat Turkaman is said to have been martyred in one of the above-mentioned clashes. His tomb in the city is still visited by a number of pilgrims. Hazrat Turkaman's entry into the local Narnaul political scene is attributed to around 1130's CE. The first mention of the city is during the time of Iltutmish. The documents mention that under Iltutmish's administration, Narnaul and Rewari were divided into 2 Iqtas. Which were further

divided into Parganas. The exact number is still not clear but broadly they were Rewari, Bawal, Pataudi, Narnaul, Kanaud and Kanti.

Under Babur, a sizeable amount of the region was under the administrative jurisdiction of the Sarkar of Mewat.

Sher Shah Sur, is said to have been born in Narnaul and a number of his ancestors were administrators here placed by the Lodis, His grandfather, Ibrahim Khan Sur was stationed at Narnaul and in his memory, Sher Shah built a magnificent mausoleum here. Sher Shah's father, Hasan Khan was also stationed here as an administrator. Later under Akbar, these were included in the Subahs of Delhi and Agra and further divided into Sarkars and Mahals.

The Narnaul-Kanaud region was gifted by the British to the Nawab of Jhajjar in 1803 for his aide during the Anglo-Maratha Wars. However, after

the 1857 uprisings in the region, the British questioned the involvement of the Nawab of Jhajjar and his family and transferred the Narnaul region under the Maharaja of Patiala.

Throughout the Medieval and Colonial periods of Indian History, Narnaul has seen multiple players rise and fall in the political scene. The Sur Dynasty, after Sher Shah, had weakened, and a local chief of the Rewari region Hemchandra or Hemu rose to power and received support from the later Surs. He was finally defeated in the Second Battle of Panipat by Akbar and his forces.

Similarly, the Raos of Rewari were an active ruling lineage that appeared and disappeared from the scene throughout the Medieval and Colonial periods. Their story is a story of survival if one looks at how they navigated throughout these periods.

2.1. Shah Wilayat/ Pir Turkman's Tomb & Mosque

Shah Wilayat, popularly known as Hazrat Turkman, was a Sufi who was in constant tussle for power with the Rathore Rajputs at Narnaul. According to a popular folk belief in Narnaul Hazrat Turkman came to Narnaul 'with jewels in one hand and sword in the other' around 1137 A.D. He made Narnaul his home and had large number of Hindu and Muslim followers. He was killed in 531 A.H./1137 A.D. The said Tomb is situated to the south of the Ibrahim Shah's tomb. It is a big tomb-cum-collegiate complex, which displays within it a long tradition of architecture ranging from the Tughlaq to the British period. The initial original structure of the tomb and the adjoining complex were said to be constructed during the reign of Firoz Shah Tughlaq. The eastern colonnades are attributed to Alam Khan Mewati in 1357.

The remaining portion of the building seems to be modern additions. The old portion has stern simplicity and grandeur, which can be attributed to the middle Pathan/Afghan style. The tomb is attached with a *verandah*. It has five arches, supported on piers or pillars carrying a flat roof. The eastern side of the *verandah* has two arches. Above the central pillar,

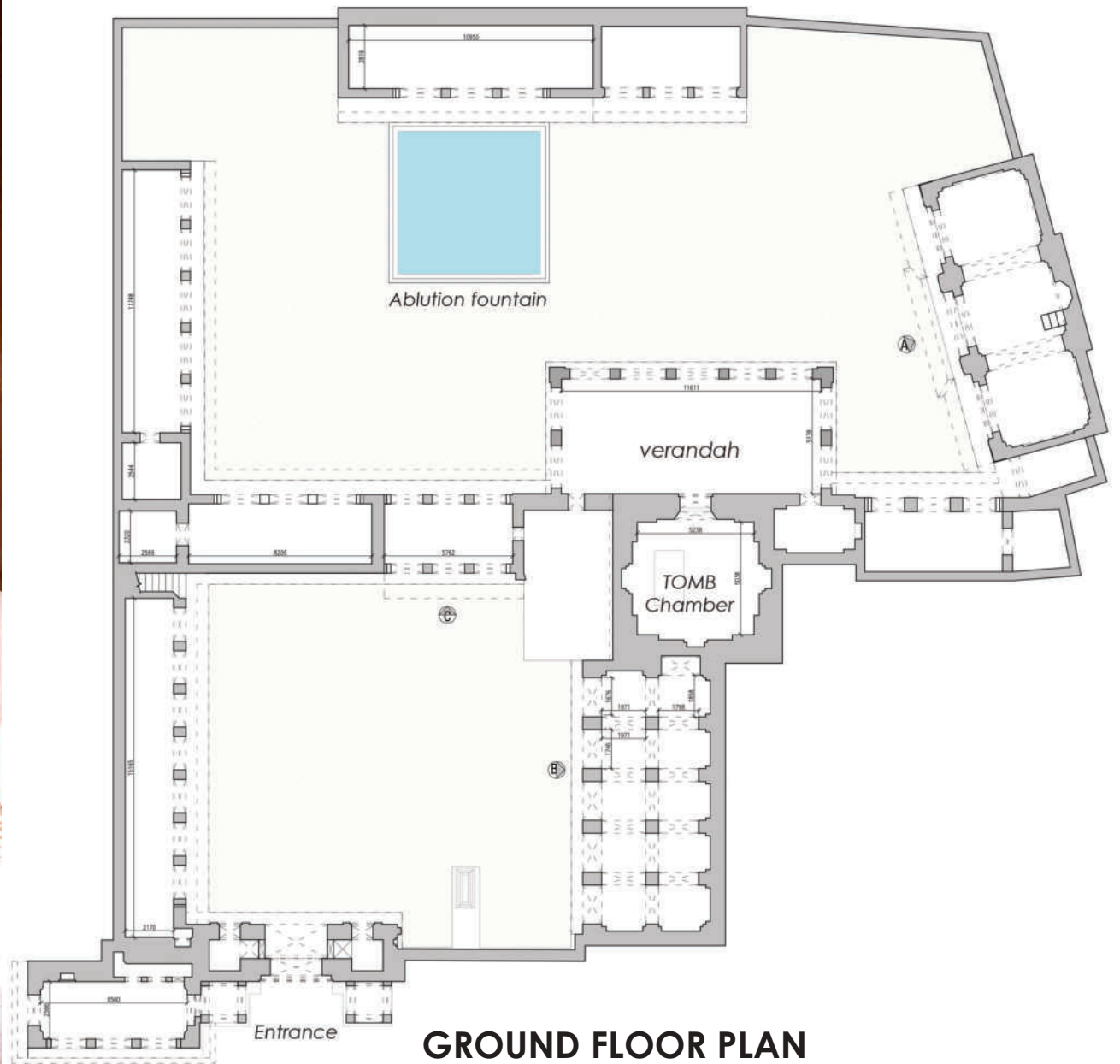
in the eastern side, is an inscription on white marble. The pillars and the walls of the *verandah* are made of red bricks and plastered over it. Some portions of the plaster have been chipped off. The ceiling of the *verandah* is flat. The wall of the tomb is decorated with stuccowork.

The main entrance of the tomb is in the southern side. There is a Persian inscription over the doorway of the tomb, which, in translation, reads as follows:

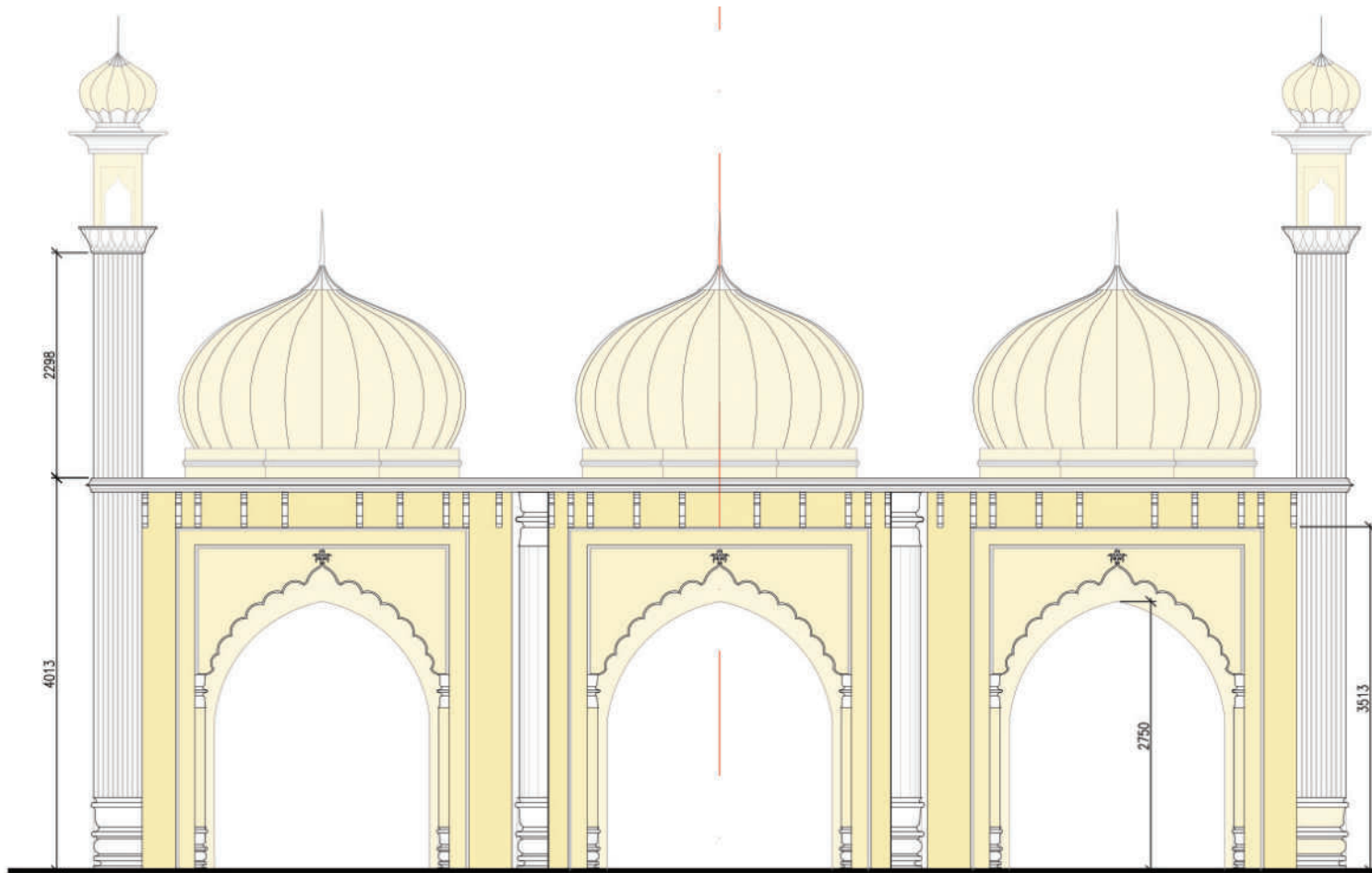
1. *The chief of chiefs, the old Turk, when he departed from this world:*
2. *The scribe of Wisdom, for the year (the chronogram) of his death, said, "Alas! He was a model to saints."- 531 A.H. (1357 A.D.).*

The original grave constructed of white marble stone is (*Hajar*) lying outside the mortuary hall near the main gate, with a Persian inscription. Based on the inscription, Salar and Usta were the main masons, who were the residents of Narnaul. The tomb shows some remnants of paintings, which belong to a much later date. The main chamber is roofed by a bulbous-shaped dome, made of rubble masonry and plaster.

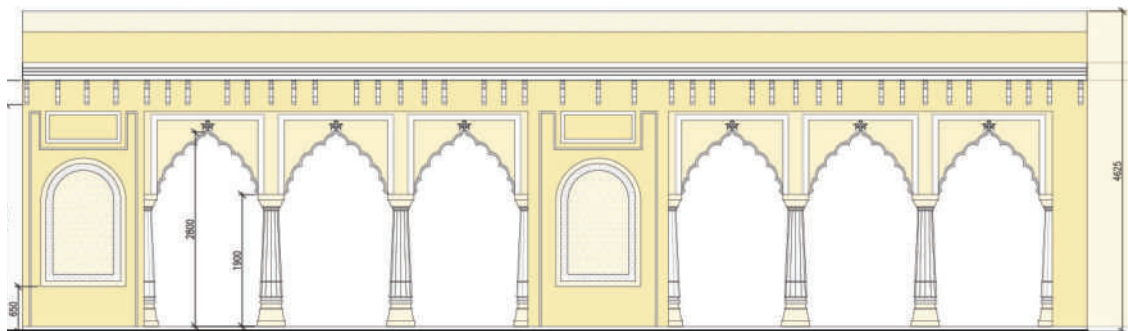




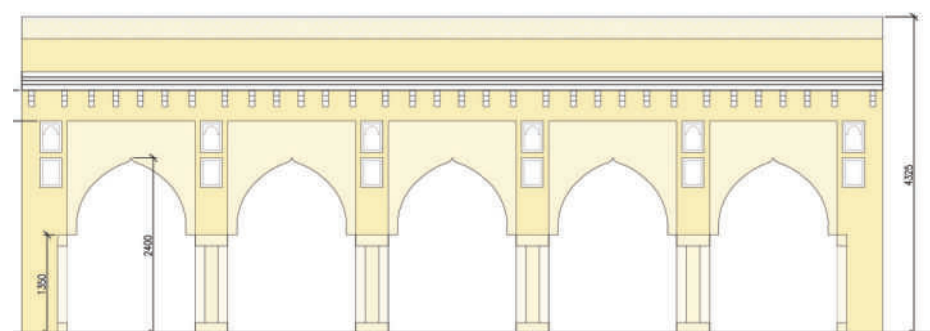
GROUND FLOOR PLAN



ELEVATION "A"



ELEVATION "C"



ELEVATION "B"

2.2 Tripolia Gate

The highly ornate and sophisticated gate, known as Tripolia, is a remarkable architectural marvel that forms an integral part of a larger structure constructed by the esteemed nobleman, Shah Quli Khan, during the reign of the great Mughal Emperor Akbar. The gate stands as a testament to the artistic and engineering prowess of its time and continues to awe visitors with its grandeur even today.

Built in the year 1588-89, the Tripolia, or the three-gated structure, is a captivating three-storey building that commands attention with its elegant design and meticulous craftsmanship. The exterior facade boasts slightly sloping walls constructed using rubble and meticulously covered with a thick layer of plaster. The combination of these elements provides not just structural integrity but also imparts a sense of grace and finesse to the gateway.

As one approaches the Tripolia, the intricately carved ornamental elements come into view, signifying the fusion of artistic influences prevalent during the Mughal era. The gateway is adorned with exquisite floral motifs, intricate geometric patterns, and delicate calligraphy, all masterfully etched into the stone, showcasing the remarkable talent of

the skilled craftsmen who brought this vision to life.

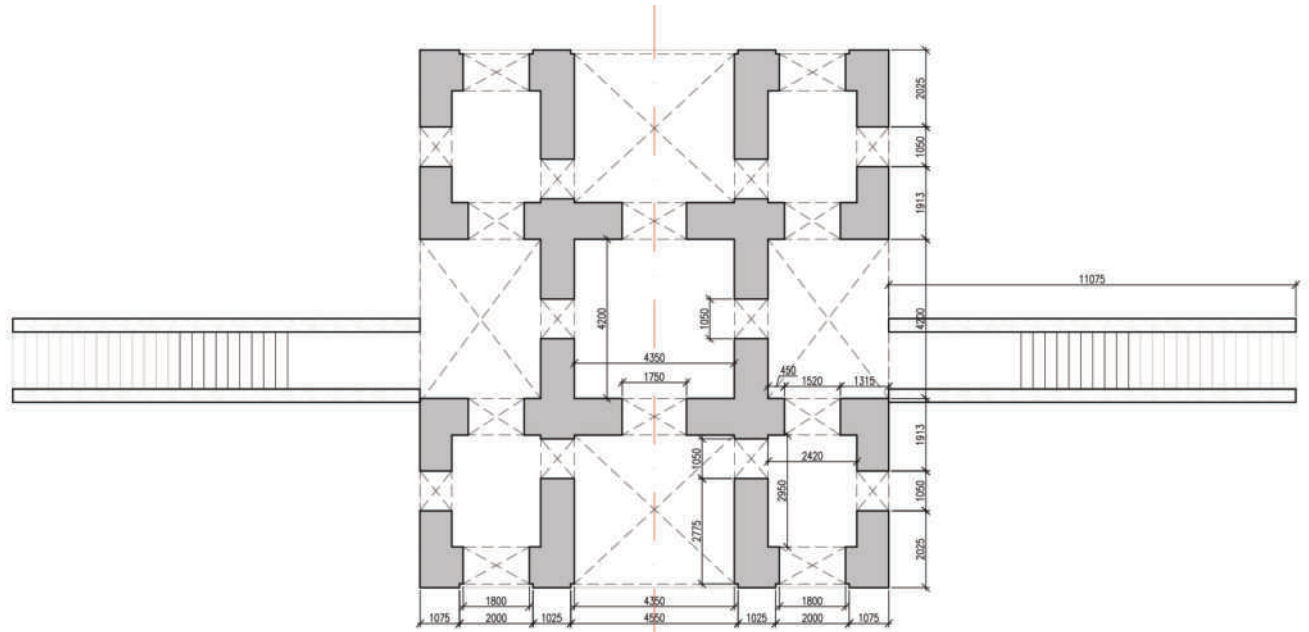
The interior of the gateway is a visual delight, captivating all who step inside. The walls and ceilings are lavishly decorated with an array of vivid colors, expertly painted in a symphony of floral designs and arabesques. The blending of rich pigments creates an ethereal ambiance that transports visitors to a world of opulence and beauty.

As visitors pass through the three gates of the Tripolia, they are welcomed into the larger structure beyond, which bears the imprint of Shah Quli Khan's vision and legacy. The entirety of the complex exhibits an impressive blend of Islamic and Persian architectural styles, with spacious courtyards, lush gardens, and other opulent structures that have withstood the test of time.

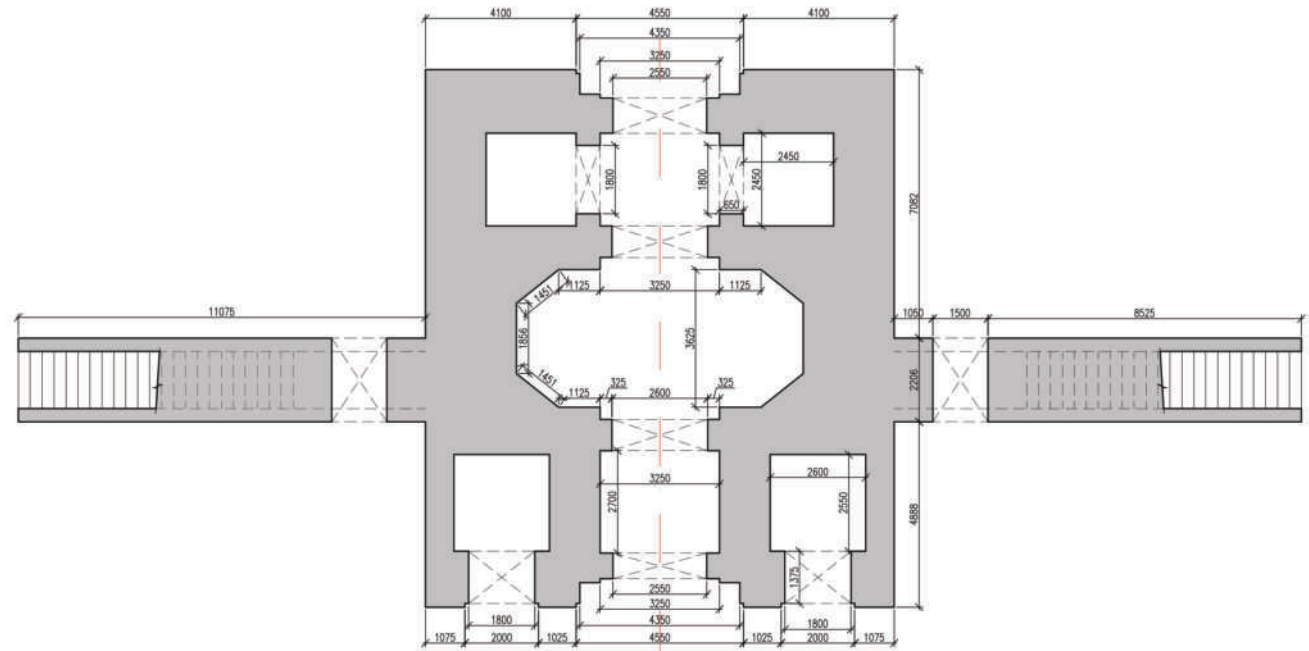
The Tripolia not only served as an entrance to the larger complex but also acted as a symbol of prestige and power, reflecting the grandeur and influence of Shah Quli Khan during the reign of Akbar. Its enduring presence today stands as a reminder of the glorious heritage of the Mughal dynasty and continues to draw admirers and scholars alike, who seek to uncover the rich history and cultural significance of this architectural masterpiece.





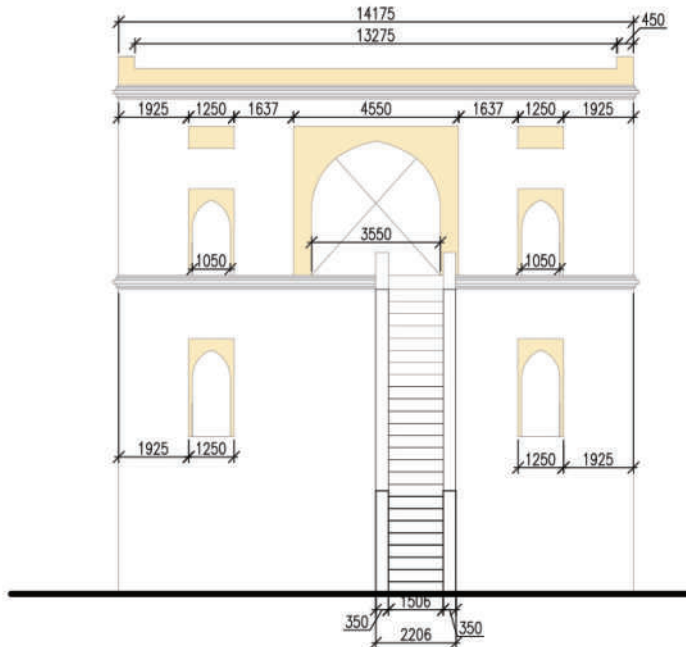


FIRST FLOOR PLAN

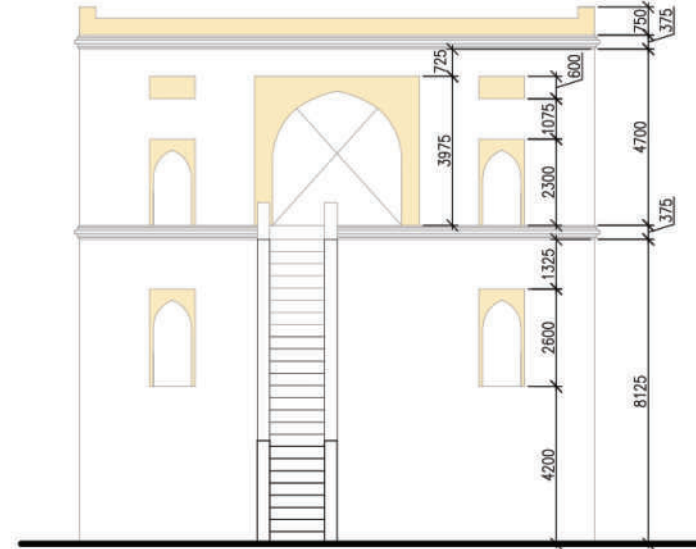


GROUND FLOOR PLAN

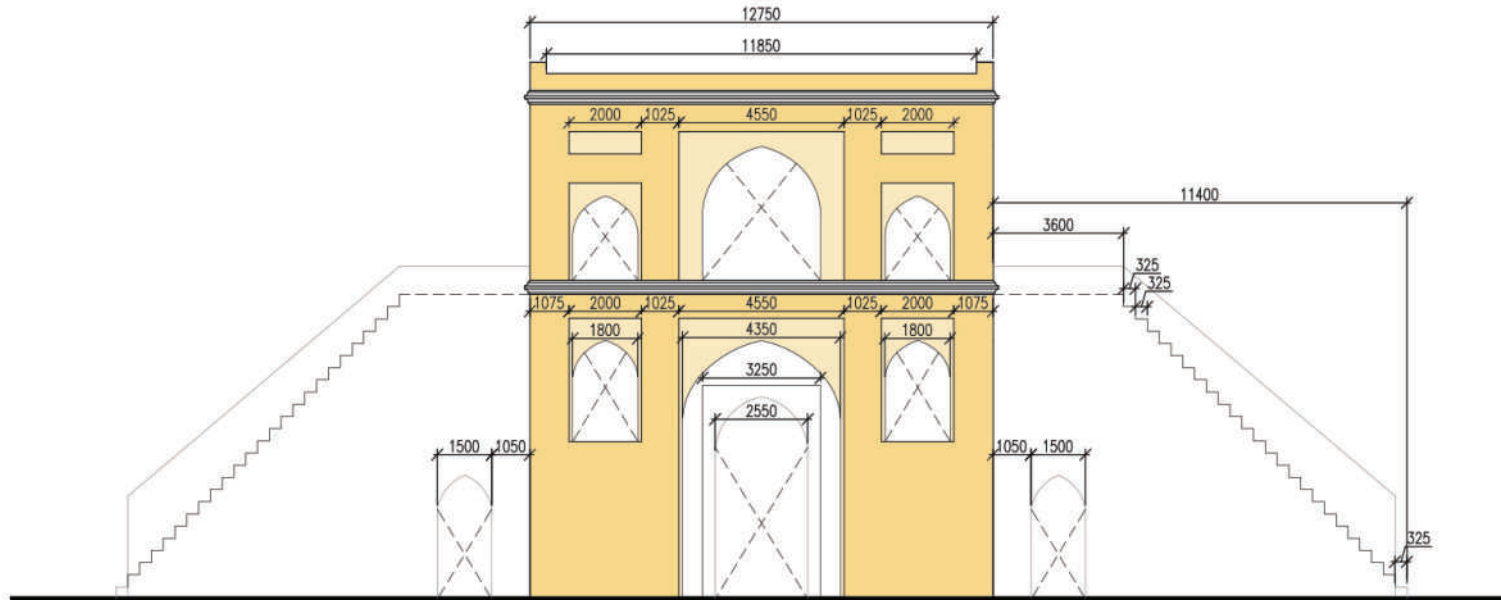
9



SOUTH ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION

2.3 Tomb of Shah Nizam

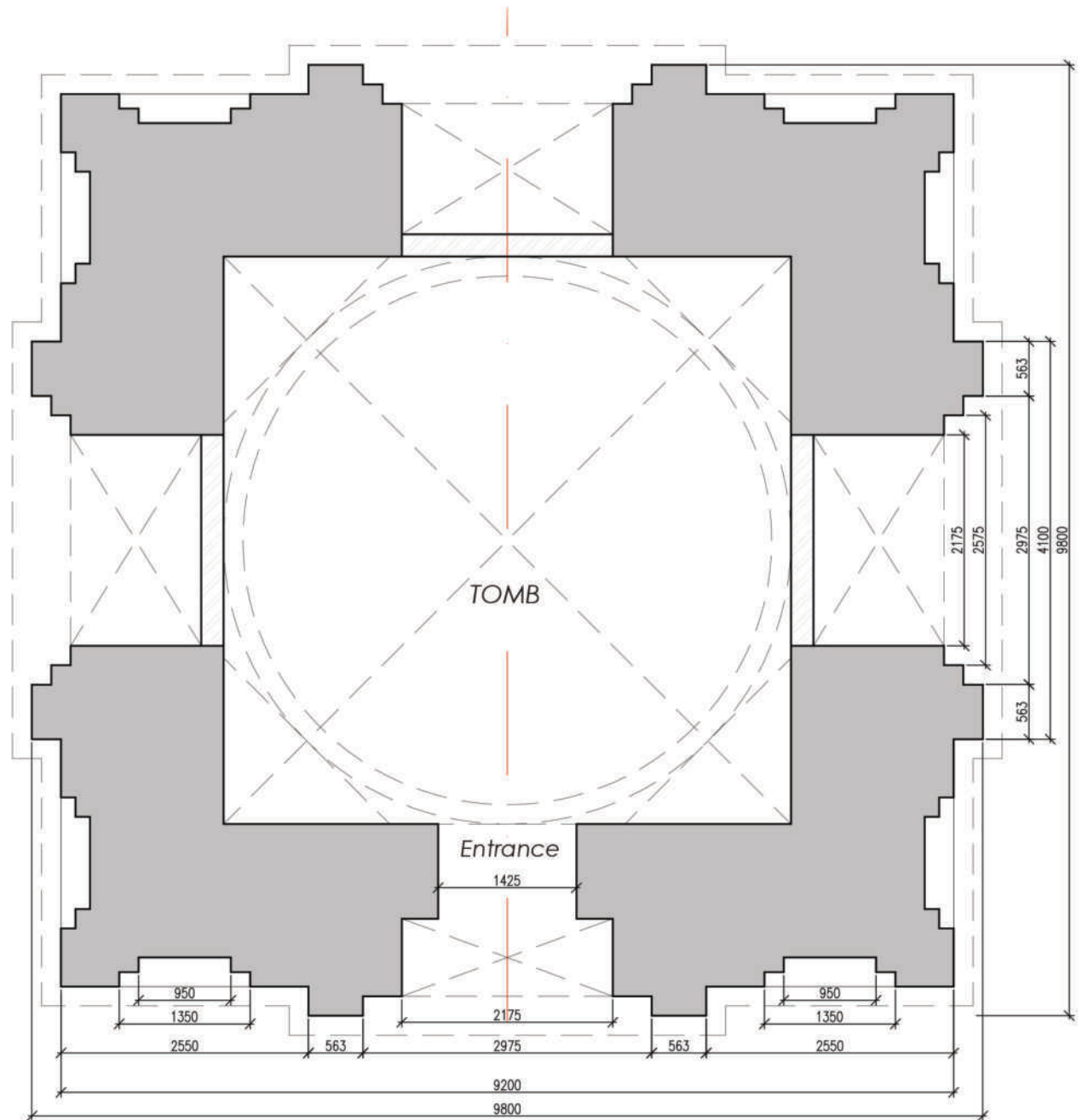
Shaikh Shah Nizam-al-din was a well-known saint of Narnaul. He was the disciple of Shaikh Khanun. Akbar himself made a trip to Narnaul to visit the esteemed contemporary Chisti Shaikh Nizam al-din.

The structure can be dated roughly to Akbar's period. This construction is a square tomb of the usual Pathan/Afghan style. It is a state protected monument. The inscription on its doorways reads as follows:

"Alas! The leader of the world, the administrator of religion, has passed away, whose holy nature was kneaded out of pure light. The exalted Shaikh, as he had an angelic disposition, so when I counted the date of his death, it came out, "He was an angel."- 997 AH (1589 AH).

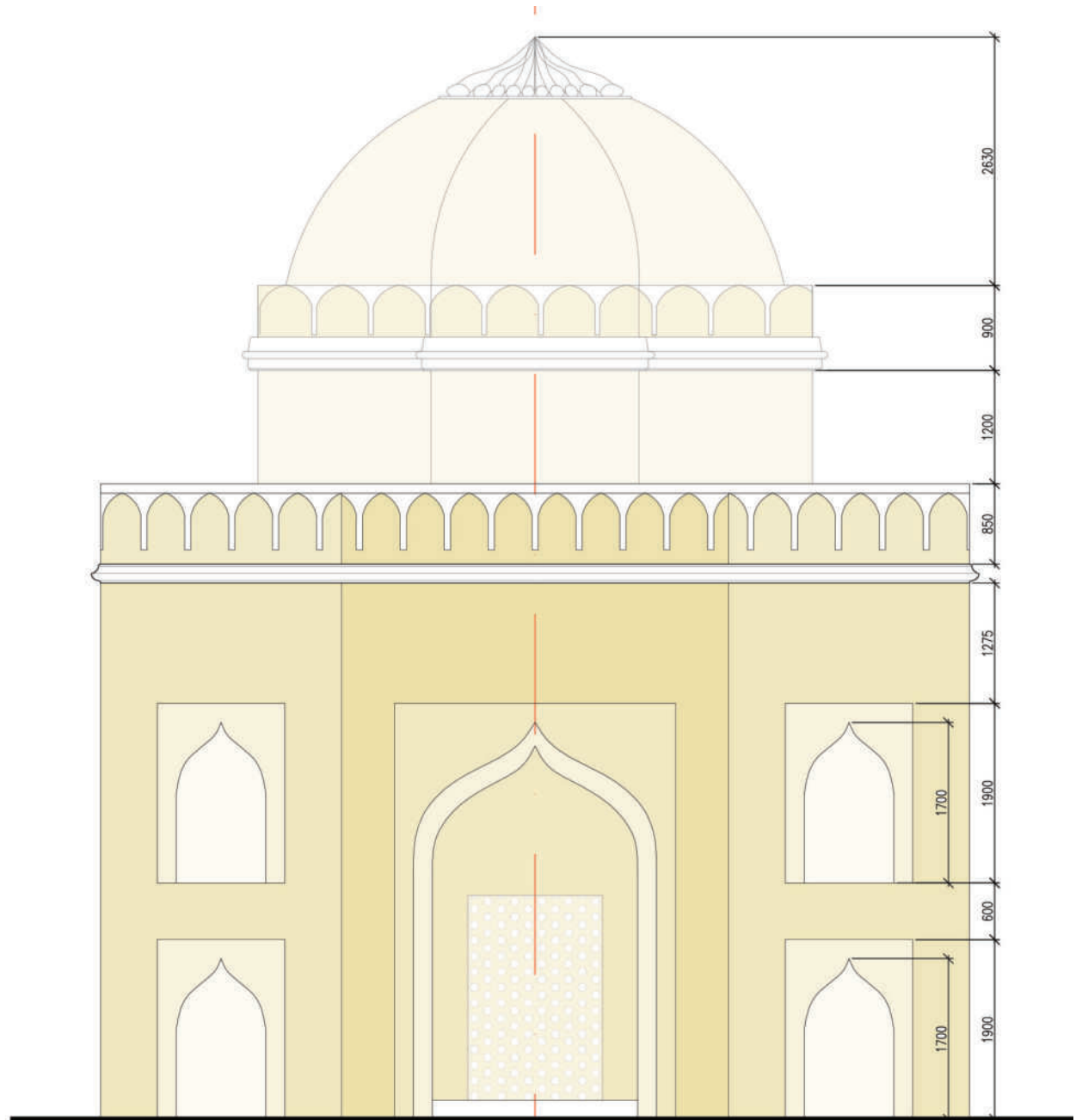
The entire edifice is made up of bricks and rubbles. The opening is decorated in lintel style, which is attached with Lodi style despite of being constructed during Akbar's period.

The square mortuary hall is open from all the main four sides. There is no grave in the centre of the mortuary hall, which might have been destroyed when it was being used. The terrace of the tomb is accessible by some stairs. The octagonal drum is having a single dome roofing & the chamber's finely decorated. The dome is crowned with ornate finial rising from inverted lotus and is made of rubble masonry.



GROUND FLOOR PLAN





NORTH ELEVATION

2.4 Chor Gumbad

This tomb was built by Jamal Khan, an Afghan noble and a trader, during the Tughluq period for himself. The tomb is situated in Narnaul, along the north side of the Singhana road near *Kotputli Chowk*.

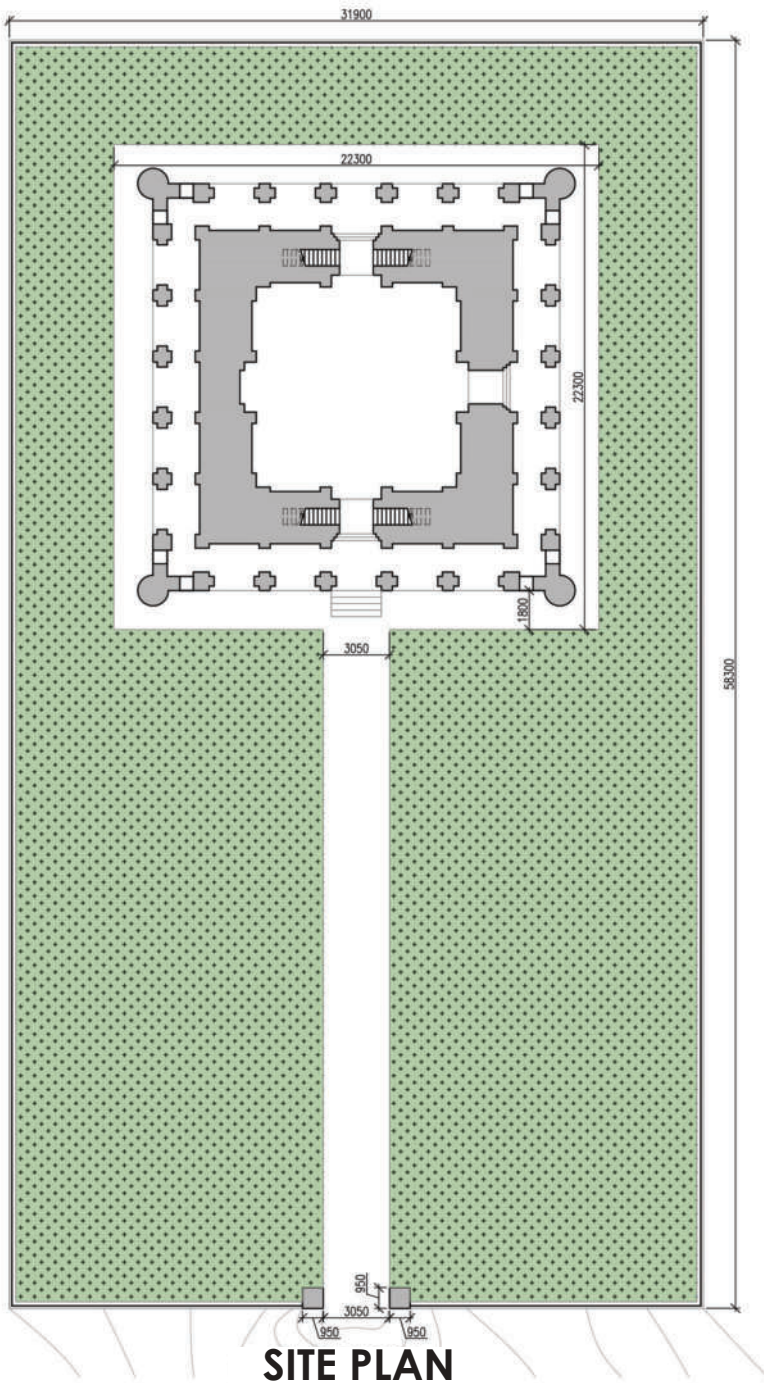
Due to its remote location and obscured identity, this tomb is visible to any bystander from miles away. Hence, it is also known as the '*sign board of Narnaul*'. According to a local legend, it is believed that for a long time, it remained a hideout for thieves and highwaymen that may account for its present name, Chor Gumbad. It stands in splendid isolation in the middle of a well manicured park.

It has a big square plan with single chamber inside. The open *verandah* makes it appear that the tomb is double storeyed, but it is not the case actually. All the four facades of the tomb seem to be alike.

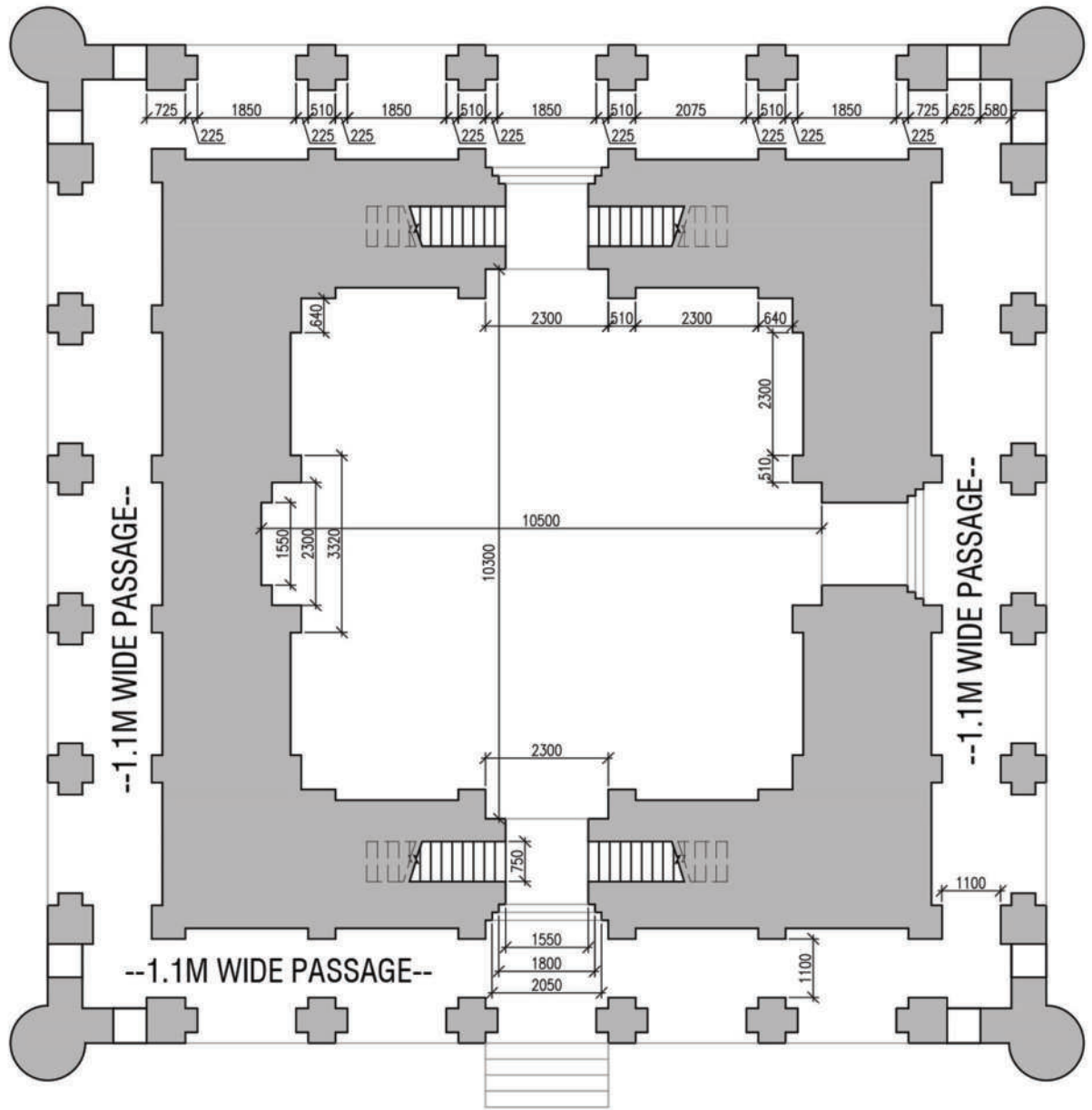
The interior of the mortuary hall is made up of rubble masonry and plastered. Western wall has a *mihrab*. The absence of the gravestone in the hall is attributed to the thieves, who once upon a time resided here.

On the mortuary hall, a high-necked octagonal drum is erected which is made of stone mortar and covered with plaster. A spherical dome is resting on top. The dome is made of rubble and plaster. It may have been crowned by a finial rising from petals, which could have been made out of rubble and mortar.

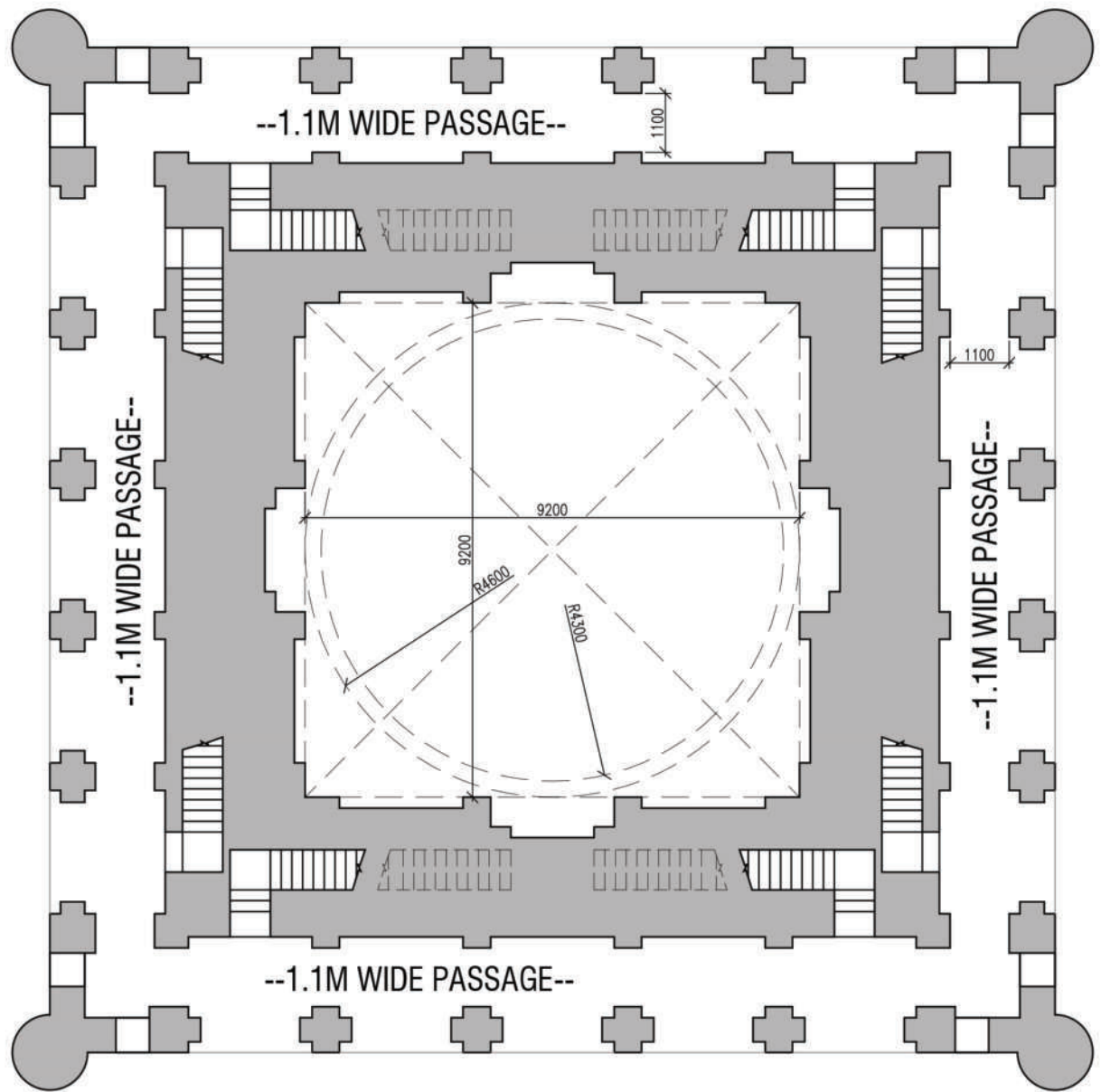




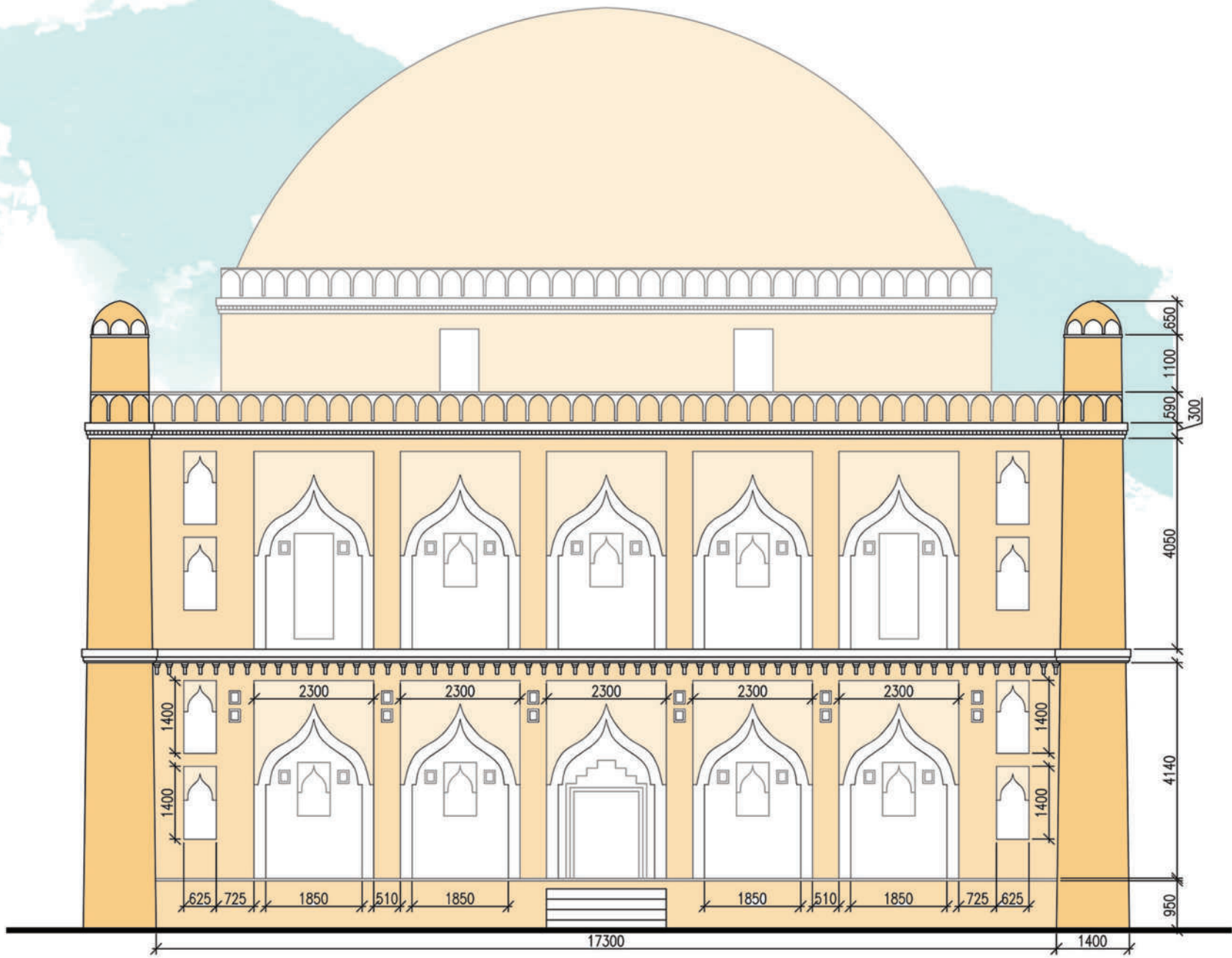
SITE PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

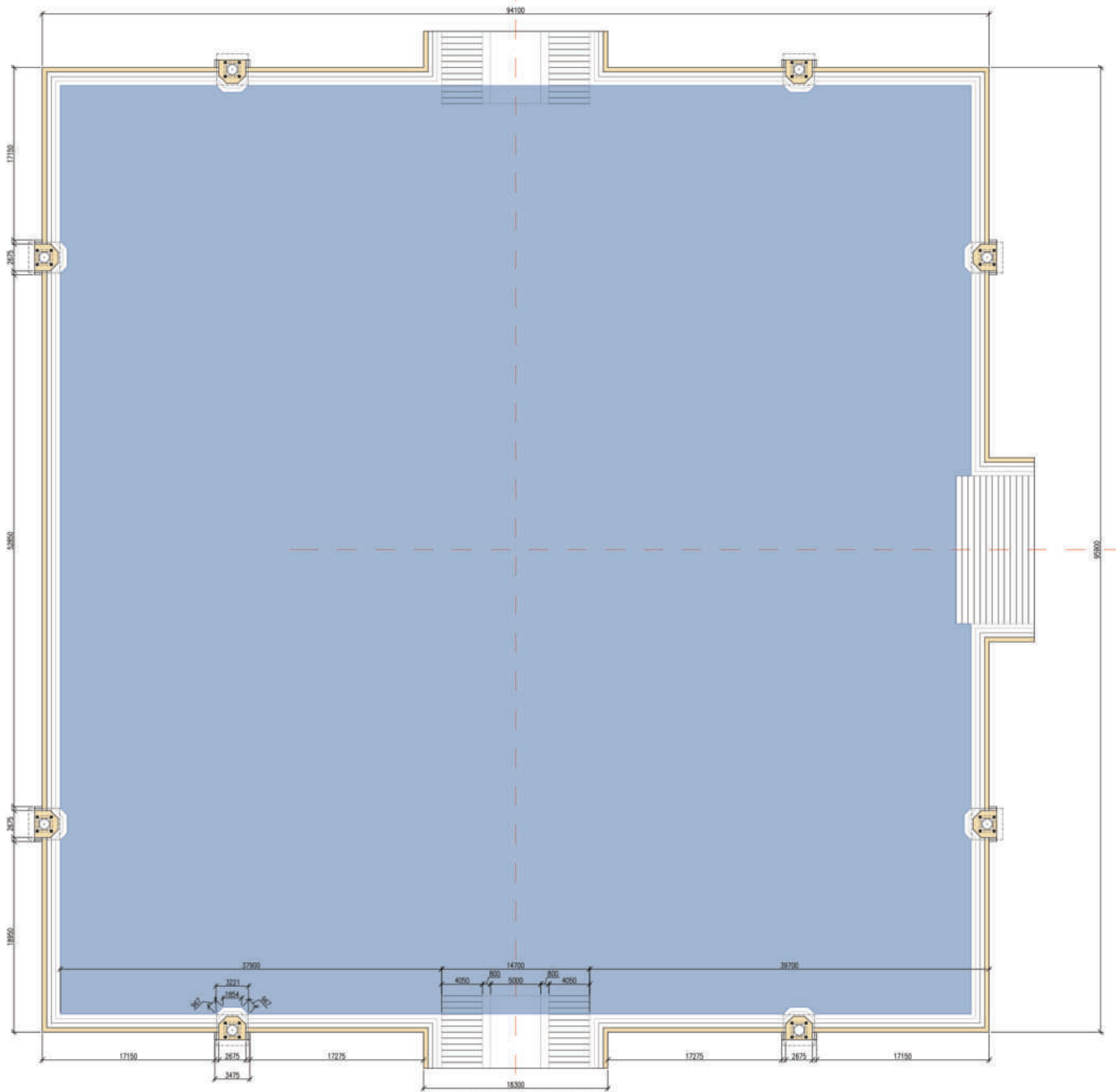


FRONT ELEVATION

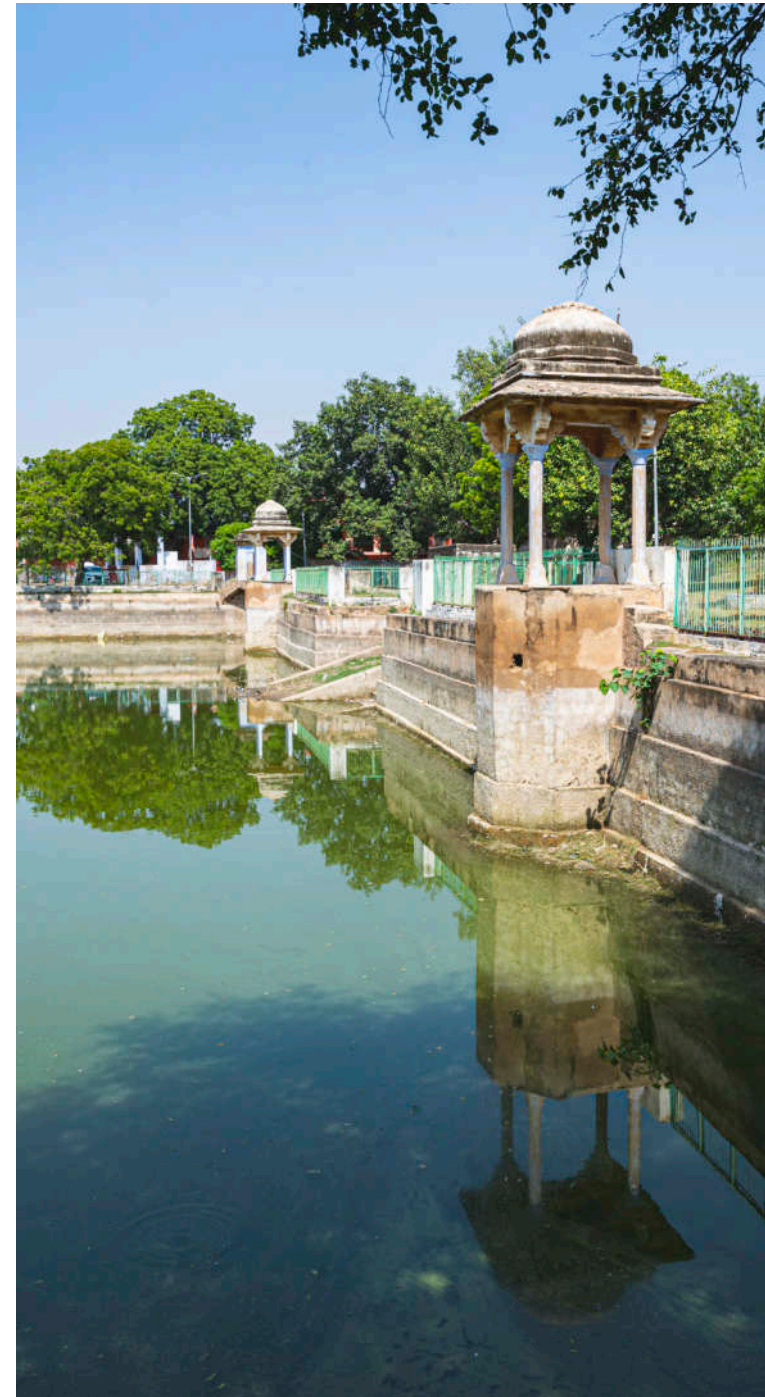
2.5 Shobha Sarovar

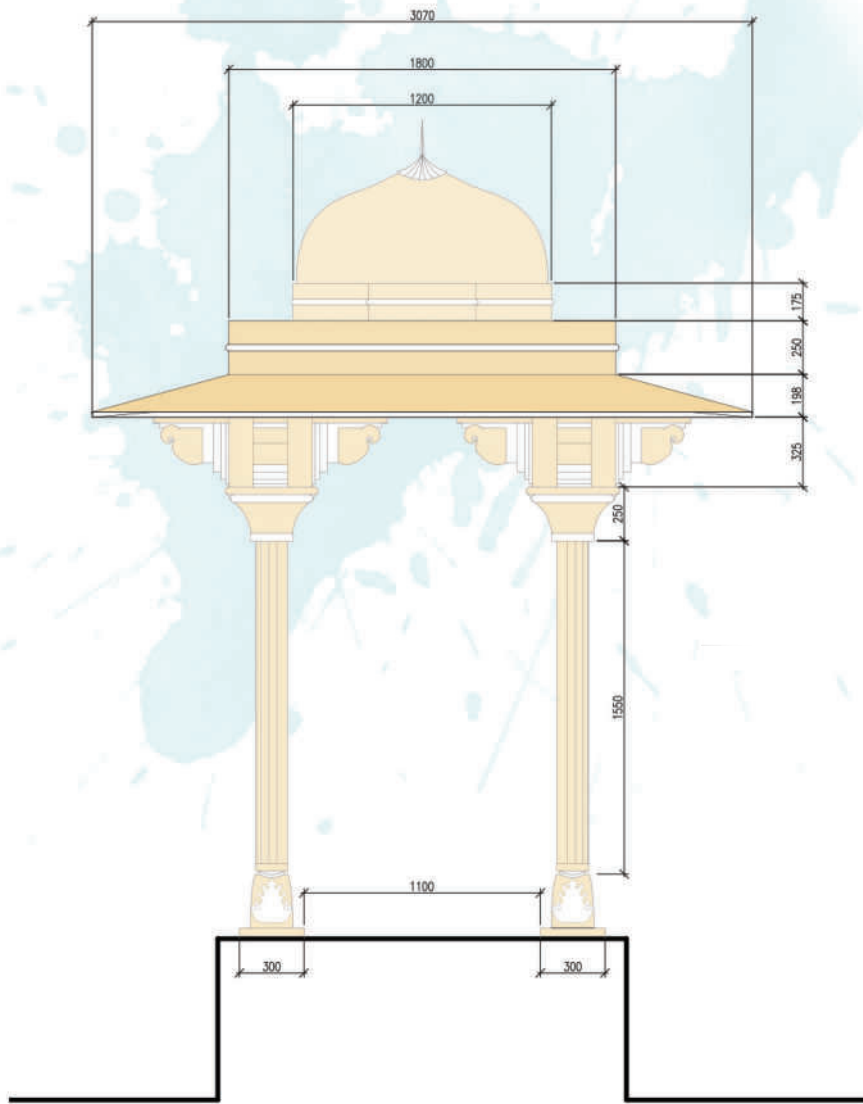
Water scarcity has always haunted Narnaul due to its proximity to the deserts. In this regard, this magnificent pond (sarovar) was built by a local chief during the late Mughal period for the use of general public. The sarovar was constructed in rubble masonry with thick layer of lime plaster in the style of the then prevailing contemporary architecture, which seems like a fine blend of Rajput and Mughal styles. Four staircases in each arm of the pond lead to the water storage tank. There were twelve kiosks (chhatris) on its boundary wall, one each at the corners and two each on the either side of the staircases. At present only two out of twelve are visible. An inscription fixed on the eastern wall records that an enclosed chamber for ladies-bath was added to this pond in samvat 1986 (1929 CE). This sarovar is still in public use.



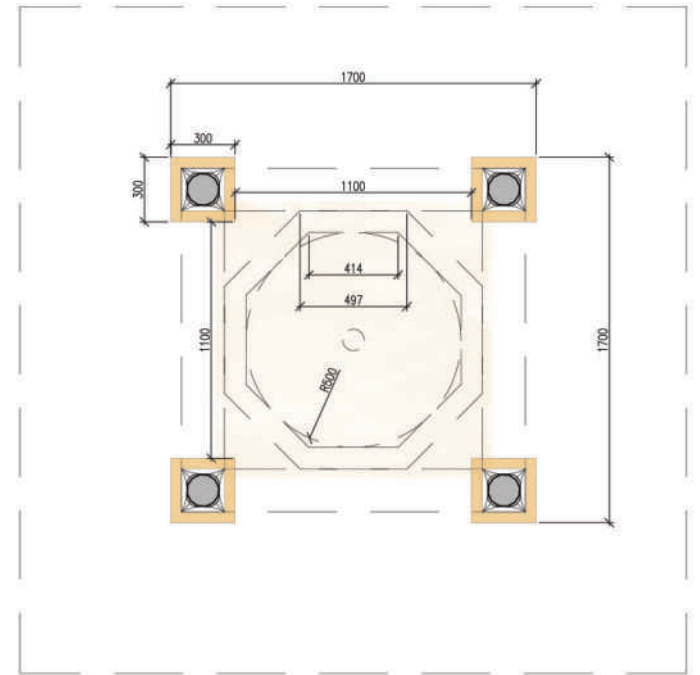


SAROVAR PLAN





TYPICAL ELEVATION



"CHATTARI" PLAN

2.6 Bal Mukand Das Sarai/ Chhatta Rai

Bal Mukand was the *diwan* of Narnaul during the reign of Shah Jahan. According to the author of *Ma'asirul-Umara* Rai Mukand Das at the beginning of his career was a humble servant of Asif Jaha, but being 'a man of good sense and courage as well as integrity', he rose in time to be the governor of Narnaul. He was known for his generosity and piety.

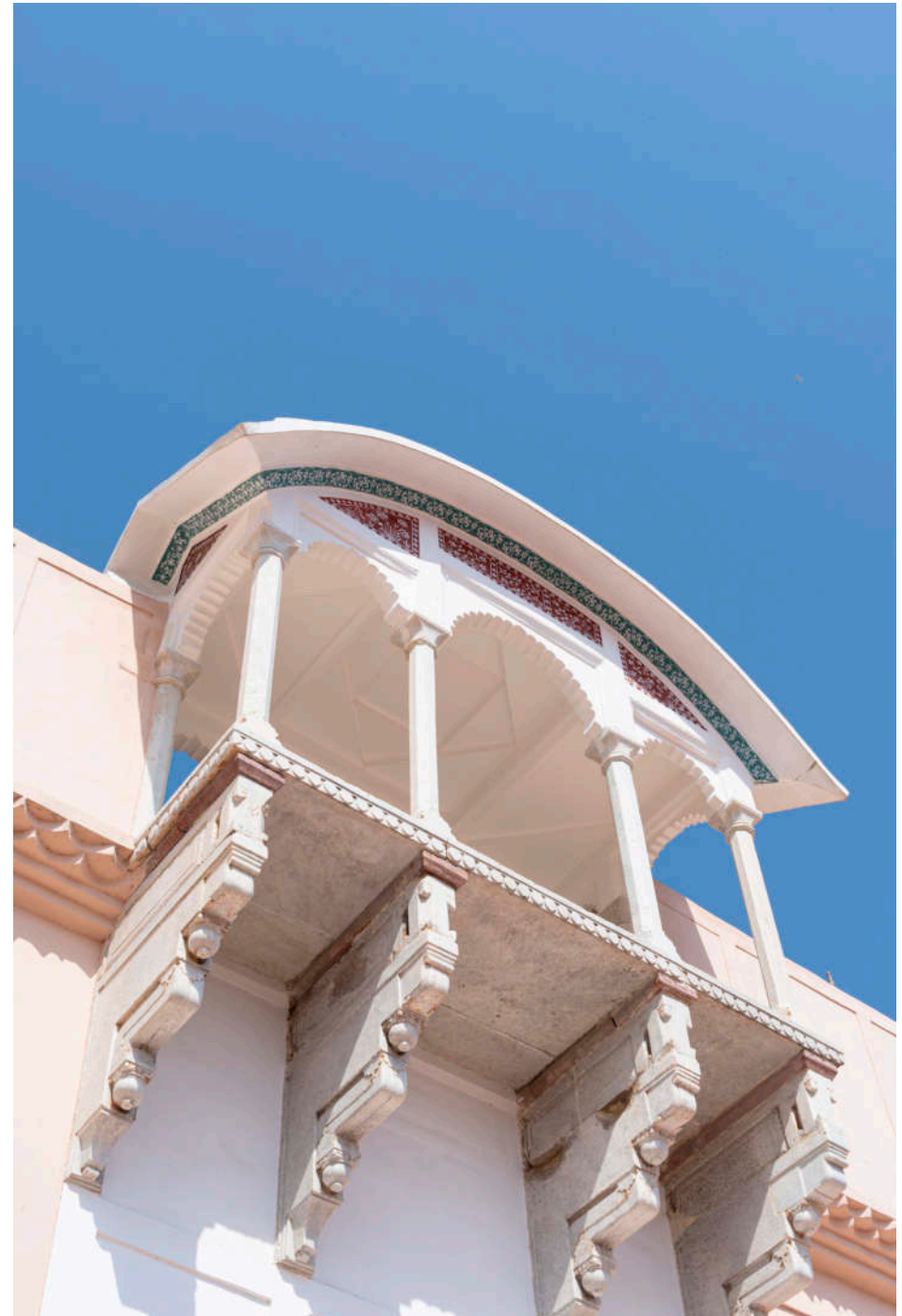
It is a spacious building in proximity of *Chhatta* of Rai Mukand Das and northern side of the town. The sarai has a single gateway on the eastern side. It is made up of red brunt bricks and plaster. It was constructed by Rai Mukand Das under the supervision of Mehta Puran Mal and Hari Das in 1041 AH./1631-32 AD for providing facilities to the caravans journeying through Narnaul. Due to its strong fort-like construction, it was used as a headquarter by the 'rebels' in 1857.

Translation of the inscription on the norther side of the gateway is:

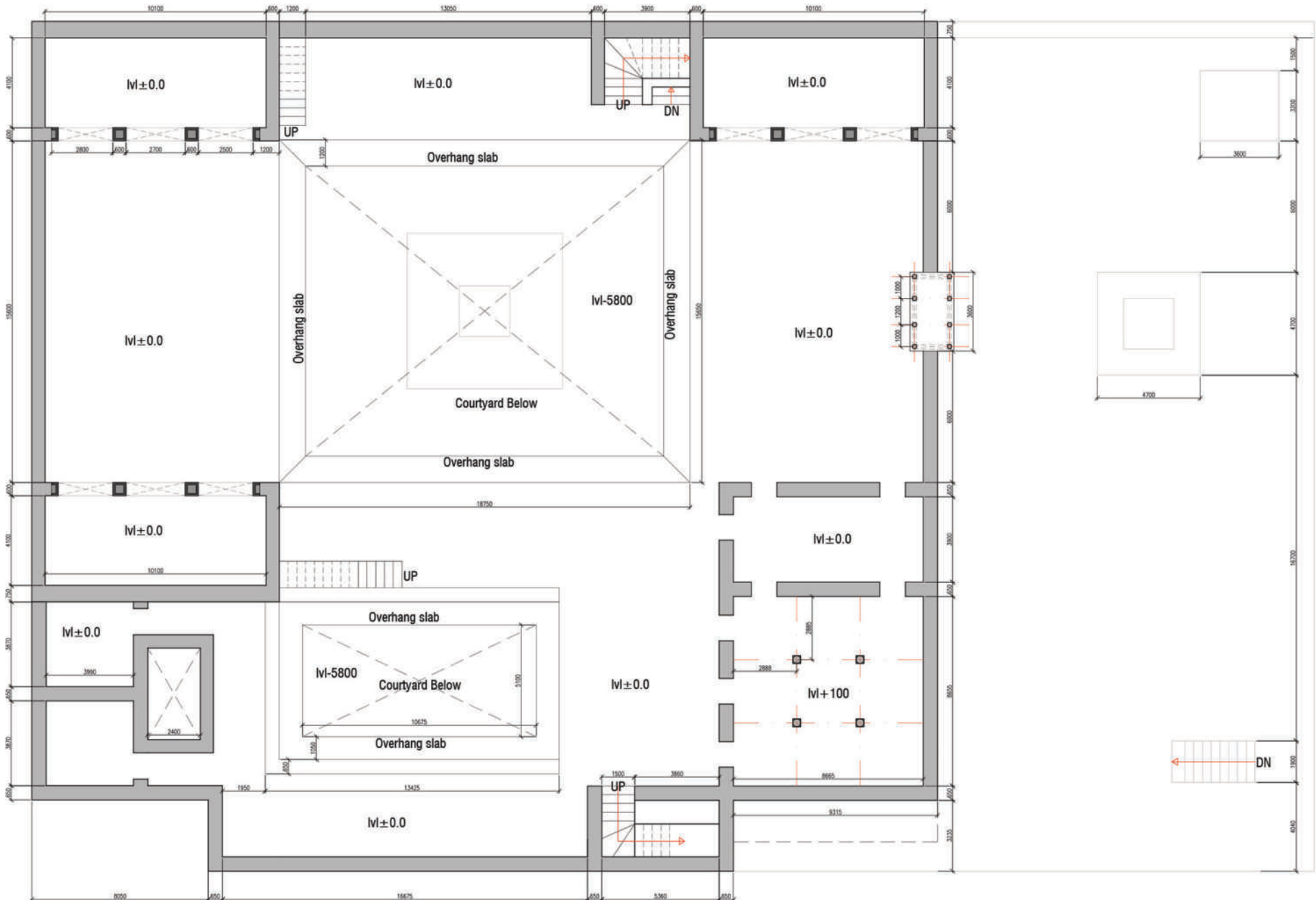
"During the reign of the victorious father Shahab-ud-din Muhammad, the second Lord of the happy conjunction, Shah Jahan, the victorious king; the Rae of Raes, Rae Mukand Das gave orders to build this magnificent caravansarai. It was completed under the superintendence of Mehtapur Mal (?) and Har Das in A.H: 11"

There is a double storey circular structure that is still intact at the corner of the sarai. A wooden doorway with an iron rod has been provided for the visitors of the Sarai. This gateway has a stalactite ceiling. On the western side of the gateway there are flights of staircases, which are closed with wooden gate for security purpose.

A well is situated in the *Chhatta*. It is located in the southern side of the *Chhatta* and is surrounded by servant's quarters. It was made of rubble and covered with plaster. Most probably the well was excavated around the same time the *Chhatta* was constructed.





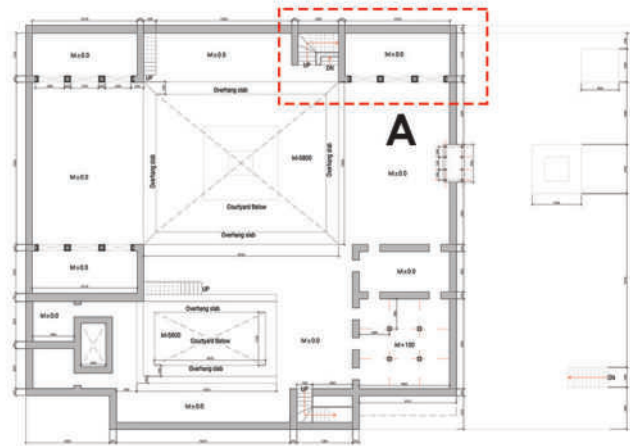


SECOND FLOOR PLAN

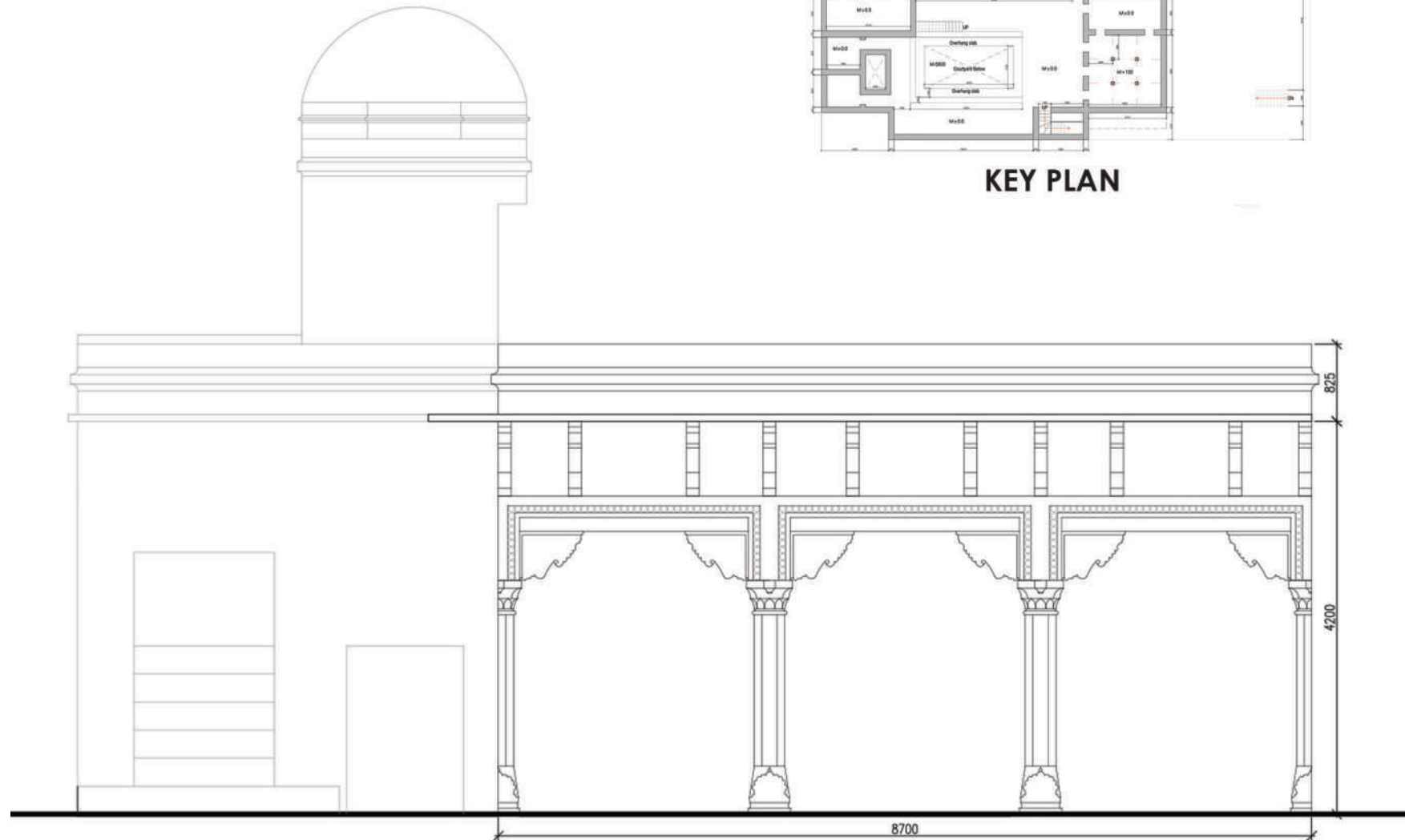


Credit: Studio Plinth, Noida

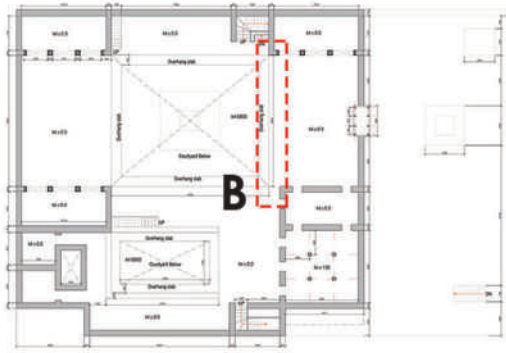
FRONT ELEVATION



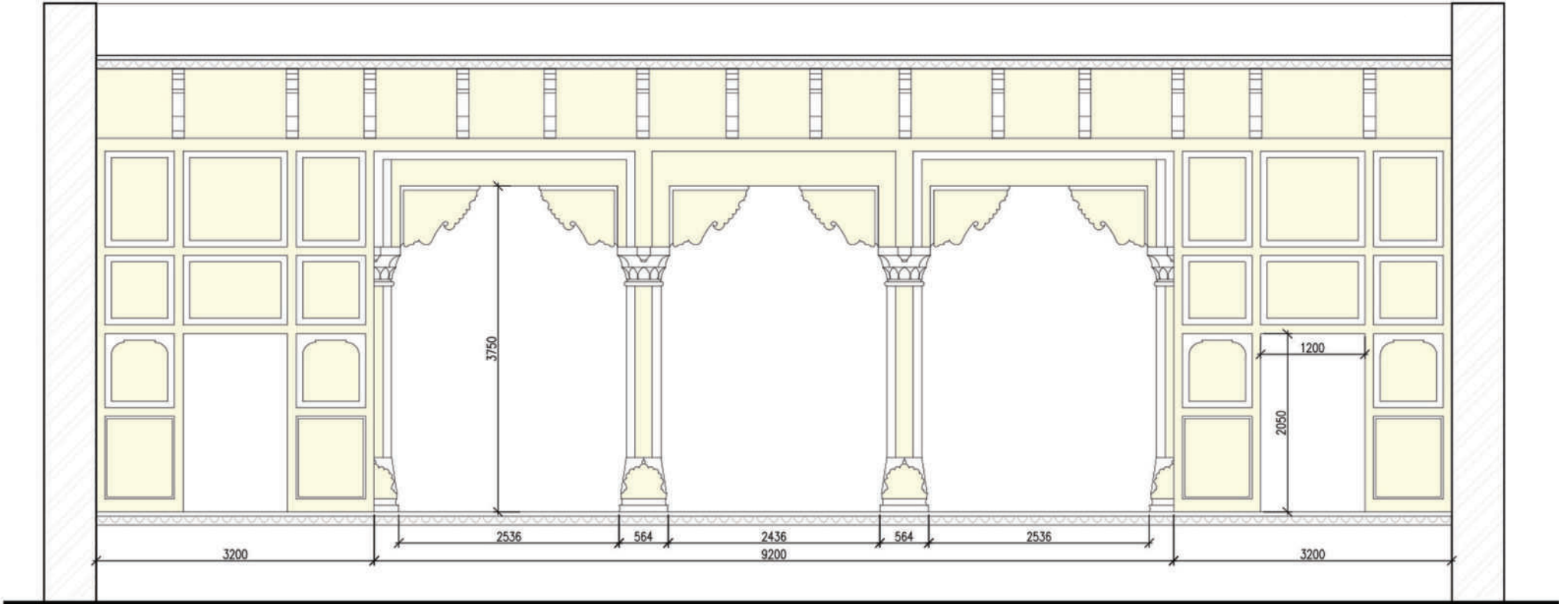
KEY PLAN



ELEVATION "A"



KEY PLAN



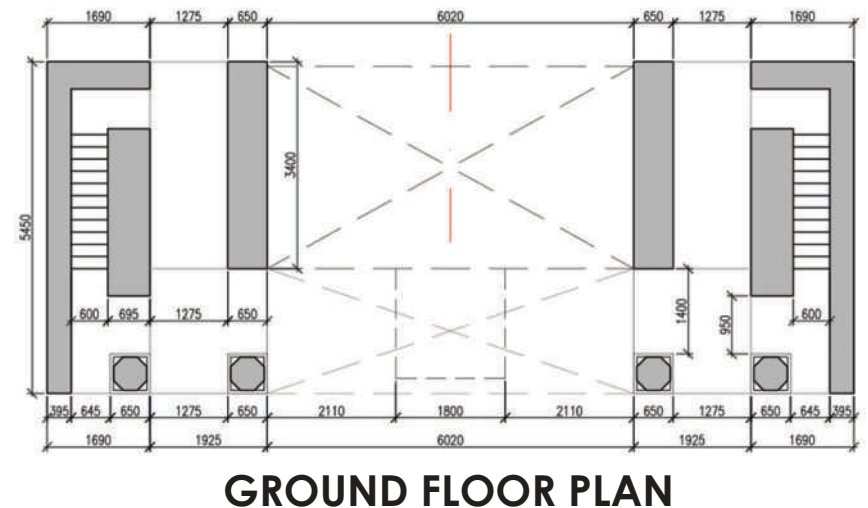
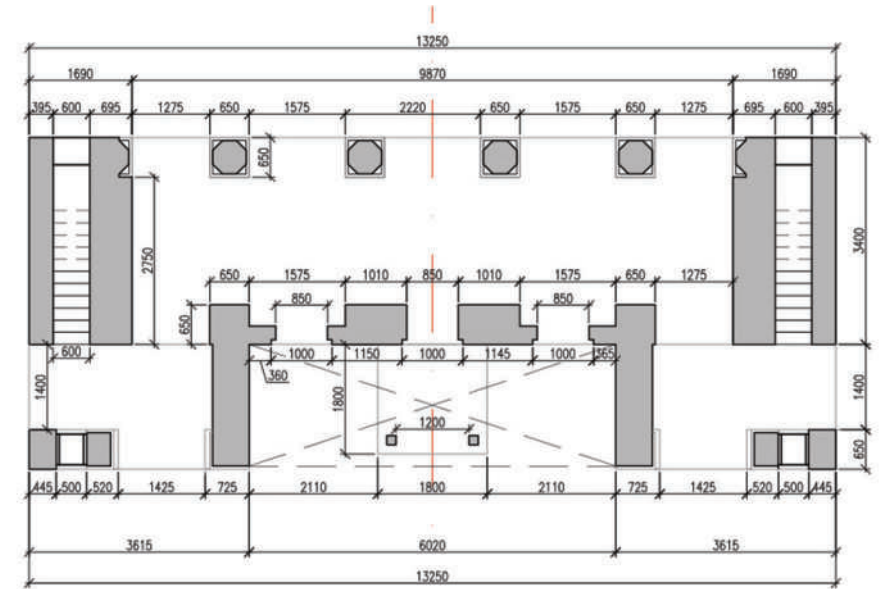
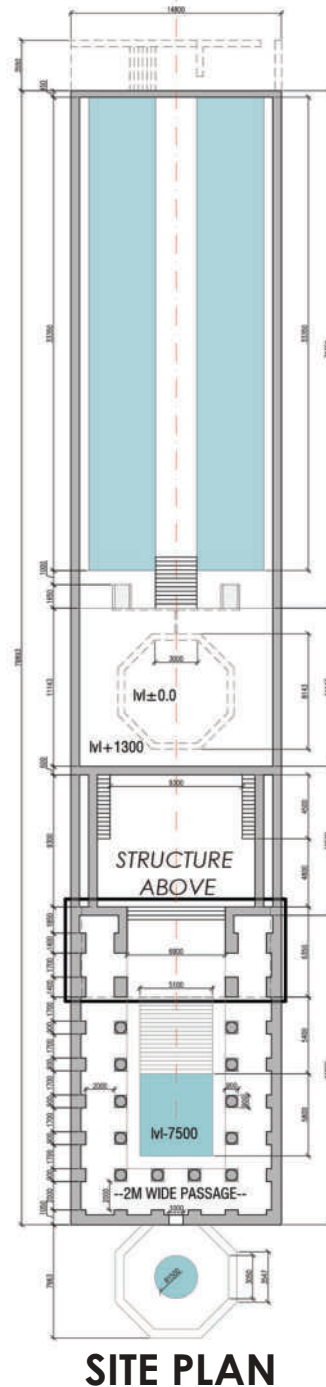
ELEVATION "B"

2.7 Mirza Ali Jan's Takht & Baoli

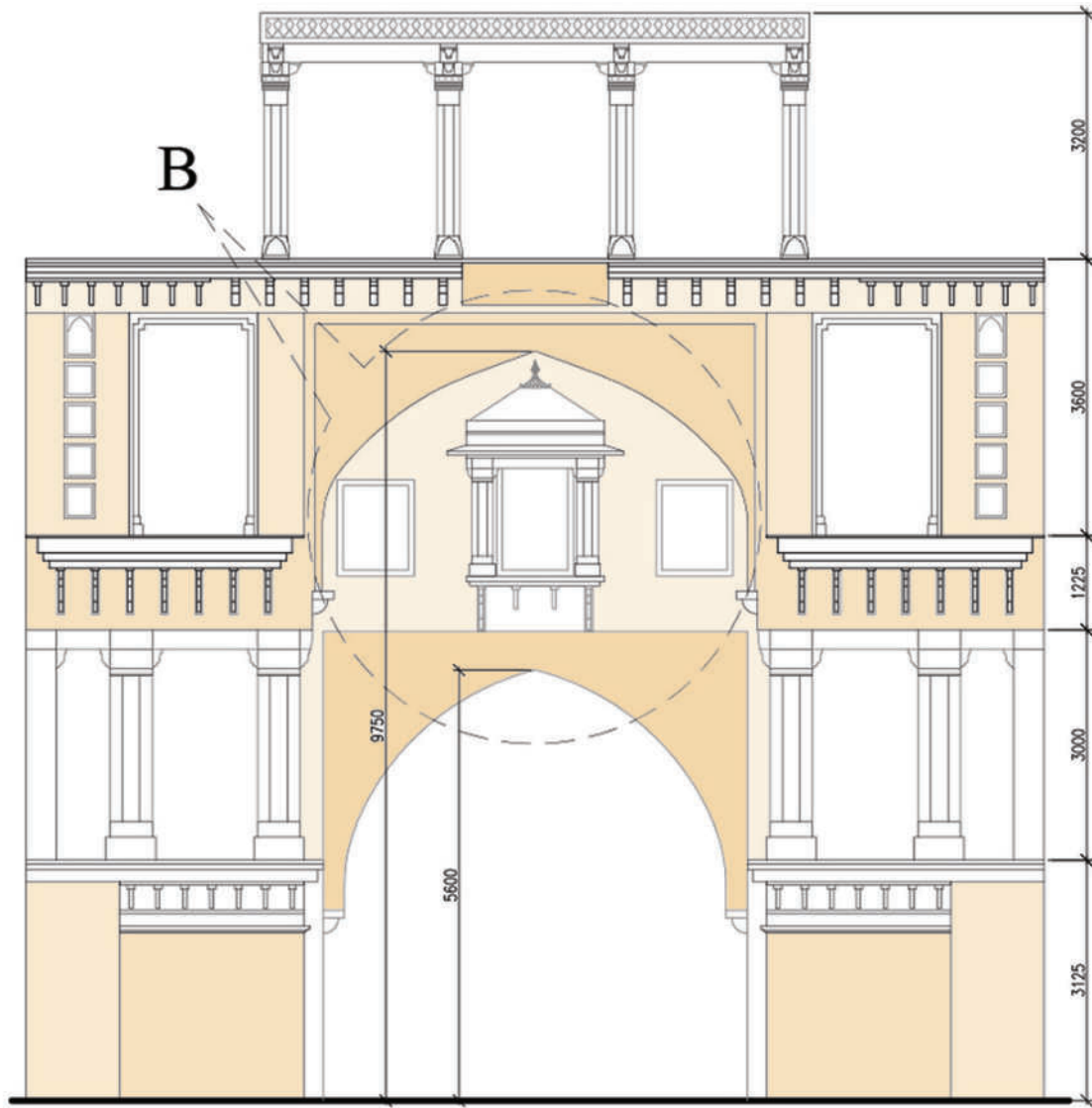
This *baoli* was built by a noble Mirza Ali Jan, at the western end of the town, during the medieval times. He was a contemporary of Emperor Akbar. The *baoli* is a part of a large complex given the appellation of 'Mirza Ali Jan ka takht' or the throne of Mirza Ali Jan. The gateway of the *baoli* is very majestic. Ceiling of the pavilion has geometrical design.

Towards the end, there is a pillared pavilion, which has been identified with a *takht*. Each pillar is square and bearing carvings in base-relief and is made of black stones. The rest of the complex is made of rubble.

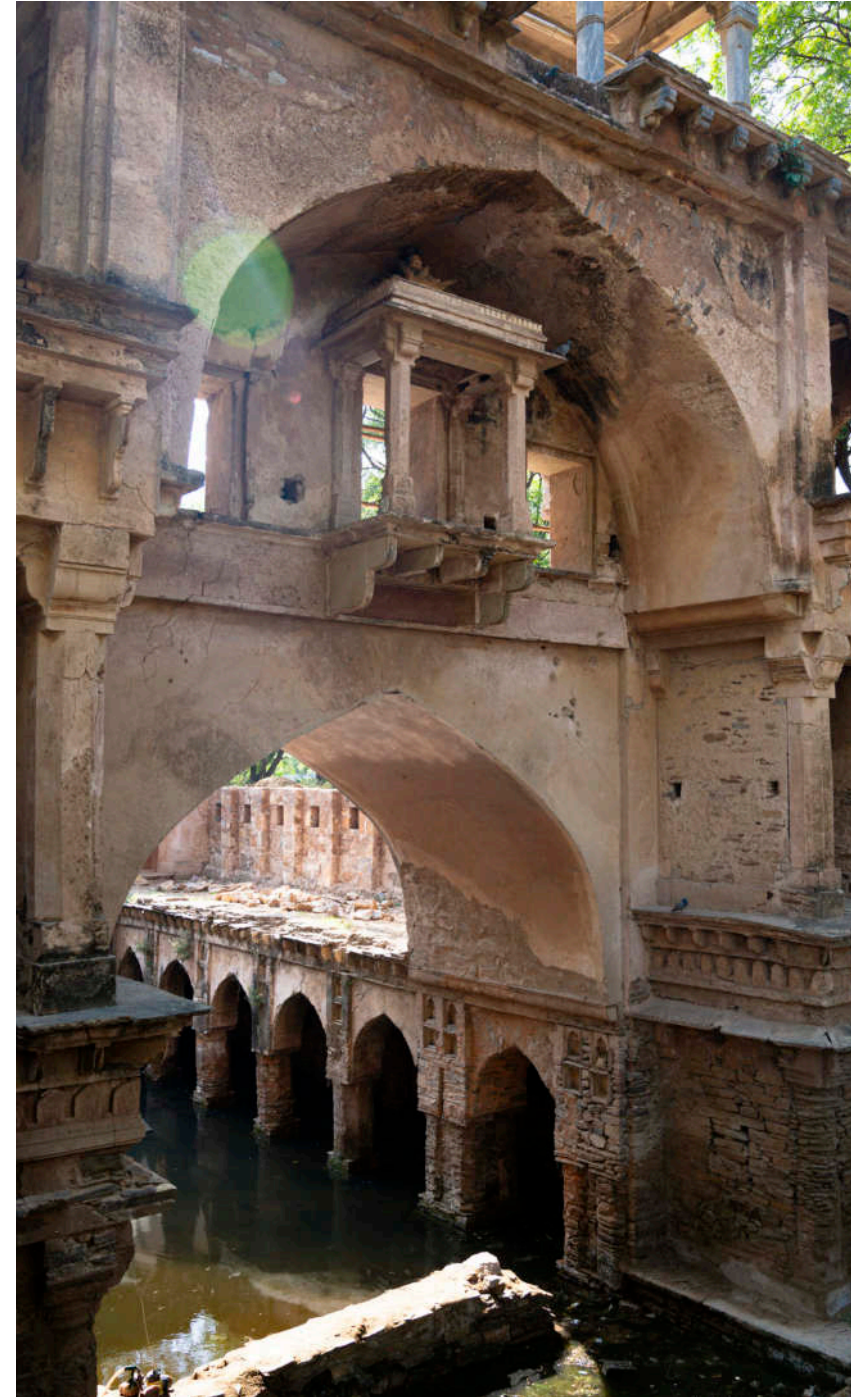
The *baoli* bears two inscriptions which cannot be deciphered properly. One of them is readable to the extent that it mentions Akbar *Padshah*.

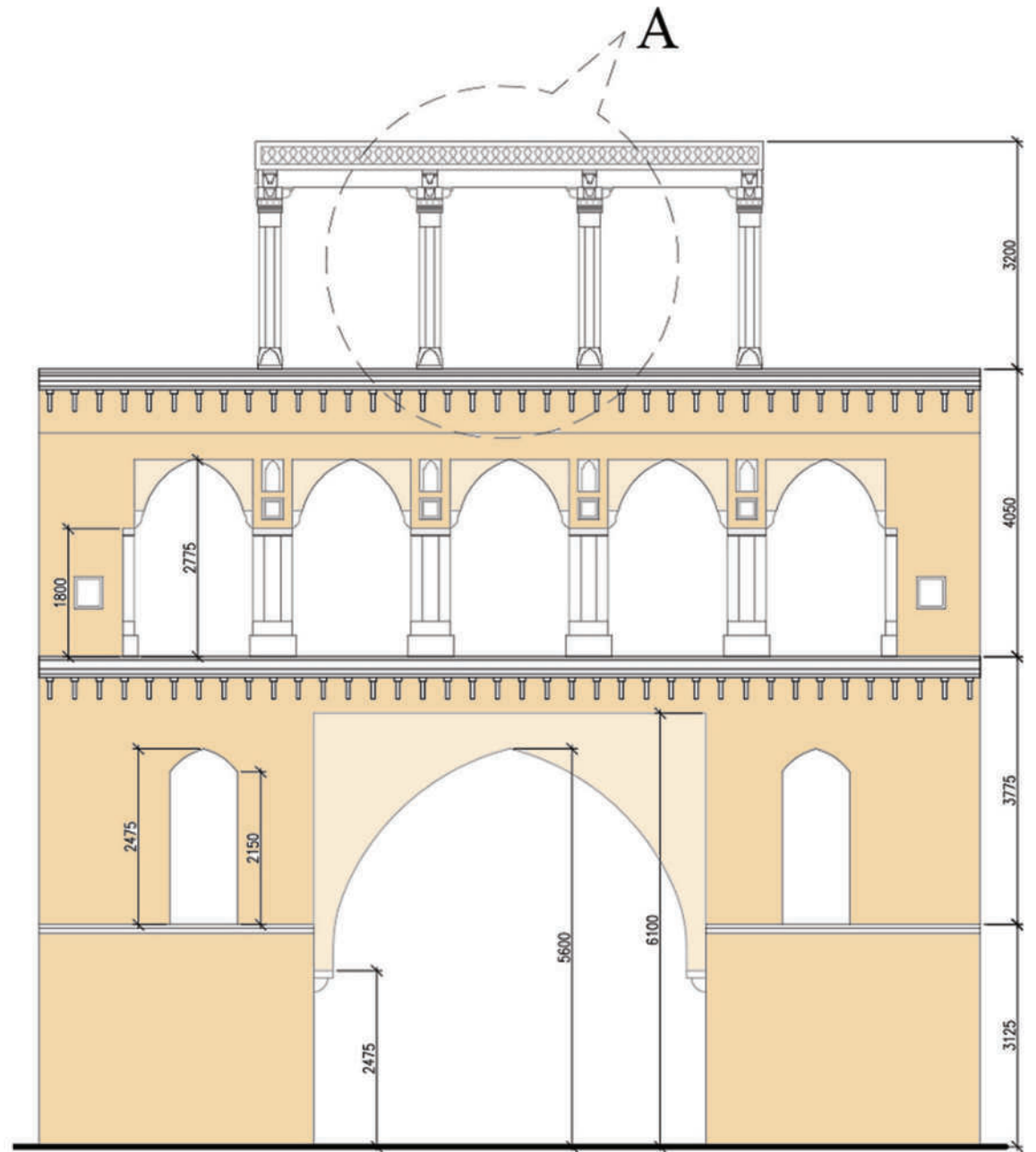




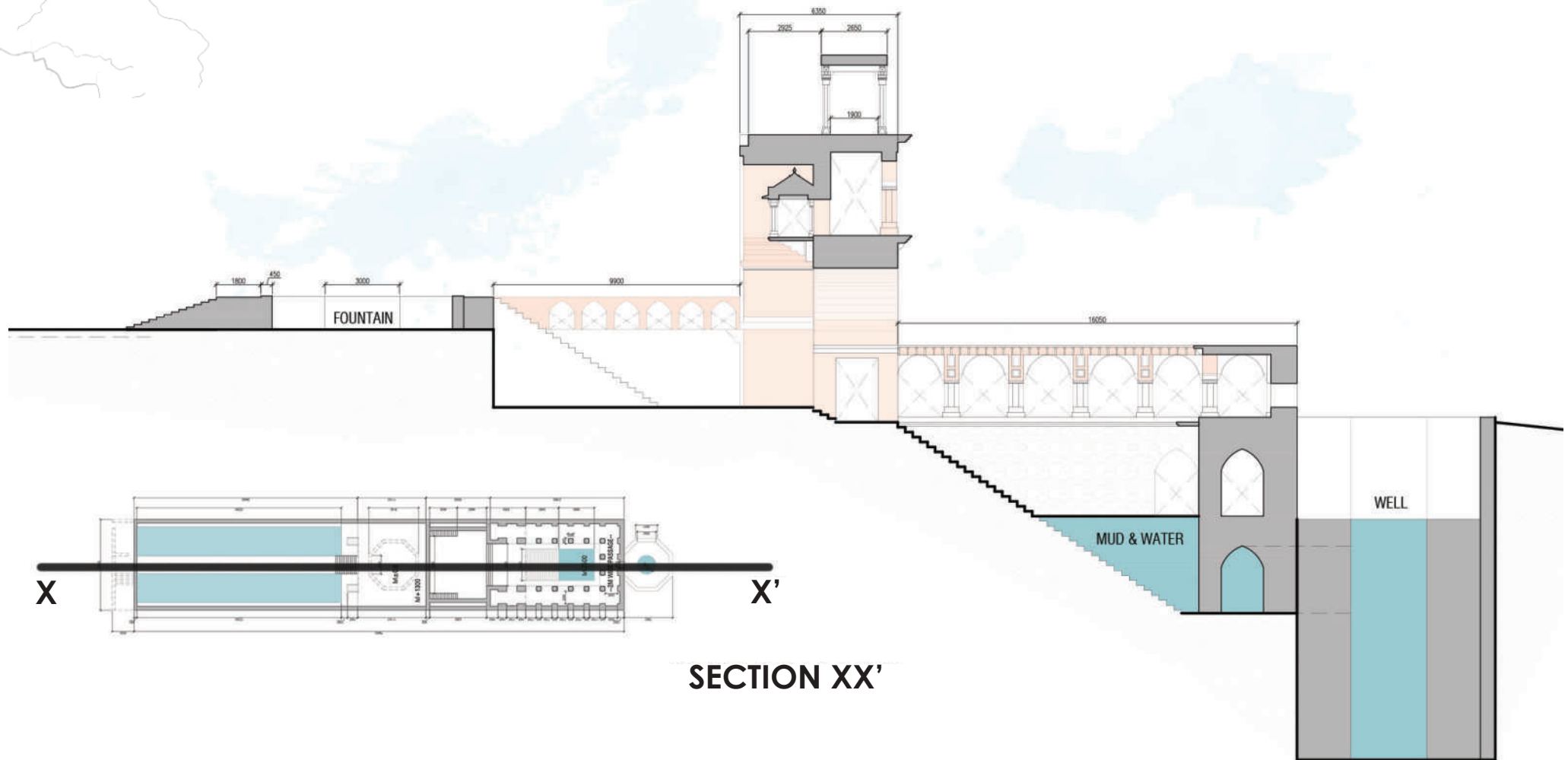


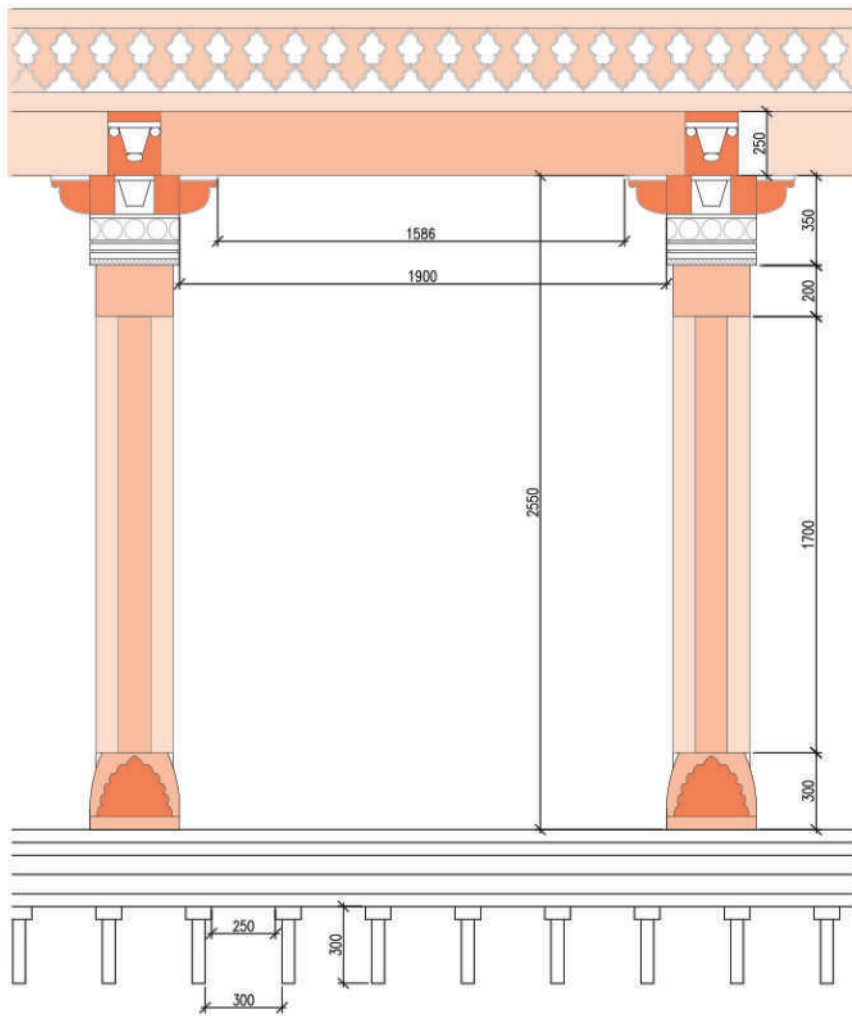
FRONT ELEVATION



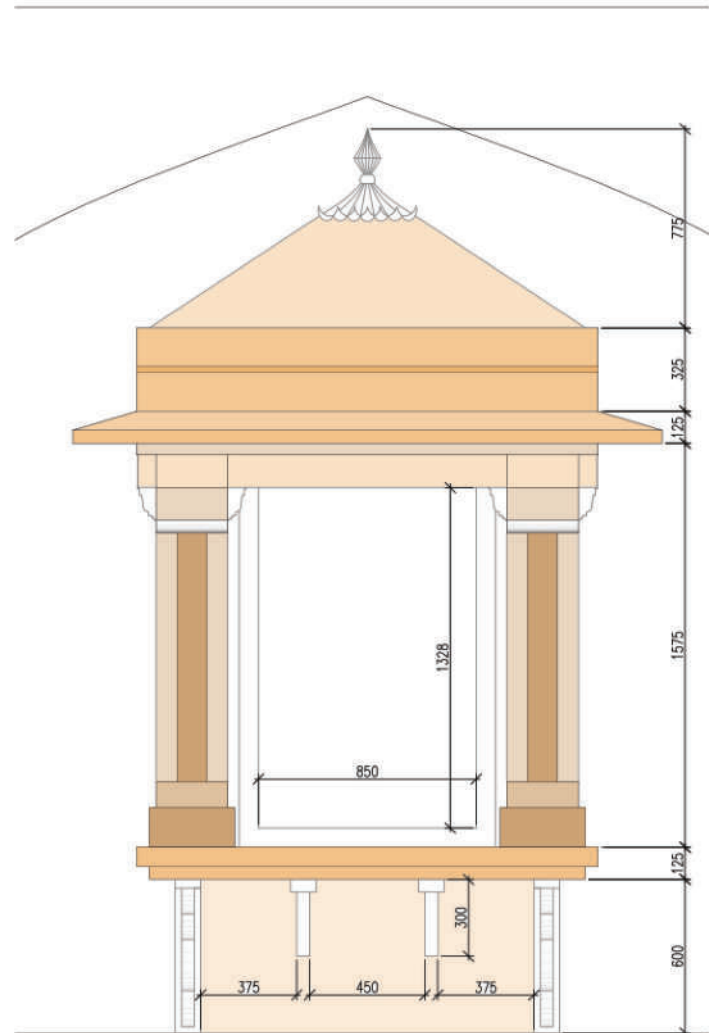


REAR ELEVATION





DETAIL AT "A"



DETAIL AT "B"

DETAILS



2.8 Jal Mahal

Nawab Shah Quli Khan built this Sarovar, which is now locally known as the Jal Mahal. It is situated in the middle of a large square water tank. It is constructed over a bridge resting on sixteen arched spans. On the northern façade of Jal Mahal, there are two inscriptions, which are partly legible today. The surviving portion is a verse containing the chronogram.

The first inscription over the north arch is as under:

“This pleasant building, which is the envy of Iram, its water and air are refreshing like Paradise. It was built in the reign of Akbar, the victorious, the king who has placed his foot on the heads of the kings of the world. As Shah Quli Khan has laid its foundation, O God! make it durable like the palace of the highest heaven. The far-sighted Wisdom, for the date of its foundation, said, “This was built in the year 999 A.H. (1591 A.D.)”.

The second inscription over the north entrance hall is as follows:

Jamshaid in dignity, Shah Quli Khan, the honour of the country, he who has carried away the ball of valour from his rivals. Generous like the ocean, grave like the mountain, of exalted rank; a second Rustam and the Hatim Tai of this time. May the wine of joy be ever in his palate, may he be victorious in the day of battle and prosperous in the day of entertainment.

He has built a tank, which is a second Kausar, and a palace like the garden of Iram in the middle of it. The water of immortality gives an idea of its water, and the pleasant air of Paradise is a specimen of its air. O God! keep it safe from the vicissitudes of time, so that he may sit in joy and exultation in this house. I inquired of Wisdom about the date of its completion; the reply, “the house of Grace,” came to the ear of my soul. 1001 A.H. (1593 A.D.)”.

The domical ceiling of the central room is adorned with graceful designs painted in harmonious colours; these aesthetic markers seemed to have been inspired by the contemporary Rajput practices. The ceilings of the verandahs also bear traces of painted decoration.

The façade is adorned with geometrical designs rendered in red colour. Stalactites are visible on the ceiling of the central room. The whole structure is covered with plaster and marble to render smoothness. The upper portion of the Jal Mahal is decorated with arches on the heads of the entrance doors, open on all sides and overlooking into the central chamber.

The roof of the Mahal is flat. The centre of the roof is an octagonal platform, that can be approached by steps and are covered with an octagonal cupola. Jal Mahal was perhaps used as a venue for enjoying the cool breeze during the hot seasons.

2.9 Tomb of Ibrahim Khan Sur

Ibrahim Khan Sur was Sher Shah Sur's grandfather. He was based out of Narnaul under the officiating capacities given to him by the Lodis. Sher Shah ascended the throne at Delhi in 1540, after defeating the Mughal Emperor Humayun. Once in power, Sher Shah ordered the construction of his long-deceased grandfather's tomb around 1538-45, who died at Narnaul in A.H. 927. The structure has a square plan, which is a common feature of the Lodi architecture.

It is a perfect example of the square tomb of Pathan/Afghan style, with intricate details and a pleasant interplay of colours. The construction of a high terrace, double storey simulation, *jhalardar* arches, low domes, beautiful *chhatris*, *jalis*, *jharokhas*, *chhajjaas*, *kalasa*-finials, slender turrets (*guldastas*) and elegant merlons, give it balance, strength and dexterity. The liberal use of deep red, grey and white stone, painted ceiling with exquisite and ornate brush work and subtle lapidary, give it a very unique touch of richness which is not visible among most of the medieval structures of India.

The tomb has some inscriptions, which, in translation, read as follows:

Over the eastern doorway:

"If any one inquires of you who built this edifice, then tell him if you know the secret. The emperor of the kingdom, Sher Sultan Ghazi, has built this Heaven-like dome. The king of kings, master of the seven empires, whose sword has surpassed the lighting of world. Farid Hasan Sur, son of Brahim (Ibrahim), gave orders for building a paradise over the tomb of his grandfather. If you inquire of me who was the superintendent, then I will say Abu Bakr, son of Shaikh Ahmad Niyazi. His clan was Niyazi and his tribe was Kindi, and on account of his pure descent he was honoured."

Over the northern doorway:

"May God ever keep this big dome, which has thrown its shade over us like high heaven. Abu Bakr Kindi, son of Shaikh Ahmad, was in charge of this building when it was being erected".

Over the southern doorway:

"Such a wonderful dome the king of the world erected over the tomb of his grandfather. If people inquire of you about the name of superintendent, then say Abu Biker Kindi, son of Shaiokh Ahmad".

According to the above-mentioned inscriptions, Sher Sultan Ghazi was the pioneer of this beautiful mausoleum under the supervision of Abu Bakr Kindi, son of Shaikh Ahmad Niyazi.

The tomb is standing on a high platform with a flight of steps for access. The size of its mass is rendered in a pleasing contrast of grey and red stone with a relatively sparing use of the latter. The terrace of the tomb is accessible by some stairs from southern façade. In the centre of the terrace, there is an octagonal drum. All the corners of the tomb and sixteen-sided drum are decorated with twenty-eight round turrets (*guldastas*), which are made of red and grey stone crowned with the opening lotus. At the four corners on the terrace of the mortuary chambers, there are octagonal *chhatris* standing on the octagonal platform.

The mortuary chamber has three gateways. The eastern gateway is the entrance section of the tomb. Northern and southern gateways are closed with *jalis* and the western wall has a *mihrab*. The inner contour of the arches depicts a flower-bud design (also called as *kangoora* designs). The interior of the hall is decorated with floral designs which are elegantly painted with different colours. In this tomb, horizontal panels of Quranic verses are placed above the central *mihrab*. The Islamic talisman of strength and victory is abundantly depicted on *mihrab* and arched niches.



2.10 Tomb of Shah Quli Khan

Shah Quli Khan served as Governor of Narnaul for 42 years during the reign of Emperor Akbar (1556-1605). According to a number of scholars, he is considered as the protege of Akbar's guardian Bairam Khan. He was the man whose arrow pierced Hemu's eye in the second battle of Panipat. Abul Fazl attributes the restoration of the Mughal dynasty to him.

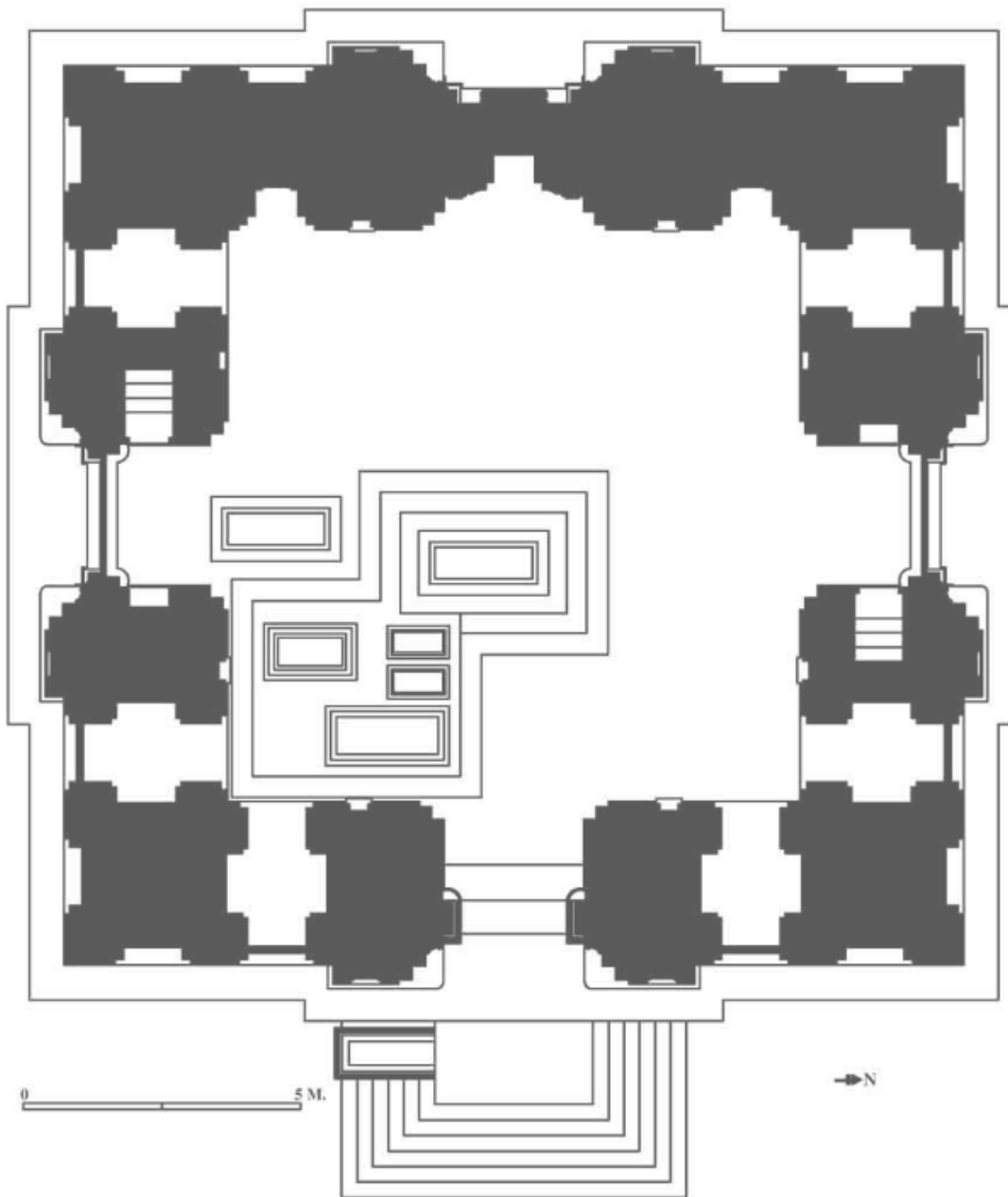
The tomb is a three storeyed building with slightly sloping walls of rubble, covered with a thick layer of plaster. The central room is decorated with eloquent designs. Under the long flights of steps, double stairs lead to the second storey. The interior as well as the facade of the gateway is adorned with numerous pleasing designs.

The inscription over its entrance furnishes the date of erection of the tomb, which is 1574-75 A.D. The inscription over the south doorways which is translated as follows:

"The eye of the sky has not seen its match, for in elegance it is unique and single. Its roof is polished like a mirror, and its exterior is transparent like its interior. I said in my mind, "O God! what would be the chronogram of this pleasant building." Wisdom suddenly, for the date of its completion, said, "The strong and elegant dome."-982 A.H. (1574 A.D.).

The inscription over the northern arch:

"The exalted Nawab, Shah Quli Khan, when he founded this tomb: The guardian of Paradise as it were opened a door from heaven to this place. Whoever saw this high dome said, "Many mercy be upon the Khan."



GROUND FLOOR PLAN (Tomb of Ibrahim Khan Sur)

(Courtesy American Institute of India Studies, Gurgaon)

The tomb is built on an octagonal in plan. The tomb itself is also octagonal. Each face of the tomb has a semi-octagonal recess covered with a pointed arch. In the western side, there is a staircase that leads to the terrace but at present it is closed with an iron gateway. The southern one opening leads to the interior and rest of the three doorways have been closed with *jalis*, which seemed to have provided light to the interior.

The tomb is a small structure with red and grey contrasting stones surmounted by a white dome. The tomb octagonal plan is very different from the octagonal type constructed by the Lodi and Sur Kings. An archetypical Afghan/Pathan style of tomb would consist of an eight-sided *verandah* encircling a central chamber. However, Shah Quli Khan's tomb has no *verandah*.

The interior of the tomb is constructed with marble. Apart from the graves of its patron, it has five additional graves in it. The design of the tomb could have drawn inspiration from structures like Sher Mandal in the Purana Qila at Delhi and Hada Mahal in the vicinity of Ajmeri Darwaja at Fatehpur Sikri.



2.11 Tomb of Miran Taj-ud-din

Miran Taj-u-din was a disciple of Qutb-ud-Din Munawar of Hansi. He was a saint and worshipped by all sects of the contemporary Indian society. He was a patron saint of sangi baniyas of Narnaul. This tomb has a beautiful facade which is decorated with Stucco work. The impression of double storey has been created by providing two tiers of Tughlaq style arches in a single storey chamber building. The tomb itself is surmounted by a hemispherical dome, crested by a finial of the Pathan/Afghan style. The interior of the dome is a perfect square.



2.12 Bada & Chota Talao

This *talao* is now simply called the *Bada Talao*. A *Chhota Talao* lies near *Mirza Alijan's Takht & Baoli* and is similar to *Anup Talao*. As the name implies, it has two water tanks adjacent to each other with the pavilions disposed around the large tank, the *bada talao*.

The pavilions are again derivatives of Shah Jahan archtypes as seen at *Anup Talao*. The soffits are covered with paintings depicting floral themes.



2.13 Baoli of Polytechnic College

It is located on the north side of the Jal Mahal and southern side of Narnaul town in the residential complex of the Polytechnic College. There is a considerable amount of obscurity about this structure as corroboration with any other literary or primary source has been unsuccessful till date.

The *baoli* is laid out in an east-west direction, the well in the west and the entrance in the east. The stepped corridor stands from a raised platform. This *baoli* has three storeys, two storeys are under ground level and one storey is above ground. The well has an octagonal shape and is indicative of its antiquity to roughly around 17th century.



2.14 Anup Talao

Anup Talao is located in close proximity to the Jal Mahal . The name of its builder is not known and today it is referred to as either Anup Talao or Babaji ka Talao. By its construction style and substance, it can be estimated to be built around Shah Jahan's period. Based on the chronology and the architectural design, it can be surmised that the Anup Talao borrows the water and pavilion theme of the Jal Mahal.

The talao is in the form of a rectangular water tank. At the middle of each side is a pillared pavilion that overlooks the water. The tank edge has a moulded profile with small semi-octagonal projections into the water at intervals and steps leading down to the water on east and west edges. The pavilions are a derivative of the Shah Jahan type design, comprising a pillared verandah flanked by walled enclosures on either side.







03 Conclusion . . .



3. CONCLUSION

The city of Narnaul has been a silent observer since its coming to prominence in the North Indian Political Scene under the Lodis. The city's unique architectural style is a fine blend of contemporary Rajput and Afghan/Pathan Styles, which was later further articulated and re-shaped by the Mughals with their own aesthetics.

A walk through the city of Narnaul and its magnificent monuments, give us a slight peak into what the city might have looked like back in the ages. Due to its proximity to Delhi and Agra, which were the seats of power in the medieval times, Narnaul was always hidden under the shadows of these powerful cities.

However, only when one bears witness to the architectural marvels of the city, that one can experience The Splendours of Narnaul.



